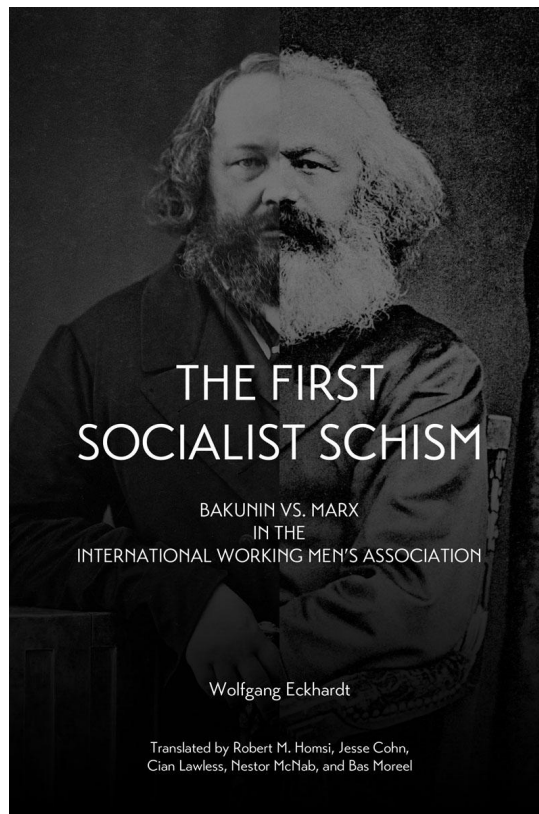


The First Socialist Schism

Bakunin vs. Marx in the International Working Men's Association

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CHAPTER 1. Bakunin, Marx, and Johann Philipp Becker

IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT TO imagine at first that one day Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) and Karl Marx (1818–1883) would face one another as the heads of opposing tendencies of international socialism. They were nearly the same age and both emigrants who had settled in Paris between 1843 and 1844, and were part of the same group of international radicals that had congregated in Paris – a melting pot for European emigrants before 1848 – at the time. There they were introduced to one another in March 1844 and had a friendly relationship until Marx was expelled from France in January 1845. Despite some tribulations – for example, Marx’s *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* accused Bakunin of being a Russian spy in 1848 – they continued to correspond well into the 1860s.¹ On 3 November 1864, a last personal meeting was arranged by Marx,² to which Bakunin was glad to agree for a special reason: ‘I knew that he had played a major part in the foundation of the International.’³

The commonly held notion that Marx was ‘the main founder of the International’⁴ (the First International or International Working Men’s Association), which Bakunin and many of his contemporaries believed, is a misconception. In reality, Marx had no part in the association of French and English workers that had existed since 1862 and led to the founding meeting of the Inter-

¹ For a detailed account of the relationship between Bakunin and Marx until 1864, which is only described briefly here, see W. Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution zur Ersten Internationale. Untersuchungen zu Leben und Werk Michail Bakunins* (Lich: Verlag Edition AV, 2005), pp. 54–105.

Six dedications and letters by Bakunin to Marx exist:

A draft of a letter from August 1848, in M. Bakunin, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. by W. Eckhardt, 6 vols. (Berlin: Karin Kramer Verlag, 1996–), vol. 5, pp. 152–55.

Letters from 27 October 1864, 7 February 1865 and 22 December 1868 in M. Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*, CD-ROM (Amsterdam: Edita-KNAW, 2000).

Two dedications from December 1847 and December 1868, in B. Nikolaevskii, ‘Russkie knigi v Bibliotekakh K. Marksa i F. Engel’sa’, *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engel’sa* 4 (1929), 371.

No letters by Marx to Bakunin survived; however, there is evidence of such letters from the periods:

February to the beginning of March 1847, mentioned in Engels to Marx, 3 March 1847, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works*, 50 vols. (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–2004), vol. 38, p. 116.

26/27 October 1864: ‘I received from Marx a card which I still possess, in which he asks me if I would like to have him visit the next day’. See ‘Rapports personnels avec Marx. Pièces justificatives No. 2’, p. 16, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Answered in Bakunin to Marx, 27 October 1864 (see above).

Mid-November 1864 to the beginning of February 1865 (two letters), mentioned in Bakunin to Marx, 7 February 1865 (see above).

Bakunin was also sent a copy of the first volume of *Capital* at the behest of Marx via Johann Philipp Becker; see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 145–46. This copy didn’t include a dedication, probably because Marx had it sent directly from the publisher Meißner in Hamburg; see R. Hecker and L. Mis’kevič, ‘“Das Kapital” mit Widmungen von Marx und Engels’, *MEGA-Studien*, 1 (1994), 112.

² See Marx to Engels, 4 November 1864, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, pp. 18–19.

³ A. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, 7 vols. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961–1981), vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 128.

⁴ ‘Protestation de l’Alliance’, suite, p. 9, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

national in September 1864. Marx was known to English union officials as an immigrant and scholar, and so he was present at the meeting on 28 September 1864 in London's St. Martin's Hall, to which he received an invitation at the last minute;⁵ however, he only took part in the meeting – as he himself put it two weeks later in a letter to Friedrich Engels – ‘in a non-speaking capacity on the platform’.⁶ During the meeting, Marx was elected as one of two German representatives of the 32-person provisional Central Council (later General Council) of the International and wrote the ‘Provisional Rules’⁷ and the ‘Inaugural Address’,⁸ the International's founding declaration – which Bakunin later described as ‘a remarkable, serious and profound manifesto, like all those that he writes, when they are not personal polemics’.⁹

Marx sent Bakunin the ‘Inaugural Address’, published a short time after their meeting in London, to Italy (where Bakunin had moved).¹⁰ More than once, in the following years, Marx toyed with the idea of mobilising Bakunin's support in disputes within the International in Italy. In April 1865 Marx threatened to ‘get Bakunin to lay some counter-mines for Mr Mazzini in Florence’,¹¹ and on 1 May of the same year he declared that if the Italian immigrants in London ‘don't appoint new delegates soon, as we have asked them to, Bakunin will have to arrange for some life [sic] Italians’.¹² Finally, in September 1867 Marx praised the Italian paper *Libertà e Giustizia* and explained ‘I assume that Bakunin is involved’.¹³

The Alliance ‘request’ by Johann Philipp Becker (November 1868)

Bakunin became a member of the Geneva central section of the International in June or July 1868.¹⁴ However, he at first concentrated his activities on the League of Peace and Liberty (*Ligue*

⁵ Apparently Marx heard about the meeting from the French refugee Victor Le Lubez only a few days before it was to take place. According to Marx, Le Lubez asked ‘if I would participate for the German workers’; see Marx to Engels, 4 November 1864, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 15. A written invitation was only sent to Marx on the day of the founding meeting by the union leader William Randal Cremer; see Cremer to Marx, 28 September 1864, in L. E. Mins (ed.), *Founding of the First International: A Documentary Record* (New York: International Publishers, 1937), pp. 57–58.

⁶ Marx to Engels, 4 November 1864, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 16.

⁷ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag [until 1992: Dietz Verlag], 1975–), vol. I/20, pp. 13–15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–12.

⁹ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 128. Around 1869, Bakunin wrote a brief account of the ‘Inaugural Address’ after reading it; see ‘Citations d'un rapport de Marx’, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁰ See Bakunin to Marx, 7 February 1865, p. 1, *ibid.*

¹¹ Marx to Engels, 11 April 1865, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 140.

¹² Marx to Engels, 1 May 1865, *ibid.*, p. 150.

¹³ Marx to Engels, 4 September 1867, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Werke*, 43 vols. (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1956–1990), vol. 31, p. 338 (the translation in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 420, is inaccurate). In fall 1868, Marx still backed Bakunin with respect to the publication plans of Sigismund Borkheim; see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 147–49.

¹⁴ According to his own account, Bakunin joined the International in June 1868; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 171. Other accounts claim he joined in July: [J. Guillaume], *Mémoire présenté par la Fédération jurassienne de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs à toutes les Fédérations de l'Internationale* (Sonvillier: Au siège du Comité fédéral jurassien, 1873), p. 38; and Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 171, based on an account by Utin, see N. Utin, ‘To the Fifth Congress’, in *The Hague Congress of the First International. 2–7 September 1872*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976 and 1978), vol. 1, p. 386.

de la Paix et de la Liberté), whose founding congress he had attended a year earlier.¹⁵ At their second congress, from 22 to 26 September 1868 in Berne, Bakunin became completely disillusioned with the political character of the League. He introduced his collectivist ideas during the second item of the agenda at that congress: ‘How does the economic or social question relate to the question of peace through freedom?’¹⁶ They were met with harsh criticism from several speakers. The draft of his resolution on this issue¹⁷ was rejected by the majority of the delegate nations with seven votes against (Spain, Sweden, Mexico, France, Germany, Switzerland, England) and four in favour (Poland, Russia, Italy, USA).¹⁸ On 25 September, Bakunin and 17 other congress participants quit the League after reading a letter of protest.¹⁹

The International’s congress, which had taken place a few days earlier in Brussels, declared to the League on 12 September 1868 that their existence next to the International was unjustified and suggested that the League’s members should ‘join one section or another of the International’.²⁰ This is precisely what Bakunin and his friends planned on doing after leaving the League. According to his own account, Bakunin ‘suggested that the social-revolutionary minority, who had left the League, all join the International while at the same time retaining their close relations’.²¹ Bakunin was referring to his contacts with various European socialists and the resulting conspiratorial web of relationships, which he had tried to form into an organisational framework between 1864 and 1867.²² According to Bakunin, his suggestion to join the International was unanimously agreed upon by all those present. There were, however, different opinions related to the question of forming a separate organisation, which the French and Italian participants of the meeting felt should include a secret and an official branch and remain absolutely independent of the International. There was a consensus that they should continue to work together in secret. However, Bakunin was against forming an *official* organisation because it ‘would compete in a most undesirable way’ with the International. Despite Bakunin’s opposition, an official organisation called the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy (*Alliance internationale de la Démocratie Socialiste*) was formed and a programme and regulations were developed by the meeting’s participants based on a lengthy draft by Bakunin.²³

Even though the Alliance claimed to be ‘established entirely within the big International Working Men’s Association’ in their preambles,²⁴ they still had to apply to the London General Council

¹⁵ For details about the founding of the League of Peace and Liberty and Bakunin’s involvement, see W. H. van der Linden, *The International Peace Movement 1815–1874* (Amsterdam: Tilleul Publications, 1987), pp. 675–715.

¹⁶ *Bulletin sténographique du deuxième Congrès de la Paix et de la Liberté*, 22 September 1868, p. 2.

¹⁷ ‘Whereas the question that presents itself to us most urgently is that of the economic and social equalisation of classes and individuals, the Congress states that without this equalisation – that is to say, without justice – freedom and peace cannot be achieved. As a result, the Congress places upon the agenda the study of practical means to resolve this issue.’ (*ibid.*, 23 September 1868, p. 91).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 September 1868, p. 134.

¹⁹ ‘Protestation collective des membres dissidents du Congrès’, *Kolokol*, 1 December 1868, p. 216.

²⁰ J. Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale. Recueil de documents*, 4 vols. (Geneva: Librairie E. Droz [vols. 1–2], Institut universitaire de hautes études internationales [vols. 3–4], 1962–1971), vol. 1, p. 389.

²¹ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 171.

²² See below, pp. 156–57.

²³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 171. M. Nettlau, ‘Michael Bakunin. Eine Biographie’ (1924–1926), 4 vols., Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis (IISG), Amsterdam, Nettlau Papers, nos. 1706–1713, vol. 3, p. 3. M. Bakunin, ‘Programme and Rules of the Alliance’ (1868), in *The General Council of the First International: Minutes*, 5 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962–1968), vol. 3, pp. 379–82.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

of the International for official recognition. The German socialist Johann Philipp Becker,²⁵ who was part of the Central Office (*bureau central*) of the Alliance, was given this task. Bakunin wrote:

Citizen J. Phillippe Becker, a member of this office, a personal friend of the members of the General Council, and to some extent influential among them, was unanimously entrusted by all the other members of the Office (Brosset, Bakunin, Perron, Guétat, Duval and secretary Zagorski) to write to London. He accepted this mission, certain, he said, of the success of his approach, and added that the General Council, *which had no right to refuse us*, would necessarily understand, after the explanations which he gave them, the immense utility of the Alliance. We thus relied completely on the promise and assurance of Ph. Becker [...]. The fact is that – contrary to all his promises – he had written nothing to London, or that he had written something completely different from what he had told us.²⁶

Becker had in fact written a letter to London; however, it was not exactly a request for the Alliance's admittance to the International. In his letter to the General Council on 29 November 1868, he wrote, more or less matter-of-factly:

In addition, we have been instructed to inform you that an International Alliance of Socialist Democracy has formed within our Association, whose programme is enclosed. Its local section has 145 members to date, and will soon have many hundreds more. As the existing sections and affiliated groups of our Association have almost exclusively been treating symptoms – their consumer establishments, bakery, butcher and chandlery, and the protection of employees' wage – and have let our primary mission out of their sights, the time has come for an element to arise and rally together to bring some healthy idealism and revolutionary energy into the movement on the continent before it is too late. It had already begun to get boring for energetic natures. And history cannot do without an avant-guard. A few words of encouragement and support in your response to this Alliance would have a positive effect.²⁷

Becker's rather smug letter surprisingly resulted in Marx's first verbal attack *against Bakunin*. On the evening that Becker's letter was received by the London General Council of the International, Marx wrote to Engels:

Mr Bakunin – in the background of this business – is condescending enough to wish to take the workers' movement under *Russian* leadership.

²⁵ Inspired by the July Revolution in Paris (1830), Johann Philipp Becker (1809–1886) – a trained brushmaker from the Palatinate – became involved in the republican movement in Germany and took part in the Hambacher Festival as a speaker (1832). In 1838 he immigrated to Switzerland and was granted citizenship to the Canton of Berne in 1846. He took part in the Swiss Sonderbund War (1847) and the Baden Revolution (1848–1849) and helped establish the first Swiss section of the International in Geneva at the end of 1864 and beginning of 1865. In 1866 he both initiated and became the president of the Group of German-speaking Sections (*Sektionsgruppe deutscher Sprache*) of the International with headquarters in Geneva. Swiss sections were later joined by sections from Germany and Austria-Hungary, along with sections of German-speaking immigrants (in the United States, for instance). Becker and his Group of German-speaking Sections were, for a time, the central institution of the International in Germany. They admitted German groups of workers into the International and represented them with respect to the London General Council of the International – whose main figure, Marx, Becker had known since 1860. The organ of the Group of German-speaking Sections was the *Vorbote*, the International's first German-language publication, published by Becker from 1866 to 1871. For more about his relationship with Bakunin, see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 142–206.

²⁶ 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', p. 11, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

²⁷ The Central Committee of the Group of German-speaking Sections to the General Council, 29 November 1868, in Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, p. 205.

This shit has been in existence for 2 months. Only this evening did old Becker inform the General Council about it in writing. [...] As old Becker writes, this association should make up for the deficient *'idealism'* of our Association. *L'idéalisme Russe!*²⁸

Marx's frivolous preoccupation with the conspiracy theory that Bakunin had used Becker as a marionette 'to take the workers' movement under *Russian* leadership' is almost bizarre. In reality Bakunin had no idea what Becker had written to London.²⁹ Ignorant of Becker's letter and the shock waves it had sent through London, Bakunin himself addressed the leading figure of the General Council, his old associate Marx, on 22 December 1868. In a friendly letter, Bakunin again sent the Alliance's programme and wrote the following: 'I also send you the programme of the Alliance that we have founded with Becker and many Italian, Polish and French friends. – We shall have much to say on this subject.'³⁰

After receiving the letter, Marx commented on it to Engels: Bakunin is 'still under the pleasant misapprehension that he will be allowed to go his own way'.³¹ On the same day as Bakunin sent his letter to London (22 December 1868), Marx had the General Council send a rebuff to the Alliance which he himself formulated. In addition to a series of references to the Rules and Administrative Regulations of the International, the main reason for the rejection of the Alliance was that 'the presence of a second international body operating within and outside the International Working Men's Association would be the infallible means of its disorganisation'.³² And so, Bakunin's fear at the founding meeting of the Alliance that as an official organisation it would 'compete in a most unnecessary way' with the International³³ was quickly confirmed.

The Alliance joins the International (February–July 1869)

The Central Office of the Alliance responded to the rebuttal by the General Council on 26 February 1869 with the suggestion that the Alliance dissolve as an international organisation.³⁴ The General Council agreed with this at its meeting on 9 March 1869³⁵ and offered to admit the individual sections of the Alliance into the International. The communiqué concerning this matter

²⁸ Marx to Engels, 15 December 1868, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 190.

²⁹ Bakunin wrote in 1871: 'none of us ever saw Becker's correspondence' (Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', p. 11).

³⁰ Bakunin to Marx, 22 December 1868, pp. 3–4, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

³¹ Marx to Engels, 13 January 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 202.

³² The General Council to the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, 22 December 1868, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 35.

³³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 171. Marx believed there was a well-coordinated intrigue behind it all: 'By a clever trick,' he informed Laura and Paul Lafargue on 15 February 1869, 'the International would have been placed under the guidance and supreme initiative of the Russian Bakunin.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 218).

³⁴ The Central Office of the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy to the General Council, 26 February 1869, in M. Bakounine, *Œuvres*, ed. by M. Nettelbladt (vol. 1) and J. Guillaume (vols. 2–6), 6 vols. (Paris: P.-V. Stock, 1895–1913), vol. 6, pp. 193–94.

³⁵ 'Minutes of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association September 17, 1867 to 31 August, 1869. From the Minute Book of the General Council September 18, 1866 to August 31, 1869', in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 633.

from the General Council to the Alliance³⁶ also included a critique of a phrase in the Alliance's programme. The second point of the programme said that the Alliance 'wants above all political, economic and social equalisation of classes and individuals of both sexes'.³⁷ The General Council's letter from March 1869, written by Marx, states:

The 'égalité des classes' [equalisation of classes], literally interpreted, comes to the 'Harmony of Capital and Labour' ('l'harmonie du capital et du travail') so persistently preached by the Bourgeoisocialists [*sic*]. It is not the logically impossible 'equalisation of classes', but the historically necessary superseding 'abolition of classes' (abolition of classes) [*sic*], this true secret of the Prolet. movement, which forms the great aim of the Int. W. Ass. Considering, however, the context, in which that phrase 'égalité des classes' occurs, it seems to be a mere slip of the pen, and the General Council feels confident that you will be anxious to remove from your programme an expression which offers such a dangerous misunderstanding.³⁸

Marx also spoke of a 'slip of the pen' in a draft of this text that he sent to Engels.³⁹ The phrase in the Alliance's programme was meant to address *both class and individual*. Because individuals could not be abolished, the term 'equalisation' was chosen.⁴⁰ Three months before the critic from the General Council, Bakunin had already offered Marx an explanation of this phrase in his letter from 22 December 1868 (where he had also sent the Alliance's programme):

Nonetheless, I must heartily avow, we would have done better expressing ourselves differently if, for example, we had spoken of the radical abolition of the economic causes of the existence of different classes, the equalisation of the economic, social and political environment, and the conditions needed for all individuals to live and develop without distinction of gender, nation and race.⁴¹

In the speeches at the second congress of the League (also sent to Marx), Bakunin took the following position on this question.

I have demanded, I do demand the economic and social equalisation of classes and individuals. Now I want to say what I mean by these words.

I want the abolition of classes both in an economic and social as well as a political sense. [...] The history of the [Great French] Revolution itself and the seventy-five years that have passed since then show us that political equality without economic equality is a lie. However much you proclaim the equality of political rights, as long as the economic organisation of society splits it into different social strata, this equality is nothing but a fiction. To make it a reality, the economic causes of class differences must disappear – we must abolish the right to inheritance, which is

³⁶ The General Council to the International Alliance of Socialist Democracy, 9 March 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, pp. 116–17. In the minutes of the Geneva section of the Alliance, the letter is dated 20 March 1869; see below, p. 6.

³⁷ Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), p. 380. According to Max Nettlau (1865–1944), the leading Bakunin expert of his time, what Bakunin meant by *égalité* was 'equality, the same starting point for all through the abolition of privileges of birth (status and inheritance) and the same access to education as well as the ability to work independently. This doesn't refer to class harmony or an artificial equalisation, but rather to equal opportunities for all' (M. Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, 5 vols., vols. 1–3 ed. by H. Becker [Aßlar-Werdorf: Bibliothek Thélème, 1993–1996; and Vaduz: Topos Verlag, 1981–1984], vol. 2, p. 100).

³⁸ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 117.

³⁹ Marx to Engels, 5 March 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 236.

⁴⁰ See A. Schrupp, *Nicht Marxistin und auch nicht Anarchistin. Frauen in der Ersten Internationale* (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 1999), p. 59. [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Bakunin to Marx, 22 December 1868, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

the permanent source of all social inequalities. [...] Thus, gentlemen, but only thus, shall equality and freedom become a political truth.

Here is what we mean when we speak of ‘the equalisation of classes’. Perhaps it would be better to speak of the abolition of classes, the unification of society by the abolition of economic and social inequality. But we have also demanded the *equalisation of individuals*, and this is the main thing that draws upon us all the wrath of our adversaries’ indignant eloquence.⁴²

It thus seems quite clear, that Bakunin in no way – as Marx feared in the critic he formulated for the General Council in March 1869 – had a ‘harmony of capital and labour’ in mind. In fact, Bakunin himself later referred to this phrase, which was basically of secondary importance, as ‘that unfortunate phrase’⁴³ and also spoke of a ‘slip of the pen’⁴⁴ – while Marx, who had spoken of a ‘slip of the pen’ (see above), in later years repeatedly made a contentious issue out of it.⁴⁵

The justified objections by the General Council were enough for the Alliance to change ‘political, economic and social equalisation of classes and individuals’ to ‘final and total abolition of classes and the political, economic and social equalization of individuals’⁴⁶ at their general meeting on 17 April 1869. The following is found in the minutes: ‘Bakunin read the letter from the General Council (from 20 March 1869) regarding the term ‘equalisation of classes’. It was unanimously agreed to make the modifications called for by the G.C.’⁴⁷ This ‘modification’ was not considered to be a contentious issue by the meeting’s participants either, but rather a technicality, which was agreed upon without any further discussion.

The General Council had no objections other than the phrase ‘equalisation of classes’; instead, they stressed the pluralism in the International’s programme – with an important limitation:

Since the various sections of workingmen in the same country, and the working classes in different countries, are placed under different circumstances and have attained to different degrees of development, it seems almost necessary that their theoretical notions, which reflect the real movement, should also diverge.

⁴² M. Bakounine and W. Mroczkowski, ‘Discours de Bakounine et de Mroczkowski au deuxième Congrès de la Paix, à Berne’, *Kolokol*, 1 December 1868, pp. 213–14 (pp. 210–18 of this issue of *Kolokol* contain the first, second, third and fifth speeches that Bakunin held at the second congress of the League of Peace and Liberty on 23, 24 and 25 September 1868. For the fourth speech, held on 25 September 1868, see below, p. 453, n. 46). Marx had read the speeches, which had appeared in *Kolokol* and Bakunin had sent him on 22 December 1868. See Marx’s reference to them at a commission meeting of the London Conference on 18 September 1871 (minutes by Engels: Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 297).

⁴³ Bakounine, ‘Rapport sur l’Alliance’, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 172. In *Statism and Anarchy* (*Gosudarstvennost’ i Anarkhiya*) (1873) Bakunin wrote that the phrase, equalisation of classes, was ‘in the sense of their total abolition’ (M. Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, ed. by M. S. Shatz [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990], p. 186). Bakunin’s political friend Élisée Reclus wrote his brother in autumn 1868 that the equalisation of classes and individuals meant ‘equality of starting conditions for all, so that each could make their way unencumbered’ (É. Reclus, *Correspondance*, 3 vols. [Paris: Librairie Schleicher Frères (vols. 1–2), Alfred Costes, éditeur (vol. 3), 1911–1925], vol. 1, p. 282).

⁴⁵ See, for example, K. Marx and F. Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits in the International. Private Circular from the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association’, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 85.

⁴⁶ ‘Programme of the Alliance’ (1869), in M. Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, ed. by A. Lehning (New York: Grove Press, 1973), p. 174.

⁴⁷ B. Andréas and M. Molnár (eds.), ‘L’Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux de la Section de Genève (15 janvier 1869 – 23 décembre 1870)’, in J. Freymond (ed.), *Études et Documents sur la Première Internationale en Suisse* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), p. 156.

The community of action, however, called into life by the Intern. W. Ass., the exchange of ideas facilitated by the public organs of the different national sections, and the direct debates at the General Congresses are sure by and by to engender a common theoretical programme.⁴⁸

This hypothesis by Marx, that the workers' movement would by and by develop a *common theory*, was to weigh heavily on the development of the International.

After correcting the 'slip of the pen', the Geneva section of the Alliance on 22 June 1869 once again wrote to the General Council to apply for admission to the International.⁴⁹ The General Council unanimously accepted them at their meeting on 27 July 1869.⁵⁰

Becker's position paper on the question of organisation (July 1869)

A second act by the Alliance member Becker – this time in connection with the socialist movement in Germany – was strangely enough also attributed to Bakunin by Marx and Engels.

In the summer of 1869, the German socialists August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, who belonged to the Union of German Workers' Associations (*Verband Deutscher Arbeitervereine*, VDAV), were able to win over an number of prominent members from the competing General Association of German Workers (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Arbeiterverein*, ADAV), founded by Lassalle in 1863. Together they agreed to form a joint organisation of 'the social democratic workers of Germany', which was to be founded in August 1869 in Eisenach. Johann Phillip Becker wrote a position paper on the question of organisation for the Eisenach Congress, which stated that 'unions are the only true form for workers' associations and indeed future society' and further that 'the proposed party organisation should not have a definitive form, but rather one that is transitional and open to change'. According to Becker's position paper, the organisation being founded in Eisenach was to be a federation of different union organisations, which were to become 'a part of the International Working Men's Association'. In addition, each organisation was to have its own international committee: 'The unions, the basic elements of the party organisation, are to form special central offices by communication with comrades in their field in different countries about the special interests of their profession'.⁵¹

Becker, who was president of the Central Committee of the Group of German-speaking Sections of the International in Geneva, would have played a key role in such an organisation form with different central offices – a plan that was spotted right away. August Bebel, for instance, wrote Marx on 30 July 1869: 'I also read Becker's suggestions in the *Vorbote* and have to admit that they were discomfiting to me, because I see in them Becker's attempt to gain control of the leadership of the International Working Men's Association in Germany'.⁵²

⁴⁸ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 116.

⁴⁹ The Section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy of Geneva to the General Council, 22 June 1869, in [Guillaume], *Mémoire, pièces justificatives*, pp. 55–56.

⁵⁰ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 680. The General Council to the Section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, 28 July 1869, in [Guillaume], *Mémoire, pièces justificatives*, p. 56.

⁵¹ *Vorbote*, 1869, pp. 103–7.

⁵² A. Bebel, *Briefwechsel mit Friedrich Engels*, ed. by W. Blumenberg (London: Mouton, 1965), p. 12. See also the description in Bebel's memoirs, A. Bebel, *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, 10 vols. (München, New Providence, London, Paris: K. G. Saur, 1995–1997), vol. 6, pp. 242–43.

Becker's ambitions also got Marx's attention again – but with the peculiarity that he pinned the blame for Becker's manoeuvre solely on Bakunin. On 27 July 1869 Marx wrote Engels concerning Becker's position paper:

Extremely reactionary business, fitting for the pan-Slavists! [...] I immediately put a spoke in his wheel when he attempted at the Eisenach Congress to promote himself as centre for Germany. [...] Becker himself is not dangerous. But, as we have been informed from Switzerland, his secretary Remy⁵³ was pressed upon him by Mr Bakunin and is Bakunin's tool. This Russian obviously wishes to become the dictator of the European workers' movement. He should be careful. Otherwise he will be officially excommunicated.⁵⁴

For Engels, it was even a matter of fact: 'It's quite clear that fat Bakunin is behind it.'⁵⁵

Once again, it's quite surprising how quickly Marx and Engels resorted to weighty accusations and threats *against Bakunin* – to this day, there is no evidence that Bakunin even knew about Becker's position paper at the Eisenach Congress. Marx was apparently obsessed with the idea that Bakunin wanted to seize *power* in the International⁵⁶ – *but Becker's behaviour was to blame for this fixation*. Bakunin apparently had nothing to do with either of the matters that caused Marx to react so bitterly toward him: Becker's Alliance 'request' on 29 November 1868 and his position paper for the Eisenach Congress. In fact, they can both be chalked up to Becker, who was being indiscreet and letting his ambitions run wild. When the political differences in the International later became apparent, the atmosphere was already highly charged thanks to Becker.

⁵³ Theodor Remy, a German immigrant to Switzerland and tutor, had taken part in Garibaldi's *Freischarenzug* in 1860 where he became friends with Becker. On 28 June 1868 he joined the German section in Geneva, and was elected into the Central Committee of the Group of German-speaking Sections in October 1868. Remy had signed the founding resolution of the Alliance on 28 October 1868 (Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), p. 382) and was a member of its committee. Bakunin described Remy in a letter to Becker as 'our friend, Mr Remy – who I am fond of in every which way – except for his passing bouts of Bismarckism and his exceedingly national Unitarianism' (Bakunin to Becker, 9 August 1868, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

⁵⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, pp. 332–33.

⁵⁵ Engels to Marx, 30 July 1869, *ibid.*, p. 335.

⁵⁶ See below, p. 42.

CHAPTER 2. The International in Geneva and in the Jura Region

THE CONFLICTS WHICH WERE TO ENGULF the entire International in 1871/2 had already been acted out to a lesser degree in Francophone western Switzerland.

From 2 to 4 January 1869, delegates from 30 sections of the International from Francophone Switzerland gathered in Geneva to form the Romance Federation (*Fédération Romande*) of the International. Bakunin, who had been active in the Geneva sections of the International since the summer of 1868, had drafted rules for the Federation, which were accepted by the congress with some modifications.¹ The rules included: Art. 1) The Romance Federation is made up of sections of the International in Francophone Switzerland. Art. 2) However, these are not forced to join. Art. 4) Each section of the Romance Federation is given full autonomy when it comes to its internal affairs and rules, as long as the Federal Committee² of the Romance Federation judges that the latter do not break the Federation's rules.³

The congress also decided to establish the Romance Federation's official organ, the *Égalité*. An editorial committee was elected which included Bakunin, Johann Philipp Becker, and Charles Perron, an enameller from Geneva and member of the Alliance.⁴ Bakunin published many articles that year in the *Égalité*,⁵ especially during the summer months of 1869 when he filled in for the chief editor, Perron.⁶

The Geneva section of the Alliance was unanimously accepted into the International by the London General Council on 27 July 1869, almost seven months after the founding congress of the Romance Federation.⁷ They then applied for membership in the International's Romance Federation with the following letter to the Federal Committee:

¹ 'Projet de Statuts pour la Fédération des Sections romandes de la Suisse. Proposé par les Sections genevoises', in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes. Statuts pour la Fédération des Sections romandes adoptés par le Congrès romand, tenu à Genève. Au Cercle international des Quatre-saisons, les 2, 3 et 4 janvier 1869*, [Geneva 1869]. 'Extrait du Rapport sur les travaux du premier Congrès romand de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs, tenu à Genève, au cercle des Quatre-Saisons, les 2, 3 et 4 Janvier 1869 (Suite et fin)', *Égalité*, 10 April 1869, p. 1. See also 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', p. 27, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. J. Guillaume, *L'Internationale: Documents et Souvenirs* (1864–1878), 4 vols. (Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d'édition [vols. 1–2]; P. V. Stock, éditeur [vols. 3–4], 1905–1910), vol. 1, p. 106.

² The administrative bodies of the International's federations were usually called *conseils* (*conseil fédéral* = Federal Council), but in Switzerland the federal government was called the *conseil fédéral*. For this reason, the Romance Federation formed a Federal Committee (*comité fédéral*) at their founding congress in January 1869.

³ *Statuts pour la Fédération*, pp. 3–4.

⁴ 'Extrait du Rapport sur les travaux du premier Congrès romand de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs, tenu à Genève, au cercle des Quatre-Saisons, les 2, 3 et 4 Janvier 1869', *Égalité*, 13 March 1869, pp. 2–3.

⁵ Published for the most part in M. Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin: Bakunin's Basic Writings*, 1869–1871, ed. by R. M. Cutler (Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1985), pp. 69–130, 145–59, 180–91.

⁶ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', p. 29. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 180.

⁷ See above, p. 6.

We have the honour of presenting You with our statutes, and we are certain that once You have examined them, You shall recognise that, as all are in conformity with the General Rules as well as with those of Romance Switzerland, they demonstrate the sincere will of our section to cooperate fully in the great goal of the International, the final and total emancipation of the working class.

In the name of the section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy

President – M. Bakunin

Secretary – Heng⁸

This application for admittance was presented to the Federal Committee of the Romance Federation only on 22 September 1869 by Fritz Heng, who was both the secretary of the Alliance and a member of the Federal Committee. In a manuscript, Bakunin described the Federal Committee's meeting regarding the Alliance's application for admittance (as Heng had related it to him):

The Federal Council then consisted of seven members: Guétat (president), H. Perret (general secretary), his brother (interior secretary), Martin, Chénaz, Duval and Heng. When this last person presented the request, an expression of considerable uncertainty, not to say confusion, was to be seen on every face. All began by saying that they themselves were members of the Alliance, except Martin. None denied the legitimacy of the Alliance as a section of the International, which moreover would have been impossible in the presence of two original letters, presented by Fritz Heng, written on behalf of the General Council by Eccarius⁹ and Jung,¹⁰ and in light of the equally decisive and universally acknowledged fact that the section of the Alliance had sent a delegate to Basel, who had been admitted as such by the congress.¹¹ The duty of the Federal Council to receive the section of the Alliance into the Romance Federation was thus obvious, staring everyone in the face, as our heretofore friend Philipp Becker had said.¹² [...] It was Mr H. Perret, the great diplomat of the Geneva International,¹³ who spoke first. He began by recog-

⁸ The Committee of the Section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy to the Romance Federal Committee, end of August 1869, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹ The General Council's letter signed by Eccarius from 28 July 1869 is meant; see above, p. 445, n. 50. – Johann Georg Eccarius (1818–1889): tailor and journalist from Thuringia, emigrant living in London since 1846, member of the League of the Just and the Communist League. At the founding meeting of the International (28 September 1864) he spoke as a representative of the German workers and was elected, together with Marx, as a German delegate to the provisional Central Council (later General Council) of the International. From 1867 to 1871, he was general secretary of the Council. From 1870 to 1872, he was corresponding secretary to the English-language sections in America. Eccarius took part in all of the International's general congresses and conferences from 1864 to 1874.

¹⁰ This refers to the General Council's receipt signed by Hermann Jung for the 1868/9 annual membership fee of the Alliance (Jung, secretary for Switzerland in the General Council, to Heng, secretary of the section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, 25 August 1869, in [Guillaume], *Mémoire, pièces justificatives*, p. 57). Hermann Jung (1830–1901): watchmaker from Switzerland, participant in the Revolution of 1848/9, and London resident since 1856. From 1864 to 1872, corresponding secretary for Switzerland in the General Council. From 1871 to 1872, treasurer of the General Council. Delegate at the London Conference of 1865 and 1871 as well as the Congresses of Geneva (1866), Brussels (1868) and Basel (1869).

¹¹ This refers to the fourth general congress of the International in Basel (6–11 September 1869), where the Geneva section of the Alliance was represented by Gaspar Sentiñón; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 12.

¹² The phrase 'staring everyone in the face' ('in die Augen springend') has been verified as a rhetorical device used by Becker: for example Becker to Jung, 12 March 1870, in G. Jaeckh, *Die Internationale. Eine Denkschrift zur vierzigjährigen Gründung der internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation* (Leipzig: Verlag der Leipziger Buchdruckerei, 1904), p. 232.

¹³ Henri Perret (1825–1896), engraver in Geneva, admitted to the Geneva central section 1866, delegate at the International's congresses in Geneva (1866), Basel (1869) and the London Conference (1871). He signed the founding

nising that the Alliance was a legitimate section, and recognised as such by both the General Council and the Basel Congress, that it was moreover a most inspired section, very useful [...], finally, that the request was perfectly in order, but that the Federal Council, he felt, would have to receive it at a later time, when the passions aroused by the struggles that had taken place had calmed down ... etc., etc. – As for Mr Guétat, he declared roundly that he would have accepted the Alliance on its own recognisance if this section did not contain some who displeased him ... Martin spoke out openly against it. Chénaz slept. It was decided to postpone acceptance until an indeterminate date.¹⁴

The Alliance was informed of this resolution in a letter dated 8 October 1869, which cited as grounds for the postponement, among other things:

that your society [the Geneva section of the Alliance] is not of a purely working-class character, that your statutes are moreover those of a political association, whilst agreeing to go along with the principles of the International. [...] the Federal Committee cannot admit you without offending a large number of sections, leading to a schism that we wish to avoid in the interests of the Federation. Consequently, the Committee [...] has voted by a majority of 5 to 2 for the indefinite deferral of your entry into the Romance Federation.¹⁵

This deferral, which amounted to a refusal,¹⁶ was in no way covered by the rules of the Romance Federation: as the Geneva Alliance was officially accepted as a section of the International by the General Council, the Federal Committee could only have denied their application on the grounds of a contradiction between the rules of the section and those of the Federation.¹⁷

The problem of admitting the Alliance into the Romance Federation, which should have been a mere formality, had to do with political differences – which were even of a professional nature. On the one hand, the Geneva International's membership was made up of construction workers (*bâtiment*) who were mostly foreigners or Swiss who had immigrated to Geneva from other cantons. They didn't have municipal voting rights, weren't involved in the battles between the Geneva's political parties, and their social situation was pretty precarious when it came to living conditions and employment. A successful strike by Geneva's construction workers in early 1868 and 1869, which was supported by the International, led many construction workers to join the International where they made up the lion's share of the 2,000 to 3,000 members (1869–1870).¹⁸

declaration of the Alliance on 28 October 1868 (Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), p. 382) but quickly resigned. From the end of 1869 onward, he was one of Bakunin's harshest critics in Geneva. As secretary (1869–1873) of Committee of the Romance Federation, he was in close contact with the London General Council of the International. In his letters to the General Council, he attacked Bakunin and the Jura sections, but after the Congress of The Hague he turned against the General Council. In 1877 he became secretary of the Geneva Police Commission.

¹⁴ Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, pp. 23–24.

¹⁵ The Romance Federal Committee to the Committee of the Alliance of [Socialist] Democracy, 8 October 1869, Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii (RGASPI), Moscow, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 323/11. Perret often threatened to split the International: in February/March 1869, while still a supporter of the Alliance, he warned Eccarius in a letter that he would provoke a split if the General Council rejected the revolutionary programme of the Alliance. See Marx to Engels, 14 March 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 240.

¹⁶ Both sides agreed with this assessment. For Bakunin's view, see Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, pp. 22–23. For the other side's view, see The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 4 January 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 887.

¹⁷ Art. 1 and 4 of the Federal Rules, see above, p. 9.

¹⁸ E. Gruner, *Die Arbeiter in der Schweiz im 19. Jahrhundert. Soziale Lage, Organisation, Verhältnis zu Arbeitgeber und Staat* (Berne: Francke Verlag, 1968), pp. 551–52.

On the other hand, there were the workers of the so-called *fabrique* – which included goldsmiths and makers of luxury watches and music boxes.¹⁹ The workers of the *fabrique* could more than make up for the fact that they were outnumbered – they only had 500 members in the International (1869),²⁰ – through their high degree of organisation and their privileged social status. Close-knit, highly qualified, and well paid, they were viewed as a labour aristocracy who set the agenda in the executive committees of the Geneva International. As citizens of Geneva, they were also integrated in the politics of their home town and even ran in the election for the Grand Council on 15 November 1868, partly on their own list and partly together with the bourgeois *parti radical*. On 14 November 1869, the *parti radical* put the well-known spokesman of the International, Jacques Grosselin, on their list for the State Council elections of the Canton of Geneva; however, the conservatives publicly accused them of collaborating with the ‘subversives’ of the International, the alleged destroyers of property, family, and public order.²¹ Thus it was very inopportune for the moderate members of the International in Geneva belonging to the *fabrique* that at this exact time topics like collectivising private property were being extensively debated and propagated by the Alliance and in the *Égalité*, whose editors included the Alliance members Perron and Bakunin.²² Bakunin wrote:

All this has necessarily brought upon us the hatred of the leaders of the *fabrique*. On the other hand, the openly socialist and revolutionary principles forthrightly expounded by the *Égalité* could not serve their interests in the least, being diametrically opposed to their goal: the abolition of states, of patriotic and political borders; the abolition of the right of inheritance, the collective organisation of property and labour from the bottom up, through liberty – all this could not serve as a bridge to unite in a single party the radical bourgeois with the bourgeois Internationals

¹⁹ The tradition of Geneva’s watch and jewellery industry, known as the *fabrique*, reaches back to the beginning of the 18th century. Until the 19th century, the employees of the *fabrique* – who worked together as ‘little bosses and workers’ in small ateliers – were part of a privileged class and apt to distance themselves from the non-native workers, such as those working in construction; see A. Babel, *La Fabrique genevoise* (Neuchâtel, Paris: Editions Victor Attinger, 1938), pp. 13, 43, 105–6, 128. The difference between the *fabrique* and non-native workers was described in letter by Johann Philipp Becker to a contemporary: ‘We have to deal with a traditional antagonism here, not much better than that between the Irish and English proletariat. On the one side there are the workers from the *fabrique* (jewellers, watchmakers, etc.) who are almost entirely made up of native Genevans and as such Francophone Swiss, and on the other side the remaining trades – called *gros métiers* here – almost exclusively made up of ‘foreigners’ and for the most part Germans and German-speaking Swiss.’ (Becker to Jung, 12 March 1870, in Jaekkh, *Die Internationale*, p. 231).

²⁰ According to Perret as a delegate of the *fabrique* in his report to the Basel Congress of the International, see ‘Rapport des sections des monteurs de boîtes, bijoutiers, gainiers, guillocheurs, graveurs, faiseurs de ressorts, et des faiseurs de pièces a musique, de Genève’ in Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 46.

²¹ See [Ch. Perron], ‘Les Partis politiques à Genève et l’Internationale’, *Égalité*, 27 November 1869, pp. 1–2. Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, pp. 237–38. M. Vuilleumier, ‘Quelques documents concernant l’attitude des milieux conservateurs genevois à l’égard de la première Internationale’, in *Mélanges d’histoire économique et sociale en hommage au professeur Antony Babel à l’occasion de son soixante-quinzième anniversaire*, 2 vols. (Geneva: Imprimerie de la Tribune de Genève, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 231–50.

²² The political entanglement of the spokesmen of the Geneva International with local politicians astonished Peter Kropotkin, who came to Geneva in 1872. He remembered the following discussion with Utin, who had expressed his opposition to a call for strike in the construction industry at a meeting of the Geneva section of the International: “The strike, you understand,” Utin told me, “will harm Amberny’s candidacy.” Now, Amberny was a radical lawyer for whom the interests of the construction workers held as little interest as last winter’s snow; but with him, they said, things would really get started! Thus, the workers’ interests had to be sacrificed.’ (P. Kropotkin, ‘Un souvenir’, *La Vie ouvrière*, 20 February 1914, p. 209). Also mentioned in P. Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (Montréal, New York: Black Rose Books, 1989), p. 260.

of Geneva. – The entire radical party of that city (the Fazys, the Carterets, the Cambessédès) having been thus stirred up against us, and given the direct influence they have since exercised over the leaders of the *fabrique* in the International (the Grosselins, the Weyermanns, the Perrets, and so many others), they have continued to foment, accumulate and organise their hatred and persecution against us –²³

Indeed, the engraver François Weyermann – who belonged to the *fabrique* and ran for election in November 1868 for the *parti radical* – gave the following reasons for his resentment toward the Alliance: ‘The Alliance preaches atheism and the abolition of the family, and we don’t want that’. Another Genevan concurred, saying ‘The members of the Alliance are men who do not believe in God or morality.’²⁴

The lines were so hardened in Geneva that the essentially formal question of admitting the Alliance section into the Romance Federation turned into an ideological conflict over the political direction of the International.

The International in Jura (February–May 1869)

The members of the Alliance were not alone in their convictions. During the founding congress of the Romance Federation in early January 1869, Bakunin got to know the delegates from the sections of the Swiss Jura (Bernese Jura and the Canton of Neuchâtel) – Fritz Heng, Adhémar Schwitzguébel, and James Guillaume – who were to become his closest political allies in coming years. Guillaume lived with Bakunin during the congress. Guillaume later remembered:

Since, having been delegated by the section of Locle, I arrived in Geneva Saturday 2 January 1869, after spending Christmas and New Year’s in Morges with my fiancée’s family, Bakunin, who had a room available, and who had offered to host a delegate, cast his eye on me, and absolutely wished that I should stay with him, I accepted his hospitality with pleasure, happy to have a chance to meet such a famous man, whose warm welcome had won me over instantly. I only stayed two days in Geneva, and already had to leave the following Sunday, 3 January; however, this short length of time was enough to bind us, Bakunin and I, despite our difference in age, in a friendship that would quickly develop into a thoroughgoing intimacy. [...]

Naturally, Bakunin and I spoke of the Alliance of Social Democracy; he showed me the programme, the federalist and anti-authoritarian character of which conformed to my own ideas. [...] I was able to tell Bakunin, without a second thought, that I felt myself to be in agreement on all the essential points.²⁵

Guillaume (1844–1916) was 24 years old at the time.²⁶ After dropping out of university (1862–1864), he had worked as a teacher for French, literature and history at the industrial school (*école*

²³ Bakounine, ‘Rapport sur l’Alliance’, suite 2, p. 11.

²⁴ *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 5. *Solidarité*, 11 April 1870, p. 4. Guillaume replied as follows: ‘The foreign sections will have a good laugh when they hear that after five years of existence, the International rejected a section because it is atheist!’ (*Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 5). Engels also appeared to be embarrassed by these accusations in a letter to Marx on 21 April 1870: ‘The Messrs Genevans might have kept their God in the bag too!’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 495).

²⁵ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, pp. 107–8.

²⁶ For more on Guillaume, see his autobiography written on the initiative of Fritz Brupbacher: ‘Curriculum vitae’, *La Révolution prolétarienne*, 5 April 1931, pp. 16(112)–19(115). M. Vuilleumier, ‘James Guillaume, sa vie, son œuvre’, in J. Guillaume, *L’Internationale. Documents et Souvenirs*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions Gérard Lebovici, 1985), vol. 1, pp. i–lviii. For the years until 1868: D. Roth, ‘James Guillaume. Seine Jugend in Neuenburg (bis 1862), sein Studium in

industrielle) of Le Locle in the Canton of Neuchâtel. There he had been put under such pressure by the school board because of his political activities that he quit teaching to work in his father's printing shop. At the industrial school, he organised evening classes for the apprentices and so came into contact with the labour movement, which had taken a special form in the context of the dominant industry in Jura – the export-oriented watchmaker industry. As opposed to the rigid, almost guild-like organisation of the makers of luxury clocks in Geneva's *fabrique*, the watchmakers in Jura were by and large free of state or industry regulations. Because they did not produce luxury goods for a small elite (like their Genevese colleagues) but standardised products for the mass market in Europe and America, they were much more vulnerable to the quick succession of international business cycles of the day. The local politicians couldn't change this situation²⁷ and enjoyed little respect in Jura. To improve their lot, the workers had to become active themselves: unlike those in Geneva, the watchmakers in Jura met the companies' attempts to pass on the risk of lower sales to them with unionised resistance, boycotts, industrial action and the establishment of strike funds.²⁸

And so the founding of the first section of the International in Le Locle, on the initiative of Guillaume and his friend Constant Meuron (already at the time a 62-year-old ex-Carbonaro) in August 1866, was met with lively interest from the watchmakers. Guillaume was named their delegate to the International's Congresses in Geneva (1866), Lausanne (1867) and the subsequent founding congress of the League of Peace and Liberty in Geneva. The section in Le Locle created credit and consumer cooperatives and, like other sections in Jura, intently followed the theoretical discussions at the general congresses of the International. An important stage in the development of their political ideas was the debate over the sensational resolution of the Brussels Congress of the International (6–13 September 1868) on common property.²⁹ Guillaume later remembered:

After the Brussels Congress, the Swiss Francophone sections began to study and debate the question of property, and I distinctly recall how, at that time, we hesitated before this problem, so new to our minds. Under the influence of Ch. Perron, Serno-Solov'evich and Johann Philipp Becker in Geneva, under that of Adhémar Schwitzguébel in the Val de St. Imier, and under that of Constant Meuron and some others in Locle, most of the socialists quickly declared themselves in favour of common property.³⁰

Zürich (1862–1864) und seine Begegnung mit dem Sozialismus (1868)', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte* 15 (1965), 30–86.

²⁷ The engraver Auguste Spichiger expressed this opinion as follows: 'the politicians have not received a mandate from their voters to remedy the industrial crises, and they could not do so even if they wished it, since the industrial crises have their cause in an order of facts that no law made by a political body could alter.' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 11 March 1877, p. 1).

²⁸ For more about the economic situation in Jura, see M. Vuilleumier, *Horlogers de l'anarchisme. Émergence d'un mouvement: la Fédération jurassienne* (Lausanne: Éditions Payot, 1988), pp. 250, 255–56, 263, 272, 278, 298–99.

²⁹ This term was used to summarise the resolutions in the debates of the time. In essence, this meant the collectivisation of quarries, collieries, mines, railways, agricultural property, canals, roads, telegraphs and forests as well as the abolishment of private property in land and its conversion into common property ('Resolutions of the first and third Congresses of the International Working Men's Association', in *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 3, pp. 295–96. *Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, p. 26).

³⁰ J. Guillaume, *Le Collectivisme de l'Internationale* (Neuchâtel: H. Messeiller, 1904), p. 5. See also [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 31. Enckell describes the adoption of the resolutions of the Brussels Congress as 'decisive step' in the Jura section's development of ideas; see M. Enckell, *La Fédération jurassienne. Les origines de l'anarchisme en Suisse*, édition remaniée (Saint-Imier: Canevas Editeur, 1991), p. 31. The Alliance also referred expressly to the resolutions of

When the International once again voted on common property in the following year at the Basel Congress,³¹ Bakunin³² and the Jura delegates Fritz Robert, Heng, Schwitzguébel and Guillaume voted in favour while Geneva's delegates Perret (the *fabrique's* own delegate) and Grosselin (despite an imperative mandate to vote for common property) abstained.³³

The Jura socialists associated with Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, Heng et al. and the spokesmen of the Geneva International also drew differing conclusions from their experience with local politics. Like the Geneva sections, the section in Le Locle had also tried to gain influence in the politics of the canton by taking part in elections. Their experiences, however, led to an acceleration of the development of their political ideas: in the vote on the revision of the canton's constitution (15 March 1868), when a member of the International stood for the Grand Council elections of the Canton Neuchâtel on the list of the *parti radical* (3 May 1868) and finally in connection with the municipal elections (13 December 1868) – the Le Locle Internationalists were the victims of manipulative political tactics, which robbed them of any illusions they had about participating in civic politics.³⁴ At the electoral meeting for the municipal elections on 13 December 1868, Guillaume gave a speech where he drew the following conclusion from the experience: 'we shall declare that we believe in progress, that we feel ourselves to be free men, capable of governing ourselves'.³⁵ As Bakunin only got to know Guillaume in January 1869 (see above), he could not have influenced these words which appeared on 18 December 1868 in the first issue of the *Progrès* – founded by Guillaume and his political friends. And yet it is precisely the *Progrès* which Marx would later claim *Bakunin* had established as a 'private journal of his own'³⁶ which was 'edited by his valet James Guillaume, a Swiss schoolmaster'.³⁷

On 20 February 1869, Bakunin made his first visit to Le Locle in the Jura Mountains and found a sophisticated movement, which was drawn to and propagated revolutionary socialism because of its *own* experiences. Guillaume summed up the self-assertive mood in Jura as follows: Bakunin 'was an invaluable assistant in this propaganda'.³⁸ As such, Bakunin was not an organiser or leader of the movement; at most, he spread certain ideas in Jura. He did this with the charm of a

the Brussels Congress in the second point of its programme (Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), p. 380).

³¹ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, pp. 74–75.

³² For his contribution to the discussion on this question, see below, p. 22.

³³ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, pp. 74–75. The Geneva delegate François Brosset protested against Grosselin's abstention and pointed out 'that he and his colleagues had been given a mandate to vote for common property and the abolition of inheritance: seventeen sections had authorised them to do so.' (*ibid.*, p. 53).

³⁴ In hindsight, Adhémar Schwitzguébel explained: 'At the birth of the sections of the International [in Jura], they generally aligned themselves with political parties. They discussed the question of worker candidacies; the bourgeois parties promised concessions, tricking the too-trusting socialist workers. The lesson was worth it, and since then, the studies of political affairs that have been made in the International have progressively convinced the members of the Jura that by leaving the bourgeois parties to their political manipulations and by organising outside of and against them, the workers shall surely produce a much more revolutionary situation than they would by dickering with the bourgeois in legislative assemblies.' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 27 September 1874, p. 4). See also the report by the Le Locle section at the Basel Congress in Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, pp. 59–60. [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, pp. 20–21. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 62, 97.

³⁵ *Progrès*, 18 December 1868, p. 2.

³⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 114.

³⁷ Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 19 April 1870, *ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 492. Guillaume had stopped working as a teacher in August 1869; see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 178.

³⁸ Guillaume, *Le Collectivisme*, pp. 6–7. 'And one reflected that the presence of such an energetic man within the ranks of the International could not fail to impart a great strength to it.' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 129).

likeable revolutionary, whose uncomplicated nature has often been described to have won over everyone he came into contact with. Guillaume later recollected:

If Bakunin's imposing stature struck the imagination, his warmth captured our hearts; he won over everyone immediately, and Constant Meuron remarked, 'That's my man'. We spoke of a thousand different things. Bakunin gave us news of the propaganda excursion his Italian friend Fanelli was undertaking in Spain, where he founded the first section of the International in Madrid with the programme of the Alliance, and he showed us a photograph of Fanelli surrounded by a group of Spanish socialists. [...] at eight o'clock, in the great hall of the International Circle, before an audience that included almost as many women as men, Bakunin gave a lecture on the Philosophy of the People, following a second speech on the subject of the history of the bourgeoisie, its development, its rise and its fall. We were spellbound, and the precision of his language, which came directly to the point, unceremoniously and with an audacious frankness, frightened no one, at least among the workers (for there were only workers in the audience, and curiosity had also drawn some adversaries); on the contrary, we were grateful to him for pursuing his thoughts to their end. It was the first time that most of the members of the International had heard such ideas expressed. They left a deep impression.³⁹

The extremely friendly reception also made a deep impression on Bakunin. Bakunin left Le Locle on 22 February, stayed overnight in Neuchâtel and wrote the first in a series of articles for the *Progrès* there the next day, which began as follows:

Before leaving your mountains I feel the need to express to you once more, in writing, my profound gratitude for the fraternal reception that you have given me. Is it not marvelous that a former Russian noble, of whom you previously knew nothing, may set foot in your land for the first time and, having scarcely arrived, find himself surrounded by hundreds of brothers!⁴⁰

The close bond was also the result of a political consensus. As opposed to the spokesmen of the Geneva International who mostly belonged to the *fabrique* and were integrated in the politics of their home town, the members of the International in Le Locle had already turned away from politics due to their experiences. They understood Bakunin's argument perfectly that participating in politics would result in the labour movement being tied to the state and thus make carrying out their social-revolutionary demands impossible. Bakunin was invoking a traditional social-revolutionary idea here which postulates that participating in existing power structures will *not* lead to freedom. Freedom can only be obtained by refusing to participate in the existing power structures, destroying those power structures and creating new forms of community.⁴¹ This emancipatory project was what Bakunin meant when he used the term 'abstention' (in the sense of non-participation), which he wanted people to see as an act of self-determination and in no way passivity. Bakunin refused the politician's concept of politics as tied to the state:

And there is the essential point upon which we separate ourselves in an absolute manner from the radical bourgeois socialists and politicians. Their politics consists in the utilisation, reform

³⁹ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 129. Guillaume's recollection of the impression Bakunin's opinions on atheism made on listeners is also characteristic: 'This was already our feeling before we had heard Bakunin; but when this bold revolutionary came before us, we resolved, with his encouragement, to declare it explicitly' (*ibid.*, p. 128). Mario Vuilleumier explains in detail how the Jura socialists' sympathies with Bakunin were rooted in their political, economic and political experiences; see M. Vuilleumier, *Horlogers de l'anarchisme*, pp. 226–27, 239–47, 300.

⁴⁰ Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 169.

⁴¹ This was also characteristic of the social-revolutionary concepts of the Alliance; see Schrupp, *Nicht Marxistin*, p. 61.

and transformation of politics and the state, while our politics, the only politics we recognise, is that of the total *abolition* of the state and the politics that is its necessary manifestation.⁴²

Marx and Engels misinterpreted this as a call for ‘total abstinence from all politics’ or a demand ‘that the workers should abstain from political activity’.⁴³ Bakunin replied:

The Marxians accuse us of intentionally ignoring political struggles, thus representing us falsely as a species of Arcadian, Platonic, pacifistic socialists who are in no way revolutionary. In saying this of us, they lie deliberately, for they know better than anyone that we too urge the proletariat to engage with the political question, but that the politics that we preach, absolutely populist and internationalist, not nationalist and bourgeois, has as its goal not the foundation or transformation of states but their destruction. We say, and all that we witness today in Germany and Switzerland confirms this, that their politics aimed at the transformation of states in the so-called populist sense can only end up in a new subjugation of the proletariat to the profit of the bourgeois.⁴⁴

Because of their experience, the movement in Jura also referred to the term ‘abstention’. At a public meeting on 30 May 1869 in Crêt-du-Loche (between Le Locle and La Chaux-des-Fonds) – where for the first time sections from the Bernese Jura also took part – Bakunin (who was in Jura for the second time on this occasion), Heng, Schwitzguébel, and Robert spoke one after another. In the minutes of the meeting, printed in the *Progrès*, can be found a typical statement of Guillaume’s concerning the cooperation between the Jura International and Bakunin: ‘*Bakunin*, from Geneva, studying the matter from another direction, arrives at the same conclusion.’⁴⁵ Among others, the meeting made the following resolutions: cooperative work was described as the economic system of the future, but it could not resolve the social question at the moment; the next general congress was to discuss a more powerful organisation of the International, in order to take on the state and bourgeoisie more effectively; a debate was to take place in Geneva’s *Égalité* about common property and the abolition of inheritance rights. And the meeting ‘declares moreover that the International must completely abstain from participating in bourgeois politics’.⁴⁶

That the sections of the International in Jura were giving voice to a position they *developed themselves*⁴⁷ was apparently unthinkable for Marx – and, in part, Marxist historians don’t go beyond stereotypes like the term ‘Bakuninism’ when describing Jura socialism: for instance, ‘Bakuninism as a petit-bourgeois ideology’, an official communist party account of the First International informs us, ‘spread across Switzerland among bankrupt craftsmen and small-business owners in the clock industry in Francophone Switzerland, especially in the mountainous Jura region’.⁴⁸

⁴² Bakounine, ‘Protestation de l’Alliance’, p. 24.

⁴³ Engels to Marx, 21 April 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 494. *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 254.

⁴⁴ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 19, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁴⁵ *Progrès*, 12 June 1869, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1. See also [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, pp. 58–59. Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, pp. 156, 161–63.

⁴⁷ The Swiss historian Erich Gruner emphasised ‘that Guillaume and the Jurassians included teachings typical of Bakunin as basic concepts in their own doctrine, while always adding qualities from their own experiences. We mean above all the belief in the revolt as a moving principle of the people, the suffocation of the people through the state and its pillars – the church and army – and finally the principle of solidarity as the antithesis to the forceful social situation imposed by the state.’ (E. Gruner, ‘Doktrinaire Auswirkungen der Ersten Internationale in der Schweiz’, *International Review of Social History* 11 [1966], 373). See also above, n. 39.

⁴⁸ *Die Erste Internationale*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Verlag Progreß, 1981), vol. 1 p. 478.

CHAPTER 3. The Basel Congress of the International

ON 20 JULY 1869 – A week before the Alliance was admitted into the International – Marx began a first tactical manoeuvre against the Alliance: ‘Cit. Marx’, the Minute Book of the General Council states, ‘opened the discussion on the question [of] the Right to Inheritance. He said the question had been put by the Alliance of Socialist Democrats of Geneva and the Council had accepted it for discussion.’¹ Marx only ostensibly referred to the motion ‘of the Genevese’ – put forward more than three months earlier – that ‘the laws of inheritance be added to the questions to be discussed at the next Congress’.² His real target was once again the phrase in the second point of the Alliance’s programme: in the first version of their programme from September/October 1868, the Alliance called for the equalisation of classes and individuals of both sexes, ‘commencing with abolition of the right of inheritance’.³ The second version of the programme, adopted in April 1869, stated that the Alliance ‘stands for the final and total abolition of classes and the political, economic and social equalization of individuals of either sex, and, to this end, it demands above all the abolition of the right of inheritance’.⁴

Marx summarised this part of the programme for the General Council as follows: ‘The Democratic Alliance was going to commence the social revolution with the abolition of the right to inheritance.’⁵ He mixed up the *goals* named in the Alliance’s programme with the *means* specified therein. On many occasions Marx gave similarly tendentious summaries of the Alliance’s programme, such as ‘*abolition of the right of inheritance as the starting point of the social movement*’⁶ and a year later he gibed that the Alliance’s programme ‘contains such absurdities as the “equality of classes”, “abolition of the right of inheritance as the first step of the social revolution”, etc.’.⁷ What Marx makes look like a quote from the Alliance’s programme – ‘*abolition of the right of inheritance as the first step of the social revolution*’ – is nowhere to be found there. In reality the abolition of the right of inheritance was never referred to as a *means* in the Alliance’s programme,⁸ but as a *vision for the future* where equality begins through the abolition of the

¹ ‘Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869’, p. 676.

² *Ibid.*, p. 641 (meeting on 13 April 1869). In the ‘Confidential Communication’, Marx wrote that Bakunin had brought forward this motion through ‘our Romance Committee at Geneva’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 115). However, this letter is lost.

³ Bakunin, ‘Programme and Rules of the Alliance’ (1868), p. 380.

⁴ Bakunin, ‘Programme of the Alliance’ (1869), p. 174.

⁵ ‘Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869’, p. 677.

⁶ Marx to Friedrich Bolte, 23 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 255. See also Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, p. 89.

⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 113. See above for more about the ‘slip of the pen’ ‘equalisation of classes’, pp. 4–6.

⁸ For Bakunin the abolition of the right of inheritance was part and parcel of the abolition of the economic causes of class differences; see above, p. 5. He didn’t see it as a *means* to bring about a revolutionary situation (as Marx insinuates) but rather a *goal* that requires a revolutionary situation in order to be accomplished. In the ‘Report

right of inheritance: 'I believe', Bakunin said in a speech at the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Liberty', (also sent to Marx in December 1868), 'that in order to achieve justice and to make possible the social equality of starting conditions for all human individuals, it is necessary to abolish the right to inheritance.'⁹

'He asked', the minutes of Marx's speech at the General Council meeting on 20 July 1869 continue, 'would it be policy to do so? The proposition was not new. St. Simon had proposed it in 1830.'¹⁰

The French utopian socialist Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon (1760–1825) had died five years earlier than 1830 – what Marx was referring to here was the summary of his ideas titled *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon* (*Doctrine de Saint-Simon*) published by his followers Saint-Amand Bazard and Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin in 1830.¹¹ This book propagates a social structure where ownership structures and income distribution depend on *an individual's performance in the manufacturing process*. The idea of a new social ranking based on the performance and ability of the individual is described as an alternative to the existing system of property ownership. The existing right of inheritance is dismissed because it is based on legal and not performance criteria. The system of property ownership and especially the right of inheritance ('privileges of birth') were to be changed for the sake of the manufacturing process: 'The privileges of birth, which have already received blows in many respects, will disappear completely. The only right to wealth, that is to the disposal of the instruments of work, will be the ability to put them to work.'¹² According to *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon*, the *state* should be the only rightful heir who alone can judge the ability and performance of the property owners in the manufacturing process.

It is immediately apparent that Bakunin would never have agreed with the criticism of right of inheritance as justified by the Saint-Simonists. Indeed Bakunin grouped the Saint-Simonists together with authoritarian socialists before 1848, who shared a fervour for regimentation.¹³ He also complained that their approach, which put performance and productivity (and not emancipation) at the forefront of socialism, would lead to greater exploitation.¹⁴

The historian Antje Schrupp pointed out that Bakunin was not evoking the demands of the Saint-Simonist in his criticism of the right of inheritance but those of feminists. In the months before the Alliance was founded, the same demands were being put forward by many, including the Alliance members Virginie Barbet and Marie Richard – they even used a very similar wording as that found in the Alliance's programme.¹⁵ The connection between the right of inheritance

of the Committee on the Question of Inheritance', Bakunin explained what was meant by *means*: 'It can be abolished by *reforms* in those fortunate countries, which are very few in number if they exist at all, where the class of property owners and capitalists, the members of the bourgeoisie, inspired by a spirit and a wisdom that they now lack, finally realize the imminence of social revolution and earnestly desire to come to terms with the world of the workers. [...] The way of revolution will naturally be shorter and simpler.' (Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 130).

⁹ Bakounine/Mroczkowski, 'Discours de Bakounine', p. 213.

¹⁰ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 677.

¹¹ [C.-H. de Saint-Simon], *Doctrine de Saint-Simon. Première Année. Exposition. 1829* (Paris: Au Bureau de l'Organisateur et chez A. Mesnier, 1830).

¹² [C.-H. de Saint-Simon], *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon: An Exposition. First Year, 1828–1829*, ed. by G. G. Iggers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 92.

¹³ See 'Fédéralisme, socialisme et antithéologisme', p. 33, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁴ 'When the Saint-Simonians recovered from their madness, they remained associated, not in order to emancipate the proletariat, but to exploit it on a grand scale.' (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, p. 451).

¹⁵ See Schrupp, *Nicht Marxistin*, p. 67.

and gender relations was apparent at the time.¹⁶ And Marx and Engels never missed a chance to make fun of the feminist context of the Alliance's programme in their polemic against Bakunin: Engels and Lafargue joked that Bakunin had called for the equalisation of classes and individuals 'in order to outdo the ladies of the League who had hitherto only demanded equalisation of the sexes'.¹⁷ Marx was just as disparaging in his notes on a copy of the Alliance's programme: in the passage 'It wants above all political, economic and social equalisation of classes and individuals of both sexes, commencing with abolition of the right of inheritance',¹⁸ Marx underlined the words 'of both sexes' and wrote 'Hermaphrodite man! Just like the *Russian Commune!*' next to it. Marx also underlined the words 'abolition of the right of inheritance' and commented: 'The old Saint Simon panacea!'¹⁹

Later on, Marx continued to repeat the criticism of the right of inheritance in the Alliance's programme falsely, announcing that 'the first requirement of the social Revolution was – *the abolition of inheritance*, old St Simonist rubbish, of which Bakunin, a charlatan and *ignoramus*, was the responsible publisher'.²⁰ This tirade, typical of Marx, was wrong in more than one way: Bakunin in no way claimed to have originated the demand for the abolition of the right of inheritance, it was much more related to feminist demands and it differed from Saint-Simonist ideas in key points.

For the International's Basel Congress (6–11 September 1869), Marx's attack on the criticism of the right of inheritance in the Alliance's programme grew into a full-blown 'Report of the General Council on the right of inheritance'. When one of the General Council members wondered why the report was more of an essay than a draft for a resolution for the Basel Congress, Marx answered that it was better 'to give the reasons & a resolution'.²¹ Privately, Marx later gave a different reason as to why he became so involved in this matter: the General Council responded so thoroughly to the Alliance's right of inheritance criticism in order to be able to give Bakunin 'a thump right on his head'.²²

In his report, Marx explained that inheritance laws were not the cause but rather the effect and juridical consequence of the existing economic organisation of society.²³ The laws would

¹⁶ 'As a result of the inheritance laws, men need to ensure the legitimacy of their descendants and ward off claims by illegitimate children. This has led to a series of laws and customs detrimental to women, such as the drastic punishments for extramarital heterosexual intercourse or the prohibition of the *recherche de la paternité* [paternity investigation] in France with its devastating effects on unwed mothers. The fact that women are generally discriminated against as heiresses has again and again led to protests and appeals from the women's rights movement, as well.' (*ibid.*, p. 81). See also the speech by Guillaume at the second congress of the Romance Federation (*Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 5).

¹⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 461.

¹⁸ Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), p. 380.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* Engels made a similar statement in a letter to Marx on 29 January 1869 where he referred to the 'Bakunin group of both male and female sex (which difference Bakunin also wants to abolish, i.e., that of the sexes)'. (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 209). And a month before that: 'I never read anything more wretched than the theoretical programme [of the Alliance]. Siberia, his stomach, and the young Polish woman have made Bakunin a perfect blockhead.' (Engels to Marx, 18 December 1868, *ibid.*, p. 193).

²⁰ Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 19 April 1870, *ibid.*, p. 490.

²¹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 683 (meeting on 3 August 1869).

²² Marx/Engels, *Werke*, vol. 16, p. 411 (the translation in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 115, is inaccurate).

²³ Bakunin later commented on this as follows: 'Doubtless they are merely effects to begin with, but what the school of Marx seems to forget if not to misunderstand is that these effects immediately become historic causes in their turn. To convince ourselves of this, we would have only to consider carefully what is happening around us. We

disappear after a social change supplanted private property in the means of production. The call for the abolition of the right of inheritance tended to lead the working class away from the true point of attack, namely the present society; it was 'false in theory, and reactionary in practise'.²⁴ Only the following 'transitory measures' would be necessary:

(a) Extension of the inheritance duties already existing in many states, and the application of the funds hence derived to purposes of social emancipation.

(b) Limitation of the testamentary right of inheritance, which – as distinguished from the *intestate or family right of inheritance* – appears an arbitrary and superstitious exaggeration even of the principles of private property themselves.²⁵

For his part, Bakunin had proposed a resolution to the commission on the question of the right of inheritance formed by the Geneva sections of the International, which was accepted without any opposition or changes by the general meeting of the Geneva sections (probably on 21 August 1869) and submitted to the Basel Congress of the International in their name.²⁶ His report ended with the following resolution proposal:

Whereas the right of inheritance is one of the principal causes of the economic, social, and political inequality which governs the world; Whereas, so long as there is no equality, there can be neither freedom nor justice but only oppression and exploitation – slavery and poverty for the proletariat, wealth and domination for the exploiters of their labor; Therefore, the Congress recognizes the need to abolish fully and completely the right of inheritance. This abolition will be accomplished as events require, either by reforms or by revolution.²⁷

see, for example, that a large segment of the bourgeoisie, the middle and especially the petty bourgeoisie, finds itself just as threatened in its existence as the proletariat by the present growth of economic prosperity. Why does it not join the proletariat? What keeps it within the ranks of the reaction? Is it self-interest? Not at all; it is political and legal prejudice, along with the bourgeois vanity that has taken root in these prejudices.' (Bakounine, 'Protestation de l'Alliance', suite, p. 8).

²⁴ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 133. Oddly enough, Marx and Engels included the following in the *Communist Manifesto* in a list of measures that were 'pretty generally applicable': '3. Abolition of all rights of inheritance.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 505). Later Engels still saw the differences with Bakunin in the question of the right of inheritance as small: 'We know as well as he [Bakunin] does that inheritance is nonsensical, although we differ from him over the importance and appropriateness of presenting its abolition as the deliverance from all evil' (Engels to Carlo Cafiero, 1–3 July 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 163).

²⁵ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 133. Bakunin later also criticised the contradiction in the argumentation in the 'Report of the General Council on the right of inheritance', namely calling for an increase in inheritance taxes when inheritance laws were supposed to disappear on their own after the abolition of private property (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, pp. 100–1). At the meeting of the General Council on 20 July, Marx's suggestions to increase inheritance taxes and restrict inheritance laws were criticised by the British member of the General Council John Weston. In view of the International's congress resolution on common property (see above, p. 448, n. 29) Weston saw inconsequence in only increasing taxes upon inheritance: 'All transfer of property which enabled people to live without work ought to be condemned.' ('Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 679).

²⁶ 'Report of the Committee on the Question of Inheritance', in Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, pp. 126–30. Guillaume said that Bakunin's resolution was accepted 'probably Saturday, 21 August' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 187). According to Bakunin, his resolution proposal and Robin's common property resolution were 'almost unanimously acclaimed and voted for' (Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, p. 18). In a letter from the end of August 1869, Bakunin wrote that the opponents of his proposed resolution did not vote as they did not dare vote no in face of the clear majority in favour (Bakunin to Carlo Gambuzzi, beginning [actually: end] of August 1869, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*; see also [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 75).

²⁷ Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 130; the missing passage 'slavery and poverty for the proletariat, wealth and domination for the exploiters of their labor' was added according to the original version in *Égalité*, 28 August 1869,

The 'Report of the General Council on the right of inheritance' written by Marx was presented by the General Council's general secretary Johann Georg Eccarius at the Basel Congress on 10 September 1869 as Marx didn't attend.²⁸ Bakunin, a member of the commission on the question of inheritance laws initiated by the congress,²⁹ criticised the report in a speech as follows:

The report of the General Council says that since the juridical reality is only the result of economic realities, the transformation of the latter suffices to destroy the former. It is indisputable that everything called a juridical or political right in history has only been the expression or the result of an established fact. But it is also indisputable that the right, being an effect of previously established facts or events, becomes in turn the cause of future events, itself a very real, very powerful fact that must be overthrown if we wish to arrive at an order of things different from what now exists.

Thus, the right of inheritance, once the natural result of the violent appropriation of natural and social riches, became the basis of the political State and the juridical family, which guarantee and sanction individual property.³⁰

As such, Bakunin tied the idea of abolishing the right of inheritance together with the abolition of all forms of political rule. Bakunin had argued similarly in the previous debate on common property³¹ at the congress:

I vote for collectivity, especially of land and in general of all social wealth, in the sense of social liquidation. By social liquidation I mean expropriation *de jure* of all current property-owners by the *abolition of the political and juridical state*, which is the protector and sole guarantor of present property and of all so-called juridical law; and expropriation *de facto*, by the very force of events and circumstances, wherever and to whatever extent possible.³²

Eccarius, former member of the Communist League and Marx's confidant at the congress, disagreed with Bakunin's criticism of the state by expressing the hope 'that the state can be reformed by the accession of the working class to power'.³³

Marx's plan to pick a fight with Bakunin in the right of inheritance discussion in order to give him 'a thump right on his head' went astray: the resolutions proposed in the 'Report of the General Council on the right of inheritance' were rejected with a vote of 19 to 37, with 6 abstentions and 13 absent delegates.³⁴ With 32 in favour, 23 against, 13 abstentions, and 7 absent delegates,

p. 2. For more about Bakunin's criticism of the right of inheritance, see A. Künzli, *Mein und Dein. Zur Ideengeschichte der Eigentumsfeindschaft* (Cologne: Bund-Verlag, 1986), pp. 514–17.

²⁸ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 92.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁰ Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 132.

³¹ See above, pp. 13–14.

³² Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 131. See also *Report of the Fourth Annual Congress of the International Working Men's Association, held at Basle, in Switzerland. From the 6th to the 11th September, 1869* (London: Published by the General Council, (1869)), p. 23.

³³ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 71. In the report on the Basel Congress written by Eccarius, published by the General Council and stylistically corrected by Marx, this statement reads as follows: 'The State could not be reformed by standing aloof, and the social transformation must be effected by the agency of the power the working class could wield in the State.' (*Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, p. 25). See also Marx to De Paepe, 24 January 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 414. Already at the opening meeting of the congress, Eccarius had spoken out for the conquest of political power. He underlined 'the necessity of using political power for class purposes. The accession of the middle class to political power, had been the overthrow of the feudal state and the acquisition of political power by the working class, would be the overthrow of the rule of capital.' (*Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, pp. 4–5).

³⁴ 'The proposal is rejected' (Freymond [ed.], *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 96).

Bakunin's resolution proposal – which the congress commission on the question of the right of inheritance had adopted – won a majority of votes; however, it missed the absolute majority required to be accepted. After the results – which constituted a respectable result for Bakunin – were announced, Eccarius apparently said 'Marx will not be happy at all'.³⁵ With regards to the stalemate on the right of inheritance vote and the predominantly German and German-speaking Swiss delegates who had supported him, Marx explained a year later that Bakunin 'would have defeated us at the last congress in Basle, had it not been for the German element in Switzerland'.³⁶

Bakunin's manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil' (October 1869)

Bakunin also used the Basel Congress to resolve a personal question. One month before the congress, he had found out that the German socialist Wilhelm Liebknecht – who was in exile in London from 1850 to 1862 and was friends with Marx and Engels since that time – had circulated several rumours about him. A witness to one of these allegations had told Bakunin that Liebknecht (possibly at the end of July 1869 in Vienna³⁷) had said that

- Bakunin was a Russian spy.
- The Russian government had helped Bakunin escape from Siberia.
- Because of the founding of the Alliance, Bakunin had maliciously driven a wedge through the International.³⁸

In a manuscript called 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil' ('Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil') written a month after the Basel Congress, Bakunin gave an account of his meeting with Liebknecht:

Arriving in Basel for the congress, I did in fact meet him. What I had to do was indicated to me by the very purpose that I wanted to achieve: that of a final and complete explanation before

³⁵ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 123.

³⁶ Marx to Engels, 3 August 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 33. Marx might have been referring to the German and German-speaking Swiss delegates Eccarius, Joseph Frey, Gerold Gut, Hermann Greulich, Hess, Jung, Jakob Leisinger, and Liebknecht, who voted against the commission proposal influenced by Bakunin and for the resolution proposal put forward by the General Council. See Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, pp. 95–96.

³⁷ See N. Rjasanoff [Ryazanov], 'Sozialdemokratische Flagge und anarchistische Ware. Ein Beitrag zur Parteigeschichte', *Die Neue Zeit*, 28 November 1913, p. 332. Liebknecht travelled to Vienna on 23 July 1869 for approximately four days; see *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland (1864–1872). Dokumente und Materialien* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1964), p. 378, 763.

³⁸ Bakunin listed these points in a letter to Johann Philipp Becker on 4 August 1869, basing them on information from Gustav Wertheim. Wertheim corroborated Bakunin's account in the same letter, saying he had done his duty in informing Bakunin 'about the situation and it was up to him to lay bare this ridiculous slander by Mr Liebknecht, which was unworthy of a labour leader, in every which way he saw fit. Geneva, 4 August 1869. Yours, G. Wertheim' (Bakunin to Becker (1), 4 August 1869, p. 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*). Wertheim joined the German section in Geneva on 23 May 1869. He belonged to the Central Committee of the Group of German-speaking Sections from June to September 1869. On 1 July 1869 he was named the Central Committee's delegate to the Eisenach Congress; however, Becker replaced him on 29 July. See 'Protokollbuch der internationalen Arbeitergenossenschaft Genf', Archiv der sozialen Demokratie (AdsD), Bonn, Bestand Frühzeit der Arbeiterbewegung, A 21, and 'Protokoll-Buch des Centralcomités der Sections-Gruppe deutscher Sprache der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association', *ibid.*, A 22.

the working-class public. [...] Moreover, the International, new as it is, already has a practice for such cases, the *courts of honour*. [...] I accused my opponent of slandering me and demanded that he produce evidence for his accusation against me. He replied that his words had been misrepresented to me. He had never really accused me and had never claimed to possess any articles of evidence against me; he had none, except perhaps one: namely, my silence after Borkheim published articles defaming me³⁹ in the major organ of Prussian democracy, the *Zukunft*. In speaking of me to his friends, he had merely given voice to the surprise provoked by this silence. At any rate, he had actually accused me of having harmed the establishment of the International by founding the Alliance of Socialist Democrats.

This issue concerning the 'Alliance' was set aside at the request of Eckarius [Eccarius], a member of the General Council, who noted that the Alliance had been recognised as a section of the International, that its programme as well as its statutes had attained the unanimous assent of the General Council in London, and that since its delegate had been received by the congress, there was no occasion for questioning its legitimacy.

As for the main question, the court found unanimously that my opponent had acted with a shameful thoughtlessness, accusing a member of the International on the basis of several defamatory articles published by a bourgeois journal.

This finding was given to me in writing. I must say also that my opponent [Liebknecht] nobly admitted before all that he had been misled concerning me – it was our first meeting – he gave me his hand, and before all present, I burned the statement written and signed by the court.⁴⁰

This account by Bakunin about the court of honour at the Basel Congress has occasionally been doubted: for instance in his article 'Social Democratic Flag and Anarchist Goods' ('Sozialdemokratische Flagge und anarchistische Ware'), the Bolshevik historian N. Ryazanov took great pains to discredit Bakunin's account and even claimed later that he had proven that the entire story 'was based on a series of misunderstandings and memory lapses by Bakunin'.⁴¹ The Bolshevik historian Yurii Steklov also didn't believe Bakunin's account of the court of honour.⁴²

Aside from Bakunin's account, there is a lot of evidence that the court of honour did take place: in addition to statements by Herzen, Nikolai Utin, James Guillaume, and César De Paepe from 1869 to 1871,⁴³ there is also a letter from the delegate Friedrich Lessner where he reports directly to Marx from the Basel Congress (7 September 1869) that 'Bakakunien [*sic*] chose a commission from among his people and Liebknecht did the same. We have thus come into a very nasty

³⁹ This refers to the series of articles 'Michael Bakunin' published anonymously by Borkheim; see below, p. 455, n. 72. Bakunin addressed this in his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil'; see below, pp. 28–29.

⁴⁰ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', pp. 23–25. Bakunin told Elisée Reclus that he had lit a cigarette with the finding; see M. Nettelau, *The Life of Michael Bakounine. Michael Bakunin. Eine Biographie*, 3 vols. (London: Privately printed [reproduced by the autotypist] by the author, 1896–1900), p. +177.

⁴¹ N. Rjasanoff [Ryazanov], 'Bakuniana', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* 5 (1915), p. 185.

⁴² Yu. Steklov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin: Ego zhizn' i deyatel'nost'*, 4 vols. (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926–1927), vol. 3, pp. 381–84.

⁴³ Alexander Herzen asked his friend Nikolai Ogarev for 'details about the jury with Liebknecht' in his letter dated 17 September 1869 (A. I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 30 vols. [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka (until 1963: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR), 1954–1966], vol. 30, p. 195). See also the followup letter from 20 September (*ibid.*, p. 198). For the references by Guillaume and Utin see below, p. 463, n. 46. For references by De Paepe see below, p. 92.

situation and Liebknecht wants our support against Bakunien [sic].⁴⁴ On the following day, Lessner continued:

Yesterday evening the jury sat on the matter of Bakunien [sic] and Liebknecht. Letters were submitted by Becker, which he received from Bak. and a certain Werthheimer [sic] which shows that Liebknecht called Bak. a Russian spy etc. Liebknecht refuted this by saying: these weren't his allegations, but only what was written in public newspapers and that he thus had nothing to deny, nor could he, and thus he did well to save his own neck.

Becker seems to be crazy about Bak.

Because I didn't stay at the meeting until the end, I only found out today that they had settled their argument.⁴⁵

In his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil', Bakunin continued:

At the request of my former opponent [Liebknecht], I gave him a copy of my Berne speech,⁴⁶ as well as a series of articles I had published in 1867 in an Italian newspaper, *Libertà e Giustizia*, against Pan-Slavism.⁴⁷ Two days later, in the hall of congress, he approached me and said: 'I see that I formed an absolutely false idea of you. You are a Proudhonist, since you wish the abolition of the state. I will fight you in my journal because my opinion is quite contrary to yours – but please do leave me your writings – I will publish them – I owe you that satisfaction' [...].⁴⁸

Liebknecht did publish a translation of Bakunin's *A Few Words to My Young Brothers in Russia* (*Quelques paroles à mes jeunes frères en Russie*) on 5 March 1870 and even had Samuel Spier, member of the Committee (*Ausschuß*) of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei*, SDAP) founded in Eisenach, ask Bakunin for an original article.⁴⁹ Liebknecht published Bakunin's article 'Letters About the Revolutionary Movement in Russia' ('Briefe über die revolutionäre Bewegung in Rußland') on 16 and 20 April 1870 in the *Volksstaat* (the 'organ of the SDAP'), for which he was fiercely criticised by his SDAP comrades. For example Johann Philipp Becker, who had switched sides in the meantime and joined Bakunin's opponents in Geneva,⁵⁰ demonstrated his new opposition to Bakunin in a letter to Liebknecht: 'A few lines in great haste

⁴⁴ IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 3041.

⁴⁵ Lessner to Marx, 8 September 1869, *ibid.*, D 3042.

⁴⁶ M. Bakounine and W. Mroczkowski, *Discours prononcés au Congrès de la Paix et de la Liberté à Berne (1868)* (Geneva: Impr. Czerniecki, 1869). This brochure includes the text from Bakunin's fourth speech at the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Liberty on pp. 5–22 (for more about the other speeches, see above, p. 444, n. 42). This was Bakunin's answer to the attacks in a series of articles by Borkheim which were signed 'S. B.': 'Russische politische Flüchtlinge in West-Europa', *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*, 1 February 1868, pp. 36–37; 8 February 1868, pp. 45–46; 25 April 1868, pp. 135–36; 16 May 1868, pp. 158–60.

⁴⁷ This refers to the correspondence between Herzen and Bakunin printed under the title 'The Slavic Question' ('La Question Slava') where Bakunin attacks the Pan-Slavists, among others (*Libertà e Giustizia*, 31 August 1867, pp. 19–21; 8 September 1867, pp. 27–28) and in comparing himself to them called himself an anarchist for the first time: 'They are unitarians at all costs, always preferring public order to freedom and I am an anarchist and prefer freedom to public order' (*ibid.*, p. 27). Bakunin ordered the relevant issue of the magazine *Libertà e Giustizia* especially for the congress from Italy so as to rebut attacks from the German delegates; see Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 19 August 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁴⁸ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', pp. 25–26.

⁴⁹ See W. Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, 2 vols., ed. by G. Eckert and G. Langkau (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1973; and Frankfurt/Main, New York: Campus Verlag, 1988), vol. 1, p. 285: 'My dear friend Spier! Be so kind as to write Bakunin right away. He should give a detailed report about the events in Russian. Yours, W. L.'

⁵⁰ See details in Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 176–93.

to call to your attention that you should be careful with Bakunin's publications. [...] You will also get hints from Marx, who is also well informed about Bakunin's recent doings.⁵¹

Very worried, Liebknecht wrote Marx somewhat sanctimoniously the day he received the letter: '*Do you suggest I print further letters from Bakunin*, nota bene, if he sends more? From the very start I had planned to draw him out so we could get him.'⁵² Marx must have sent Liebknecht a very blunt reply⁵³ because Liebknecht subsequently sent his apologies to London on 7 May 1870: 'If you had warned me in advance, I naturally wouldn't have accepted the letter [from Bakunin], which I *only* published in order to attack Bakunin, whom I couldn't touch because of his International membership.'⁵⁴

Despite such attempts to clear his name, Liebknecht still stood up *for* Bakunin right after the Basel Congress in connection with an article by the German journalist Moses Hess (1812–1875). Bakunin knew Hess casually from the time when both were emigrants living in Paris in the mid-1840s. They only met each other again in 1869 at the Basel Congress of the International, where they apparently got into two arguments.⁵⁵ In September 1869, Hess – who had worked as a correspondent for German-language newspapers since the 1840s – wrote an article about the Basel Congress for the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* published by Wilhelm Liebknecht. In the article, Hess explained that the 'delegates, correspondents and observers' were poorly informed about what he called 'a kind of secret story of the Basel Congress'. Hess said his source for what actually happened in Basel was the General Council member Eccarius, whose disclosures would be printed in the Parisian newspaper *Le Réveil* shortly. The 'true issue' – as Hess gave to understand – was that the majority of the congress was made up of two tendencies ('nuances'):

Only one of them – which forms a very small minority within the majority –, the Bakunist, can truly be called communist in the raw sense of the word. This one suggested the abolition of the right of inheritance in a haphazard, dictatorial and anarchist way – a proposition which was evidently turned down by the congress, whose vote on this question [...] remained a mystery to most. It is no longer one, when one considers the nuance of Bakunin within the majority.⁵⁶

At that point, the article in the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt* was interrupted. The editor (Liebknecht) remarked parenthetically: 'Our correspondent gives some more details that we will not publish in view of party interests. ED.' Liebknecht, who had just been put in his place in Basel, apparently didn't want to burn his fingers on Bakunin again in his paper. The eliminated passage of Hess's article (reconstructed from another article he published in the *Wöchentliche Illinois Staats-Zeitung* from 19 October 1869) reads as follows:

Bakunin is accused of having Pan-Slavist tendencies and of only supporting anarchist measures in order to provoke a civil war in Europe so that Russia can conquer the West more easily.

⁵¹ Becker to Liebknecht, 15 April 1870, in E. Kundel (ed.), 'Aus dem Kampf von Marx und Engels gegen den Bakunismus. Unveröffentlichte Briefe über den Einfluß von Marx' 'Konfidentieller Mitteilung' auf die Haltung des 'Volksstaats' im Frühjahr 1870', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 12 (1970), 814–15.

⁵² Liebknecht to Marx, 20 April 1870, *ibid.*, p. 815. Liebknecht also professed to this 'tactic' in his answer to Becker (22 April 1879): 'With regards to the Bakunin letter in the *Volksstaat*, I can inform you that I only accepted it in order to draw Bakunin out to get a chance to *attack* him, as I didn't see any other way.' (Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 1, p. 309).

⁵³ Marx told Engels in a letter on 16 May 1870 that he had written Liebknecht that 'the continuation of Bakunin's twaddle, which should never have been started, must now be stopped' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 519).

⁵⁴ Liebknecht to Marx, 7 May 1870, in *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, p. 471.

⁵⁵ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du *Réveil*', pp. 16–17.

⁵⁶ [M. Hess], 'Aus Frankreich. Paris, 24. September', *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*, 29 September 1869, p. 492.

To me he appears to be more of a dreamer and an obsessively ambitious demagogue who would like to become a labour boss. It is well known that he came to Basel with the plan of moving the seat of General Council from London to Geneva, where he founded sections of the International over the last year and where he has got a few confused heads – like Philipp Briker [Becker] and various French party leaders – involved in his endeavour. However, he didn't dare to come forward with his plan after he suffered a defeat in the question of inheritance.⁵⁷

Why Bakunin 'suffered a defeat in the question of inheritance' – where the resolution he inspired was accepted by a majority and the General Council's resolution proposal was clearly rejected – is just as inexplicable as the other bizarre details with which Hess peppered his article. However, it is clear, as we will see, that a detail from this incredible account was to become a staple in the polemic against Bakunin in the coming years: namely the claim that he had wanted to move the seat of the General Council to Geneva.

Hess went into even more detail in his peculiar analysis of the events in Basel in a two-part article that appeared as promised in the Parisian newspaper *Le Réveil* at the beginning of October 1869 under the headline 'Collectivists and Communists at the Basel Congress' ('Les collectivistes et les communistes du congrès de Bâle').⁵⁸ Bakunin heard about Hess's campaign from the big Parisian newspaper and immediately began writing a response. This grew into the extensive manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil', which remained unprinted in his lifetime.⁵⁹

Bakunin began this manuscript with an outburst of anti-Jewish resentments, which strangely enough often appear in connection with his anti-German mentality – beginning with his row with Marx, who in his 'threefold character as communist, German and Jew'⁶⁰ had always been just as suspicious to him as Hess and other supporters of Marx's campaign against Bakunin in the International. In fact, the conflict in the International seems to have set off Bakunin's anti-Jewish resentments, which emerged for the most part between 1869 and 1874 – i.e. during his feud with Marx.⁶¹ This resentment, which can be seen in various polemics and disparaging remarks, runs contrary to the anarchist ideas for which Bakunin became famous. It has thus been argued that Bakunin's anti-Jewish gaffes should be considered separately from his political arguments.⁶² On the other hand, one must ask oneself how such a passionate advocate of freedom and self-determination like Bakunin could cultivate such crude prejudices?⁶³ One possible explanation is that Bakunin resorted to deep-seated patterns of reasoning in the heat of the argument, which he learned from his family and during his socialisation in the Russian feudal aristocracy. The outbursts might even represent a commonplace anti-Jewish (and ostensibly anti-capitalist) sentiment, which a wide variety of European socialists – from Fourier, Leroux and Blanqui to Marx – shared in the 19th century. In this respect, it would be interesting to study how much the zeitgeist of the 19th century and family and social-psychological influences were responsible

⁵⁷ Quoted from E. Silberner, 'Moses Hess und die Internationale Arbeiterassoziation', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 5 (1965), 127–28.

⁵⁸ *Réveil*, 2 October 1869, p. 2; 4 October 1869, p. 2.

⁵⁹ In September 1870, Bakunin once again tried to contest Hess's article without finishing; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, pp. 102–3.

⁶⁰ Bakunin to the 'Journal de Genève', second half of September 1873, in Bakounine, *Euvres complètes*.

⁶¹ See E. Silberner, *Sozialisten zur Judenfrage. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Sozialismus vom Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts bis 1914* (Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 1962), p. 270.

⁶² Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. xxvi.

⁶³ Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, p. xxx. This is all the more incomprehensible, the editor Shatz goes on to argue, as Bakunin was able to completely free himself from the other prejudices of his socialisation.

for Bakunin's anti-Jewish clichés, in order to find out whether these statements are compatible with other more coherent positions – for example when he vehemently called for 'respect for freedom of conscience', '*Absolute freedom of conscience and worship*', and '*Absolute freedom of religious associations*'.⁶⁴

In his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the *Réveil*', Bakunin only reacted to attacks he assumed came from Marx's associates. Bakunin counted Sigismund Borkheim (1825–1885), a ruthless hater of Russia, among them. After taking part in the Revolution of 1848/49, Borkheim first went into exile in Switzerland and then London where he worked in several commercial professions beginning in 1851.⁶⁵ For the founding congress of the League of Peace and Liberty in September 1867, Borkheim had prepared a hawkish speech against Russia, which had to be interrupted because of tumultuous protests in the audience.⁶⁶ Bakunin later described Borkheim's speech as having been 'inspired, it is said, if not actually dictated, by citizen Karl Marx himself'.⁶⁷ Marx had indeed given Borkheim suggestions while he was working on his scandalous Geneva speech and even wrote parts of it: in a letter to Engels from 4 October 1867, Marx described his contribution to the speech as 'catchwords, which I whispered into his ear'.⁶⁸ He was a bit more careful toward the Hanoverian social democrat Ludwig Kugelmann: Marx wrote that 'he [Borkheim] is a personal friend of mine. There are in his speech, etc., a number of phrases in which he *has fatuously garbled* certain views of mine.'⁶⁹

From July to November 1869, Borkheim published a four-part series of articles in the Berlin democratic newspaper *Die Zukunft* titled 'Michael Bakunin', which once again came about upon consultation with Marx and Engels. Borkheim sent Engels the rough concept for his text about Bakunin on 10 February 1869, writing: 'Please read the enclosed passages, which I wrote quickly last night. Send them on to Marx with comments that you deem necessary for my article "Bakunin" to be published in *Die Zukunft*.'⁷⁰ Engels suggested that Borkheim target the

⁶⁴ Bakunin, *Selected Writings*, p. 176. 'Principes et organisation de la société internationale révolutionnaire. I. Objet. II. Catéchisme Révolutionnaire', p. 47, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁶⁵ See H. Gemkow, *Sigismund Ludwig Borkheim. Vom königlich-preußischen Kanonier zum Russland-Experten an der Seite von Marx und Engels* (Hamburg: Argument Verlag, 2003).

⁶⁶ See *Annales du Congrès de Genève (9–12 Septembre 1867). Préliminaires, Les quatre Séances, Appendice* (Geneva: Vérésoff & Garrigues, 1868), p. 177. Borkheim published his speech that year as a brochure in French and in the following year in German.

⁶⁷ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 29. A report about the speech from Geneva in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* stated that 'for those in the know, this was a spiritual exercise written by Mr Marx himself'. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 September 1867, p. 1214). Amand Goegg, vice president of the League, also assumed that Marx was the author. Borkheim denied this in a conversation with Goegg. 'That's in *your* interest', Borkheim explained in a letter to Marx on 15 November 1867 (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 1767).

⁶⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 435. Borkheim had sent an outline of his speech to Marx two weeks before the congress and asked for comments (Borkheim to Marx, 27 August 1867, in Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 249–51).

⁶⁹ Marx to Kugelmann, 11 October 1867, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 441. For more about Marx's Russophobia, see M. Rubel (ed.), *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels zur russischen Revolution. Kritik eines Mythos* (Frankfurt a.M., Berlin, Wien: Verlag Ullstein, 1984), epilogue, p. 287.

⁷⁰ IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 703. As requested, Engels sent the extracts with his comments on 17 February 1869 to Marx (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 219). Marx and Borkheim might have discussed the article personally before sending it to Berlin; see the following note and Borkheim to Marx, 26 July 1869, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 538.

'Pan-Slav pack' in his article,⁷¹ and indeed, the article ended up an anti-Russian diatribe, which included the following:

Only if one *lacked any understanding* of Slavic affairs and mistrusted any movement could one label [Bakunin] a Russian spy in the pay of the Petersburg government. He should not be watched any less closely for this reason [...]. The effect on our affairs is always equally damaging, and as every sane Russian is a Pan-Slavist, the older refugee Turgeneff just like the younger Bakunin [...], these gentlemen should understand for once and for all that they are suspicious to us for this reason. They should be all the more careful in their public appearances in Europe and should not butt into our party business, much less butt us out. Who do the Russian refugees represent? [...] The Russians being considered here are Pan-Slavists who are satisfied with the government or not. The loudest of the aforementioned have to wander across the border from time to time for reasons of state. Thus, all Russian refugees are instinctively enemies of our culture. They can't help it! May the Tsar save them! Amen!⁷²

Bakunin heard about the first part of Borkheim's bizarre article shortly after it was published.⁷³ In his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the Réveil', Bakunin commented on it as follows:

I have wished, Messieurs, that one of you should have the patience to read these three or four articles that have been published in this journal under the title '*Michael Bakunin*'. As for me, I avow that I have never before read anything so confused, so odiously ridiculous and stupid, as this latest tirade by Mr Borkheim, next to which the article by Mr Maurice Hess attacking me could pass for a model of clarity and honesty.⁷⁴

⁷¹ 'Apropos', Engels wrote Marx on 25 February 1869, 'I have written to Borkheim about Bakunin that *he* should raise the question as to whether it is in any way possible for us Westerners to cooperate with this Pan-Slav pack while the fellows preach their Slav supremacy; he will probably read this to you tomorrow when you collect the money – but, in addition, I told him he should discuss the matter with you.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 223).

⁷² [S. Borkheim], 'Michael Bakunin', *Die Zukunft*, 21 July 1869, pp. 2–3; 13 August 1869, p. 3; 15 August 1869, pp. 2–3; 2 November 1869, pp. 2–3 (published in no. VIII–X of the series of articles 'Russian letters' ['Russische Briefe']). The quote is from 21 July 1869, p. 2. Borkheim began writing the series of articles 'Russian letters' on the initiative of Marx; see Marx to Engels, 23 January 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 206. The Lassalleian newspaper the *Social-Demokrat* protested against Borkheim's polemic in a feature story signed 'H.' on 3 August 1869: it called Borkheim's article 'hostile in the most wanton manner' toward Bakunin. '*Bakunin* has for many years always been there', the article continued, 'where freedom was worth fighting for. He led the street battle in Dresden, where he was taken prisoner, sentenced to death only to be deported to Siberia, where he was long banished until he managed to escape. One would think that such a man would be safe from the supposedly democratic *Zukunft*. Far from it! [...] According to the *Zukunft*, Bakunin – who fought and suffered for the German people, who sought freedom for all mankind – acted in the interest of the Russian Reaction! It is the most shameless twisting of the facts that we have ever seen.' (*Social-Demokrat*, 4 August 1869, p. 1).

⁷³ That very month he sent the *Zukunft* from 21 July 1869 to his friend Ogarev (Bakunin to Ogarev, second half of July 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

⁷⁴ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', p. 14. See also Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 4, p. 95. Two and a half years later, Bakunin referred to 'this Mr Borkheim whom I have called, not without reason, the executor of citizen Karl Marx's deeds and the disseminator not so much of his thought as of his personal grudges'. He continued: 'In a series of articles published in the Berlin *Zukunft*, of which Dr Jacoby of Königsberg is the founder if not the chief editor, and which was then the principal journal of bourgeois democracy in the north of Germany, Mr Borkheim, armed with that entire arsenal of rubbish, vile nastiness and mudslinging of which he seems to hold a monopoly, attacked me with a vehement fury. His articles, full of ridiculous and odious insinuations, were so bereft of sense, so incoherent, so stupid, that even after I had scanned them twice, I understood almost nothing at all.' ('Aux compagnons de la Fédération des sections internationales du Jura', pp. 137–38, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.)

Bakunin was referring to the latest slander against him: the report on the Basel Congress by Hess, where, among other things, he accused Bakunin of planning to move the General Council to Geneva. Hess wrote:

A Russian party⁷⁵ did not yet exist at the previous congresses of the International. It is only in the course of the previous year that an attempt to change the organisation and principles of the International, and even to move the seat of the General Council from London to Geneva, was made by Bakunin, a Russian patriot whose revolutionary good faith we doubt not, but who cherishes fanciful projects no less to be condemned than the means of action he employs to achieve them.⁷⁶

In reality, not Bakunin but the General Council members themselves – including Marx – were behind the initiative to move the General Council. On 28 June 1870, for example, Marx suggested to the General Council ‘that the General Council be transferred from London to Brussels. We must not let it crop up as a privilege that the Council sits in London. The Congress may not accept the proposition then we can put conditions.’⁷⁷ Marx had already considered a similar tactical manoeuvre on the eve of the Brussels Congress of the International (6–13 September 1868), about which he wrote Engels:

Now, when the Germans will join the ‘International Workingmen’s Association’ *en masse*, with the Association, for the time being, filling out at least the boundaries of its main territory – though it is still thin on the ground – my plan is that the *General Council* should move to Geneva for the next year and that we should function here only as the Britannic Council. It appears a shrewd move to me if the proposal comes from us.⁷⁸

Although Engels disagreed because of power politics (‘the more splendidly things go, the more important it is that you should keep them in *your* hands’), Marx insisted on the option ‘to vote for Geneva’ in order to block a possible move of the General Council to Brussels or Paris and prevent any of the associated Proudhonist influences.⁷⁹ The topic became relevant again one year later – before the Basel Congress (6–11 September 1869) – when Marx considered threatening the congress with the transfer of the Council to the Continent because of the bad payment morale in the International and the resulting horrible financial situation of the General Council. In a letter to Engels on 4 August 1869, he describes the financial situation of the General Council as ‘international bankruptcy’ and continued: ‘We shall be forced to declare to the next congress, either in written or spoken form, that we cannot continue to run the General Council in this

⁷⁵ Bakunin protested against this label in his manuscript ‘Letter to a Frenchman’ (‘Lettre à un Français’, 1870): ‘I was the only Russian at the Basel Congress, and I did not even represent Russia but the sections of Lyons and Naples.’ (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, p. 103).

⁷⁶ *Réveil*, 2 October 1869, p. 2.

⁷⁷ ‘Minutes of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871. From the Minute Book of the General Council September 21, 1869 to May 21, 1872’, in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 797. In fact the General Council issued a memorandum at the behest of Marx two weeks later ‘that the different sections give their delegates formal instructions on the opportunity of changing the seat of the General Council for the year 1870–71’, and even suggested Brussels as the seat of the General Council (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 538; on 14 July 1870 Marx sent the document to his colleague in the General Council Hermann Jung, *ibid.*, p. 537–38). The question was sent to the Belgian Federation in a letter by the corresponding secretary for Belgium; see Auguste Serrailier to César De Paepe, [second half of July 1870], in D. E. Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges de l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Correspondance 1865–1872* (Leuven-Louvain, Brüssel: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1986), p. 254.

⁷⁸ Marx to Engels, 4 August 1868, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 79.

⁷⁹ Engels to Marx, 6 August 1868, and Marx to Engels, 10 August 1868, *ibid.*, p. 81–82.

way; but that they should be so kind, before they give us successors, to pay *our debts*'.⁸⁰ At the last meeting of the General Council before the Basel Congress, their 'delegates were instructed to press the financial question seriously upon the Congress'.⁸¹

Apparently the threat shocked the participants at the Basel Congress quite a bit. James Guillaume, who was Le Locle's congress delegate, later remembered:

the delegates of the General Council at the Basel Congress, Lucraft, Cowell Stepney, Jung, Eccarius and Lessner, proposed, in the name of the Council, that its seat be fixed in Brussels for the year 1869–1870. The proposal for this change surprised and alarmed us: we felt that London was the city where the General Council was safest from governmental and police harassment, and we were afraid to see, in Brussels, the despotism and violence of the Belgian government threaten its freedom of action. Accordingly, we pressed this point most urgently, so that our friends in London should preserve the mandate with which they had been charged since the foundation of the Association. In light of the unanimity of the wishes expressed, they declared that they accepted.⁸²

In his *Mémoire* (memorandum) of the Jura Federation (1873), Guillaume also recalled that the delegates of the General Council 'had themselves proposed that the General Council be moved to Brussels'.⁸³ This makes the accusations launched by Moses Hess in the *Réveil* that Bakunin wanted to move the General Council to Geneva all the more strange. On 16 October 1869 – two weeks after the publication of Hess's attack – Hess was asked the following by Guillaume in his newspaper the *Progrès*: 'What is this prodigious project of moving the General Council to Geneva? Socialists of Romance Switzerland, which of us, we ask you, has dreamed of such a thing?'⁸⁴

Bakunin also defended himself against this bizarre accusation in his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the *Réveil*'. According to Bakunin, Hess's article in the *Réveil* included

another ridiculous lie concerning attempts I made, according to him, to move the General Council from London to Geneva. No one has said this to him, no one could have said this to him, because I would have been the first to fight with all possible energy against such a measure had anyone proposed it, so fatal would it seem to me for the future of the International.

The Geneva sections have, it is true, made immense progress in a very short time. But a rather narrow spirit still reigns in Geneva, a spirit that is too specifically Genevan, for the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to be located there. Besides, it is obvious that as long as the present political organisation of Europe lasts, London shall remain the only suitable location for it, and one would have to be crazy or actually an enemy of the International to want to move it anywhere else.⁸⁵

The suspicion that Bakunin speculated on moving the General Council to Geneva doesn't pan out for another reason: in private letters from 23 July 1869 onward (six weeks before the Basel Congress), Bakunin signalled that he would be *leaving Geneva* after the congress.⁸⁶ On 13 August

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 340–41.

⁸¹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 694 (meeting on 31 August 1869).

⁸² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 209.

⁸³ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 82.

⁸⁴ *Progrès*, 16 October 1869, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du *Réveil*', p. 29.

⁸⁶ Bakunin wrote Carlo Gambuzzi: 'I sent you a thick packet of letters 23 July [...] I wrote to you in the letter that I have included [...] that I am asking nothing better than to go settle in Turin after the Basel Congress, i.e. toward the middle or even the end of September' (Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 3 August 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

1869 (three weeks before the congress), Bakunin told the Committee of the Geneva Alliance about his intention to move.⁸⁷ What did Bakunin expect to gain from the General Council's move to Geneva if he wasn't going to live there? In fact, Bakunin continued in later years to refer to London as the only possible seat of the General Council.⁸⁸

The rumour started by Hess was dealt with as a matter of fact by Marx and Engels despite the apparent contradictions. It even entered the annals of Marxist history: even in 1978, the publishers of the complete works of Marx and Engels – commissioned by the central committees of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Communist Party of the Soviet Union – repeated the accusation in their own special way: 'After the Bakuninists failed to move the seat of the General Council to Geneva at the Basel Congress in 1869, they continued their divisive activities within the International.'⁸⁹

Bakunin's first strategy: attack not Marx but his associates

As Bakunin's standpoint on the dispute with Liebknecht, Borkheim, and Hess in the manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the *Réveil*' got bigger and bigger without coming to an end, he sent the half-finished manuscript through an acquaintance to his friend, the veteran emigrant Alexander Herzen (Gertsen) in Paris, and asked him to copyedit it with a view to publishing it as a book.⁹⁰ Included was a short reply for the *Réveil* dated 18 October 1869,⁹¹ which Bakunin asked Herzen to give to the Parisian newspaper. After a fierce argument between Herzen and the chief editor Charles Delescluze,⁹² a short reply by Alexander Herzen was finally published in the *Réveil* on 22 October 1869.⁹³ The reply was accompanied by an editorial note that said, among other things: 'The *Réveil* has fought against Mr Bakunin's theories, and it will fight them again when need be, while appreciating the energetic convictions of this ardent adversary of Russia's imperial despotism.'⁹⁴

After Herzen achieved this acceptable result, he must have written Bakunin a letter disapproving of his hesitant strategy with Marx; as mentioned before, Bakunin had not criticised *Marx* at all in his manuscript 'To the Citizen Editors of the *Réveil*'. Bakunin even considered Marx (along with Lassalle) one of the

most eminent socialists of our time [...] I have no need to tell you, Messieurs, what these two men have done and what one of them continues to do for the development and propagation of

⁸⁷ 'The president [Bakunin] informs us that he shall depart soon after the Basel Congress' (Andréas/Molnár [eds.], 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 167).

⁸⁸ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 215.

⁸⁹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 1140. The complete works of Marx and Engels (MEGA) were published since 1990 under new terms by the International Marx Engels Foundation (IMES). Criticism about the earlier published volumes – and above all the commentary procedure – led to the adoption of new guidelines for the edition.

⁹⁰ Bakunin to Herzen, 18 October 1869, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹¹ Bakunin to the editors of the *Réveil*, 18 October 1869, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹² See Herzen to Ogarev, 21 October 1869, in Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 30, p. 222. Delescluze (1809–1871), later member of the Paris Commune, shot by counter-revolutionary troops on 25 May 1871.

⁹³ *ibid.*, vol. 20, p. 597.

⁹⁴ *Réveil*, 22 October 1869, p. 2.

the socialist idea. Marx is rightly considered as one of the principal founders of the International Working Men's Association.⁹⁵

Instead of attacking Marx directly, Bakunin had at first only set his sight on people like Borkheim who were *associates of Marx*. He justified his strategy in his reply to Herzen on 26 October 1869 with the following words:

As regards Marx this is my answer: I know as well as you that Marx is as much to blame as all the others and that he was even the instigator and inspirer of all the dirty tricks used against us. Why I pitied and even praised him, called him a great man? For two reasons, Herzen – *the first: fairness*. Leaving aside the dirty tricks he has used against us we, or, at least I, have to acknowledge that he has enormous merits for the cause of socialism, which he has been serving intelligently, energetically and loyally for almost 25 years now [...] undoubtedly more than any of us. He was one of the first and almost the main founder of the Intern. Association – in my view an enormous merit which I will always acknowledge, whatever he has done against us. The *second* reason is *politics* and, in my view, very proper *tactics*. – I know, you consider me a very poor politician. – But, please, don't call me narcissistic if I tell you that you are mistaken. The matter is that you judged and judge me by my behaviour in the civilized society, in the bourgeois world – and, it's true, in that world I behave inconsiderately and totally unceremoniously, not caring about my words, with *brazen* straightforwardness. But do you know why? Because I consider that world not worth a farthing, I don't consider that world able to produce anything or to act in any way. I know perfectly well that the bourgeoisie has sufficient material means left, sufficient organisation and power to run the state routine, much more than would be desirable. – But we have to fight this force, we have to destroy it [...]. – So, I agree with you I'm not a politician or tactician in the bourgeois world and in bourgeois matters and I don't want to be neither a politician nor a tactician in that world. – But you are very mistaken if you conclude that I behave also inconsiderately or, rather, that I behave *in the same way* in the workers' world. [...]. – May the way I deal with Marx, who cannot stand me, neither, I think, anybody except himself and those close to him – may my politics and tactics with regard to him serve as proof.

Marx is undoubtedly useful for the Intern. Association. He continues to be one of the toughest, most intelligent and most influential pillars of socialism, – one of the strongest barriers against all attempts to infect socialism with bourgeois tendencies and ideas. And I would never forgive myself if, out of revengefulness, I were to destroy or even to diminish his undoubtedly beneficial influence. – I may and probably will soon start fighting him, not because he has offended me personally but for reasons of principle, because of state communism of which he and the party he leads, the English and the German party, are passionate advocates. – Our fight will be a mortal struggle. However, all things in due course. That time hasn't come yet.

There was also *tactics* and personal politics in my pitying and extolling him. How is it possible that you don't see that all these gentlemen taken together, our enemies, are a phalanx which we ought to split up, to break up, so as to smash it more easily. – You have made more studies than I and, so, know better than I who first said: *divide et impera* [divide and rule]. – Should I start an open war with Marx now three quarters of the Intern. world would turn against me and I would be in a bad position and lose the only ground on which I want to stand. – If I start with an attack on the rabble that supports him I will have the majority behind me and Marx himself, who, as

⁹⁵ Bakounine, 'Aux citoyens rédacteurs du Réveil', p. 4. For more about the misconception that Marx was a founder of the International, see above, p. 1.

you know, revels in others' bad luck, will be very happy that I attacked his friends separately. – If my calculation turns out to be wrong and he defends his friends it's he who starts the open war – in that case I will step back and come off best. – Why did I attack Hess so vehemently? – Because he wrote an intentionally mean article against me, – but in the first place because he was the first to try to bring nasty slander against us into circulation in the French press.⁹⁶

Herzen answered Bakunin on 28 October 1869:

I don't like your politics. You will never make a Machiavelli with your 'divide' ... I absolutely disagree with your following the example of the Russian censorship – that allowed reproving clerks but not generals. You don't want to attack Marx so as not to spoil your relationship with him? All right, but then leave also Hess and c[ompa]ny alone. That's my advice and opinion.⁹⁷

In the case of Hess, this tactic would have been correct because there was no evidence at the time of a coordinated action between Marx and Hess. Hess, who had himself been a victim of one of Marx's destructive campaigns, appears to have sought reconciliation with Marx through his polemic against Bakunin; his effort apparently did not fail completely as Marx seems to have stopped attacking Hess in 1869.⁹⁸

While Bakunin followed his first strategy – *repelling only the assaults from Marx's associates* – for more than a year (until the end of 1870), it doesn't seem as if Marx was following any strategy at all: Marx's reactions to Bakunin during this time can be described as uncoordinated temper tantrums.

⁹⁶ Bakunin to Herzen, 26 October 1869, pp. 1–4, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹⁷ Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 30, p. 228.

⁹⁸ See Silberner, 'Moses Hess und die Internationale Arbeiterassoziation', pp. 133, 137–38.

CHAPTER 4. Marx's 'communications' concerning Bakunin

ON 28 OCTOBER 1869, BAKUNIN MOVED to Locarno after his long-planned departure from Geneva.¹ He had previously resigned as a member of the editorial board of the *Égalité* at the beginning of September before leaving for the Basel Congress of the International.² The editorial board had already been strengthened on 11 August through the arrival of Paul Robin. Robin (1837–1912)³ was born in Toulon and had studied in Paris at the École Normal Supérieure before working as a teacher in Brest and Brussels. He was involved in the Brussels section of the International and was one of the secretaries of the Belgian Federal Council. In July 1869, he moved to Geneva upon receiving a deportation order in Belgium. In Geneva he got to know Bakunin, became a member of the Alliance section and joined the editorial board of the *Égalité*. His friend James Guillaume later wrote the following about him:

very committed, active, intelligent, [...] he has dedicated himself passionately to propagandising for revolutionary socialism. He has his faults: a taste for systematic thinking [*l'esprit de système*], an overly fastidious and aggressive character [...]. But Robin's qualities outweighed his faults, and his foibles, which made us smile, and sometimes annoyed us a bit, did not prevent me from holding him in high esteem and friendship.⁴

Things took a turn for the worse once Robin became an editor of the *Égalité*. He published various anonymous attacks and erroneous accusations against the London General Council of the International in November and December 1869; for example, the General Council had failed to publish a regular information bulletin in violation of the Rules and congress resolutions, the General Council had not yet made a decision on the Liebknecht-Schweitzer⁵ question, etc.⁶ Bakunin described it as 'an unjust protestation, and at the same time impolitic and absurd'.⁷

The General Council found this series of baseless accusations annoying for obvious reasons.⁸ Marx, who didn't know that Bakunin had left Geneva, once again put the blame for the anony-

¹ For family reasons, see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 261.

² Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, p. 35–36. The *Égalité* announced that the replacements for Bakunin and the editor François Mermillod, who was also leaving, would be chosen at the editorial meeting on 6 October 1869 (*Égalité*, 1 October 1869, p. 4).

³ For more on him, see C. Demeulenaere-Douyère, *Paul Robin (1837–1912): Un militant de la liberté et du bonheur* (Paris: Publisud, 1994).

⁴ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 225.

⁵ This refers to the question as to which German group belonged to the International: the ADAV, founded by Lassalle and whose president was Johann Baptist von Schweitzer; or the SDAP, founded in Eisenach and whose organ the *Volksstaat* was edited by Liebknecht.

⁶ [P. Robin], 'Le Bulletin du Conseil général', *Égalité*, 6 November 1869, p. 1. 'Réflexions', *ibid.*, 11 December 1869, p. 1.

⁷ Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, p. 42.

⁸ See 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 725, 739 (meetings of 9 November and 14 December 1869).

mous attacks squarely on Bakunin and wrote Engels about this on 17 December 1869: 'From the enclosed *Égalité*, which I must have back, you'll see how impudent *il Sigñor* Bakunin is becoming. [...] He believes the moment has come to start an open squabble with us. He is playing himself up as the guardian of real proletarianism. But he's in for a surprise.'⁹

Marx took advantage of the General Council's Christmas vacation, which he himself had suggested take place between 14 December 1869 and 4 January 1870,¹⁰ to start a counter attack from within the Subcommittee – the General Council's executive, which only the secretary, treasurer, and the corresponding secretaries of the General Council for the different countries and groups belonged to.¹¹ On 17 December 1869, Marx announced to Engels:

Next week (luckily the Central [General] Council has adjourned until the Tuesday after New Year's Day, so we on the subcommittee are free to work without the *cosy* intervention of the English) we shall be sending a threatening missive to the Romance Federal Committee in Geneva¹² [...]. At this opportunity, blows will fall upon certain intriguants who are usurping undue authority, and who wish to subject the *International* to their private control.¹³

Who Marx meant by 'certain intriguants' becomes clear at the end of the letter: 'As soon as a Russian gets a foothold, there is the devil to pay.'¹⁴ As such, a further storm was heading toward Bakunin, who once again had nothing to do with the cause of the dispute. The articles being criticised in the *Égalité* were written by Robin and not Bakunin, who had moved out of Geneva the month before and referred to the articles as a 'disastrous campaign'.¹⁵

The next victim of Robin's manoeuvres was his colleague on the editorial board, Pierre Wæhry. Apparently Wæhry's protest against an article in the *Égalité* that complained that the Geneva

⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 404. Already at the end of October, Marx had been irritated by a report (from 'Lyons, 1 October 1869') in the *Égalité* that said, among other things: 'The English and the Germans, caring little for individual rights, refuse to concern themselves with the abolition of inheritance [...]. In France, we are very concerned for individual rights, since our country is the land of centralisation *par excellence*, and because if we fall into German communism with a political state, we shall inevitably reconstitute dictatorship and authority' (*Égalité*, 16 October 1869, p. 3). Marx wrote Engels on 30 October about this: 'In the *Égalité*, Monsieur Bakunin indicates that the German and English workers have no desire for individuality, so accept our communisme autoritaire. In opposition to this, Bakunin represents *le collectivisme anarchique*. The anarchism is, however, in his head, which contains only one clear idea – that Bakunin should play first fiddle.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 364). In reality, Bakunin had already left the *Égalité* at the beginning of September; see above, p. 35.

¹⁰ 'Cit. Marx proposed that the Council at its rising should adjourn to January 4th. [...] The proposition was agreed to & the standing committee authorised to transact any necessary business in the mean-time.' ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 739–40).

¹¹ The subcommittee (standing committee) was formed originally on 5 October 1864 and made up of nine members of the Central Council. It was charged with drafting the guidelines for the International's programme. After that work was completed, however, the committee was kept. On 25 September 1866, the General Council accepted Marx's proposal that it should continue to exist 'provisionally'. The subcommittee – which was not provided for in the General Rules of the International – established itself as the executive of the General Council. See 'Minute Book of the Provisional Central Council of the International Working Men's Association October 5, 1864 to August 28, 1866', in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/20, p. 268; 'Minutes of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association September 18, 1866 to August 29, 1867. From the Minute Book of the General Council September 18, 1866 to August 31, 1869', *ibid.*, p. 486.

¹² This 'threatening missive' is known as the 'Private Communication' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, pp. 84–91).

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 404.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 405.

¹⁵ Bakounine, 'Rapport sur l'Alliance', suite 2, p. 33.

International's library had been closed for many months without reason¹⁶ led to a fierce dispute between Wæhry and the majority of the editorial board, whom Robin was able to get on his side. The editors gave the Committee of the Romance Federation an ultimatum: remove Wæhry from the editorial board of the *Égalité* or they would all quit as editors.

As Wæhry refused to step down from the editorial board, the Federal Committee was pleased to accept the resignation of the editors who had put forward the complaint – happy to get rid of the openly socialist editors of the newspaper so easily. The particularly militant tone struck by Perron and Bakunin in the *Égalité* had long been a nuisance to the moderate spokesmen of the International who were interested in an arrangement with the *parti radical*. Because of the autonomy anchored in the statutes of the *Égalité*,¹⁷ the editors had been able to resist any attempts to gag them – only to hand the paper over to their rivals. On 3 January 1870, the editors once again sent in their resignation in writing,¹⁸ confident that the *Égalité* would have to be closed. However, the *Égalité* continued to be published through the determined efforts of the Federal Committee that in no way wanted to see the rebellious editors, who were their political opponents, return to the editorial board. On 4 January 1870, Henri Perret – spokesman of the Geneva *fabrique* and secretary of the Federal Committee – was pleased to report the successful coup in a letter to Hermann Jung, corresponding secretary for Switzerland in the London General Council:

Latest news – the hotheads of the Alliance have tendered their resignations to the *Égalité*.¹⁹ Perron, Robin and a few [other] more or less capable men, with their little coup d'état à la Bakunin and à la Robin, thought to force the hand of the Federal Committee so that it would remove from the editorial staff a member who raised opposition and who objected to the attacks made upon the various Committees and on the General Council; we do not want to throw our weight behind these men; we shall continue to wage a silent war against them [...].²⁰

This happened before the 'threatening missive' from the General Council to the Committee of the Romance Federation arrived in Geneva; the Subcommittee of the General Council met on 1 January 1870 and accepted Marx's lengthy resolution which refuted every detail of the criticised article in the *Égalité*. However, the wording of the resolution was repeatedly changed before it was finally forwarded to Hermann Jung on 8 January 1870 to be copied and sent to Switzerland.²¹ This letter, titled 'Private Communication' ('Communication privée'), began with the words: 'At

¹⁶ According to Robin's own description (1872), see P. Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif à propos de mon expulsion du Conseil Général', in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 382. See also Robin to Hins, 27 December 1869, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 213. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 252. The library appears to have been closed from mid-October 1869 to at least the end of January 1870; see *Égalité*, 16 October 1869, p. 4; 29 January 1870, p. 4.

¹⁷ See 'Règlement du Journal. Adopté par le Congrès[s] des sections romandes de la Suisse, le 3 Janvier 1869', *Égalité*, 23 January 1869, p. 1.

¹⁸ Perron, Robin, Guilmeaux, Dutoit, Lindegger, Becker, and Pinier to Wæhry, 3 January 1870, in 'Circulaire à toutes les sections de la Fédération Romande'. [Signed:] Genève, le 16 janvier 1870. Au nom des démissionnaires: Ch. Perron, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 386/2.

¹⁹ Other than Jules Dutoit, all of the editors of the *Égalité* who had resigned were also members of the Geneva section of the Alliance; see the membership list of the Alliance from summer 1869 in Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', pp. 248–51.

²⁰ Perret to Jung, 4 January 1870, in IISG, Jung Papers, no. 888.

²¹ 'There are changes in the text – I have struck away, I have added some sentences, and very often corrected the phraseology. Hence you must copy the thing anew (as quickly as possible)' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 406). Jung was only able to issue the resolutions on 16 January 1870; see *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 340–44.

its extraordinary meeting on January 1, 1870, the *General Council* resolved'²² – in fact, only the Subcommittee had met, where Marx thought he could act freely 'without the *cosy* intervention of the English' because the General Council was on Christmas break. The General Council was presented with a *fait accompli* when they were informed drily about the extensive letter at their first regular meeting in the new year: 'Cit. Marx announced that the Subcommittee had replied to the charges of *Égalité*.'²³

Marx reported his manoeuvre to Engels on 10 February, erroneously claiming that the resignation of the majority of the editors of the *Égalité* was the 'result' of his 'Private Communication':

You will recall that *Égalité*, inspired by Bakunin, attacked the General Council, made all sorts of interpellations publicly, and threatened more. A communication [the 'Private Communication'] – which I composed – was, thereupon, sent to the *Comité Romand* in Geneva, and ditto to all the other *Comités* of French tongue corresponding with us. Result: The entire Bakunin gang has quit *Égalité*. Bakunin himself has taken up residence in Tessin, and will continue intriguing in Switzerland, Spain, Italy and France. Now the armistice is at an end between us, since he knows that I attacked him heatedly and inveighed against him on the occasion of the latest Geneva events. The brute really imagines that we are '*too bourgeois*' and, therefore, incapable of grasping and esteeming his lofty concepts about 'inheritance right', 'equality' and the replacement of the present state systems by '*l'Internationale*'.²⁴

To remark here that the 'brute' Bakunin had done nothing to warrant these accusations would be almost superfluous.

Bakunin's defence by Eugène Hins (January 1870)

As announced the 'Private Communication', adopted by the Subcommittee of the General Council on 1 January 1870, was sent to all French-speaking Federal Councils of the International. Marx himself sent it to the Belgian Federal Council in Brussels, and added what he called a 'full report' on 'the theoretical nonsense preached at Geneva' (i.e. by Bakunin).²⁵ Apparently Marx took advantage of the opportunity to defame Bakunin behind the scenes. 'I added', Marx admitted that year, 'a denunciation and characterisation of Bakunin in my own name to the circular which the General Council had issued on the *Égalité*, etc., at the beginning of January'.²⁶ This lost 'expostulation about Bakunin's goings-on',²⁷ as Marx described his letter to Brussels, was met with vigorous protest from a member of the Belgian Federal Council: Eugène Hins.

Hins (1839–1923)²⁸ – a teacher, doctorate in philosophy, and journalist in Brussels – joined the International in June 1867 and was the general secretary of the Belgian Federal Council since its founding in December 1868. He worked for the newspapers the *Liberté* and the *Internationale* and

They were only sent to Geneva on 23 January 1870 together with a letter from Jung to Becker; see IISG, Becker Papers, D II 32. See also Perret to Jung, 3 February 1870, in IISG, Jung Papers, no. 889.

²² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 84.

²³ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 742 (meeting on 4 January 1870).

²⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 424. In the same letter Marx corrected himself: the 'Private Communication' had not led to the resignation of the editors but had strengthened the 'status rerum' (*ibid.*).

²⁵ Marx to Jung, 8 January 1870, *ibid.*, p. 406.

²⁶ Marx to Johann Philipp Becker, 2 August 1870, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 26.

²⁷ Marx to Engels, 12 February 1870, *ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 430.

²⁸ For more on Hins, see M. Mayné, *Eugène Hins: Une grande figure de la Première Internationale en Belgique* (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 1994).

took part in the International's Congresses in Brussels (1868) and Basel (1869) as a delegate for the Belgian Federation. Hins later recalled receiving Marx's 'denunciation and characterisation of Bakunin' in the Belgian Federal Council: 'After Karl Marx wrote us a letter full of base calumnies levelled against Bakunin, I thought that if he could not be officially taught a lesson on this subject, it would be wise in any case not to let such things pass. I thus wrote a letter in my own name in which I said to him that these calumnies were unworthy of him.'²⁹

Hins didn't write Marx directly but the English member of the General Council Cowell Stepney, who thought that Hins's criticism was just.³⁰ In his letter dated 21 January 1870, Hins wrote, among other things:

We have not yet been able to discuss the letter from Karl Marx in the General Council,³¹ as we have been occupied with a number of internal affairs. I do not know how the Belgian Council will reply, but for my part, I find Marx's letter supremely unfair to Bakunin. For example, Marx criticises Bakunin's proposal on inheritance,³² forgetting that the General Council itself has presented a proposal on this subject.³³ [...]

For my part, I am unable to bow to the great scholars who believe they have judged a man when they say: *he has not studied*.³⁴ If this means that a man has not studied the men of the working class and their needs, I shall indeed say that this man is incompetent, but if it means that he *has not studied books*, I shall say that to me this is a matter of perfect indifference. This is not a movement to be led by a half-dozen scholars from their chambers; it is a movement in which men of action are needed to animate and excite the masses.

The workers we recruit have not studied either, but I believe that when they come together, these workers are more knowledgeable than the greatest scientist there is, because it is only through the gathering of the popular masses that the problem can be solved. [...]

Certainly, we have not approved of the *Égalité*,³⁵ for my part, I wrote to Robin what I thought of it, and we put it in order *amicably*. The official letter from Marx³⁶ filled with joy the timid socialists of Geneva, who are afraid to make a move, and you have managed to provoke a crisis contrary to the common sense, i.e. in the reactionary sense. [...] So I do not criticise the letter to the Romance Congress, but Marx's incrimination of Bakunin: it seems to me *unworthy*.

I authorise you, if you think it good, to bring my letter before Karl Marx.³⁷

²⁹ Hins to Guillaume, 12 June 1914, in J. Guillaume, *Karl Marx pangermaniste et L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs de 1864 à 1870* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1915), p. 72.

³⁰ 'Stepney thinks him quite right in many of his points', Johann Georg Eccarius wrote on 27 January 1870 to Marx (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2081).

³¹ This refers to the Belgian Federal Council of the International, which called itself the General Council.

³² See above, p. 451, n. 26.

³³ See Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, pp. 132–33, and above, p. 21.

³⁴ In his letter to the Belgian Federal Council, Marx appears to have again made remarks about Bakunin similar to 'one of the most ignorant men in the field of social theory' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 113) or 'Bakunine and his acolytes know nothing of theory' (Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 19 April 1870, *ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 490).

³⁵ This refers to the articles by Robin about the General Council in the *Égalité* from November and December 1869; see above, p. 35.

³⁶ This refers to the 'Private Communication' to the Committee of the Romance Federation approved by the Subcommittee of the General Council on 1 January 1870. Hins is also referring to the 'Private Communication' when he mentions the 'letter to the Romance Congress' later on in his text.

³⁷ Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 222–25.

Although Marx initially only had second-hand knowledge of Hins's letter, he began immediately with a counter offensive. Already on 24 January, Marx wrote another member of the Belgian Federal Council, his friend César De Paepe:

My illness has naturally prevented me from attending the General Council in the last weeks. Yesterday evening, the subcommittee (the executive committee) of which I am a member visited me. Among other things, they communicated to me the content of a letter sent by Mr Hins to Stepney. As Stepney believed that I would be able to attend the session of the General Council (on 25 January), he did not communicate to me any extracts from that letter. I do not know any of it except from hearsay. [...]

If Mr Hins has not yet communicated my letter (and the resolutions of the General Council) to the Belgian council, *it would be better to suppress entirely the paragraph about Bakunin*. I have no copy of it, but I know that I wrote it in irritation brought on by physical suffering. Thus I do not doubt that Mr Hins justly blames me for the form of that paragraph. As to the substance and the facts, they are independent both from my bad manner of expression and the good opinion of Mr Hins about Bakunin. The fact is that *l'Alliance*, of which Bakunin is the creator and which has not been dissolved except *nominally*, is a danger to the *International Association* and an element of disorganisation.³⁸

De Paepe answered Marx on 1 February 1870:

Hins's letter to Stepney about your letter is quite personal and written without the knowledge of the Belgian Council which has, moreover, nothing to do with it. As my colleague Vandenhouten must have written citizen Serrailier, the Belgian Council has unanimously approved the letter and the attitude of the General Council regarding the affairs of Romance Switzerland, including the *Égalité*.

Now it is true that those who know Bakunin personally (such as Brismée, Hins and myself) found you to be a little harsh with this citizen and a bit exaggerated in the motives of personal ambition that you attribute to him; but these are differences of opinion concerning the character of a man whom you seem to hold in mediocre esteem, and whom we respect despite some errors of ideas and a few ill-considered acts he has performed.³⁹

Later on Marx was still convinced that Bakunin had 'in that blatherer Hins a fanatical instrument at his disposal in the Belgian General Council'.⁴⁰ After receiving the original of Hins's letter on 27 January 1870,⁴¹ Marx must have written a rude reply, which Hins later recalled as follows: 'He responded to me with a letter full of coarse insults'.⁴² The reply from Stepney, who Hins had originally addressed, was the exact opposite. Stepney thanked Hins for his letter from 27 January and explained: 'I entirely share your ideas concerning Bakunin'.⁴³

³⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, pp. 412, 414.

³⁹ Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 232–33.

⁴⁰ Marx to Johann Philipp Becker, 2 August 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 26.

⁴¹ Together with the letter from Eccarius to Marx from 27 January 1870, see above, p. 458, n. 30.

⁴² Hins to Guillaume, 12 June 1914, in Guillaume, *Karl Marx pangermaniste*, p. 72. Marx acknowledged this to Engels on 12 February 1870: 'In my reply I gave the fellow a thorough dressing down' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 430). Marx's letter to Hins is lost. In a letter dated 9 March 1870, Hins apologised to Marx in case certain statements in his letter were insulting, 'while continuing to disapprove of the manner in which you expressed yourself concerning Bakunin.' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 240).

⁴³ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 80/3.

The ‘Confidential Communication’ to German social democrats (March 1870)

A week after the previously mentioned letter in which Marx declared the ‘armistice’ with Bakunin over, Marx wrote Ludwig Kugelmann: ‘I had a big row with Bakunin, that intriguer. But more about that in my next letter.’⁴⁴ And on 24 March 1870, Marx declared in a letter to Wilhelm Bracke: ‘I have information for you, which is not uninteresting, about the internal affairs of the International. This will reach you by an indirect route.’⁴⁵ Four days later, Marx sent his notorious ‘Confidential Communication’ (‘Confidentielle Mittheilung’) via Kugelmann to the Committee of the SDAP in Brunswick. In an accompanying letter to Kugelmann with the same date (28 March 1870), Marx explained:

Since an abscess on my right thigh makes sitting for any time impossible, I send you, enclosed, a letter for the Brunswick Comité, Bracke and Co., instead of writing twice. It would be best if you delivered it personally, after reading it through, and reminded them again that this information is confidential, not intended for the public.⁴⁶

Marx wrote his ‘Confidential Communication’ concerning Bakunin on three sheets of paper, which all had the stamp of the General Council: *International Working Men’s Association. Central Council London*.⁴⁷ He thereby used his position in the General Council for the second time – after his ‘denunciation’ of Bakunin sent to the Belgian Federal Council – to attack his political rival Bakunin. Marx’s ‘Confidential Communication’ began with the words: ‘The Russian Bakunin (although I have known him since 1843, I shall here ignore everything not absolutely necessary for the understanding of what follows) met Marx in London shortly after the founding of the *International* (1864). There the latter took him into the Association’.⁴⁸

The claim that Bakunin had already joined the International upon meeting Marx on 3 November 1864 contradicts Bakunin’s account⁴⁹ as well as other statements by Marx himself. On 19

⁴⁴ Marx to Kugelmann, 17 February 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 436. Kugelmann was clearly dying for more: ‘Please don’t forget to write me about Bakunin’ (Kugelmann to Marx, 19 February 1870, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2088); and again on 29 March 1870: ‘I would really like to receive the report soon that you repeatedly threatened to send about Bakunin and the Russian affair’ (*ibid.*, delo 2103).

⁴⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 464.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

⁴⁷ Reproduction of the first page in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 221. It has been argued that the stamp of the General Council was not meant to give this document an official character; see Rjasanoff [Ryazanov], ‘Sozialdemokratische Flagge’, 5 December 1913, p. 374. On the other hand Marx emphasised, while speaking of the *unofficial* character of another letter addressed to the Brunswick committee a year later, that this letter ‘was *not* written in the name of or on the instructions of the General Council. That is why it was not written on paper stamped by the General Council’ (Marx to Natalie Liebknecht, 2 March 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 116 [here erroneously ‘on paper with the letterhead of the General Council’ instead of ‘on paper stamped by the General Council’ (*auf Papier mit dem Stempel des Generalrats*)]; corrected according to the original wording in Marx/Engels, *Werke*, vol. 33, p. 186.) The stamp of the General Council on the ‘Confidential Communication’ also suggested an official character to the addressees: Leonhard von Bonhorst referred to it as a document from the General Council (see below, p. 44).

⁴⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 112.

⁴⁹ See above, p. 442, n. 14.

April 1870, for example, Marx complained that Bakunin was a newcomer to the International: 'Bakunine does not belong to the *International* but for about 1½ years' (1868).⁵⁰

Marx's 'Confidential Communication' continues:

Shortly after the Brussels Congress of the *International* (September 1868) the *Peace League* held its congress at Berne. Here Bakunin acted the firebrand and – be it remarked en passant – denounced the occidental bourgeoisie in the tone in which Muscovite optimists are accustomed to attack Western civilization – to palliate their own barbarism. He proposed a number of resolutions, which, *absurd in themselves*, were intended to instil fear into the bourgeois cretins and allow Monsieur Bakunin to *leave* the Peace League and *enter* the International with *éclat*.⁵¹ It suffices to note that the programme proposed by Bakunin to the Berne Congress contains such absurdities as the '*equality of classes*', '*abolition of the right of inheritance as the first step of the social revolution*', etc. – empty babblings, a garland of ostensibly horrifying hollow fancies; in short an insipid improvisation, calculated purely to make a certain short-lived effect.⁵²

As this passage shows, Marx carried out his campaign against Bakunin in a surprisingly superficial and grossly one-sided manner: the details about the term 'equalisation of classes' (Marx himself had referred to it as a 'slip of the pen') and the criticism of the right of inheritance in the Alliance's programme have already been mentioned.⁵³ Typical for the 'Confidential Communication' as well as the other polemical attacks from Marx that followed was that Bakunin's position was distorted while a plethora of presumptions and accusations by Marx were presented as facts. Apparently Marx wasn't taking the conflict seriously and so didn't deem it necessary to take a hard look at the substance behind Bakunin's ideas on federalist socialism. Marx considered the alternative *socialist concept* that Bakunin was developing in anarchism to be complete nonsense – 'empty babblings, a garland of ostensibly horrifying hollow fancies' – because he didn't want to or wasn't able to understand the emergence of different currents in international socialism.

If Bakunin's *ideas* didn't mean anything, Marx suggested in his correspondences, then he must be interested in *power*: 'For Mr Bakunin the doctrine (the rubbish he has scraped together from Proudhon, St. Simon, etc.) was and is a secondary matter – merely a means to his personal self-assertion. Though a nonentity theoretically, he is in his element as an intriguer.'⁵⁴ 'The theoretical programme of this Alliance was, however, pure farce. The serious aspect of the affair lay in its practical organisation.'⁵⁵ As such, Marx's train of thought continued to be dominated in the 'Confidential Communication' by the idea that Bakunin wanted to *seize power* in the International:⁵⁶

Bakunin now attempted to reach his goal – the transformation of the *International* into his personal instrument – by other means. Through our Romance Committee at Geneva he pro-

⁵⁰ Marx to Paul Lafargue, 19 April 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 489. And on 23 November 1871 he wrote Friedrich Bolte: 'At the end of 1868 the Russian, Bakunin, joined the *International*' (*ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 255).

⁵¹ Bakunin had already joined the International in the summer of 1868 *before* leaving the League of Peace and Liberty; see above, p. 442, n. 14.

⁵² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, pp. 112–13.

⁵³ See above, pp. 4–6, 19–20.

⁵⁴ Marx to Friedrich Bolte, 23 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 255.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 113. See also above, p. 457, n. 9. These suspicions bear even stranger fruit later on; see below, p. 204.

⁵⁶ See details in M. Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale. La Conférence de Londres de 1871* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1963), p. 131.

posed to the General Council the inclusion of the ‘*inheritance question*’ in the agenda of the Basle Congress.⁵⁷ The General Council agreed, in order to be able to give Bakunin a thump right on his head. Bakunin’s plan was this: the Basle Congress, in accepting the ‘principles’ (?) put forward by Bakunin at Berne,⁵⁸ will show the world that it is not Bakunin who has come over to the International, but the International that has gone over to Bakunin. Obvious result, the London General Council (of whose hostility to the warming up of the Saint-Simonian old rubbish Bakunin was fully aware) would have to resign and the Basle Congress would *transfer the General Council to Geneva*, that is, the *International* would come under the dictatorship of Bakunin.⁵⁹

The fact that Bakunin never wanted to move the General Council away from London but had already announced that he would move out of Geneva six weeks before the Basel Congress has already been described in detail above. Marx could not help passing along Moses Hess’s misinformation about the planned move of the General Council.⁶⁰

‘The results of the Basle Congress are well known’, Marx continued. ‘Bakunin’s proposals were not accepted’.⁶¹ As mentioned, the result of the Basel Congress was quite gratifying for Bakunin: his resolution proposal for the abolition of the right of inheritance missed the required absolute majority by only three votes, while Marx’s proposal was pounded.⁶² ‘The annoyance which followed this failure[!] – perhaps Bakunin had based all kinds of private speculations on the assumption of success – found expression in the irritable comments of the *Égalité* and the *Progrès*.’⁶³ With these words Marx returned to the ‘*Égalité* affair’, which he once again blamed on Bakunin even though, as Marx knew full well, Robin was responsible for the campaign.⁶⁴ Marx attached to this letter the complete ‘Private Communication’ from the General Council’s Subcommittee from 1 January 1870, which was originally meant only for the French-speaking Federal Councils of the International. Marx then summed up the *Égalité* affair as follows:

The Geneva [Federal] Committee, however, had long grown tired of Bakunin’s despotism and saw itself with great displeasure being forced by him into opposition to the other German-Swiss Committees, the General Council, etc. It therefore endorsed the attitude of those members of the *Égalité* editorial board who opposed Bakunin. [...] Bakunin thereupon retired from Geneva to Ticino.⁶⁵

Bakunin had actually moved from Geneva to Locarno two months *before* these events and not ‘thereupon’. How much the despotic Bakunin was able to steer the *Égalité* from Locarno can be seen from the publication of Robin’s polemical articles about the General Council, which Bakunin disapproved of. Marx took up accusations of ‘despotism’ against Bakunin from a letter from Henri Perret.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ See above, p. 19.

⁵⁸ This refers to the resolution proposal by Bakunin for the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Liberty; see above, p. 442, n. 17.

⁵⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 115. The new translation mentioned above is used in the third sentence; see above, p. 21.

⁶⁰ See above, p. 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 115.

⁶² See above, p. 23.

⁶³ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Three weeks after the ‘Confidential Communication’, Marx wrote his son-in-law Paul Lafargue: Robin ‘did all in his power to *discredit the General Council* (he attacked it publicly in the *Égalité*)’ (*ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 489).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 123.

⁶⁶ Perret to Jung, 4 January 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 888. Marx may have also been referring to a letter from Perret from October 1869. Marx wrote about this letter (which is lost) on 30 October 1869 to Engels: ‘The secretary of

The conclusion of the 'Confidential Communication' is also made up of accusations against Bakunin that Marx had borrowed from others:

Shortly afterwards [Alexander] Herzen died. Bakunin, who from the time that he decided to set himself up as *director of the European workers' movement* had denied his old friend and patron Herzen, hastened to sing his praises immediately after his death. Why? Herzen, though personally wealthy, allowed the pseudo-socialist, Pan-Slavist party in Russia, which was friendly towards him, to pay him 25,000 francs annually for propaganda. By his paeon of praise Bakunin directed this stream of money *to himself*.⁶⁷

Marx heard this bizarre story about Bakunin's friend Alexander Herzen, who died in January 1870, and the Bakhmet'ev fund,⁶⁸ which he had administered, from a letter from Bakunin's former friend Johann Philipp Becker – who had switched sides during the *Égalité* affair and was trying to ingratiate himself with Marx with this letter. In the letter dated 13 March 1870, Becker vilified Bakunin as follows:

Bakunin who was very poor in the last while, apparently came into 25,000 francs after Herzen's death. This situation is as follows: this money was given to Herzen by his friends for his kind of propaganda. Bakunin, who had only recently profanely insulted Herzen, hurried to get into the good book of Herzen's followers by writing a canonisation of Herzen for the newspapers.⁶⁹ The money grab succeeded and so the *Kolokol* will be published again soon.⁷⁰

Engels commented on this crazy story as follows: 'The explanation about Bakunin [is] very good.'⁷¹ As was characteristic of Marx in the 'Confidential Communication', he exaggerated Becker's 'this money was given to Herzen by his friends for his kind of propaganda' into 'Herzen [...] allowed the pseudo-socialist, Pan-Slavist party [!] in Russia, which was friendly towards him, to pay him 25,000 francs annually [!] for propaganda'.⁷²

Marx must have shared the story with his Russophobic friend Borkheim, who made immediately use of it. A letter by Borkheim to the *Volksstaat* on 30 April 1870 stated: 'The affluent Herzen apparently received 25,000 francs a year from Pan-Slavist committees in Russia and abroad for his subversive activities in Europe [...]. Bakunin wanted to snatch the 25,000-franc-a-year salary for Pan-Slavist subversion upon Herzen's death.'⁷³

our French Genevan committee is utterly fed up with being saddled with Bakunin, and complains that he disorganises everything with his "tyranny". (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 364).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 123.

⁶⁸ See details in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 4, p. xlii–xlv. A. Herzen, *My past and thoughts: Memoirs*, 4 vols. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1968), vol. 4, pp. 1343–47. See also Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 11, p. 715.

⁶⁹ Bakunin's obituary on Herzen is meant, which appeared on 2 and 3 March 1870 in the French newspaper *Marseillaise* (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, pp. 19–23).

⁷⁰ Becker to Marx, 13 March 1870, in Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, p. 183.

⁷¹ Engels to Marx, 27 March 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 468.

⁷² *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 123.

⁷³ [S. Borkheim], 'Der Verfasser der 'Russischen Briefe' an die 'Drei Parteigenossen'', *Volksstaat*, 30 April 1870, p. 2. This bizarre depiction provoked a letter to the editor in which three irritated readers asked: 'The author of the "Russian letters" accuses Herzen of receiving 25,000 francs from a Pan-Slavist fund – but does he have *factual evidence*? If yes, then it is a bitter disappointment; however, we will bow to the truth! It's *defamation* without *evidence*! It's sad to see honest people accused in such a manner' ('Die 'Drei Parteigenossen' an den 'Verfasser der russischen Briefe'', *Volksstaat*, 4 June 1870, p. 3). Borkheim justified his words as follows: 'As Herzen was a Pan-Slavist, there is no particular "defamation" in accusing him of taking money from Pan-Slavist funds' ([S. Borkheim], 'Der Verfasser der 'Russischen Briefe' an die 'Drei Parteigenossen'', *Volksstaat*, 16 July 1870, p. 2).

And so the story about the Bakhmet'ev fund was embellished and distorted through continuous rumour-mongering. The 20,000 francs that Alexander Herzen received in August 1857 became a *yearly salary*; the Russian socialist Pavel Bakhmet'ev – who gave Herzen the money in 1857 and then emigrated to New Zealand hoping to form a socialist colony – mutated into 'Pan-Slavist committees in Russia and abroad'.

Bakunin first heard about this accusation from Borkheim's article in the *Volksstaat* and only wrote: 'One may understand how, in the face of such triumphant deeds, I have had nothing to say.'⁷⁴

In fact it is surprising that Marx based his 'Confidential Communication' on such questionable and outlandish stories as those from Hess, Perret, and Becker – upon closer inspection hardly any truth can be found in the 'Confidential Communication' at all. The Dutch Bakunin researcher Arthur Lehning once published a part of the 'Confidential Communication' for fun with the note that the text 'does not contain a single accurate fact'.⁷⁵ Even the Marxist historian Franz Mehring once wrote the following about the 'Confidential Communication': 'It is hardly necessary to enumerate the many errors the communication contains. Generally speaking, the more incriminating the accusations it makes against Bakunin appear to be, the more baseless they are in reality.'⁷⁶

However obvious the inconsistencies in the text are, the German socialists humbly welcomed the letter from London. After the 'Confidential Communication' was sent via Kugelmann to the Committee of the SDAP in Brunswick, it circulated between the party officials Wilhelm Bracke, Leonhard von Bonhorst, Samuel Spier, and Wilhelm Liebknecht. It was accepted at face value by everybody. Bonhorst wrote in a letter on 20 April 1870: 'The General Council [!] has passed along a very bulky document to us where they prove the Bakuninian swindle. You have to read it yourself; I spent two hours copying it for Leipzig'.⁷⁷ Wilhelm Liebknecht, who edited the *Volksstaat* in Leipzig, sent the following request to Marx on 27 April 1870: 'Be so kind and let me know right away what I should publish regarding Bakunin?'⁷⁸ And Kugelmann enthusiastically wrote Marx: 'My heartiest thanks for communicating your "Confidential Communication", which will certainly bring an end to the petty machinations of the short-sighted intriguers within the Internat[ional] and reinvigorate trust in the General Council.'⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 156.

⁷⁵ A. Lehning (ed.), *Bakounine et les autres. Esquisses et portraits contemporains d'un révolutionnaire* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1976), p. 276.

⁷⁶ F. Mehring, *Karl Marx. The story of his life*, ed. by R. and H. Norden (New York: Covici, Friede, 1935), p. 454.

⁷⁷ K.-H. Leidigkeit (ed.), *Der Leipziger Hochverratsprozeß vom Jahre 1872* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1960), p. 156.

⁷⁸ *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, p. 468.

⁷⁹ Kugelmann to Marx, 13 April 1870, in Kundel (ed.), 'Aus dem Kampf von Marx und Engels', p. 812.

CHAPTER 5. The Romance Federation split

A KEY ROLE IN THE UPCOMING conflicts would be played by the Russian emigrant Nikolai Utin (1841–1883), who called himself an ‘irreconcilable enemy’ of Bakunin.¹ Bakunin and Utin met in London in 1863 only to grow to hate each other over 1867 and 1868 because of differences in character and political attitude.² Utin later became one of Marx’s most important agents in his conflict with Bakunin. However, by the mid-1870s Utin retired from politics, applied for a pardon from the Third Section (secret police in the Russian Empire) in 1877 and returned to Russia the following year with official permission.

On 27 October 1869, Utin made his first appearance at the Geneva International, where he clashed with Bakunin three days before Bakunin was to move to Locarno.³ In November 1869 Utin’s journal *Narodnoe Delo* – founded by Bakunin only to be taken over by Utin and his friends – praised Marx and Becker exuberantly, which might have helped Utin get on Becker’s good side.⁴ Becker returned the favour in January 1870 by making publicity for a new section Utin had formed, which Becker claimed to have inspired:⁵ ‘A Russian section has been established here as well,’ Becker wrote in the *Vorbote* which he edited, ‘which has given itself the task of fighting Pan-Slavism and bringing Slavic-speaking workers, notably those in Austria, into the international movement.’⁶

Becker helped not only by publicising the Russian section formed by Utin and his compatriots Viktor Bartenev and Anton Trusov in Geneva, but by announcing his parting of ways with Bakunin in two long letters to the General Council members Jung and Marx.⁷ Therein, he also made the case for the Russian section’s membership in the International, promising that ‘the Russian section’s paper [*Narodnoe Delo*] would bring Bakunin into great difficulty’.⁸ Becker apparently also talked Utin and his friends into writing letters to the two General Council members and sending all four letters to London together with the statutes of the Russian section.

In their letters to Jung and Marx, the founders of the anti-Bakunist Russian section tried to give the impression that thanks to their propaganda new sections of the International would soon

¹ ‘Ah yes!’, Utin called out during the second congress of the Romance Federation, ‘it is true that I am his irreconcilable enemy’ (*Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 4). For more on Utin, see the biographical information in B. P. Koz’min, ‘N. I. Utin – Gertsenu i Ogarevu’, *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* 62 (1955), 607–25.

² Bakounine, ‘Rapport sur l’Alliance’, suite 2, pp. 47–49.

³ See the report in *Égalité*, 30 October 1869, pp. 1–2.

⁴ *Narodnoe Delo*, November 1869, p. 117. W. McClellan, *Revolutionary Exiles: The Russians in the First International and the Paris Commune* (London, Totowa: Frank Cass, 1979), p. 85.

⁵ In his letter to Jung on 12 March 1870, Becker spoke of ‘the Russian section formed at my suggestion’ (Jaechh, *Die Internationale*, p. 231).

⁶ *Vorbote*, 1870, p. 12.

⁷ This didn’t occur without insult; see above, p. 43.

⁸ Becker to Marx, 13 March 1870, in Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, p. 183.

be formed in Russia.⁹ However, no sections of the International were ever formed in Russia. They even stylised the Russian section as the ‘link between the Association and the *Russian Branch*’.¹⁰ In reality the section broke up two years later. Utin was the only truly active member of the Russian section, and his main motivation in forming the section seemed to be his rivalry with Bakunin. As such, the letters from Utin and his friends to Marx are mostly composed of insults against Bakunin. They were already all too anxious to disassociate themselves from Bakunin in their first letter to Marx (12 March 1870):

so as not to lead you astray nor give you any rude surprises later on, we are also bound to inform you that we have absolutely nothing in common with Mr Bakunin and his kind. Much to the contrary: we shall soon be forced to render a public judgment of the worth of this man, so that the world of workers – whose opinion alone has real value in our eyes – may know that there are individuals who, preaching certain principles in their midst, would *fabricate* something quite different in their country, Russia – something which well and truly merits the charge of infamy.¹¹

Between the end of April and start of May 1870, Marx urged Utin, Bartenev and Trusov to collect information about Bakunin and send it to London.¹² Their reply was full of further put-downs:

In his frivolous egoism, [Bakunin] shall always throw himself into all manner of alliances in which he frankly plays the role of a dictator, and consequently shall always intrigue and conspire, not against the true enemies of the people, but against all those who have dared to do something without him, who have dared to create some institution, some organ, in the interest of the people, but in which he, Bakunin, could not have a part [...] nothing is dear to him but his own ambition, and all must be sacrificed to this ambition; all means are to his liking.¹³

‘We never wanted to air this dirty laundry in public’, Utin and his friends concluded – while at the same saying that they might publish a brochure about Bakunin. One can imagine how happy Marx was to have these supporters fall in his lap. Marx’s friend, the Russia-hater Borkheim, triumphed shortly afterward in a letter to the *Volksstaat*: ‘The “Russian section of the International Association” was formed to *counteract* Bakunin’s influence, and he is not even a member.’¹⁴

⁹ ‘The International is banned in Russia, but this cannot stop us from actively making propaganda there, and we may hope that in a little time the International organisation shall take root amid the working classes in Russia’ (Utin, Netov [Bartenev], and Trusov to Jung, 11 March 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 864).

¹⁰ Utin, Bartenev, and Trusov to Marx, 24 July 1870, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, p. 390.

¹¹ IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 3888.

¹² See Perret to Jung, 13 May 1870: ‘Utin and the Russians will be sending you the documents concerning Bakunin shortly – he has received a letter from Karl Marx asking for them’ (IISG, Jung Papers, no. 893). Already on 28 April, Perret told Jung that this was possible (*ibid.*, no. 891). Marx was on the lookout for someone who could be used ‘as an informant about Bakunin’ since December 1868, and first thought of Alexander Serno-Solov’evich (see Marx to Engels, 13 January 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 202). Utin’s ‘engagement’ in early 1870 appears to have got around to Bakunin, who in October 1872 wrote: ‘Already, in the spring of 1870, I heard that Mr Utin [...] having told anyone who would listen that Mr Marx had written him a confidential letter in which he recommended gathering all the facts against me, that is to say, all the tales, all the charges, as odious as possible, having the appearance of evidence, adding that if these appearances were plausible he would use them against me at the next congress.’ (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 155–56. See also Bakunin to Lorenzo, 7 May 1872, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.)

¹³ Utin, Bartenev (Netov) and Trusov to Marx, 24 July 1870, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, pp. 388–90.

¹⁴ [Borkheim], ‘Der Verfasser der ‘Russischen Briefe’’, 30 April 1870, p. 2.

Engels remained sceptical about the revelations Utin and his friends made: 'What an idiotic piece of gossip-mongering. Six Russians quarrelling among themselves as if the mastery of the globe depended on the outcome.'¹⁵ But Marx was more than happy to refer to his new friends at the end of his 'Confidential Communication':

About two weeks ago they applied to London, sending in their Programme and Statutes, and requesting permission to form a Russian branch [section]. Permission was given.¹⁶

In a separate letter to Marx they asked him to represent them provisionally on the General Council. That too was done. At the same time they indicated – and apparently *wished to excuse themselves* to Marx on this account¹⁷ – that in the immediate future they would have to expose Bakunin publicly, since the man spoke in *two entirely different tongues*, one in Russia, another in Europe.

The game of this very dangerous intriguer – at least in the domain of the *International* – will soon be played out.¹⁸

La Chaux-de-Fonds Congress (April 1870)

The political differences between the tendency of the Geneva *fabrique*, which was integrated in local politics, and the social-revolutionary tendency of the Alliance and Jura¹⁹ abruptly became acute after the Alliance was refused membership in the Romance Federation. Both sides prepared themselves for the anticipated conflict at the next congress of the Romance Federation. On 27 September 1869, the general assembly of the Geneva Alliance decided to appeal the Federal Committee's refusal at the Federation's next congress, which a vote at the founding congress had set for the first Monday in April 1870 in La Chaux-de-Fonds in the Canton Neuchâtel.²⁰ On 2 April 1870, two days before the congress, Bakunin reminded the Alliance's general assembly about the resolution to protest the Federal Committee's refusal, which got him into a fierce debate with Becker, who had secretly parted ways with him. In an apparently benign act, Becker warned that the Alliance would be given the boot again if they appealed at the congress. 'One mustn't be afraid to get a kick', Bakunin answered, 'if one keeps holding one's flag high'; the reactionary will always defend itself against the revolution, the revolution will always have to fight for its rights.²¹ In the vote that followed, the majority of participants voted to send a delegate to the Romance Federation's congress with following mandate: 'The delegate for the Alliance asks ad-

¹⁵ Engels to Marx, 31 July 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 19.

¹⁶ At the meeting of the General Council on 22 March 1870 ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 759–60).

¹⁷ A reference to the anxiety of Utin and his friends evident in their letter to Marx from 12 March 1870, see above, p. 48.

¹⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 124.

¹⁹ Of course the terms 'Geneva tendency' and 'Jura tendency' only provide a rough explanation and merely represent the two main tendencies within the International in Western Switzerland. Movements like the initially influential one surrounding the doctor Pierre Coullery in Jura are not accounted for because they hardly had any influence on the conflict described here.

²⁰ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', pp. 168–69. 'Extrait du Rapport sur les travaux du premier Congrès romand de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs, tenu à Genève, au cercle des Quatre-Saisons, les 2, 3 et 4 Janvier 1869 (Suite et fin)', *Égalité*, 10 April 1869, p. 1.

²¹ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', pp. 188–89. For details about this discussion see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairievolution*, pp. 188–89.

mission to the congress and to the Romance Federation with the same rights as the delegates of all the other sections.’²²

In Jura the topics for the upcoming congress of the Romance Federation were being discussed intensely, as well. Probably at the end of January 1870, the central section of the Courtelary District (Val de Saint-Imier) proposed to add a debate about ‘the position of the International regarding governments’ to the agenda.²³ This resulted in a vehement response from a meeting of the Geneva International on 9 March 1870:

Ma... requests clarification on this issue.

H. Perr... believes that the goal of the section that has presented it is to engage in abstention from political affairs; however, no further instructions have been given; it is vague.

Gué... opposes abstention; on the contrary, the worker must involve himself with all things governmental and political, for the governments will not voluntarily tender their resignations.

Rey... urges that we follow G...’s opinion.

Ou..., lamenting that the issue was not better defined, rejects the abstention of members of the International from political affairs; he explains at length that there exist different perspectives on the subject according to country, and that in England, France, or America, one would be laughed at if one preached abstention. He argues that the presence of a worker in a parliament is a huge advantage, if not for the votes he can get, then as an agitational influence, since the eyes of all the workers shall be upon him. A time shall come when workers shall push their representatives to the supreme power, and then capital will revolt, but at that point, the weapons shall have changed hands, and we shall be the strongest.

Cr... rejects abstention, he does not understand how one could make such a proposal, for the workers already abstain too much by virtue of indifference.

Gué... argues that in Switzerland, if the workers wish it, they can gain power through the vote. [...]

Ou... adds that politics must serve as our tactic for socialist propaganda.

Cr... undertakes to fight vigorously against abstentionism at the Romance congress.²⁴

‘Political action is everything for us’, Utin later summarised what he perceived to be the opinion of the Geneva International’s members.²⁵

The Geneva and Jura tendencies met for the last time before the Federation’s congress at a benefit for the International in Lausanne on 27 February 1870. On the topic of politics, Henri Perret – a spokesman for the Geneva *fabrique* and secretary of the Federal Committee – noted in his speech that he categorically opposed the current government. At the same time he declared: ‘The government that emerges from our midst, that of the workers, in short, shall have all our sympathies, and we shall respect it.’²⁶ On the other hand Guillaume spoke out ‘against the corrupting influence of parliamentarianism’²⁷ and warned: ‘Appoint the seven members of

²² Andréas/Molnár (eds.), ‘L’Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux’, p. 190.

²³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 278. On 22 January 1870, the *Égalité* still spoke of only two items on the agenda: the Federation of Resistance Funds and the Cooperative Associations (*Égalité*, 22 January 1870, pp. 1–2). The third item was only mentioned on 5 March 1870 (*ibid.*, 5 March 1870, p. 1).

²⁴ *Égalité*, 12 March 1870, p. 2 (the speakers were apparently Louis Magnin, Henri Perret, L. Guétat, Charles Reymond, Outine [Utin] and Edouard Crosset).

²⁵ Speech by Utin at a commission meeting of the London Conference on 18 September 1871, recorded by Engels (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 296).

²⁶ *Égalité*, 12 March 1870, p. 1.

²⁷ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 279.

your Romance Federation's Committee, in whom you trust, as heads of State; then *voilà!* you shall have minted them as brand-new bourgeois.'²⁸

The course of the Jura sections was further strengthened by an event that took place in Lyon on 13 March 1870 – an audience of 5,000 to 6,000 witnessed the most important public meeting that the International ever held in France.²⁹ The gathering was similar to a congress of the International: delegates came from Paris, Rouen, Marseilles, and other French cities; Adhémar Schwitzguébel attended as the delegate for the Jura sections;³⁰ and César De Paepe, international secretary for the Belgian Federal Council, sent an official address, which included the following:

What should be the position of the proletarian class with regard to political movements that attempt to modify the form of governments, with regard to the radical democrats and bourgeois republicans? [...] This bourgeois socialism has nothing in common with the kind we want [...]; the artificial mechanism called *government* shall disappear into the economic organism; politics shall be based upon socialism.³¹

The applause in response to this address told the Jura sections that they had close allies in the socialists in France and Belgium when it came to the central question at the upcoming congress of the Romance Federation regarding its attitude toward governments. Moreover an address from Spain was sent to the Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds: 'With respect to the position of the workers regarding governments, we can happily declare that the Spanish workers are more and more convinced that they can expect absolutely nothing from their participation in matters of the state'.³²

The last issue of the *Progrès* before the congress of the Federation, edited by Guillaume, pointed out that international opinion favoured the Jura's social-revolutionary position: 'it is the opinion, finally, of the vast majority of the International. We hope thus that it shall be that of the Romance congress as well'.³³

The agenda of the congress of the Romance Federation was announced on 5 March 1870:

- 1) Verification of mandates.
- 2) Election of the bureau members.
- 3) Report of the Federal Committee and nomination of the verification commission.
- 4) Partial revision of the Rules of the Federation and of the journal.
- 5) Discussion of the issues on the agenda.
- 6) Nomination of the Federal Committee and determination of its seat for the year 1870–1871.
- 7) Determination of the place where the journal is to be published and nomination of the editorial council.
- 8) Determination of the location for the 1871 congress.³⁴

Bakunin wrote his friend Albert Richard in Lyon regarding points 5 to 7 on the agenda:

²⁸ *Égalité*, 5 March 1870, p. 2.

²⁹ See details in J. P. W. Archer, *The First International in France 1864–1872: Its Origins, Theories, and Impact* (Lanham, New York, Oxford: University Press of America, 1997), p. 216.

³⁰ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 102.

³¹ 'Adresse des Travailleurs belges aux Délégués des Travailleurs français réunis à Lyon le 13 mars 1870', *Progrès*, 26 March 1870, pp. 1–2.

³² Gaspar Sentiñón and Rafael Farga Pellicer to 'Compagnon président du congrès romand', 31 March 1870, in *Solidarité*, 23 April 1870, p. 2.

³³ *Progrès*, 2 April 1870, p. 2.

³⁴ *Égalité*, 5 March 1870, p. 1.

This congress will be most important for the future of the International in Romance Switzerland. There will be a great battle. It will mainly concern the issue of *the workers' abstention from or participation in local politics*. All of us in the sections of the [Jura] Mountains are for abstention. The truly Genevan workers, those of the *fabrique*, are for participation. [...] It is nearly resolved, that either our friends of the Mountain shall triumph, and then that the Federal Council and editorial control of the *Égalité* shall go over to them³⁵ – or else, if our friends are defeated, that the sections of the Mountains, and with them perhaps those of Lausanne, Vevey, Neufchatel, and Bienne will separate from Geneva to form a separate federation. The *fabrique* in Geneva for its part has openly declared that if the congress rejects participation in local politics, it will secede from the sections of the Mountains. [...]

In addition to its local significance the battle that shall unfold at La Chaux-de-Fonds will have an enormous, universal importance. It shall be the forerunner and precursor to the one we will bring to the next general congress of the International:

Do we want the grand politics of universal socialism or the petty politics of the bourgeois radicals revised and corrected from the standpoint of the bourgeois workers?

Do we want the abolition of bourgeois nations and political states and the advent of the single, universal, socialist state?

Do we want the complete emancipation of the workers or only the amelioration of their lot?

Do we want to create a new world or to plaster over the cracks in the old?

These are the issues which we must study and prepare for the next Congress.³⁶

The other side was also fully aware of the essential differences. For example, in a letter to Jung – the General Council's corresponding secretary for Switzerland – Perret explained: 'I am in complete agreement with you on the issue of not abstaining from politics; we must continually, energetically demand rights and concessions from our governments, until the day they will be completely abolished.'³⁷

Perret went on to call Bakunin and his friends in the Alliance newcomers in the International who were either bourgeois or the sons of bourgeois, and announce that he would lead a 'merciless war' against them. He then asked if he was eligible to vote at the upcoming congress of the Romance Federation without a mandate from a section – he was only a delegate of the Federal Committee.

Utin also wrote Jung on 24 March 1870: 'I am quite afraid that all this intrigue and bombast, all these misinterpretations of the goals and tendencies of the International, may break the unity of the Romance Federation at the Chaux-de-Fonds congress'.³⁸

Inspired by the letters from Utin and Perret, Jung appears to have positioned himself against Bakunin a bit prematurely and given Utin corresponding orders – as Utin's reply to him on 1 April 1870 implies: 'We shall be at the Romance congress in sufficient numbers to follow your

³⁵ At the meeting of the International's Geneva sections on 2, 9 and 16 February 1870, various changes to the regulations of the *Égalité* and Romance Federation were discussed in preparation for the Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds. The editors of the *Égalité* were to be put under the control of the local sections and the Federal Committee – as opposed to the current editorial autonomy. Whereupon the Jura section suggested that the *Égalité* be published in a location other than Geneva (*Égalité*, 5 February 1870, p. 2; 12 February 1870, p. 2; 17 February 1870, pp. 1–2; Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 278).

³⁶ Bakunin to Richard, 1 April 1870, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, pp. 277–78.

³⁷ Perret to Jung, 3 February 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 889.

³⁸ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 216/5.

instructions if Bakunin meddles in it'.³⁹ During the congress the Genevan engraver François Weyermann revealed that the Geneva delegates had a mandate to leave the congress immediately if the Alliance was accepted into the Romance Federation.⁴⁰

As such, the proceedings of the second congress of the Romance Federation in La Chaux-de-Fonds on 4 April 1870 were doomed from the start. Along with the 38 representatives of the member sections, whose mandates were checked and accepted without any objections (first agenda item), five more delegates were present. These represented three sections applying for membership in the Romance Federation at the congress: the engravers' section from the Courtelary District, the Geneva section of the Alliance and the propaganda section from La Chaux-de-Fonds. After forming the congress office (second agenda item), there was a first debate about whether the admission of the three sections should be dealt with first so that they could take part in remainder of the congress. The question of the Courtelary section's admission was moved and carried unanimously. The ensuing debate about the Alliance section's membership led to a heated discussion that ended in a new point of order being narrowly approved: the Federal Committee's report was to be read, following which the question of the Alliance's membership was to be dealt with.⁴¹

In their report, the Federal Committee only included a very scant justification for their refusal of the Alliance: the Alliance section's membership was unjustifiable because it would be a second 'mixed' section (i.e. a section without a specific trade) in Geneva next to the central section;⁴² the Federal Committee feared that the Alliance section would breed dissent within the Romance Federation, etc.⁴³ However, none of these reasons were covered by the Federal Rules: as the Alliance was an official section of the International, the Federal Committee could have only based its refusal on a discrepancy between the rules of the section and those of the federation.⁴⁴

The subsequent discussion of the Alliance section's membership saw tempers rise. After diffuse arguments by the Alliance's opponents raised objections (for example: 'Listen, if this intrigue is dangerous for the International, you should denounce it and provide the details'),⁴⁵ the Geneva delegates Guétat and especially Utin reacted with fierce attacks against Bakunin. Whereupon Guillaume – who was a delegate of the central section of Neuchâtel – reminded the congress about the court of honour's verdict on Bakunin at the International's Basel Congress, which had

³⁹ *Ibid.*, delo 216/6.

⁴⁰ *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 1; *Solidarité*, 11 April 1870, p. 3 (both tendencies published their own minutes after the congress in their organs, the *Égalité* [Geneva] and *Solidarité* [Neuchâtel]). Utin confirmed at a commission meeting at the London Conference on 18 September 1871 that the Geneva delegates had an imperative mandate to leave the congress if the Alliance was accepted. According to his account, the following resolutions were passed in Geneva before the congress: '1) the Journal shall remain in Geneva, 2) the Central Committee shall as well, 3) and the Alliance shall not be admitted' (minutes recorded by Engels, see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 296).

⁴¹ *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, pp. 1–2. *Solidarité*, 11 April 1870, p. 3.

⁴² The Alliance actually seems to have fulfilled the needs of many of the International's members in Geneva by organising educational initiatives and the exchange of ideas between workers in the different trades – on the other hand, the central section dominated by the *fabrique* was much too busy with local politics to satisfy its members; see M. Vuilleumier, 'L'anarchisme et les conceptions de Bakounine sur l'organisation révolutionnaire', in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo. Atti del Convegno promosso dalla Fondazione Luigi Einaudi (Torino, 5, 6 e 7 dicembre 1969)* (Torino: Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1971), pp. 498–99.

⁴³ 'Rapport du Comité fédéral romand au Congrès de Chaux-de-Fonds du 4 avril 1870', *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, pp. 5–6; 7 May 1870, p. 4; 14 May 1870, pp. 3–4. For the section of the Alliance, see 30 April 1870, p. 6.

⁴⁴ Art. 1 and 4 of the Rules of the Romance Federation, see above, p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 3.

sided entirely with Bakunin. Utin then threatened to convene a new court of honour at the next congress of the International, warning, ‘and be sure that there shall be no lack of arguments and documents to unmask certain individuals once and for all.’⁴⁶

The vote took place after the debate was closed. By a vote of 21 in favour and 18 against, the Alliance was accepted into the Romance Federation. Tumultuous and chaotic scenes followed the announcement of the result.⁴⁷ The majority of the delegates, the representative of the Jura sections, saw no alternative to continuing the congress elsewhere in La Chaux-de-Fonds – the split of the Romance Federation was complete.

After attempts at mediation failed, both sides continued the congress on their own and each passed resolutions on the agenda items. The resolutions passed by the different sides show that the Geneva Alliance section’s membership merely *provoked* the Romance Federation’s split and that *political differences were the real reason behind the conflict*. For the agenda item ‘the position of the International regarding governments’, the congress dominated by the Geneva sections stated that they reject ‘political abstention as being fatal in its consequences for our shared work’ and justified this as follows:

When we profess political intervention and worker candidacies, it is well understood that we do not believe in any way that we can come to our emancipation by the road of working-class representation in the legislative and executive councils. We know very well that the present regimes must be abolished; we only wish to use this representation as a means of agitation which must not be neglected by the tactics we must follow in our struggle.⁴⁸

On the other hand, the congress dominated by the Jura sections passed a resolution announcing

That all participation of the working class in bourgeois governmental politics being incapable of having any other result than the consolidation of the existing order of things, which would paralyse the revolutionary socialist action of the proletariat;

The Romance congress recommends to all sections of the International Workers’ Association to renounce all action having for its goal to accomplish social transformation by means of national political reforms and to direct all their activity toward the federative constitution of labour organisations, the sole means of assuring the success of the social revolution. This federation is the true representation of labour, which absolutely must take place outside of the political governments.⁴⁹

At the end of the congresses, each group elected a Federal Committee that it considered the rightful representative of the Romance Federation: the *new Federal Committee* seated in La

⁴⁶ Guillaume explained: ‘A similar event took place at the congress of Basel: Liebknecht also attacked [Bakunin], and he was forced to admit that he had been wrong and that Bakunin was a revolutionary above all suspicion; why then didn’t Utin protest against this verdict of the jury at the Basel congress?’ Utin answered: ‘You ask me why I didn’t come to attack Bakunin at the Congress of Basel; I reply that I was unaware that the Alliance was admitted into the International, and that everything I said about his fatal involvement in Russian affairs concerns a period after the congress. However, this should not allow you to abuse the name of citizen Liebknecht. In Basel, it was not a matter of awarding Bakunin a certificate of civic revolutionism; it was merely a matter of an article in the German newspapers severely criticising Bakunin’s conduct in 1848, the author of which suspected that Bakunin was a spy for the Russian government. It cost citizen L[i]ebknecht nothing to confess that Bakunin was not a spy’ (*Égalité*, 30 April 1870, pp. 4–5). See above, pp. 23–25.

⁴⁷ *Égalité*, 30 April 1870, p. 5. *Solidarité*, 11 April 1870, p. 4.

⁴⁸ *Égalité*, 16 April 1870, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Solidarité*, 11 April 1870, p. 3.

Chaux-de-Fonds was elected by the predominantly Jurassian congress, the *former Federal Committee* in Geneva was re-elected by its supporters.

Marx's third 'communication' regarding Bakunin (April 1870)

After receiving the sensational news of the Romance Federation split, Marx decided to pen a third diatribe against Bakunin. After addressing Belgium⁵⁰ and Germany⁵¹ with anti-Bakunist 'communications', Marx turned to France where another key figure of the coming conflict was residing – Marx's son-in-law Paul Lafargue.

Lafargue (1842–1911)⁵² was born in Santiago de Cuba, came to France when he was nine and visited secondary school in Bordeaux and Toulouse before beginning his studies in medicine at the University of Paris. After he was barred from studying at university because of his political activities as a co-organiser of the International Students' Congress in Liège (October/November 1865), he moved to London where he was able to complete his studies in medicine. On 6 March 1866 he was accepted into the General Council of the International.⁵³ There he got to know Marx and fell in love with his daughter Laura. They married in April 1868 and soon moved to Paris where Lafargue hoped to complete his degree while earning a living as a journalist. In the meantime he attended the International's meetings in Paris and kept his father-in-law up to date on events. On 18 April 1870, for example, he enthusiastically described the founding meeting of the Federation of Paris Sections of the International, which was attended by around 1,200 people.⁵⁴ When Marx found out that Paul Robin was a member of the newly formed Paris Federal Council, he immediately warned Lafargue:

I call your attention to the presence in your committee of *Robin, Bakunine's agent* who, at Geneva, did all in his power to *discredit the General Council* (he attacked it publicly in the *Égalité*) and to prepare Bakunin's dictatorship in the International Association. He has been expressly sent to Paris there to act in the same sense. Hence this fellow must be closely watched without becoming aware of having a surveillant at his side.⁵⁵

Marx used the chance to bring up the *Bakunin affair* for the third time in a few months – this time with Lafargue. It isn't surprising that Marx used almost the exact same material for his attack against Bakunin on this occasion as in the other 'communications'. The following was once again presented as fact to Lafargue:

- Bakunin had attempted to move the General Council from London to Geneva (misinformation from Moses Hess).⁵⁶
- Bakunin had tricked his way into a yearly salary from Russian Pan-Slavists as Alexander Herzen's successor (misinformation from Johann Philipp Becker).⁵⁷

⁵⁰ See above, p. 38.

⁵¹ See above, pp. 40–43.

⁵² For more on Lafargue, see L. Derfler, *Paul Lafargue and the Founding of French Marxism 1842–1882* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

⁵³ 'Minute Book of the Provisional Central Council October 5, 1864 to August 28, 1866', p. 390.

⁵⁴ Paul Lafargue to Marx, 18 April 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, pp. 555–57. See also Archer, *The First International in France*, pp. 191–92.

⁵⁵ Marx to Paul Lafargue, 19 April 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 489.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 492. See above, p. 29.

⁵⁷ See above, p. 43.

- Bakunin had attacked the General Council in the *Égalité* (misinformation from Henri Perret).⁵⁸
- Bakunin was advocating the continued existence of classes through his phrase ‘equalisation of classes’ (Marx and Bakunin had both referred to the wording as a ‘slip of the pen’).⁵⁹
- Bakunin thought that the abolition of the right of inheritance was the ‘first requirement’ of the social revolution (a distortion of the second point in the Alliance programme).⁶⁰

Marx even magnified the last two points into ‘Bakunine’s programme’, which was made up of three points in total. Only in the third point did Marx’s polemic touch on a new and relevant topic: the debate between political-parliamentary and social-revolutionary socialism – which only recently led to the split in the Romance Federation. Marx described *Bakunin’s standpoint* as follows:

3) The working class must not occupy itself with *politics*. They must only organise themselves by trades-unions. One fine day, by means of the *Internationale* they will supplant the place of all existing states. You see what a caricature he has made of my doctrines! [...] The ass has not even seen that every class movement *as a class movement*, is necessarily and was always a *political movement*.⁶¹

In fact, Marx was the one making a caricature of *Bakunin’s ideas*. Of course Bakunin had always been involved in *politics* and *political movements* – he was only against the formation of parties and the conquest of political power. At the first congress of the League of Peace and Liberty, for example, Bakunin explained his position in a speech, which he had sent to Marx:⁶²

Gentlemen, for anyone who can see, it is evident that by this time that the workers of Europe are uniting more and more, across the artificial boundaries of states, by means of this great International Workers’ Association, which, just born, is already a real power – it is evident, I say, that the workers of Europe are determined to take politics into their own hands, to make their own politics, that is to say, the politics of the emancipation of labour from the heavy and odious yoke of capital. Any other politics is foreign to them from now on; moreover, and with good reason, they see as hostile and contrary to their interests any politics that would pose any goal other than this radical, total economic emancipation of the workers.⁶³

Marx did not choose to include a critical analysis of any of Bakunin’s ideas in his ‘communication’ to Lafargue; instead, Marx summarised his problem with Bakunin as follows:

Thus this damned Muscovite has succeeded to call forth a great public scandal within our ranks, to make his personality a watchword, to infect our Working men’s Association with the poison of sectarianism, and to paralyse our action by secret intrigue. [...] You are now sufficiently informed to counteract Bakounine’s movements within our Paris branches.⁶⁴

⁵⁸ See above, p. 37. Paradoxically, at the beginning of the letter Marx himself stated that *Robin* had attacked the General Council in the *Égalité*; see above, p. 55.

⁵⁹ See above, pp. 4–6. In reality the ‘equalisation of classes’ phrase in the second item of the Alliance’s programme had been changed a year before; see above, p. 6. Paradoxically, Marx himself alluded to the fact that the programme *had been changed* elsewhere in the letter (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 491).

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 19–20.

⁶¹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, pp. 490–91.

⁶² See above, p. 444, n. 42.

⁶³ Bakounine/Mroczkowski, ‘Discours de Bakounine’, p. 212. See also above, p. 16.

⁶⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 493.

After receiving Marx's letter, Lafargue sounded out members of the Paris International about Bakunin only to have to bring Marx down to earth in his reply:

I have spoken with several people and tried to discover their opinion of him [Bakunin] without telling them mine; unfortunately, I saw that all favoured him. An open attack on him is impossible, and here is why: for all those who know him, he represents radical ideas, while his Swiss opponents are reactionaries, and the last scene that played out at the Romance congress, as recounted in the *Solidarité*,⁶⁵ Bakunin's newspaper, which is now distributed throughout Paris, is made to confirm this idea; for twice Bakunin has asserted that his expulsion was sought because he stood for atheism [...].⁶⁶

And so Marx must have realised that the 'communication' concerning Bakunin that he had sent to France had not damaged Bakunin's reputation either – despite all the effort put into the polemic. Only the 'Confidential Communication' that Marx sent to Germany had resulted in a euphoric reaction; whereas, the 'denunciation and characterisation of Bakunin' he sent to Belgium even resulted in a harsh criticism.⁶⁷ After this experience Marx did not send any more extensive 'communications' concerning Bakunin.

The General Council's decision (June 1870)

As things stood, there could no longer be any doubt about the Alliance's membership in the Romance Federation: the minutes of the Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds published by both sides showed that all the mandates of the Romance Federation member sections had been checked and accepted at the beginning of the congress. The result of the vote, 21 to 18 in favour of accepting the Alliance, was also not questioned by either group.⁶⁸

In the *Égalité*, now edited by Utin and the mouthpiece of the Geneva sections, the argument was nevertheless put forward that the Alliance's opponents should have received four more votes: Jean-Baptiste Dupleix (the meeting's president) didn't vote, two Geneva delegates were not present and a fourth had forgotten his mandate. In addition the 18 delegates that had voted *against* the Alliance represented 2,000 members while the 21 delegates who vote *for* the Alliance only represented 600 members.⁶⁹ This argument contradicted the Rules of the Romance Federation: Art. 47 stated that *each* member section (regardless of its size) had the right to send two delegates to the congress; a section that did not make use of its rights could not protest against decisions made by the majority of the congress.⁷⁰ Moreover the doubts about whether

⁶⁵ This refers to the minutes of the congress in nos. 1–4 of the *Solidarité*; see above, p. 463, n. 40.

⁶⁶ Paul Lafargue to Marx, [20 April 1870 or later], RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 5913. A few days later Laura Lafargue informed her father that Leo Frankel and Victor Jaclard would be monitoring Robin (*ibid.*, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 267/2).

⁶⁷ See above, pp. 38–39.

⁶⁸ The *Égalité*, 23 April 1870, p. 2, also conceded that the vote was lost by the Genevans.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 16 April 1870, p. 3. In addition Marx and Engels later argued that the vote about the Alliance's membership had been invalid because art. 53 and 55 of the Rules of the Romance Federation supposedly stipulated that 'any important decision' required a two-thirds majority (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 475). They borrowed this argument from Utin, 'To the Fifth Congress', p. 382. In reality art. 53 and 55 of the Federal Rules only called for a two-thirds majority for 'decisions that would impose an extraordinary burden on the sections' or changes to the statutes (*Statuts pour la Fédération*, p. 14).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the congress was quorate would have been more convincing if they were expressed *at the beginning* of the congress and not after an undesirable outcome of a vote.

A letter on 7 April 1870 from the delegates of the predominantly Genevan congress appealed to the London General Council of the International to take their side. In this letter, they also said that *political differences* were at the root of the conflict:

even though we would have allowed the admission of the Alliance, the split was inevitable: no question on the programme of the congress had been addressed or resolved, and we knew well in advance, as the documents attest, that the rupture would take place anyway [...].

We therefore await [...] your word on the dispute, your approval of the decisions made at the congress by the delegates representing sections whose members number two thousand, and at the same time the repudiation, by the authority of your voice, of the conduct of those delegates who together do not represent more than 600 members for having sought disunity and for having tried to lead the Association away from its true principles and aspirations for the benefit of a few ambitious types, unworthy of being part of our great family.⁷¹

This letter was sent to Jung who related it to the General Council on 12 April 1870. Its members decided to call on both sides to clarify their positions.⁷² Jung sent this request to Perret and Guillaume. Guillaume answered on 21 April 1870 in a private letter:

For a long time, there has been dissent between ourselves and the coterie leading the Geneva watchmakers. [...] What divides us is our opinion on cooperation and bourgeois politics. [...] As for politics, in Switzerland, there is only one thing for us to do – to boycott the elections. Instead, the leadership in Geneva would like us to elect Grosselin or Coullery to the State Council. A lot of good that will do! [...]

To test the waters, to take stock of the situation, they made a prelude of the case of the Alliance, which the Federal Committee arbitrarily rejected from the Federation. – The stage was cleverly selected by the Geneva coterie: instead of separating on the basis of principles, they separated on the basis of personal affairs. They put forward the personality of Bakunin, they attacked him, in order to represent us, the majority, as his creatures. – The delegate from the Alliance not being allowed to give explanations, it was necessary that Schwitzguébel and myself – the only ones who are even a little familiar with the Alliance – should bear the entire burden of the discussion. I did not even have on hand the rules of the Alliance, which I had to defend. Mr Utin, instead of making arguments, insulted Bakunin; Dupleix and Weyermann accused us of being atheists.⁷³ I responded as well as I could. The vote found us to be 21 against 18.⁷⁴

The Federal Committee of La Chaux-de-Fonds, which for the most part represented sections from Jura, had already sent a similar account of the events to the General Council on 7 April 1870.

A *personal enemy* of Bakunin, as he calls himself, the Russian journalist Utin saw fit to place the question [of the Alliance's membership] on a purely personal terrain. The delegates of the

⁷¹ The Romance Congress of La Chaux-de-fonds to the General Council, 7 April 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 564.

⁷² 'Cit. Jung had received a long letter from La Chaux de Fonds announcing a split at the Congress. In consequence of a majority having voted for the admission of the social democratic alliance of Geneva the Geneva & La Chaux de Fonds delegates had withdrawn & continued the Congress by themselves. The reading of the letter was postponed & Cit. Jung instructed to write to both parties for full particulars' ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 764).

⁷³ See above, p. 12.

⁷⁴ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 391/3. Jung gave a summary of Guillaume's letter at the meeting of the General Council on 26 April 1870 ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 768).

sections refused to join in Mr Utin's hatred and thought they had to assess the rules of a section, not the merit or demerit of a man; 21 delegates voted to accept the Alliance, 18 to refuse it. The majority represented the delegates from Locle, from Neuchâtel, from all the sections of the Courtelary district, the Bernese Jura, Biel, Moutiers, and finally Vevey and Granges (Solothurn). Following this vote, the delegates of the minority spoke in turn, declaring their withdrawal from the Romance congress. The President himself, Dupleix of Geneva, gave his resignation immediately. A violent tumult ensued [...].

Finally, seeing that it was impossible to bring the minority back into the congress, we continued our work without them. Resolutions were made on all the questions on the agenda [...] the Federal Committee was moved to La Chaux-de-Fonds, the newspaper to Neuchâtel under the title '*Solidarité*'.⁷⁵

In his report to the General Council, Perret once again made the case that the Geneva delegates should have represented the majority:

we urged the sections of Geneva to represent themselves by a respectable number of delegates; unfortunately, many could not do it, lacking funds; finally there were 15 of us, representing 21 sections; we hoped that the Vaudois would be represented, only two from Vevey who had passed over to the enemy, having been with us a month before [...] [T]he Alliance of Geneva had sent a delegate before being admitted, *Joukovsky*, one of Bakunin's damned souls; Guillaume's coterie scarcely noticed us the morning just before the assembly of these gentlemen opened at a café in town, and they arrived at the congress as a bloc; during the first meeting, Guillaume *led and commanded* these men. I shall let the *Égalité* describe all these things to you in detail; it is shameful to see our congress take the shapes of the bourgeois Assemblies, the entire morning taken up with strife and useless quarrels; they didn't want to allow the report of the Federal Committee be read, until finally it was read in the afternoon; it was after this that the debate started on the Alliance of Geneva, but unfortunately for us, three of us were missing at the roll-call; one had forgotten his mandate, and we did not want to let him be seated, and two others had not yet arrived.⁷⁶

Perret insisted that the Federal Committee remain in Geneva because 'We remain the most numerous.'⁷⁷

Once these letters arrived in London, the General Council had enough details from both sides to reach its decision. However, at the meeting of the General Council on 19 April 1870, Jung didn't want to commit himself. He merely informed the meeting that statements had arrived from both sides and that 'There were some discrepancies between the statements of the two parties'. He made a preliminary decision by highlighting the figures in the Geneva statement: 'The constituency of the new committee numbered about 600, that of the Geneva committee about 2,000 members.'⁷⁸

Doubt would soon be cast over the membership figures as the numbers given by Geneva proved insupportable: the 'more than two thousand members'⁷⁹ the opponents of the Alliance at the Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds claimed to represent on 16 April 1870 turned into 1,459 members

⁷⁵ The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 7 April 1870, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 391/2.

⁷⁶ Perret to Jung, 15 April 1870, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 324/4 (the last page of this letter can be found in IISG, Jung Papers, no. 890).

⁷⁷ IISG, Jung Papers, no. 890.

⁷⁸ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 766.

⁷⁹ *Égalité*, 16 April 1870, p. 3.

two weeks later⁸⁰ only to sink to 1,394 in the official report of the Geneva Federal Committee to the London Conference.⁸¹ The Swiss historian Erich Gruner pointed out that in this context one can hardly rely on exact figures 'because of the high turnover rate of members and notoriously inexact accounting'.⁸²

In a fix, Jung nevertheless fell back on the Geneva argument that their small number of delegates was not in line with the large number of members they represented. However, this point of view did not accord with the history of the International: the votes of the delegates at the congresses of the International were never weighted according to *how many* members they represented. One delegate, one vote was the maxim in the General Rules of the International,⁸³ regardless of how many members the delegate represented. Giving a Geneva section delegate's vote more weight than a Jura section delegate's would have been in violation of the statutes. Such a procedure had never been practised in the International.

Although the guidelines of the International were clear on this matter, the General Council's decision was nevertheless fraught with difficulties: Marx and Jung were apparently sympathetic to the *political-parliamentary Genevans*,⁸⁴ which caused both to hesitate in recognising the legitimacy of the victory of the Alliance and Bakunin's friends in Jura. In an awkward position, Marx had his colleague Jung give him both sides' statements on the evening of the General Council's meeting on 19 April: the letter from Perret dated 15 April and the letter from the new Federal Committee (in La Chaux-de-Fonds) signed by Fritz Robert and dated 7 April 1870. Marx sent both documents along with an accompanying letter on the same evening to Engels:

From the enclosed letter from Perret, ex-secretary of the Fédéral Comité in Geneva – which I must have back by *Friday* – you will see how the Muscovite beast [Bakunin] is acting. He was naturally forced to appeal also – which he did – to the Central Council through his secrétaire général Robert. I also enclose this letter. What do you think we should do about these fellows?⁸⁵

Engels responded two days later:

Enclosed, returned, the Swiss letters. The Genevans are, at all events, rather sluggish, otherwise they would not have got into this unfortunate position with the Bakuninists formally having the rules on their side with regard to them. This does not, of course, alter the fact that the Genevans must remain in the right [...]. Whereas, if the business in Switzerland continues to develop, the result will be either that it [the Alliance] leaves the International completely, or can be thrown out. But it must be impressed on the Messrs Genevans that they cannot be helped unless they help themselves. If Bakunin were to get a majority of the workers of the Suisse Ro-

⁸⁰ According to Perret in a 'Liste officielle des délégués et des Sections représentées au Congrès Romand de Chaux-de-Fonds le 4 avril 1870', which he sent 28 April 1870 to Jung (IISG, Jung Papers, no. 891).

⁸¹ 'Rapport du Comité Fédéral Romand. A la Conférence de Londres du 17 Septembre 1871', in Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*, p. 202.

⁸² Gruner, *Die Arbeiter in der Schweiz*, p. 620.

⁸³ 'Each delegate has but one vote in the Congress' (*Rules of the International Working Men's Association. Founded September 28th, 1864*, [London: Printed by the Westminster Printing Company, (1867)], p. 7). Marx reiterated this fact at the Congress of The Hague – because he was able to use it to his advantage; see below, p. 314.

⁸⁴ At the beginning of June 1870, Jung wrote Guillaume: 'I recognise the strength and logic of some of your arguments in favour of abstention without therefore agreeing with the principle itself [...]; in order to transform society, to achieve the social revolution, the workers will be forced to seize political power' ([Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 136). Apparently, Jung already regretted the acceptance of the Alliance into the International at the Basel Congress (see Perret to Jung, 28 April 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 891).

⁸⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 488.

mande on his side, what could the General Council do? The only conceivable point is that of the total abstinence from all politics, but even this action would not be so certain.⁸⁶

Marx, Engels and Jung let the matter drop for the time being because it proved too difficult to side with the Geneva sections. As time went by, however, it became more and more difficult for the Geneva Federal Committee to prove its legitimacy. An alarmed Perret sent the following message to Jung on 13 May 1870: 'We are very disturbed to see that some organs [of the International] are against us, we who have upheld the principles of the Association'.⁸⁷ And on 20 June 1870, he sent the following call for help to Jung:

we look like a parade committee; we cannot correspond with anyone; Robin has written to tell the Local Committee [*Comité Cantonal*] of Geneva that he cannot correspond with us; it is the same for all the sections with which we were in relation before our conflict; this does considerable harm to our relations, while Guillaume and his people are in very *close relations* with the outside; the newspapers of Spain, *Igualdad* and *Federación*, do not favour us; the Belgians are waiting for the judgment [of the General Council] to enter into relations as before; we also have some sections that have not yet declared themselves in favour of us, awaiting the decision of the General Council; all of these facts prevent us from building our federation on a solid basis: in short, we are *isolated* [...].⁸⁸

And so Jung once again brought the matter up at the General Council meeting on 28 June 1870. The decision-making process of the General Council was documented in the minutes as follows:

A letter from Geneva asked the Council to come to a decision as soon as possible.

Cit. Marx thought the only thing the Council could do was to leave the Geneva Committee that had helped from the foundation of the Association as it was. It had fulfilled its duty in every respect & had had a larger constituency though fewer delegates than [the] other party at the Swiss Congress. The vote admitting the Alliance should also be communicated. The New Committee could choose some local name.

Cit. Weston said if they advised abstention from politics & acted upon that [it] would disqualify them from acting as administrators. The Alliance was only tolerated on condition of conforming to the Rules.

The proposition was seconded by Applegarth & carried unanimously.⁸⁹

The General Council's remarkably nonchalant decision was then reported to the competing Federal Committees of the Romance Federation by Jung, who included a PS in the letter sent to Jura:

Considering,

That although a majority of delegates at the Chaux-de-Fonds Congress elected a new Romance Federal Committee, this majority was only nominal;

⁸⁶ Engels to Marx, 21 April 1870, *ibid.*, p. 494.

⁸⁷ IISG, Jung Papers, no. 893. Jung informed the meeting of the General Council on 17 May 1870 about this: 'Cit. Jung had received a private letter from Perret of Geneva who wished the Council to decide soon upon the Swiss quarrel.' At the same meeting an enquiry from César De Paepe was also read: 'De Paepe asked the opinion of the Council on the affairs of Switzerland.' However, the General Council returned to their agenda on both occasions ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 781).

⁸⁸ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 324/8.

⁸⁹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 797.

That the Romance Federal Committee in Geneva, having always fulfilled its obligations to the General Council and to the International Working Men's Association's Rules, the General Council does not have the right to relieve it of its title,

The General Council, at its meeting of June 28, 1870, unanimously resolved that the Romance Federal Committee residing in Geneva shall retain its title, and that the Federal Committee residing in Chaux-de-Fonds shall select another, local title of its own choosing.

In the name and by order of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association,

H. Jung,

secretary for Switzerland

London, June 29, 1870.

P.S. We wish to amicably remind you that our General Rules state that every political movement must be subordinated, as a means, to the economical movement.⁹⁰

The international response and the International's next congress (April–August 1870)

As could have been predicted, the response to the General Council's decision on the split in the Romance Federation was varied: Perret sent his warm thanks to London in the name of the Geneva Federal Committee,⁹¹ while Guillaume used the *Solidarité* to respond to what appeared to be an unfair decision by the General Council. Guillaume first questioned the General Council's line of argumentation that the majority at the Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds was 'only nominal':

But can this manner of reasoning be serious? Has anyone ever, in a general congress, invoked this strange argument to overturn a vote? And yet has it not very often been the case that the majorities in the general congresses were also *nominal*? If such a principle were to prevail, here is what might happen in such a congress: Z comes as a delegate of 800,000 Americans, Y as a delegate of a million Englishmen, and all other delegates together account for only one million five hundred thousand internationalists, whereupon Y and Z declare themselves to form the *real* majority, and nothing remains for the other delegates, crushed in advance, than to go to bed and let Y and Z write and vote on the resolutions of Congress.

The absurdity of these con[se]quences is enough to point out the absurdity of the principle. [...]

The General Council, in a postscript, recalls us to the Rules which say that 'every political movement must be subordinated, as a means, to the economical movement.'

We believe ourselves to be in perfect conformity with this, in the sense that we have thoroughly subordinated the political movement to the economical movement, that we have resolved not to occupy ourselves with national politics at all. This is also what the Belgians, French, Spaniards, Italians, Austrians, and Russians are doing.

⁹⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 136. The PS was translated according to the text in *Solidarité*, 23 July 1870, p. 1.

⁹¹ The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 10 July 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 547 (read to the meeting of the General Council on 19 July 1870 by Jung, see 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 807).

It seems that the General Council would do better to send a reprimand to Geneva, which seems to us, on the contrary, to subordinate the economical movement in the political movement. This is a blatant violation of our Rules, and this is an opportunity for the General Council to intervene without risking anyone's disapproval.⁹²

A letter by the Belgian Federal Council also voiced misgivings about the General Council's decision on the split of the Romance Federation. In view of the next general congress of the International, they signalled 'that the Belgian delegates will ask at the Congress why the Council has interfered in Switzerland'.⁹³

The fundamental importance of the clash between the *political-parliamentary* and the *social-revolutionary* tendencies of the Romance Federation was also noticed in Germany. Liebknecht, who was preparing for the elections of the Reichstag of the North German Confederation and editing the *Volksstaat*, immediately aligned himself with the parliamentary line of the 'political socialists' in Geneva: The political question, Liebknecht erroneously claimed in an article on 16 April 1870, had led to 'an intense battle at the last congress of the Romance sections of the International Working Men's Association, but ended with a victory for the political socialists'.⁹⁴ Two weeks later, Liebknecht went on the offensive in a letter to Marx urging him to make an issue out of the political question. He proposed that the '*political position of the socialist workers' party* or rather the relationship between socialism and politics be discussed' at next congress of the International. 'This question must be addressed', he continued, 'as it led to a split in Germany and is leading to one in the International Working Men's Association'.⁹⁵

In a follow-up letter, Liebknecht tried to encourage Marx: '*Bakunin* isn't dangerous – in Germany (Spain and Italy, where he is still afloat, are not very important)', and promptly suggested that the next congress of the International take place in Germany.⁹⁶

Initially the next congress was to be held in Paris according to a resolution of the Basel Congress.⁹⁷ The intensification of repression of the International in France starting in April 1870 brought an end to this plan.⁹⁸ Thus the way was clear for the official offer to host the

⁹² *Solidarité*, 23 July 1870, pp. 1–2. The General Council did not take kindly to the article at their meeting on 2 August 1870; the matter was passed on to the subcommittee ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 814–15), which apparently didn't react further. Marx contented himself with asking Jung to send the resolutions of the General Council regarding the Alliance from 22 December 1868 (see above, p. 4) and 9 March 1869 (see above, p. 4) to Geneva so they could be published there. 'That is the best way of replying to the *Solidarité*', he added (Marx to Jung, 6 August 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 36). Because Jung became seriously ill, the Geneva Federal Committee only received the resolutions in early 1871 from Elisabeth Dmitrieff (pseudonym of Elizaveta Tomanovskaya). In July 1871 Jung finally confirmed the validity of the resolution of the General Council regarding the acceptance of the Alliance in the International (from 27 July 1869 – see above, p. 6); see below, pp. 72–74.

⁹³ Read by Auguste Serrailier at the meeting of the General Council on 2 August 1870 ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 814; a subsequent letter to the General Council by the Belgians apparently withdrew the threat (*ibid.*, p. 823). Because of the criticism of the General Council's decision, Marx fretted on the same day that 'we shall now have to justify our decision in greater detail' (Marx to Becker, 2 August 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 26).

⁹⁴ [W. Liebknecht], 'Politische Uebersicht', *Volksstaat*, 16 April 1870, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Liebknecht to Marx, 27 April 1870, in *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, p. 468. In speaking of a 'split' in Germany, Liebknecht was referring to the conflict between the Lassalleians and Eisenachians; see above, p. 457, n. 5.

⁹⁶ Liebknecht to Marx, 7 May 1870, in *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, pp. 471–73.

⁹⁷ *Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, p. 36.

⁹⁸ A number of members of the French International were arrested on 30 April 1870 because of their alleged involvement in a plot against Napoleon III; see Archer, *The First International in France*, pp. 205–6.

congress in Germany made by the Committee of the SDAP to the General Council and sent two days after Liebknecht's letter.⁹⁹ 'The business would be a good thing', Marx told Engels after receiving the letter, 'insofar as Mr Bakunin et Co. would be totally powerless in Germany'.¹⁰⁰ And so Marx presented the German social democrats' invitation to the General Council meeting on 17 May 1870 where it was unanimously agreed that the next congress should take place in Mainz.¹⁰¹ In a letter to Engels the following day, Marx rejoiced that 'The transfer of the congress to Mainz – unanimously voted yesterday – will give Bakunin a fit'.¹⁰² The other congress locations suggested to the General Council – Amsterdam, Barcelona, and Verviers – were not even considered.¹⁰³ Marx even thought some of the suggestions were part of a conspiracy: the Belgian Federation's suggestion, for example, to have the congress take place in Amsterdam, was curiously branded a 'plan of Mr Bakunin. The congress would consist *chiefly of his tools*'.¹⁰⁴

The *political question* propagated by Liebknecht was suggested as the second point on the congress agenda by Marx ('On the connection between the political action & the social movement of the working class') and approved by the General Council.¹⁰⁵ As such all of the preparations for the defeat of Bakunin and social-revolutionary socialism were in place by the summer of 1870: Marx succeeded in having the congress take place in the location of his choosing; as many

⁹⁹ The Committee of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party to the General Council, 9 May 1870, in G. Eckert (ed.), *Aus den Anfängen der Braunschweiger Arbeiterbewegung. Unveröffentlichte Bracke-Briefe* (Brunswick: Albert Limbach Verlag, 1955), pp. 10–11. Liebknecht had already made the suggestion the day before he wrote his letter to Marx; see Liebknecht and Bebel to Wilhelm Bracke, 6 May 1870, in Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 1, pp. 309–10.

¹⁰⁰ Marx to Engels, 10 May 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 511. In contrast, Marx told the General Council a week later that, after Belgium and Switzerland, it was Germany's turn to host a congress ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 780). The preparation began quickly to send as many German delegates as possible for the Mainz Congress. On 12 June 1870, the Committee of the SDAP briefed Marx on their resolution 'that we shall make sure the German members of the International Working Men's Association have energetic representatives on the occasion of this year's congress in Mainz. We will find ways and means to do this resolution justice' (Eckert [ed.], *Aus den Anfängen der Braunschweiger Arbeiterbewegung*, p. 12). Becker argued frankly in a letter to Marx on 7 August 1870 that the congress 'should only be held if we can be sure that the German and Swiss element will be strongly represented' (RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 38/10).

¹⁰¹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 780.

¹⁰² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 523.

¹⁰³ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 814 (meeting on 2 August 1870) and p. 818 (meeting on 9 August 1870). The International's sections in Paris did not agree with the congress being moved to Mainz. A letter from Paris was read at the meeting of the General Council on 31 May 1870, which the minutes summarised as follows: 'They did not believe that it would have been impossible to hold a Congress at Paris. Would have preferred Verviers' (*ibid.*, p. 790). By now, Marx already feared that an alternative congress would take place; see the account of a letter by Marx to the Committee of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party, 27 June 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 445. On 13 September 1870, the General Council learned that the members of the International in Paris wanted to hold the congress there as soon as possible ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 832). On 29 March 1871 the minutes of the Paris Federal Council remained optimistic: 'Combault proposes to ask the general council in London to fix the next international congress in Paris for May 15. (This project was put before the social section of the schools.) This proposition, warmly welcomed, is unanimously adopted.' (*Les Séances officielles de l'Internationale à Paris pendant le siège et pendant la Commune* [Paris: E. Lachaud, éditeur, 1872], p. 161, see also p. 99).

¹⁰⁴ Marx to Engels, 3 August 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 33. See also Marx to Becker, 2 August 1870, *ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁵ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 805–6 (meeting on 12 July 1870). The invitation to the congress in Mainz was printed on a leaflet along with its agenda (reproduced in *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 3, p. 369).

loyal, 'energetic representatives' as possible would attend; by way of the confrontational agenda, the International would assume a political position to Marx's liking. At the same time, Utin was to discredit Bakunin at Marx's behest in the spring and summer of 1870.¹⁰⁶ All of these arrangements were to be repeated two years later ahead of the Congress of The Hague and were designed to lead to a preliminary decision against Bakunin and social-revolutionary socialism.

Already in early 1870, Bakunin noticed the actions Marx was taking against him but hoped for a debate on ideas at the next congress of the International.¹⁰⁷ He wrote his friends Walerian Mroczkowski and Zoya Obolenskaya on 1 August 1870 that he was preparing a brochure in French at the moment that was to be a response to all his enemies within the International.

A propos, have you ever met with Marx, the secret leader of all my public enemies – do You know that last winter he started corresponding with Utin through Becker, who betrayed me and the Alliance when I was away [from Geneva] and that Utin & Comp. are collecting documents against me for him to destroy me? – Doesn't matter, let's measure our forces – the Spaniards, the Italians, the French and the Belgians are on our side (not personally but in principle), – the Mountains [i.e. the Jura sections] led by our bright and loyal friend Guillaume defend us like a wall.¹⁰⁸

But the expected all-out clash in the International didn't occur in 1870 due to a historic event that temporarily overshadowed everything else: the start of the Franco-German War. After France declared war on 19 July 1870, three German armies attacked France, putting French forces in the defensive in early August.¹⁰⁹ The war rocked the countries in Central Europe so severely, that by mid-August the planned congress of the International – where the conflict within the organisation was to be decided – was unimaginable. On 23 August, the General Council cancelled the congress for 1870.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ See above, p. 48.

¹⁰⁷ See above, pp. 461–62, n. 12, and p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Bakunin to Mroczkowski and Obolenskaya, 1 August 1870, pp. 3–4, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁰⁹ After heavy fighting, Napoleon's main army commanded by Marshal Mac Mahon had to surrender on 2 September 1870 at Sedan; Napoleon III was taken prisoner.

¹¹⁰ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 824.

CHAPTER 6. Fixing the International's course

GLOBAL ATTENTION WAS NOW FOCUSSED ON the war in France instead of the internal crisis within the International, which had reached a peak in the summer of 1870. Bakunin wrote his friend Nikolai Ogarev (1813–1877) on 11 August 1870 that the war had given him a ‘real fever’: ‘In three days I wrote exactly 23 big letters, this small one is the twenty-fourth. I’ve worked out a whole plan’.¹ Bakunin expected the war to create an unstable situation in France where armed rebellions in the provinces could trigger a general revolution. He left for Lyon in September 1870 for this reason, but the revolution he and his political friends tried to start lacked the necessary support and failed. He was forced to secretly leave France through Marseilles in October 1870.

Bakunin’s second strategy: cautious criticism of Marx

Bakunin returned to Switzerland disappointed and began writing an extensive manuscript, which he called a ‘pathological study of present-day France and Europe’ in a letter dated 19 November 1870.² A first part of this manuscript was printed the following year under the title *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* (*L’Empire knouto-germanique et la Révolution sociale*).³ In the manuscript, Bakunin first developed his idea of counteracting the invasion by German troops with a revolutionary uprising, then described the effects of the long-standing German-Russian alliance on the political events of the day, following which he attempted to outline the history of German liberalism and concluded with a discussion of a variety of philosophical topics.⁴

In the various drafts of the manuscript, Bakunin for the first time took his conflict with Marx out into the open, abandoning his old strategy of *not attacking Marx but his associates*. Bakunin followed this first strategy⁵ from autumn 1869 to the end of 1870. In September 1870 he still honoured Marx in a manuscript that remained unpublished at the time as

the incontestable leader of the socialist party in Germany, a great intellect armed with deep knowledge, whose entire life, or at least the last thirty years of it, one can say without flattery,

¹ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, p. 283.

² Bakunin to Ogarev, 19 November 1870, p. 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

³ M. Bakounine, *L’Empire knouto-germanique et la Révolution sociale*. [Inside title:] *La Révolution sociale ou la dictature militaire* (Geneva: Imprimerie coopérative, [end of April] 1871).

⁴ For more about the various groups of manuscripts, see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. xiv–xxvi. One of the philosophical manuscripts was published by Elisée Reclus posthumously as *God and the state*.

⁵ See above, pp. 31–33.

have been exclusively devoted to the greatest cause existing today, that of the emancipation of labour and of the labourers [...].⁶

When Bakunin started describing the Marxist manoeuvres against him in the same manuscript, he refrained from naming Marx by name: 'I do not wish to name him yet, but he shall be well and truly compelled to name himself. And then I shall have it out with him directly and publicly.'⁷

Bakunin only changed this strategy while writing *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*.⁸ He had already sent pages 1–80 of his manuscript to Geneva in the first half of November 1870 to be proofread and typeset.⁹ The second instalment of the manuscript (from page 81 onward) took a lot longer as Bakunin revised the text repeatedly. In the *first* version of the second instalment, likely written at the end of November 1870, Bakunin praised Marx as the author of *Capital*.¹⁰ Later on while describing the effects of the German-Russian alliance, which united the two reactionary centres of Europe, Bakunin brought up a letter Marx had sent on 24 March 1870 to the members of the anti-Bakuninist Russian section of the International in Geneva.¹¹ In this letter, which was immediately printed in the Russian section's organ *Narodnoe Delo*, Marx claimed 'that Russia's violent conquest of Poland provides a pernicious support and real reason for the existence of a military regime in Germany, and, as a consequence, on the whole Continent'.¹²

Bakunin referred to this letter in the *second* version of the second instalment of the manuscript in a passage titled '4. State-France-Germany. Marx-Russia', written in around mid-January 1871:

In a letter sent some months ago to the editors of a little paper published in the Russian language in Geneva, the recognised leader of the German communists, Mr Karl Marx, has pronounced an historical sophism which truly astonished me, coming from such an intelligent and erudite man as him. He claims that if Germany finds itself still subject to the absolute rule of its princes, this must be attributed mainly to the fatal influence of Russia. He is singularly mistaken about the history of his own country when he advances a notion that is, moreover, in flagrant contradiction with the experience of all times and of all nations. Has anyone ever seen a nation inferior in civilisation impose its principles upon and inject them into an incomparably more civilised country, unless it be by way of conquest? But Germany, to the best of my knowledge, has never been conquered by Russia. [...]

⁶ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, p. 99. In keeping with his previous strategy, Bakunin referred to Marx's associates all the more disparagingly: he wrote that they form 'a sort of little Communist Church, comprised of fervent adepts spread across Germany' (*ibid.*, p. 100).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁸ The concrete motives behind Bakunin's change in strategy in January 1871 are unknown. The resumption of his correspondence with Guillaume might have been a factor; according to Guillaume, they had been out of touch for several months until January 1871 (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 131). However, this seems odd because Guillaume had apparently been proofreading the manuscript of Bakunin's *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* since November 1870; see Bakunin to Karl-Arvid Roman (Postnikov), 5 November 1870, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹ Bakunin to Ogarev, 19 November 1870, *ibid.* Also see Guillaume's remark in Bakounine, *Œuvres*, vol. 3, p. ix.

¹⁰ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. 356–57, see also p. 283.

¹¹ See above, pp. 47–48.

¹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 110. Marx also emphasised this in a speech celebrating the fourth anniversary of the Polish uprising of 1863/64: Prussia 'has but grown into a first rate power under the auspices of Russia, and by the partition of Poland. [...] To maintain herself as a power distinct from Germany, she must fall back upon the Muscovite. [...] At the same time Russia is the prop upon which the arbitrary rule of the Hohenzollern dynasty and its feudal retainers rest. [...] Prussia is, therefore, not a bulwark against the Muscovite but his predestined tool' (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/20, pp. 246–47).

Unless he is ignorant of history or in denial of it, Mr Karl Marx must recognise that the people, or at least the Russian peoples – for there are at least two principal peoples, those of Great Russia and those of Little Russia, speaking two languages and having, at least in many respects, two different histories – that these peoples, I say, have in no way contributed to the rise of this Empire [...].¹³

In another draft of the manuscript, apparently written at the same time, Bakunin came to the following conclusion: ‘Mr Karl Marx thus has no need to seek in Russia the seeds of the princely despotism, the aristocratic arrogance, and the bourgeois servility that constitute the political life of his own country. If he really wants to find them, he should look for them in the history of Germany itself’.¹⁴

In his *third*, definitive version of the second instalment of the manuscript, Bakunin wrote (probably between 26 and 28 January 1871):¹⁵

I confess that this reproach [that Russia is the true cause of despotism in Germany] has always seemed excessively ridiculous to me, inspired by bad faith and unworthy of a great people; the dignity of every nation, as of each individual, consisting, in my opinion, mainly in this, that everyone accepts full responsibility for his actions, without miserably seeking to shift the blame to others. [...]

I confess that I was deeply surprised to find the same complaint in a letter, sent last year, by Mr. Karl Marx, the famous leader of the German communists, to the editors of a little Russian paper published in the Russian language in Geneva. He claims that if Germany is not yet organised democratically, the fault lies only in Russia. He is singularly mistaken about the history of his own country when he advances such a notion whose impossibility, even leaving aside the historical facts, is easily demonstrated by the experience of all times and all nations. Has anyone ever seen a nation inferior in civilization impose its principles upon or inject them into a much more civilized country, unless it be by way of conquest? But Germany, to the best of my knowledge, has never been conquered by Russia. [...]

It would really be an act more worthy of a great German patriot and a genuine democratic socialist, such as Mr Karl Marx undoubtedly is, and above all more profitable for the German people, if, instead of trying to console the national vanity by falsely attributing the sins, crimes and shame of Germany to foreign influence, he would use his immense erudition to prove, according to justice and historical truth, that Germany itself has produced, refined, and historically developed all the elements of its present-day slavery. Having already bowed before the astonishing erudition of his brain and his pen, I would have gladly left to him the task of performing such useful work, especially necessary in view of the emancipation of the German people; in his hands, it would naturally be far more complete. But since I fear he shall never find it acceptable and necessary to tell the whole truth on this point, I have taken up this task myself [...].¹⁶

¹³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. 380–81. This passage, which Bakunin included as a long footnote, was perhaps written on 2 January 1871. That day, Bakunin noted in his diary: ‘Brochure – Germany, history. Overly long note’ (‘Carnet’, 1871, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

¹⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, p. 387.

¹⁵ Bakunin recorded his progress on the manuscripts over this time period in his diary as follows: ‘26. [...] Brochure – Germans – 27. [...] Brochure – good. [...] 28. Brochure – very good. [...] Modern lit. of Germany’ (Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1871, p. 2). This could be a reference to pp. 87–111 of the manuscript; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. 51–66; and Guillaume’s remark in Bakounine, *Œuvres*, vol. 3, p. xii.

¹⁶ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. 61–64.

Bakunin considered the *third* version of the second instalment of his manuscript (with the aforementioned passage) to be the final version and sent it in February 1871 to his friend Guillaume for proofreading.¹⁷ Guillaume then sent the manuscript to the printers in Geneva where it was published (together with other parts of the manuscript) at the end of April 1871 as the first part of the book *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* – the first publication in which Bakunin openly opposed Marx.¹⁸

In further instalments of the manuscript, Bakunin intensified his look at Marx and wrote a separate section titled ‘Historical Sophisms of the German Communists’ Doctrinaire School’ (‘Sophismes historiques de l’École doctrinaire des communistes allemands’)¹⁹ that was conceived as the opening of a planned second part of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*. In this section Bakunin first acknowledged the accomplishments of ‘the socialists or rather the authoritarian communists of Germany’ and called Marx their ‘principal leader’. Bakunin then told the story of his personal conflict with the ‘leaders of German communism’ in another long footnote: the conflict surrounding Herwegh’s Legion (April 1848); the defamation of Bakunin as an ‘agent of Russia’ in Marx’s *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (July 1848); the press campaign against Bakunin by the English publicist David Urquhart (1853, 1856, and 1862), in whose publications Marx printed several texts;²⁰ and finally the articles by Marx’s Russophobic friend Sigismund Borkheim, which aggressively attacked Bakunin and were partly written in consultation with Marx and Engels.²¹ The section ‘Historical Sophisms of the German Communists’ Doctrinaire School’ was typeset in Geneva along with other instalments of the manuscript as a second part of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* but not published in Bakunin’s time.²²

The caution with which Bakunin openly confronted Marx was typical of Bakunin’s *second strategy*, which he followed for more than a year (until spring 1872). He only seemed to name him reluctantly and did not bring their *political* conflict into the open even though he was well aware of the underlying differences in their ideas – i.e. ‘for reasons of principle, because of state communism’.²³ Bakunin hinted at this fundamental conflict in *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* without naming any names. In connection with the development of the German labour movement, for example, he wrote:

perhaps the time is not far off when they [the German workers] can form themselves into a true power. Their tendency, it is true, does not seem to me the best to achieve this goal. Instead of trying to form a truly revolutionary, negative power, destructive of the state, which alone, according to my conviction, could have resulted in the full and universal emancipation of the labourers and of labour, they want, or rather they allow their leaders to lure them into dreaming of creating a positive power, the establishment of a new workers’ state that would be popular

¹⁷ On 9 February 1871, Bakunin noted in his diary: ‘Brochure / Sent to Guillaume 81–109 pages. 29 pages in all’ (Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1871, p. 3).

¹⁸ Bakounine, *L’Empire knouto-germanique*, pp. 89–93. Bakunin himself later referred to this passage of his book in February/March 1872; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 26.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 83–87. In choosing this title, Bakunin picked up on the phrase ‘the recognised leader of the German communists, Mr Karl Marx, has pronounced an historical sophism’ found in the aforementioned manuscript (see above, p. 68), which remained unpublished at the time.

²⁰ For more about these conflicts, see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 66–86, 93–105.

²¹ See above, pp. 27–28, 44.

²² The proof-sheets still exist; see IISG, Bakunin Papers, no. 201. It was not published because of financial reasons; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. xxii–xxv.

²³ See above, p. 33.

(a *Volksstaat*), necessarily national, patriotic and pan-Germanic, which puts them in direct contradiction with the basic principles of the International Association, and in a very ambiguous position vis-à-vis the aristocratic and bourgeois Prusso-Germanic Empire that Bismarck is in the process of shaping. Doubtless they hope that first, perhaps by way of a legal agitation that is later to be followed by a more profound and decisive revolutionary movement, they shall manage to seize it and turn it into a purely popular government. This politics, which I regard as unrealistic and disastrous, stamps their movement first and foremost with a reformist rather than a revolutionary character, which indeed is perhaps somewhat owing to the particular nature of the German people, who are more willing to make a series of slow reforms than a revolution.²⁴

While Marx and Engels were not named in this passage, they were intended – and the message was received: in a surviving copy of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* from Engels' library, one can see that this passage is marked with a pencil.²⁵ However, he apparently ignored the long footnote analysing Marx's letter to the Russian section.

Paul Robin, the congress question, and the disbanding of the Geneva Alliance section (summer 1871)

After the war in France, the founding of the German Reich in January 1871, and the assault on the Paris Commune in May 1871, the simmering conflict surrounding the International's political direction slowly returned. The General Council was forced to deal with this subject in the summer of 1871 upon Paul Robin's initiative. Robin's role in the *Égalité's* editorial board, where he launched a disastrous attack against the General Council in November/December 1869, has already been described.²⁶ After leaving the editorial board, he went to Paris in January/February 1870, became involved in the newly formed Paris Local Federation of the International, came into the crosshairs of the police again and was implicated in a sensational trial in June/July 1870 against 38 members of the International in Paris. He moved to London in October 1870 where, as a prominent member of the French International, he was accepted into the General Council upon Marx's recommendation.²⁷

The political differences between the Swiss sections of the International and the split in the Romance Federation had taken a back seat for Robin in these months, as well – both because of the war and his difficult living conditions as an exile in England.

After the war [Robin later wrote], I received no letters, no newspapers from that country [Switzerland]. However, I had vaguely spoken once or twice with Marx as of an incident that was closed, and although he had prejudices against some people that I did not share, I saw no cause for quarrel in this, and I even counted on his influence to help me ease the conflict if it should revive. This is so true that when my friendly relations with Guillaume (of Neuchâtel), interrupted by events, resumed in late January [of 1871], I naively shared several letters from

²⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 7, pp. 56–57.

²⁵ Engels' copy is in the Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv, Berlin, Library, signature: Ma 852. Engels first unsuccessfully tried to order Bakunin's work through a bookseller; see Engels to Adolf Hepner, 4 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 416.

²⁶ See above, p. 35.

²⁷ See 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 848 (meeting on 25 October 1870) and p. 853 (meeting on 8 November 1870).

this friend with Marx.²⁸ It was then, on receiving several equivocal responses, that I began to sense a systematic hostility, but full of an extreme confidence in Marx's spirit of justice and good faith, I refused to pay heed to the most obvious clues.²⁹

The first major conflict between Robin and Marx in the General Council took place in March 1871 because of the congress question: the planned congress in Paris in September 1870 was postponed 'till the earliest opportunity' by the General Council on 23 August 1870 because of the war in France.³⁰ In the debate proceeding that resolution, Marx had suggested calling a conference of delegates instead of the congress;³¹ however, the matter was not pursued. Half a year later, in March 1871, Robin revived the idea of convening a conference of delegates as soon as possible in London to make up for the lost congress. Robin justified his suggestion by calling to mind unresolved administrative questions³² – he was alluding to the continued split in the Romance Federation. After the English General Council member George Milner spoke out in favour of Robin's suggestion at the meeting on 14 March 1871, Marx announced his opposition – even though he himself had made the same suggestion six months earlier. Engels backed Marx's opposition by saying 'that the time might come when a conference would have to be called but it had not come yet. Cit. Robin had not shown what the administrative questions were that required a conference.'³³ Robin replied

that it did not rest with the Council to judge its own acts & that now was the time for a conference. [...] the Association had a right to control the acts of the Council & the Council ought not to shirk an investigation. There was a difference of opinion in different places the members acted differently in every country & therefore a conference ought to meet to settle the mode of action.³⁴

After clarifying that the conference should be convened 'to control the acts of the Council', the General Council members voted 10 to 2 against Robin's suggestion.³⁵

In the meantime the conflict between the sections of the International in Romandy grew. In early 1871, the Geneva Federal Committee accused the Geneva section of the Alliance – whose membership bid had led to the split in the Romance Federation at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds – of never having been accepted into the International by the General Council.³⁶ The

²⁸ Robin lent Marx at least two letters from Guillaume. Marx and Engels made notes about the content of these letters (see below, n. 38, and n. 44).

²⁹ Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 382.

³⁰ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 824.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 815 (meeting on 2 August 1870). Liebknecht also suggested this (possibly at Marx's behest) in a letter to Leonhard von Bonhorst on 16 August 1870 and asked that it be conveyed to the General Council (Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 1, pp. 332–33).

³² 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 901 (meeting on 14 March 1871), see also p. 899 (meeting on 7 March 1871).

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 902.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 199. The Geneva Federal Committee wrote in a report in May 1871: 'the old Federal Committee could not confirm that the Alliance had been accepted by the General Council; it had never received anything to that effect from it. After the congress [at La Chaux-de-Fonds in April 1870], the General Council let us know that it had sent us a resolution concerning the Alliance; as it had doubtlessly passed by intermediaries, we hadn't known of it; your Committee asked the General Council for a copy of these resolutions' ('Rapport du Comité fédéral romand au Congrès de Genève du 15 mai 1871', *Égalité*, 27 May 1871, p. 4). Jung, the corresponding secretary for Switzerland in the General Council, then apparently wrote an evasive interim notice stating that the General Council had not yet had time to decide on the question of the Alliance section's membership: 'As if the Council could decide

membership confirmation from the General Council dated 28 July and 25 August 1869³⁷ presented by the secretary of the Alliance section were dismissed as forgeries. After consulting with Robin, Guillaume sent him a copy of both membership confirmations to London on 4 July 1871 so that their authenticity could be verified by the General Council.³⁸

Robin then sent the following letter to Marx on 8 July 1871:

I have again received a letter from my friend Guillaume who has asked me to act as his intermediary to the General Council in order to reach a final settlement. This letter contains copies of two letters [from 28 July and 25 August 1869; see above] [...]. If the Alliance has breached any of its commitments as a section, it must be suspended (art. 6 of the Basel decision)³⁹ but this must be by means of a *new judgment* of the Council. Otherwise it is incontestably a section of the International [...]. I do not know what decision the G[eneral] C[ouncil] will make about this year's congress; I'm afraid it will still be impossible to meet. The matter of two Swiss federations will certainly be resolved. [...] Do you want me to visit you Monday morning before noon so that it would be possible to make a definitive answer to Guillaume afterward? Or would it be much better to get the Swiss secretary [Jung] to address a joint letter to the two warring parties?⁴⁰

Robin's letter must have made quite an impact on Marx because it brought together all of the present conflicts: the Alliance section's membership in the International, the affair surrounding the split of the Romance Federation and the congress question. Shortly after receiving Robin's letter, Marx also got word of the Belgian Federal Council's position: 'We consider it entirely necessary that this year should not go by without a congress.'⁴¹

Apparently because of these comments, Marx and Engels finally decided to take the initiative on the congress issue after procrastinating as long as they could. At the next meeting of the General Council, Robin proposed that 'the Council take into consideration the disputes existing in the Swiss Section'. Strangely enough, Engels then suggested organising 'a Conference preparatory to the holding of a Congress'.⁴² As the General Council then returned to the agenda, the unexpected exchange didn't bear any fruit. A week later, the same topic was addressed, but it was once again deferred 'owing to the pressure of other business'.⁴³ One week later on 25 July 1871, Robin made a last attempt:

Citizen Robin called attention to the state of affairs in Switzerland, and asked if two letters [from 28 July and 25 August 1869; see above] [...] to the 'Alliance Socialiste' of Geneva in 1869 announcing its acceptance as a section of the International – were genuine. Citizen Jung said the one which had his signature attached was written by him. Citizen Robin then asked if any resolution had been passed by the General Council since the date of that letter, suspending l'Alliance

on the existence or non-existence of a past event!' (Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 383). In the summer of 1871, the Geneva Federal Committee repeated its request; see Perret to Jung, 23 July 1871, in M. Vuilleumier, 'La Suisse', *International Review of Social History* 17 (1972), p. 293. Only after Robin intervened (see below, pp. 73–74) was the resolution confirming the Alliance's membership in the International sent to the Geneva Federal Committee.

³⁷ See above, p. 445, n. 50, and p. 446, n. 10.

³⁸ Guillaume to Robin, 4 July 1871 (copied by Engels), RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 2940. See also Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', pp. 382–83. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 159.

³⁹ See below, p. 147.

⁴⁰ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 81/24.

⁴¹ Eugène Hins to Marx, 9 July 1871, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 282.

⁴² 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 574 (meeting on 11 July 1871).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 577 (meeting on 18 July 1871).

Socialiste Démocratie from its rights as a section. The Chairman [Jung] answered *No*. No resolution of the kind had been passed.

Citizen Engels said it was a question if a section admitted under certain conditions, and not afterwards fulfilling those conditions ever had the rights of a section.

Citizen Marx said 'l'Alliance Socialiste Démocratie' had not paid any contributions for two years, and it might be said therefore to have forfeited its membership.⁴⁴

Citizen Serrailier endorsed the remarks of Citizen Marx – contribution was a condition of membership.

Citizen Hales thought the questions raised were subjects for the Congress to decide and not for the Council.

Citizen Robin said he only asked for information, and he should like the Chairman's statement signed. This was agreed to, and it was signed and countersigned by the Secretary.⁴⁵

The same events took place as follows according to Robin's recollection:

Finally, pressed with questions, he [Jung] ends up admitting that indeed he wrote the second letter (which at the same time proves the authenticity of the first). Engels mumbles a few words as well, but after a quarter of an hour of rambling, it is impossible to deny the two letters.

In response to the first question [whether the General Council's letters from 28 July and 25 August 1869 were genuine], I write: *yes*.

As for the second [whether the Alliance's membership had been suspended since], Engels again mumbles: You prejudge the question, we must await the conference, etc. – No, I said, what I am asking is simple: is the Alliance suspended or not? – But, says Marx, enraged at being trapped, it is not in good standing with respect to the [General] Council. – I will write in response to the second question: no, but it is suspended *de facto* as not being in good standing with respect to the General Council (now, it is known that out of twenty sections, the same is true of at least nineteen). – No, says Marx. – What should I write down, then? – Write 'no'; but all this will be resolved at the conference (*sic*).

I write, and I pass the paper to the secretary to countersign it and add seal of the Council.

'Let me see it,' Marx says, 'this is another new machination against our *friends*, and there is a *Russian* Section in Geneva that I want to inform (!!!)'.⁴⁶

What to add to that? The document was duplicated: one for the Alliance, the other for the Federal Committee based in Geneva, both advised that the other had received a copy of it. Marx was not accustomed to this way of acting fairly. The great man, usually so safe among his courtiers, was stunned. He was caught in the act of lying, and his act had been authentically established. My heart was raised to see the socialist philosopher brought so low.⁴⁶

The General Council meeting continued as follows according to the minutes:

Citizen Robin said there was another matter that he should like to ask, there was a serious split in the French part of Switzerland. There were two Federal Councils acting independently of each other, one continued to have relationship with the General Council, the other did not. Could not something be done to heal the breach and bring them both into unison.

⁴⁴ Marx had already come up with this argument in his notes on Guillaume's letter to Robin from 17 June 1871: The section of the Alliance was only 'accepted conditionally (it did not meet the conditions)' (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 2872). For more about the Alliance's union dues, see below, p. 470, n. 52.

⁴⁵ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 581–82.

⁴⁶ Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 384.

It was decided that it was a matter that must be left for the next Congress or Conference to decide upon.

Citizen Engels proposed 'That a private Conference of the Association be called in London to meet on the third Sunday in September'. He said that last year the Sections gave the General Council power to postpone the Annual Congress – because of the circumstances created by the war – and things were not much better now. [...] The position too was such, that if a Congress was summoned scarcely any of the sections could send delegates, at the same time it was necessary for the General Council to take counsel with the sections, as to the future policy, and to get its powers ratified, and such could only be done by holding a private Conference as he proposed.

Citizen Robin seconded the proposition, he agreed with the remarks of Citizen Engels, it was also necessary to try and heal the schisms.

The proposition was carried, and the sub committee was instructed to draw up a programme to be submitted to the Council.⁴⁷

It is only at first surprising that Marx and Engels fought against a conference in March 1871 only so Engels could call for one a few months later. The difference between both proposals was obvious: Robin suggested a conference in March to *make up for the congress called off in 1870* – Engels suggested a private conference so that *the congress of 1871 could also be called off*.⁴⁸

Robin later remembered the 'painful reflections' bothering him after leaving the meeting.⁴⁹ The conflict in the General Council had apparently been very demanding on him so that he lashed out at both sides afterward. Two days after the General Council meeting, Robin sent the Alliance section's verified membership confirmation to Guillaume along with an irate note: 'It was damned difficult. Here is what I was able to do, to the best of my ability, and I believe that it was a master stroke, considering the mood that exists here concerning you.'⁵⁰ Robin described the gaudy details of the General Council member's bias against the Alliance and Jura sections,⁵¹ which were considered the same. He complained that the question of the Alliance's membership in the Romance Federation had led to the split at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds. If the decisive question at the congress had been the *political* differences, Robin argued, then the Jura sections would have an easy time of it; whereas, the question of the Alliance's membership was none too popular. 'This section, already so detested, is not even in good standing with the G[eneral] C[ouncil]. It has not sent subscriptions for two years', Robin railed – the memory apparently fresh of the General Council meeting where Marx and Serrailier had made this unjustified claim.⁵² Robin even went so far as to suggest that the Alliance be disbanded in order to

⁴⁷ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 582.

⁴⁸ Robin had criticised this: 'My proposal [about convening a conference] was opposed and quashed by Marx and his acolytes [on 14 March 1871] almost unanimously. Why was such a proposition adopted later on? Because in this way they would make the Congress of 1871 vanish, which nothing prevented.' (Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 383, see also p. 392).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁵⁰ Robin to Guillaume, 27 July 1871, in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 81/42.

⁵¹ The sections that made up the majority at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds and who called themselves the Romance Federation are meant by 'Jura sections'. The sections, predominantly from Geneva, that made up the minority at the congress also claimed the title Romance Federation. Both Federations were not really geographically separate: the central section of La Chaux-de-Fonds was part of the Geneva tendency while the Alliance's Geneva section was part of the Jura tendency.

⁵² The union dues of the Alliance section for 1868/69 were sent to the General Council in August 1869 (The section of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy to the General Council, 8 August 1869, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 961). The Alliance no longer paid its union dues directly to the General Council but to the Federal Committee after their

calm things down. He also signalled that a conference of delegates of the International would soon be convened where, he warned, the Jura sections' membership status might be threatened. He urged the Jura sections to send a delegate to the conference. This delegate was to bring along a copy of their statutes, a list of the member sections and their yearly membership payments to the General Council. In addition, the delegate was to have a resolution in hand passed unanimously by the Jura sections and stating that they intend to settle all past differences.⁵³

Robin's conflict-prevention tactic was obviously the result of the pressure he was put under in the London General Council – pressure that was now being relayed to his friends in Switzerland. Guillaume sent Robin's letter and the enclosed verification of the Alliance section's membership to the Alliance secretary Nicolas Joukovsky (Nikolai Zhukovskii). In an accompanying letter, Guillaume agreed with Robin's proposal to disband the Alliance section in order to prevent the imminent expulsion of the Federation of Jura sections from the International.⁵⁴ Guillaume examined the idea carefully

whether, now that it had obtained the General Council's recognition of the regularity of its situation, it would be wise for the section of the Alliance, taking into consideration the greater interests of the International, to forgo prolonging an existence that had long had outlived its usefulness. [...] The dissolution of the section of the Alliance, I added, would at the same time snatch away from the Marxist coterie of the General Council the pretext it already thought it had to take fatal measures against us, to be approved by the forthcoming conference, that could hinder the free organisation of our sections.⁵⁵

At the same time, Guillaume asked his friends in Geneva to consult with Bakunin in Locarno on this question and send him Robin's letter – which they never did.⁵⁶ Guillaume also informed Bakunin personally about the Federation of Jura sections' supposed imminent expulsion at the upcoming conference. Bakunin answered Guillaume on 6 August⁵⁷ in a long letter (which is lost). He also penned a letter 'To the friends of the section of the Alliance of Geneva' in the night between 6 to 7 August 1871, which included the following:

Our friend James [Guillaume] has just written me that he sent you a letter from Robin (a letter I beg you to send me quickly, as I think he recommended you do) warning that a terrible storm,

controversial acceptance into the Romance Federation; a corresponding resolution was passed at the general meeting of the Alliance on 16 April 1870; see Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 194. The Alliance's union dues were thus paid together with those of the Jura Federation by its Committee in June 1872; see The Committee of the Jura Federation to the General Council, 1 June 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 394/2.

⁵³ Robin to Guillaume, 27 July 1871, in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 81/42.

⁵⁴ Based on Robin's message, Adhémar Schwitzguébel – the corresponding secretary of the Jura – also expected the worst: 'the General Council itself was on the verge of excluding us, but thanks to Robin, the matter has been adjourned' (Schwitzguébel to Pauline Prins, around 16 July 1871, excerpts in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 168; manuscript in IISG, Descaves Papers, no. 713). In reality the Federation of Jura sections did not seem to be in any danger at the time. A few weeks earlier, Engels wrote that the Jura sections were striving 'to be recognised as a separate federation, which very probably the Council will not oppose. [...] if they will agree to work peaceably alongside our other members we have neither the right nor the will to exclude them.' (Engels to Cafiero, 1–3 July 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 164).

⁵⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 177. Guillaume didn't think very highly of the Geneva section of the Alliance anyway: 'My opinion on the uselessness of this section of the Alliance was well known' (see Guillaume's remark in Bakounine, *Œuvres*, vol. 6, pp. 162–63).

⁵⁶ See Guillaume's letters from 10 and 20 August 1871 to Joukovsky, in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 181, 184.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 177–78. Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, p. 16.

long prepared by our dirty enemies from Geneva, together with the authoritarian communists of Germany, threatens to break not only upon the Alliance, but the whole Federation of the [Jura] Mountains, and this means nothing less than the exclusion of the Federation, the only one that represents the true spirit of the International in Switzerland, the international communion of the workers.

Rightly worried by this news, my friend James, who sent you at the same time the act of the General Council recognising the legitimacy of our section, has counselled you to take advantage of this new declaration of the G[eneral] C[ouncil] to make what he calls a master stroke, which would seem to me to be a clumsy act of weakness. He advises you to voluntarily dissolve yourselves [...].

Let none say to me that I must make a sacrifice for peace, for the good of the International. Never can any good be achieved by cowardice. We do not have the right to abase ourselves before them, because in abasing ourselves we would debase our cause and our principle, and to save appearances, the lie of the International, we would sacrifice the truth and reality.

I think in general it is not through a policy of cowardly concessions and Christian humility, but only by firmly and frankly upholding our rights that we can triumph over our enemies, even for the good of the International. Are our rights not clear enough? Have we not, for over a year, suffered all the attacks, all the calumnies, all the intrigues, without defending ourselves and without even replying? Our silence was a great mistake;⁵⁸ our dissolution would be a shameful suicide.

[...] What is to be done? There is but one course: to renew our struggle in the open. Let us not be afraid to kill the International thereby – if something can be killed, it is precisely diplomacy and intrigue – it is the underground practice which now constitutes the entire strategy of our enemies not only in Geneva but also in London – Struggle in broad [daylight] shall restore life and strength to the International; moreover, fought in broad daylight, it cannot be a struggle between persons, but will necessarily become a great struggle between two principles: that of authoritarian communism and that of revolutionary socialism.

[...] Finally, since a sneaky Conference – a kind of anonymous and small scale congress – is scheduled to meet in London, the [Jura] Mountain sections absolutely must send a delegate and that delegate, in my opinion, should be none other than James Guillaume [...] He would pass through Brussels where he would meet beforehand with the Belgians. Well, my dear friends, I am convinced myself that if Guillaume comes to London, he will win, and he will win a striking victory for our [Jura] Mountains organisation as well as for the Alliance.⁵⁹

Bakunin's suggestion – to send a delegate to the London Conference and wait at least until then before disbanding the Alliance – was not taken into consideration. Without so much as consulting Bakunin as Guillaume had suggested, the Alliance section disbanded on 6 August 1871 – the very day that Bakunin wrote his rabble-rousing letter to its members.⁶⁰ The section's

⁵⁸ Guillaume later commented this statement: 'Our silence has been the forced consequence of the war and the [Paris] Commune, not the result of our will' (Bakounine, *Œuvres*, vol. 6, p. 164). Bakunin was actually still pursuing a strategy of cautiously criticising Marx at the time; see above, pp. 31–33.

⁵⁹ Bakunin to the section of the Alliance de Genève, 6 August 1871, pp. 1–3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Bakunin also wrote an accompanying letter (Bakunin to Joukovsky, 7 August 1871, *ibid.*) and sent both to Guillaume, who received them on 9 August and forwarded them to Perron in Geneva on the same day; see Guillaume to Joukovsky, 10 August 1871, in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 181.

⁶⁰ Bakunin only heard of the dissolution of the Alliance section on 12 August 1871 (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, p. 17).

secretary, Joukovsky, informed the General Council that the Alliance section was no more in a letter dated 10 August 1871, enclosing a statement on the dissolution based on a suggestion by Robin and ratified by the meeting of the Alliance section on 6 August 1871, which declared:

Considering that this declaration [the General Council's confirmation that the Alliance section was a member of the International, dated 25 July 1871; see above] annihilates the calumnies and intrigues for which the section of the Alliance has been the pretext;

In order to render these impossible in the future,

The section of the International Working Men's Association called the Alliance of Socialist Democracy declares itself dissolved.⁶¹

Bakunin's suggestion to send a delegate to the London Conference was also dismissed – Guillaume downright refused to go:

my situation, as a representative of the [Jura] Mountain Sections [he later wrote] was that of an accused appearing before judges whom he recognises as competent and whose verdict he accepts: would it not be better, since we were condemned in advance, not to insist on whatever simulacrum of a vain defence might have been sketched by a defender of our cause, but to acknowledge, on the contrary, that we had been condemned without a hearing?⁶²

As the London Conference would show, an informed and courageous delegate who could represent the interests of the Jura sections in the struggle over the political direction of the International was lacking. Instead of sending a delegate to London, the Federal Committee of the Jura sections made do with corresponding with the General Council for the first time since April 1870. On 6 August 1871, the corresponding secretary Adhémar Schwitzguébel wrote Jung – the General Council's corresponding secretary for Switzerland – about the makeup of Federal Committee of the Jura sections and expressed the hope that he would be in touch with the General Council on a regular basis until the next congress of the International where the conflict could be resolved.⁶³ Jung did not pass the letter on to the General Council nor did he answer. As the start of the London Conference was fast approaching, the Federal Committee in Jura decided to address the conference's participants directly with a letter, which included the following:

Today we learned indirectly that a special conference is to be convened in London on September 17. It was the duty of the General Council to notify all regional groups, we do not know why it kept silent with respect to us.⁶⁴ [...] as we may not doubt the spirit of equity that should animate any international meeting, we do not want to miss this solemn occasion to make an appeal to justice.

For eighteen months, we have been as outcasts from the International for the simple reason that a regional congress of the sections we represent has held an opinion different from those

⁶¹ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 386/5. A variant of the text (from Joukovsky's papers) can be found in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 183. A draft of this statement was included in Robin's letter to Guillaume from 27 July 1871 (see above, pp. 75–76).

⁶² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 188.

⁶³ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 391/7. Schwitzguébel sent this letter along with a short accompanying letter on 12 August 1871 (*ibid.*, delo 391/8).

⁶⁴ According to the Administrative Regulations of the International, the General Council is 'to bring the Congress programme to the knowledge of all the branches through the medium of the Central Committees' (*Rules of the International*, p. 6). Engels justified the boycott of the Jura sections by the General Council as follows: 'Jung, the secretary for Switzerland, could not continue to correspond officially with a committee which, flying in the face of a resolution passed by the General Council, continued to flaunt the title of Committee of the Romance Federation' (Engels to Lafargue, 30 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 285). See above, pp. 62–63.

professed by another group of sections. The General Council has thrown its weight behind one party, and since then, the whole of western Switzerland has been deprived of all communication with the General Council. We understand that the conference will be convened to pronounce concerning the conflict; we allow ourselves to advise it of the following:

1) It would be contrary to the most basic fairness to rule against a Federation which has not been provided the means to defend itself;

2) A decision revoking the rights of our Federation would have most fatal results for the existence of the International in our country;

3) A general congress, convened regularly, can alone be competent to decide a case as serious as that of the split in the Romance Federation. [...]

We therefore request that the conference decide simply to instruct the General Council to open a serious investigation into the conflict occurred in the Romance Federation. This investigation, made with impartiality, will enable the next general congress to judge, with knowledge of the cause, concerning an affair which, if were to be judged at present, without one party having been heard, might have the most unfortunate results.

It is an act of equity that we demand from the conference; we strongly believe that we shall not be denied by it. We attest to our ardent hope that its deliberations shall contribute powerfully to the progress of the International.

Accept, comrades, our fraternal greetings.

Adopted at the meeting of September 4, 1871.

On behalf of the Romance Federal Committee (federal seat: Val de Saint-Imier)

The corresponding secretary:

Adhémar Schwitzguébel,

engraver, in Sonvillier (Bernese Jura, Switzerland)⁶⁵

Marx and pluralism within the International

The conflict between the Jura sections and the General Council would never have gotten out of hand had it only been about the interpretation of a vote at a federal congress of the International; the conflict in Switzerland was sparked when the majority of delegates at the Romance Federation's Congress in La Chaux-de-Fonds (April 1870) voted to admit the Geneva section of the Alliance. This rather insignificant event had far reaching consequences: the congress was split in two and two federations were formed that both claimed the title Romance Federation and elected their own Federal Committee. The rush to form factions exposed deep-seated political differences that went beyond the immediate cause of the strife (the Alliance section's membership). In turn a conflict about political direction was played out in Switzerland which was to engulf the entire International: the conflict between political-parliamentary and social-revolutionary socialism.⁶⁶

This conflict must have seemed manageable at first in the International because the coexistence of various positions and tendencies had been characteristic of the First International since its beginning. The question as to whether the International was revolutionary or reformist, political

⁶⁵ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 355–56. The letter was apparently based on a draft by Joukovsky; see Guillaume to Joukovsky, 11 August 1871, in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 558.

⁶⁶ See above, pp. 15–16, 49–54.

or unpolitical, a party or union, authoritarian or free, was superfluous; it was all of these things at once.⁶⁷ Far-reaching theoretical differences had already been played out at the organisation's congresses without any threats of expulsion. Debates on theory proved to be a motor for the intense development of political ideas among members,⁶⁸ while also turning the International into an open forum for the different socialist tendencies of the day. Within this context, the refusal to accept the Alliance section as a member of the Romance Federation because of political reasons must have seemed like a step backward – an attempt to inhibit the pluralism that had existed in the International so far.

It was not only the debates on theory that fostered the emergence of a broad spectrum of ideas: the federalist internal organisation of the International enshrined in the Administrative Regulations gave each section the autonomy to define its own programme.⁶⁹ As the founders of the International consciously refrained from formulating a specific political programme in the General Rules,⁷⁰ its openness had a similar positive effect. Bakunin highlighted this while he was an editor of the *Égalité*:

We think that the founders of the International were very wise to eliminate all political and religious questions from its program. To be sure, they lacked neither political views nor well-defined anti-religious views. But they refrained from expressing those views in their program because their main purpose before all else, was to unite the working masses of the civilized world in a common movement.⁷¹

Bakunin considered it impossible to formulate a uniform programme for all countries in which the International existed.

To hope to establish a perfect theoretical solidarity among all the sections of the International today would be to subscribe to a singular illusion. Indeed, has this solidarity ever existed in the world? Could it even be achieved solely within the Catholic Church that boasts of its unity? How could one think that millions of workers born in different countries and under different climates, subjected to such different economic and political conditions, should achieve it today, unless it was to be imposed from above in an authoritarian manner, which would bring us back to the Catholic lie?

However, an ever greater and more complete unification of theoretical ideas shall not fail to occur in the future under the double influence of progressive science, on the one hand, and the gradual unification of interests and social positions on the other. But this can only be the work of centuries, and if we wished to found the emancipation of the proletariat on the basis of this perfect theoretical solidarity, it would be long in arriving.

It is the eternal honour of the first founders of the International and, we willingly admit, of comrade Karl Marx in particular, to have understood this, and to have sought and found, not in any economic or philosophical system, but in the universal consciousness of today's proletariat, certain practical ideas resulting from their own historical traditions and everyday experience,

⁶⁷ See D. E. Devreese, 'An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of Organization: Some Observations on the International Working Men's Association, 1864–1872/76', in F. van Holthoon and M. van der Linden (eds.), *Internationalism in the Labour Movement 1830–1940*, 2 vols. (Leiden, New York, Copenhagen, Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1988), vol. 1, p. 285.

⁶⁸ For example the debate on common property, see above, pp. 13–14. See also Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 112.

⁶⁹ 'Every section is at liberty to make Rules and Bye-Laws for its local administration, suitable to the peculiar circumstances of the different countries.' (*Rules of the International*, p. 7).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3–6.

⁷¹ Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 98.

which one shall find in the feelings or instincts if not always in the conscious thought of the workers of all countries in the civilised world, which constitute the true catechism of the modern proletariat.⁷²

As the author of the International's founding documents (Inaugural Address and Provisional Rules),⁷³ Marx at first professed the pluralism in the International's programme – in public at any rate – even though this openness was literally imposed on him.⁷⁴ 'It is the business of the International Working Men's Association', he wrote in 1867, 'to combine and generalize the *spontaneous movements* of the working classes, but not to dictate or impose any doctrinary system whatever.'⁷⁵ In January 1871, Marx explained the caution of the General Council: 'according to our Rules the General Council can only intervene with a veto in the event of open violations of the Rules and principles of the International. Apart from that, however, it is our invariable policy to let the sections have their head and conduct their own affairs.'⁷⁶ At the beginning of July 1871 Marx still insisted in an interview that the International was a *pluralist* and not a *centralist* organisation like that of the Pope:

to talk of secret instruction from London, as of decrees in the matter of faith and morals from some centre of Papal domination and intrigue is wholly to misconceive the nature of the International. This would imply a centralized form of government for the International, whereas the real form is designedly that which gives the greatest play to local energy and independence. [...] The association does not dictate the form of political movements; it only requires a pledge as to their end.⁷⁷ It is a network of affiliated societies spreading all over the world of labor. In each part of the world some special aspect of the problem presents itself, and the workmen there address themselves to its consideration in their own way.⁷⁸

In private, Marx and Engels did not view pluralism as the definitive organisational form within the International but rather as a temporary concession, something provisional, which would one day have to be replaced with a uniform political programme.⁷⁹ On 28 July 1871, three days after the General Council meeting described above where the London Conference was called to life, Engels wrote to Carlo Cafiero: 'as regards discussions of theoretical points, the Council desires nothing more ardently than this. From discussions of this sort the Council hopes to arrive at a general theoretical programme acceptable to the European proletariat.'⁸⁰ Engels was reaffirming a viewpoint that Marx had expressed in March 1869 in the General Council's reply to the Geneva Alliance: 'The community of action, however, called into life by the Intern. W. Ass., the exchange

⁷² 'Article français', pp. 5–6, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁷³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/20, pp. 3–15.

⁷⁴ He wrote Engels on 4 November 1864: 'It was very difficult to frame the thing so that our view should appear in a form that would make it acceptable to the present outlook of the workers' movement. [...] It will take time before the revival of the movement allows the old boldness of language to be used.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 42, p. 18).

⁷⁵ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/20, p. 231.

⁷⁶ Marx to Sigfrid Meyer, 21 January 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 101–2.

⁷⁷ Namely the protection, advancement and complete emancipation of the working classes (*Rules of the International*, p. 4).

⁷⁸ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 454.

⁷⁹ Later Marx and Engels would distance themselves completely from pluralism within the International; see below, p. 408.

⁸⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 183–84.

of ideas facilitated by the public organs of the different national sections, and the direct debates at the General Congresses, are sure by and by to engender a common theoretical programme.’⁸¹

As we have seen, Bakunin had already declared this impossible in the article for the *Égalité*, explaining that there is ‘still too great a difference in the level of industrial, political, intellectual, and moral development among the working masses in various countries for it to be possible today to unite them around a single political, anti-religious program’. Bakunin warned that trying to impose such a uniform and specific political programme on all of the members ‘would destroy the International’.⁸²

The logic behind Marx’s way of thinking was striking: in Marx’s opinion the responsibility for drafting and enforcing a *common* theoretical programme – compulsory for all – lay with the General Council where he set the agenda and which, unlike all the deviant tendencies (‘sects’), was the true representative of the *real movement of the working class*. Thus, Marx did not see the discussions on theory within the International as a normal manifestation of pluralism and a motor for the development of ideas but as ‘a *continual struggle of the General Council* against the sects and attempts by amateurs to assert themselves within the International itself against the real movement of the working class’, as he wrote in a letter in November 1871.⁸³

Incidentally the terms ‘real movement’ and ‘sect’ have their own history within the context of Marx/Engels terminology: Marx liked to refer to his own position as *real* while other directions in his opinion existed only *in theory*. Already in the *German ideology* (*Die deutsche Ideologie*) (1845/46), ‘true socialists’ were criticised for trying to ‘detach the communist systems [...] from the real movement, of which they are but the expression’ – communism as advocated by Marx and Engels of course represented ‘the *real* movement’.⁸⁴ In a similar vein, the followers of ‘utopian’ socialism were called ‘reactionary sects’ in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) because they proposed the ‘realisation of their social Utopias’ despite the ‘progressive historical development of the proletariat’;⁸⁵ it is clear, Engels added three years later, that the ‘German Communist School [is] entirely different from this sect’.⁸⁶ The word ‘sect’ was used to describe almost all rival tendencies of international socialism by Engels and Marx in the years that followed: in his ‘The Housing Question’ (‘Zur Wohnungsfrage’) (1872) Engels wrote in all seriousness ‘that in France the Proudhonists form a numerically rather insignificant sect’, only to admit a couple of sentences later that they were ‘strongly represented’ in the Paris Commune.⁸⁷ Marx also accused his rival Ferdinand Lassalle of not orienting himself to ‘the real elements of the class movement’, of being ‘the founder of a sect’ and of following ‘a certain doctrinaire recipe’.⁸⁸ According to Marx the ADAV – founded by Lassalle in 1863 – and its large membership was also ‘purely a sectarian organisation and, as such, hostile to the organisation of the *real* workers’ movement’,⁸⁹ which Marx obviously identified himself with. It is not surprising that Marx and Engels would

⁸¹ See above, p. 6.

⁸² Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 99. See also Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 152–53.

⁸³ Marx to Friedrich Bolte, 23 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 252. He was more careful (without mentioning the General Council) in Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, p. 107.

⁸⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 5, p. 49, 456.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 516.

⁸⁶ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/11, p. 19.

⁸⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 369–70.

⁸⁸ Marx to Johann Baptist von Schweitzer, 13 October 1868, *ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 133 (here erroneously ‘the actual elements’ instead of ‘the real elements’ [*den wirklichen Elementen*]).

⁸⁹ Marx to Bolte, 23 November 1871, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 255.

also refer to directions within the International that diverged from their own as sects: whether the Alliance 'sect'⁹⁰ or the Jura Federation which Engels was referring to on 11 March 1872 when he wrote 'We must now make an end of this sect'.⁹¹

So when Marx states in the aforementioned letter that he considered the discussions on theory within the International as 'a *continual struggle of the General Council* against the sects and attempts by amateurs to assert themselves within the International itself against the real movement of the working class', this can be seen as part of a long line of attempts to isolate and marginalise others in order to establish his own programme.

Implementing his own political programme *in the International* would mean turning the General Council into a governing body and bringing an *end to the pluralistic internal organisation* of the International. This would pit Marx up against the majority of sections and federations as they supported the pluralism that had reigned in the International thus far. By setting the groundwork in the lead up to the London Conference, Marx was nevertheless able to steer the International in his direction – at least temporarily.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 473.

⁹¹ Engels to Paul Lafargue, 11 March 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 337.

CHAPTER 7. The London Conference

ROBIN WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE to inform his political friends about the London Conference after the crucial meeting of General Council on 25 July 1871, which was described above. Marx also notified his correspondents: on 27 July 1871 – the same date as Robin wrote the aforementioned letter to Guillaume – Marx recorded that he wrote letters to Utin, the New York Central Committee of the International's sections in the United States, and Wilhelm Liebknecht informing them that the London Conference would take place on 17 September 1871.¹ Only a draft of the letter to Utin survives in which Marx wrote:

The convocation of this Conference *must not be published in the press*. Its meetings will not be public ones. The Conference will be required to concern itself, not with theoretical questions, but exclusively with questions of *organisation*. It will also deal with disputes between the different sections of a particular country.²

At the General Council meeting on 15 August 1871, Engels reinforced the notion that the London Conference would not deal 'with theoretical questions': 'Theoretical discussions were of no value except for publication, and this Conference was to be private.'³ As such the nine resolutions proposed a short time later by the General Council for the London Conference did not deal with any theoretical questions.⁴ However, these paled in comparison to ten resolutions put forward during the Conference that dealt extensively with 'theoretical questions'. Divulging the Conference's crucial and controversial questions not before but during the Conference⁵ flew in the face of the established procedure for preparing congresses.⁶ This time the sections and federations of the International had not been involved in drawing up the agenda nor were they informed about the Conference's programme beforehand.

The debate about the General Council members' participation at the London Conference was equally vexing. Marx put forward a motion at the General Council meeting on 5 September 1871 to give all the members of the General Council the right to speak at the Conference but only a certain number of votes. This number – he shrewdly suggested – should 'be fixed when it is known how many delegates come from the different sections'.⁷ The French General Council

¹ RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 2940. Marx enclosed the letter to Liebknecht, which has not been preserved, in a letter written to Ludwig Kugelmann on the same day; see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 176.

² *Ibid.*, p. 178.

³ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 594.

⁴ See Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, pp. 276–82.

⁵ The historian Miklós Molnár said the following about this course of action, which resulted in the conference going in a completely different direction than had been proposed beforehand: 'If it is completely natural that the delegates should enrich the program by their support, it is also normal that the general line should be traced in advance. And it would be absurd to suppose that Marx, who has long craved a kind of settling of accounts with Bakunin, has left to chance and the whim of the delegates the setting of the points which interest him above all on the agenda.' (Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*, pp. 50–51).

⁶ See above, p. 471, n. 64.

⁷ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 601. Marx and Engels had worked out this idea before; see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 275.

members Auguste Serrailier and especially André Bastelica said that it would be better to let the Conference decide on this delicate matter. In contrast, the General Council member John Weston called for the right to speak *and* vote for all of the General Council's 40 members⁸ on the grounds that the General Council should not give up its powers to a *smaller body* (namely the Conference), 'which might not represent the whole Association'.⁹ Marx agreed with this peculiar statement because he considered the General Council 'a governing body', which was 'distinct from its Constituents' and had its own collective policy.¹⁰ Édouard Vaillant even declared that the General Council could call a conference to merely *advise upon the position of the Association that it deemed necessary* without 'giving the delegates the right to vote'.¹¹ These differences in opinion marked the beginning of the aforementioned conflict about the internal organisation of the International: whether the International should be organised in a pluralistic fashion with a democratic leadership or whether the General Council – leaders charged with enforcing a common theoretical programme – should be considered a *governing body* with its own collective policy and independent from the sections and federations. According to the logic of the second interpretation, the General Council is superior to the International's conferences and congresses.

Engels did not consider the London Conference particularly legitimate, either. The entire Conference, he explained to his fellow General Council members, 'was a compromise and was not provided for in the rules'.¹² In a letter to Liebknecht from 18 January 1872, he even described the Conference as 'an illegal mechanism, justified only by the gravity of the situation'.¹³ At the General Council meeting, Engels used this grey area in the Rules to ask that the General Council be given an *unlimited number* of delegates with the *right to vote* at the Conference.¹⁴ Such pretensions finally provoked an objection from Johann Georg Eccarius, a founding member of the International, who said that the Council didn't have the right 'to swamp all the other delegates'. He scoffed that the General Council 'might just as well pass certain decrees and call upon the sections to register them, and not call the Conference at all'.¹⁵

This appeal was perhaps decisive in forming the General Council's opinion: at the end of the meeting on 5 September, the members voted nine to three – with a number of abstentions – in favour of only giving delegates elected by the General Council the right to speak and vote at the London Conference. At a special meeting of the General Council on 16 September 1871, the eve of the London Conference, the number of delegates was set at six.¹⁶

At the same meeting, when John Hales suggested that the French members of the General Council choose three additional delegates from their ranks because of the lack of delegates from France, Marx objected, since Italy, Germany, and the United States did not have any delegates either. The following motion by Engels, which was carried, makes plain that he and Marx were much more interested in having the *respective corresponding secretaries in the General Council* represent these countries. This made Marx (secretary for Germany), Engels (secretary for Italy),

⁸ Marx made an up-to-date list of the 40 members of the General Council about a week and a half before the London Conference (*ibid.*, p. 1108).

⁹ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', pp. 601–2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 602.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 296.

¹⁴ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 602.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 602, 609.

as well as their confidants Joseph Patrick McDonnell (secretary for Ireland) and Eugène Dupont (secretary for France) delegates with the right to vote.¹⁷ This meant that the General Council had six *more* delegates for the countries that had not sent delegates¹⁸ in addition to the six official delegates it already had.¹⁹

The London Conference's decision on the Swiss conflict (resolutions nos. 16 and 17)

The London Conference was attended by six delegates with mandates from Belgium,²⁰ the Spaniard Anselmo Lorenzo Asperilla with a mandate from the conference of the Spanish Federation in Valencia,²¹ and two delegates from Switzerland – the anti-Bakuninists Utin²² and Henri Perret.²³ These *nine* delegates from the sections and federations of the International must have felt lost among the *twenty-one* members of the General Council present, of which twelve

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 609.

¹⁸ Engels for Italy, Marx for Germany, McDonnell for Ireland, Eccarius for the United States, Hales for England, Eugène Dupont for France. As no Danish delegates attended the London Conference, James Cohn – corresponding secretary for Denmark in the General Council – should have had the right to vote and speak, but he apparently did not attend the Conference.

¹⁹ Thomas Mottershead, Leo Frankel, Hermann Jung, Auguste Serrailier, André Bastelica, Édouard Vaillant ('Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 609). In addition, Robin and the General Council members Frederick Bradnick, Victor Delahaye, Benjamin Constant Le Moussu, Charles Longuet, Constant Martin, George Milner, Charles Rochat, and Albert Theisz participated in the London Conference without voting rights.

²⁰ Philip (Philippe) Coenen (delegate for the Antwerp sections), César De Paepe (delegate for the Belgian Federal Council), Pierre Fluse (delegate for the Local Federation of the Vesdre valley), Alfred Herman (corresponding secretary for Belgium in the General Council with a mandate for the Liège sections), Eugène Steens (delegate for the Hainaut Coal Miners' Centre), and Laurent Verrijcken (delegate for the Belgian Federal Council), see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 643 (minutes by Rochat). There are both edited minutes and rough notes of the meetings of the London Conference, which are quoted here with reference to the authors: Rochat, Martin, Delahaye, Le Moussu.

²¹ Anselmo Lorenzo Asperilla (1841–1914), printer in Madrid, founding member of the local section of the International, delegate at the first congress of the Spanish Federation in Barcelona (1870), then member of the Spanish Federal Council until 1872. Lorenzo was sent to the London Conference as the Spanish Federation's delegate by the Conference of Valencia (10–18 September 1871); see below, p. 166. For details about his mandate, see *Resoluciones de la Conferencia Internacional de Londres y Acuerdos de la Conferencia Regional de Valencia*, Madrid: Imprenta de Inocente Calleja, 1871, p. 2.

²² Utin had a mandate from the Group of German-speaking Sections in Geneva; see below, p. 117.

²³ Henri Perret, Secretary of the Committee of the Romance Federation in Geneva, was a delegate for the 'Romance sections of Switzerland' according to the conference minutes (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 643 [minutes by Rochat]). However, Robin claimed Perret was a delegate for the Geneva Federal Committee. In reality he was made a delegate by a commission of the Geneva Local Committee (*Comité Cantonal*) convened by the Canton of Geneva's Local Federation of sections. A letter from Joukovsky to Robin on 15 September 1871 states that Jacques Grosselin beat Perret in a delegate's election by 150 votes to 28 (Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', pp. 385–86). According to a circular by the Administrative Commission (*Commission administrative*) of the Geneva Local Committee, Grosselin – shortly before his planned departure – demanded the defrayal of 400–450 francs in travel expenses (instead of the agreed-upon 300) in return for accepting the mandate. The circular continued: 'because of the impossibility of convening a new general assembly of the Sections, due to lack of time', the Administrative Commission named Perret the delegate to the London Conference (The Administrative Commission to the sections of the Geneva Federation, 15 September 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 39/6).

had voting rights. So much so that the Spanish delegate Lorenzo later referred to the Conference as ‘an extension of the General Council’.²⁴

Oddly enough, no information about the duties and agenda of the London Conference had been provided beforehand (see above). So, at the opening meeting on 17 September 1871, the Belgian delegate César De Paepe demanded ‘explanations concerning the goal of the conference’. Marx replied as follows:

The General Council has called a conference to consult the delegates of the various countries about the measures to be taken to guard against the risks which the Association is running in a large number of countries, and to set up a new organisation to meet the needs of the situation.

Secondly, to draw up a response to the various governments that are working unceasingly to destroy the Association by every means at their disposal.

And finally to reach a definite solution to the Swiss conflict. [...]

Citizen Marx adds that it will be necessary to make a public declaration to the Russian government, which is trying to implicate the Association in a certain affair relating to a secret society whose main leaders are completely unconnected with or hostile to the Association.²⁵

After establishing the speaking rules, the Geneva delegate Perret requested that an agenda be set and suggested ‘that the first item that must be subjected to discussion is the matter of the disputes in Switzerland’.²⁶ Marx then suggested that a five-person commission be formed to deal with the Swiss conflict where – in accordance with a proposal by Perret – only people ‘who were not directly engaged in the conflict’ would take part. Utin suggested the following people: ‘1 Belgian and Eccarius, McDonnell, Vaillant, Marx, Verrijcken’.²⁷ However, Marx could hardly be considered impartial as he weighed in heavily on the General Council’s decision on the Swiss conflict.²⁸ His nomination led to the objection from Robin – who was taking part in the meeting without voting rights – ‘that only men who have no relations with the parties involved should be named’. This sparked the following bizarre exchange:

Utin is astonished that certain citizens who know the details of this affair, by being excluded, somehow have an unfair suspicion of prejudice cast upon them. [...]

Marx replies that there had never been any divisions concerning it at the General Council; all the resolutions taken on this subject were taken by the majority.

Robin says that he never had any intention of making a person[al] [attack] against Citizen Marx –

After this incident, Marx refuses to accept a place on the commission [...].²⁹

Robin later remembered the incident as follows:

When it is time to appoint the commission to study this issue, right away, this man [Utin] cheekily proposes his partner, Marx; I dare to observe that the commission must be composed of completely impartial men. Utin waxes indignant; Marx waxes satirical [...] the sycophants join in, and Marx is *forced* to accept.³⁰

²⁴ See below, p. 167. For more detail about each meeting and all the resolutions, see Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*.

²⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 613 (minutes by Rochat).

²⁶ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 646 (minutes by Rochat).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 648 (rough notes by Rochat).

²⁸ See above, pp. 60–62.

²⁹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 649 (rough notes by Rochat).

³⁰ Robin, ‘Mémoire justificatif’, p. 388.

Despite making a show of turning down the nomination, Marx was elected into the commission on the Swiss conflict along with Eccarius, McDonnell, Vaillant and Verrijcken.³¹ Marx then invited the commission members and witnesses to meet at his home on the following day (18 September 1871).³² Robin recalled:

The impartial commission chose for its meeting place ... Marx's living room. Summoned there as a witness at eight o'clock in the evening, I presented myself to them with the greatest reluctance but punctually. Marx's daughters, who had also attended the last gathering of the secret conference, were present at this meeting, which was at least equally secret. With two hours' journey home ahead of me, I declared in advance that I would leave at ten o'clock. They passed round refreshments to reinforce the air of impartiality and began at half past nine. The one presiding [Verrijcken] was appointed for the sake of form; his partner, Engels, took the minutes, even though he was not a member of the commission.³³

According to Engels' minutes,³⁴ the to and fro surrounding the membership of the Alliance in the International, the Geneva *Égalité* affair,³⁵ the split of the Romance Federation, etc., immediately led to a heated discussion. Marx began the polemic with a long speech, which Robin then tried to rebuke. Robin took a defensive position in line with the conflict-prevention tactic he had already developed in his letter to Guillaume:³⁶

In coming here, I still believed possible a fusion of the two sides; I now see that this is impossible [...]. If no reconciliation is possible, I believe that the two sides could yet live peaceably side by side, but I do not think that the Council or the Conference has the right to exclude the sections without having given them a hearing, and I have no mandate to represent them. At any rate, the Alliance has been dissolved, and the basis for the dispute has disappeared with it.³⁷

Nobody else was ready to accept this compromise. Perret and especially Utin hoped to take advantage of the situation to openly attack their opponents, whereupon Robin immediately got ready to leave. He later recalled:

I get up then, but they want to keep me there; I refuse, saying that I have said all that I have to say. Mr Utin exclaims that he declares to me that he accuses me directly ... – To which I reply, withdrawing, that I throw his accusation back at him with the utmost contempt. One can see that it would have been unworthy for me to continue to play any role in this comedy, to appear in any capacity before this so-called tribunal in which the most common conventions from which bourgeois justice itself shall never vary are outrageously violated.³⁸

³¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 646 (minutes by Rochat), see also p. 286 (notes by Engels).

³² Marx 'asks the citizens of the Swiss Commission to come to his home at 8 o'clock this evening to settle the matter.' (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 663 [rough notes by Rochat].)

³³ Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 388.

³⁴ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, pp. 292–99.

³⁵ See above, pp. 35–37.

³⁶ See above, p. 76.

³⁷ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 295.

³⁸ Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 389.

Marx considered the scene Robin made ‘most shabby and cowardly’.³⁹ The Spanish delegate Lorenzo also later complained about ‘the cowardly silence and, worse still, certain timid excuses of someone from the Alliance who was present’ at the Conference.⁴⁰ As such, the actual reason for the conflict – the vote by the majority of delegates at the La Chaux-de-Fonds Congress of the Romance Federation to accept the Geneva Alliance section and the General Council siding with the losers of the vote – never came up. Because of Robin’s retreat, Perret and Utin had free rein to demonise Bakunin and his political friends in any way they saw fit without the other participants (except for Marx, Engels and Jung) knowing any better. Marx was the only member of the commission to say a word. Lorenzo found the entire scene positively disgusting:

One can safely reduce the substance of that Conference to the affirmation of the dominance of one man present, Karl Marx, against the supposed dominance of another, Miguel Bakunin, who was absent.

This affirmation was propelled by a list of charges against Bakunin and the Alliance of Socialist Democracy. Nobody was convinced of the truth or authenticity of the documents, declarations and facts which upheld the charges and which were supported by the testimony of some delegate present like the Russian Utin, for example. What is bad is that they were left unchallenged because of the cowardly silence and, worse still, certain timid excuses of someone from the Alliance who was present. But if all of this, quite aside from being repugnant in itself, was carried out in the Conference sessions with a semblance of regularity, within the commissions a hatred was manifested with cruel shamelessness. I was present at the home of Marx for a meeting charged with deciding the question of the Alliance and there I saw this man [Marx] descend from the pedestal on which my respect and admiration had him positioned, to a level most vulgar. Afterwards various supporters of his would descend further still, practising their adulation as if they were vile courtiers before their master.⁴¹

Robin sent a desperate letter to the participants of the London Conference the next day, which included the following:

Called as a witness with regard to the Swiss dispute to the commission that had been appointed to examine it, I presented myself with the hope of contributing to a reconciliation. Having been directly accused, I formally declare that I do not accept the part of the accused, and I shall abstain

³⁹ ‘Robin behaved in the most shabby and cowardly manner. After having had his say (at the beginning of the meeting) he declared that he must leave and rose, intending to go. Outine told him that he must stay, that the investigation was going to be a serious one and that he would not like to discuss him in his absence. Robin, in an admirable series of tactical moves, approached the door. Outine apostrophised him violently, saying that he would have to accuse him of being the mainspring of the Alliance’s intrigues. Meanwhile, to secure a safe retreat, the great Robin had partly opened the door and, like a true Parthian, delivered a parting shot at Outine with the words: “Then I despise you”’. (Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 24–25 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 266).

⁴⁰ See below, p. 90. According to the memorandum of the Spanish Federal Council to the Federal Congress of Saragossa, Lorenzo was not able to make up his mind on the Swiss conflict at the London Conference because no member of the Jura sections was present and as ‘an individual of the Council who – with his background and commitment – should have defended them, limited himself to leading an attack, evading all discussion afterwards.’ (*Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso obrero de la Federación Regional Española, celebrado en Zaragoza en los días 4 al 11 de Abril de 1872, según las actas y las notas tomadas por la comisión nombrada al efecto en el mismo*, [Valencia 1872], p. 11).

⁴¹ A. Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, ed. by J. A. Junco (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1974), pp. 183–84.

from attending the meetings of the Conference at which the Swiss question shall be discussed [...].⁴²

Robin did not take part in any more meetings of the London Conference and the other conference participants kept quiet on the Swiss question. So there was no opposition during the reading of the report on the Swiss conflict at the meeting on 21 September 1871. Marx proposed three resolutions⁴³ that were adopted by the delegates and which repudiated the question of the Alliance and the letter of protest from the Jura sections.⁴⁴ The following resolutions were passed:

- The question of the Alliance's membership in the International was considered settled as it had declared itself dissolved. No more 'separatist bodies' such as the Alliance, sections of propaganda, etc., 'pretending to accomplish special missions' would be allowed to join the International in the future.⁴⁵
- The exceptions taken by the Jura sections as to the authority of the London Conference were held to be inadmissible.⁴⁶
- The General Council resolution of 28 June that pronounced in favour of the Geneva sections was reconfirmed; furthermore, that the Jura sections should join the Geneva Federal Committee – in case this was impossible, the Conference 'decreed' that they should form their own group under the name Jura Federation.⁴⁷

The Nechaev trial (resolution no. 14 of the London Conference)

The eighth meeting of the London Conference on 22 September 1871 dealt with the organisational situation of the International in different countries. With regards to Russia, Utin explained: 'One might think that in Russia, it is absolutely necessary to form secret societies – we have no need

⁴² Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 714 (minutes by Martin). The manuscript of Robin's letter can be found in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 43/1. After two failed attempts to have Robin retract his letter, he was expelled from the General Council on 17 October 1871 (Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 389–90; 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', pp. 622–23 [meeting on 10 October 1871] and pp. 627–28 [meeting on 17 October 1871]).

⁴³ The exact wording is unknown. His proposed resolution, which was made up of three parts each voted on separately, seems to correspond with the resolutions nos. 16, 17.1, 17.2 (see the following notes), which were published later.

⁴⁴ See above, p. 79. This letter was given to Jung by Robin at one of the first meetings of the London Conference; see Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif', pp. 388, 393.

⁴⁵ Resolution no. 16 of the London Conference (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 345; see also resolution no. 2, *ibid.*, pp. 339–40). The formal procedure to regulate the 'mission' of sections was aimed at the Alliance: 'it is intended that such an association should be prevented from reconstituting itself' is how Marx explained the motivation (*ibid.*, p. 718 [rough notes by Le Moussu]; Le Moussu's authorship was identified in *Londonskaya Konferentsiya Pervogo Internatsionala, 17–23 sentyabrya 1871 g. Protokoly i dokumenty* [Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1988], p. 205).

⁴⁶ Resolution no. 17.1 of the London Conference, in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 345.

⁴⁷ Resolution no. 17.2 of the London Conference, first printed in *Égalité*, 21 October 1871, p. 3. The expression 'it decrees' (*elle décrète*) – 'which reveals all too cruelly the spirit with which our adversaries are inspired' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 212; see also [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 219) – was replaced with 'it decides' (*elle décide*) in the conference resolutions that the General Council later provided (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 332, 346).

of them – Bakunin has abused the name of the International’.⁴⁸ This was the first time that Utin brought up Bakunin at the London Conference. However, he did not specify how Bakunin had abused the name of the International. At the meeting that evening, there was even an item on the agenda titled ‘the abuse of the name of the International Association in a famous political trial in Russia’. Marx and Utin had apparently agreed to bring up this topic: Marx had added the item, which was aimed at Bakunin, to the agenda at the opening meeting of the Conference (see above). As such Utin was able to launch an extensive attack on Bakunin during the evening meeting on 22 September.

The impetus for Utin’s arguments was the court case that had recently taken place in St. Petersburg against the secret Russian organisation The People’s Judgment (*Narodnaya rasprava*) founded by Sergei Nechaev. Nechaev (1847– 1882)⁴⁹ was born in Ivanovo (Vladimir province) to serf parents. He began work as a teacher in October 1866 in St. Petersburg. In autumn 1869 he came into contact with students interested in politics, took part in their discussions and helped form the so-called Committee at the beginning of 1869, whose members tried to radicalise student groups in Moscow and St. Petersburg. On 16 (4) March 1869, he left Russia to establish contact with Russian emigrants: presumably from Brussels, his first stop abroad, he got in touch with Alexander Herzen. Herzen was asked by Nechaev to print an appeal to the St. Petersburg students that he had written.⁵⁰ In this appeal, Nechaev told of his escape from imprisonment in the Peter and Paul Fortress – a rumour he had already tried to spread in Russia to make a legend of himself. Nechaev and Bakunin got to know each other through Ogarev on 6 April 1869 in Geneva. Nechaev introduced himself as ‘an envoy of an existing and fairly powerful organization’ as Bakunin later recollected.⁵¹ Nechaev, who must have had exceptional charisma and power of suggestion, was able to win over Bakunin and Ogarev completely⁵² and worked closely with them from that point on. The cooperation resulted in two dozen proclamations, which cannot easily be attributed to any of the three. In addition, Bakunin issued Nechaev an identity card

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 727 (minutes by Delahaye). Marx supported Utin by saying: ‘the secret societies are useless there – the International is perfectly accessible’, ‘the St. Petersburg sections are of this opinion’ (*ibid.*, p. 727 [minutes by Delahaye] and p. 734 [rough notes by Martin]). In reality, there had never been a section of the International in Russia according to Utin’s own account; see below, p. 119.

⁴⁹ For more on Nechaev, see P. Pomper, *Sergei Nechaev* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1979); and (especially until 1869) S. T. Cochrane, *The Collaboration of Nechaev, Ogarev and Bakunin in 1869. Nechaev’s Early Years* (Gießen: Wilhelm Schmitz Verlag, 1977).

⁵⁰ Later published during the court case against his followers: S. Nechaev, ‘Studentam Universiteta, Akademii i Tekhnologicheskogo Instituta v Peterburge’, *Pravitel’svennyi Vestnik*, 10 (22) July 1871, p. 2.

⁵¹ Bakunin to Nechaev, 2–9 June 1870, in M. Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary: Natalie Herzen and the Bakunin-Nechayev Circle* (London: Alcove Press, 1974), p. 246.

⁵² In an appeal from January 1870, Bakunin wrote that in agreeing with the goals of Nechaev’s supposed committee ‘and convinced of the seriousness of the cause and of the people involved, I did what in my view every honest émigré ought to do abroad: I submitted unconditionally to the Committee as the only representative and leader of the revolutionary cause in Russia’ (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 4, p. 11). Nechaev was also impressed with Bakunin – while pretending to discuss business in a letter to Russia, he wrote ‘that here real, unadulterated wine is only available from B[akunin]’ (B. Bazilevskii [Vasilii Jakovlev] [ed.], *Gosudarstvennyya prestupleniya v Rossii v XIX veke*, 3 vols. [Stuttgart: Verlag von J. H. W. Dietz Nachf., 1903–1904 (vol. 1–2); Paris: Société nouvelle de librairie et d’édition, 1905 (vol. 3)], vol. 1, p. 316).

(‘No. 2771’) on 12 May 1869 appointing him an agent of the Russian section of the European Revolutionary Alliance (*Alliance Révolutionnaire Européenne*).⁵³

On 5 August 1869 Nechaev left Switzerland and returned to Russia through Bulgaria. The secret society The People’s Judgment was founded by Nechaev in Moscow by September 1869. Members were expected to follow him blindly and submit to his will. When one of the members – the student Ivan Ivanov – questioned Nechaev’s conduct and wanted to leave the organisation, Nechaev accused him of treason and arranged for his murder on 3 December (21 November) 1869. Nechaev escaped the ensuing repressions by fleeing to Switzerland, where he resumed his cooperation with Bakunin. Bakunin finally severed their relationship after he found out about Nechaev’s ruthless ways in May/June 1870.⁵⁴

After the murder of Ivanov, 152 people were arrested in Russia – four of them died in prison and another went mad. One and a half years after the wave of arrests, 64 people were tried as members of Nechaev’s organisation in the first public political trial in Czarist Russia (13 (1) July to 8 September (27 August) 1871). Sentences included long prison terms, hard labour and banishment to Siberia. The Russian government hoped that the trial’s publicity would result in public contempt for the revolutionaries; however, the news coverage of the trials caused the revolutionary ideas to spread. The trial not only attracted a good deal of attention in Russia but also in Western Europe. Public sympathy for the mostly young defendants was often mixed with disdain for Nechaev: ‘what a scoundrel!’ Bakunin wrote about Nechaev in his diary after first reading the reports from the trials on 1 August 1871.⁵⁵

At the evening meeting of the London Conference on 22 September 1871, Utin lumped this ‘famous political trial in Russia’ – as was typical of him – together with his polemic against Bakunin. Charles Rochat soon had trouble keeping up with Utin’s shameless remarks about Bakunin in his minutes – for example, ‘Bakunin was an unknown person but one who was already consumed by a great desire to get himself talked about’.⁵⁶ He thus struck out the three paragraphs of Utin’s insults he had recorded and instead wrote: ‘Utin must reconstruct in writing the record of the speech which he gave’.⁵⁷ Utin also reported about the development of the student movement in Russia and was just about to label Bakunin a Pan-Slavist when he was interrupted by the Belgian delegate De Paepe:

It is not the first time that he has heard excessively grave charges levelled against Bakunin – He has even taken part in a commission arbitrating a dispute between Liebknecht and Bakunin; it must be recognised, however, that Liebknecht was forced to make a retraction.⁵⁸ – He regrets that Bakunin is not here to defend himself, or that he has no advocate to defend him. In any case, the matter to be settled is that of the Russian trial in which the Association has been implicated – *he asks that to this end, we immediately make a formal declaration that the Association has*

⁵³ *S.-Peterburgskiya Vedomosti*, 10 (22) July 1871, p. 2. The original document is thought to be lost; an official copy can be found in the Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), Moscow, fond 124, opis’ 1, delo 9, list 247.

⁵⁴ See below, p. 327.

⁵⁵ Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1871, p. 15. See also Bakunin to Adolf Reichel and Mariya Reichel-Ern, 3 August 1871, pp. 2–3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁵⁶ RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3003 (minutes by Rochat).

⁵⁷ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 738 (minutes by Rochat).

⁵⁸ For more about the court of honour at the Basel Congress, see above, pp. 23–25.

absolutely nothing to do with it, and this is all the easier to do in that the ringleader of this trial, the agent Nechaev, doesn't belong to the Association [...].⁵⁹

'[As to] the story of the assassination [of Ivanov]', De Paepe emphasised, 'Bakunin was not involved in it.'⁶⁰ Utin then tried to dispel the notion that he was biased and referred to the accusations against Bakunin in the reports of the trial in Russian: 'Nechaev carried a card bearing the name of the International Working Men's Association.'⁶¹ This was not true: the identity card from Bakunin bore the stamp *Alliance Révolutionnaire Européenne, Comité Général*.⁶² The International was not mentioned on it or any of the other seized papers.

As Utin's attempts to pin Nechaev's acts in Russia on Bakunin weren't impressing the delegates, Marx proposed a compromise: Utin was to be commissioned with translating the Russian trial report. This proposal was adopted by the delegates.⁶³ De Paepe suggested that it would suffice to declare that Nechaev had nothing to do with the International. This was also agreed upon by almost all the delegates.⁶⁴ Only the Spanish delegate Lorenzo abstained and added the following written statement to the minutes: 'I abstain by reason of my absolute ignorance of the subject prior to the discussion and because the arguments made in the course of it did not seem clear enough for me to form an opinion.'⁶⁵ This may well have been true for the great majority of delegates at the London Conference; however, most voted in favour of the proposed resolutions, anyway.

The instruction to Utin was later released as resolution no. 14 as follows: 'Citizen Outline is invited to publish in the journal *l'Egalité* a succinct report, from the Russian papers, of the Netschayeff trial. Before publication, his report will be submitted to the General Council.'⁶⁶ Marx had high hopes for this resolution: in a letter two months after the Conference he wrote that the resolution 'is especially distasteful to Bakunin because it would reveal to the whole of Europe the turpitudes for which he was responsible in Russia'.⁶⁷ In reality neither Utin nor Marx could demonstrate, at the London Conference or afterward, that Bakunin was responsible for Nechaev's acts in Russia.⁶⁸ Utin later included excerpts of the Russian trial report in a manuscript that he

⁵⁹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 739 (minutes by Rochat).

⁶⁰ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 228 (rough notes by Rochat).

⁶¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 740 (minutes by Rochat).

⁶² See above, p. 475, n. 53.

⁶³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 745 (rough notes by Martin) and p. 740 (minutes by Rochat). Because of the unexpected turn in the discussion, Marx was forced to admit: 'we cannot judge Bakunin without an adversarial debate, but it is a matter of publishing the trial.' (*ibid.*, p. 746 [rough notes by Rochat].)

⁶⁴ Released as resolution no. 13.4 (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 344) and separately based on a manuscript in English by Marx (*ibid.*, p. 420).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 740 (minutes by Rochat).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 344.

⁶⁷ Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 24–25 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 270.

⁶⁸ Upon closer examination, the opposite appears to be true: Nechaev exploited Bakunin rather than the other way around. During his first stay in Switzerland, Nechaev apparently told Utin 'that he was not a delegate of any secret organisation, but that he had comrades and acquaintances whom he wanted to organise and that meanwhile he had to get hold of some old emigrants to *influence* the young people by their names and get their printshop and money' (Utin, 'To the Fifth Congress', p. 403). Nechaev did receive considerable amounts of money from Ogarev and used Bakunin's prestige to impress people in Russia with their friendship. Bakunin even served as an excuse for Nechaev: during the trial, the defendant Nikolai Nikolaev testified that after badgering Nechaev about the existence of the alleged Committee, he was given the evasive response that all means were justified and that's how Bakunin did it; see *S.-Peterburgskiya Vedomosti*, 4 (16) July 1871, p. 3.

sent to Marx with the remark ‘confidential’.⁶⁹ The translated excerpts, however, were never published in the *Égalité* or elsewhere.

Constitution of the working class into a political party (resolution no. 9 of the London Conference)

The London Conference had not yet adopted any decisive ideological resolutions. Resolutions nos. 2 and 6 spoke out against ‘separatist bodies’ – however, the question of the Alliance itself was considered settled. Resolution no. 17 reaffirmed the General Council’s resolution from 28 June 1870 siding with the Geneva sections in the split of the Romance Federation. Other than that, the Jura sections were merely obliged to take on the name Jura Federation instead of Romance Federation – nobody threatened to throw the Jura sections out of the International as Robin had feared. An attempt to damage Bakunin’s reputation in the form of a resolution regarding the Nechaev trial was snubbed at the Conference, and the ensuing resolution no. 14 failed completely to this end.

However, a proposed resolution about *the political action of the working class and the conquest of political power* had the potential for an ideological conflict. Marx and Engels were leading proponents of this proposal, which in their opinion amounted to the political-parliamentary activities as practised – for example – by the SDAP in Germany by way of participation in elections and parliamentarianism. Engels paid the following compliment to Wilhelm Bracke on 28 April 1870:

The German workers have got half a dozen of their people into parliament; the French and the English *not a single one*. Allow me to remark, in this connection, *that all of us here* regard it as of the greatest importance that as many worker candidates stand as possible in the coming elections, and that as many are elected as possible.⁷⁰

Engels also wrote the Danish socialist Louis Pio: ‘we think it of very great importance that workers from the International should sit in all the parliaments’.⁷¹

This political-parliamentary position was opposed by many sections and federations in the International with emancipatory tendencies, who advocated labour struggles and not participation in parliaments dominated by bourgeois politics. They were invoking the traditional social-revolutionary idea that participating in existing power structures will *not* lead to freedom.⁷² The differences in opinion on this question first became apparent after the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds (April 1870) split when both sides passed diametrically opposite resolutions on ‘the position of the International regarding governments’.⁷³ Marx and Engels’ preferences at this fork in international socialism’s road were obvious: after the spokesmen of the Geneva section

⁶⁹ See Utin, ‘To the Fifth Congress’. Utin sent instalments of his report on Bakunin to Marx before and after the Congress of The Hague (see below, p. 533, n. 13); Engels and Lafargue made use of it while writing the pamphlet ‘L’Alliance’; see below, p. 410.

⁷⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 499. See also Engels to Marx, 29 April 1870: ‘I have also written to Bracke [...], saying how necessary it is that they should nominate worker candidates and force them through everywhere’ (*ibid.*, p. 500).

⁷¹ Engels to Pio, 7 March 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 332.

⁷² See above, p. 15.

⁷³ See above, p. 54. For the corresponding debate at the Spanish federal congress of June 1870, see below, pp. 159–64.

of the International – who were involved in local politics – asked the General Council for help, Marx and Engels wholly endorsed the political-parliamentary line in Switzerland.⁷⁴

This essential difference soon became the main order of business for the entire International. The different positions could at first be grouped as follows: the advocates of the conquest of political power through parliament (*position 1*) were pitted against the supporters of social-revolutionary ideas who favoured labour struggles and rejected any participation in parliamentarianism (*position 2*). The supporters of both positions were present at the London Conference, where the debate was greatly enlivened by the French member of the General Council, Vaillant (1840–1915), an engineer and doctor who had been a member of the executive commission of the Paris Commune. It had been Vaillant who suggested in the lead up to the London Conference that the Conference should only be used to announce the changes to the organisation that the General Council considered necessary and that the delegates of the federations and sections should not be given a right to vote.⁷⁵ As a participant in the Blanquist movement, which envisioned capitalism being overthrown by a disciplined and centralist organisation that would take power through an armed rebellion and establish a ‘revolutionary’ minority dictatorship in order to implement its communist goals, Vaillant advocated the CONQUEST OF POLITICAL POWER WHILE REJECTING PARLIAMENTARIANISM AND LABOUR STRUGGLES (*position 3*).

At the afternoon meeting of the London Conference on 20 September 1871, Vaillant proposed the following resolution:

In the face of an unbridled reaction, victorious for the moment, that forcibly suppresses all demands for socialist democracy and that intends to maintain the distinction of classes by force, the Conference reminds the members of the International Association that the political question and the social question are indissolubly united; that they are but the two faces of a single, identical question that the International has proposed to resolve – that of the abolition of classes. The workers must recognise, no less than economic solidarity, the political solidarity that unites them and combine their forces, no less on the terrain of politics than on that of economics, for the final triumph of their cause.⁷⁶

This put the question of the political action of the working class and the conquest of political power on the agenda. To many delegates this must have been a surprise with incalculable ramifications; the Spanish delegate Lorenzo immediately interjected

that this is a question of principles which could not be discussed by the Conference, which moreover is not qualified to do so – This question must be raised at a congress and voted upon by the delegates as instructed by their mandates – he asks that [the proposal] be rejected – *Bastelica seconds*⁷⁷

Utin responded ‘that Lorenzo’s objection is completely mistaken – The proposition does not contain a new principle, but only formulates more formally that which is contained in the

⁷⁴ See above, pp. 60–62.

⁷⁵ See above, p. 86.

⁷⁶ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, pp. 682–83 (minutes by Martin).

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 696 (minutes by Rochat). A written statement signed by Bastelica, Verrijcken, and Coenen, included as an appendix to the minutes, states: ‘Since the resolutions presented by Vaillant raise a question of principle, send it on for the deliberations of the next congress.’ (*ibid.*, p. 1428).

Rules'.⁷⁸ Utin was referring to the fourth point of the General Rules' preamble: the 'economical emancipation' is the 'great ends to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means'.⁷⁹ A reference to this passage in the Rules had already caused a storm in the summer of 1870 when Guillaume objected to an interpretation of this passage by the General Council which seemed one-sided.⁸⁰ Bakunin, who also read it in a social-revolutionary manner, later complained that the German social democrats suggest

to the workers who have the misfortune to hear them, that they adopt as the immediate goal of their association legal agitation for the conquest of political rights first of all; by the same token, they subordinate the movement for economic emancipation to what is first an exclusively political movement, and by this ostensible reversal of the entire programme of the International, they have instantly bridged the gulf that it [the International] had opened up between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.⁸¹

The 'political movement, which should have been a means, becomes an end', is how an Italian organ of the International later summarised the opposition's criticism.⁸² During the debate at the London Conference, Bastelica added: 'what is called politics means wasting the workers' energy trying to appoint a worker to the municipal council or chamber – this politics of puerile agitation seems significant to them', revealing that he was a follower of *position 2*. Vaillant agreed with Bastelica on this point: 'he [Vaillant] does not understand, by this word, politics, making this meagre agitation that consists in sending a worker to parliament, since these parliaments must also be destroyed' (*position 3*).⁸³ The Geneva delegate Perret on the other hand lent his support to *position 1* by saying that he wanted to

put an end, once and for all, to this false interpretation of the Rules – in Switzerland, the Romance Section [Federation] that he represents is of the opinion that the Association must engage in politics [...]. He would like for the workers, animated by this principle that the political struggle is a duty, to penetrate into parliaments and chambers everywhere to gnaw away at this old society and precipitate its downfall.⁸⁴

The Belgian delegate De Paepe – who had already put a stop to the debate on the Nechaev trial where a lot was being taken for granted – stepped in once again by noting that setting an ideology in stone, as Perret had proposed (i.e. *position 1*), would lead to new conflicts without solving the question at hand: 'he does not believe that one can impose one single political line upon all nations'.⁸⁵

he is convinced that, despite the rigorous clarity of Vaillant's declaration, certain sections will continue to refuse to follow this line of conduct and thus will create new conflicts – [...] even if

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 696 (minutes by Rochat). Utin also took advantage of this opportunity to attack his political opponents: 'This declaration [Vaillant's], by its bold and sweeping character, must put an end to the misunderstandings and push the abstentionists outside of the Association, as veritable accomplices, consciously or not, of the Bourgeoisie.' (*ibid.*)

⁷⁹ *Rules of the International*, p. 3.

⁸⁰ See above, p. 63.

⁸¹ Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 173–74. In a letter to Italy, Bakunin claimed that the fourth point of the General Rules' preamble stated 'that the International rejects all politics that does not have for its direct and immediate goal the economic and social revolution, which alone can bring about the total liberty of each founded upon the real equality of all' (*ibid.*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 209).

⁸² 'Il Congresso dell'Aia', *Rivoluzione Sociale*, September 1872, p. 3.

⁸³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 697 (minutes by Rochat).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 702 (rough notes by Martin).

the Belgian workers should gain the right to vote and could send one or two socialist deputies to the chamber, he does not think that this would give any advantage to the socialist camp [...].⁸⁶

Here Marx took the floor. He tried to rebut the objection made by Lorenzo and Bastelica, which questioned the authority of the Conference in such an important question when the sections had not even been given a chance to form an opinion beforehand:

Citizen Lorenzo has called on us to observe the Regulations, and Citizen Bastelica has followed him in this course. – I take the original Rules and the Inaugural Address, and I read in the two that the General Council will be responsible for presenting a programme for discussion at the congresses. The programme which the General Council is presenting to the Conference for discussion comprises – the organisation of the Association; and the Vaillant motion relates to this point – the claim of Lorenzo and Bastelica is therefore unfounded [...].⁸⁷

This was a flimsy argument for more than one reason: according to the International's Administrative Regulations, the General Council was not only supposed to notify the Conference about the programme it was to ratify but to bring it 'to the knowledge of all the branches' – which they did not do.⁸⁸ Moreover, Vaillant's proposed resolution did not involve a simple organisational matter, it represented an ideological convention of considerable proportion – even though the Conference was not supposed to deal 'with theoretical questions' as Marx and Engels had said.⁸⁹

Marx continued with a summary of the forms of political action in the different countries and concluded by substantiating his political line with the following words: 'To engage in politics is always a good thing'.⁹⁰

it must not be thought that it is of minor importance to have workers in parliament. [...] The governments are hostile to us. We must answer them by using every possible means at our disposal, getting workers into parliament is a victory over them, but we must choose the right men [...].⁹¹

Marx, who was expressing the views of *position 1* with these words, called for Vaillant's resolution proposal to be adopted with one amendment 'explaining the reason for this declaration, that is stating that it is not just today that the Association asks the workers to engage in politics, but all the time'.⁹²

Referring to the General Rules, the French General Council member Albert Theisz argued against treating economic and political forms of struggle equally: 'Cit. Vaillant', he explained, 'seems to put politics and socialism on the same footing – politics must be considered as nothing more than a means'.⁹³ In a written statement added to the minutes, Theisz explained further: 'Vaillant's proposition does not explain our Rules but changes them, a right that belongs only to the congress'. Rochat, who was keeping minutes, added the question: 'In what way?' To which Theisz responded: 'It speaks of two terrains, political and economic, while the Rules speak of

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 698 (minutes by Rochat).

⁸⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 616 (minutes by Rochat).

⁸⁸ See above, p. 471, n. 64.

⁸⁹ See above, p. 85.

⁹⁰ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 703 (rough notes by Rochat); he was speaking about political-parliamentary activities: 'The speaker's platform is the best means of publicity', Marx declared according to another source (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 617 [rough notes by Martin]).

⁹¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 699 (minutes by Rochat).

⁹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 617 (rough notes by Martin). Marx was referring to the proposed amendment by Serrailier and Frankel (*ibid.*, pp. 696–97).

⁹³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 702 (rough notes by Martin).

Politics but as a means.⁹⁴ Because of the great difference in opinion, the delegates voted 9 to 8 in favour of deferring the question to the next day's meeting.⁹⁵

Engels started the debate on Vaillant's resolution the following day with an address that further confused the matter. He accused the advocates of an abstention from parliamentarianism (*position 2*) of taking part in politics: 'the abstentionist camp is always engaging in politics'.⁹⁶ 'All abstentionists call themselves revolutionaries [...]. But revolution is the supreme act of politics'.⁹⁷ Apparently Engels had overlooked the fact that the 'abstentionist camp' was not criticising politics *per se*⁹⁸ but the founding of parties and conquest of political power. While Engels' peculiar argument missed the point of the previous days debate for and against parliamentary activities, he did make his and Marx's political-parliamentary line more concrete by insisting on the constitution of the working class *into a political party*. There was already talk of the 'organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party' in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848);⁹⁹ at the London Conference, Engels called for the 'political domination of the proletariat' by way of a 'worker's party [...] with its own objective, its own politics'.¹⁰⁰

Bastelica eventually proposed a resolution stating that the London Conference did not have the right to decide on this matter of principle¹⁰¹ – a view that he and Lorenzo had expressed at the beginning of the debate. In response to the argument that Vaillant's proposed resolution could be adopted because it merely accentuated the wording of the International's General Rules, Bastelica countered that the Rules 'say not that the [political] question is indissoluble but that [it] is subordinate to the econ[omic] question'.¹⁰² He proposes that the question be postponed until the next congress.¹⁰³

In order to give credence to Vaillant's resolution, Marx quoted from the 'Inaugural Address', which states that 'To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes'.¹⁰⁴ Marx saw the 'Inaugural Address', which he himself wrote, as a binding document of the International and explained that it was necessary 'to read the Rules and the Inaugural Address together'.¹⁰⁵ In a letter to Italy, Engels went so far as to refer to the 'Inaugural Address'

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1435 (appendix to Rochat's minutes).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 699 (minutes by Rochat).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 707 (rough notes by Martin).

⁹⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 417 (transcripts by Engels).

⁹⁸ Bakunin wrote the following on this issue: 'since it is obvious that politics, that is to say the institution and mutual relations of states, has no other goal than to ensure the legal exploitation of the proletariat by the governing classes, from which it results that the moment that the proletariat wishes to emancipate itself, it is forced to take politics into consideration in order to fight against it and reverse it. Our adversaries understand otherwise; they wish and have wished for *positive* politics, the politics of the state' (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 175). See also above, p. 16.

⁹⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 493.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 417 (transcript by Engels).

¹⁰¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 706 (minutes by Rochat).

¹⁰² A reference to the fourth point of the General Rules' preamble, see above, p. 95.

¹⁰³ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 200 (rough notes by Martin).

¹⁰⁴ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/20, p. 11. The *Communist Manifesto* already suggested 'that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy. The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i.e.*, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 504).

¹⁰⁵ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 716 (rough notes by Le Moussu). Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 618 (minutes by Martin).

as an 'official and essential commentary on the Rules'.¹⁰⁶ While the 'Inaugural Address' was adopted by the General Council, it was never put to a vote at a congress of the International – unlike the General Rules – and could thus not be considered binding.¹⁰⁷

After a short break, a proposal was put forward by Utin, Perret, and four more delegates that spoke out for 'the necessity of political action for the proletarian party' in general and suggested that the General Council be left to work out the details of Vaillant's resolution.¹⁰⁸ This amounted to an admission of failure in that the delegates would pass the buck on this important question. As the author of most of the General Council's documents, Marx was of course in favour of this suggestion because it more or less meant that he could elaborate Vaillant's resolution. At the same time Marx once again addressed those who called for an abstention from parliamentarianism (*position 2*) and branded them with a word whose history has already been explained above: Marx 'combats the abstentionists, saying that they are sectarians – these are sincere men but their tendencies are retrograde. However, one would be led to be suspicious of their loyalty';¹⁰⁹ 'he believes that changes must be made in the framing of Vaillant's motion – which is why he is supporting Utin's motion'.¹¹⁰

Half a year later, Marx clarified that he was particularly supportive of this resolution because it 'makes short work of the political abstention preached by Bakunin's programme'.¹¹¹

As there were calls to end the debate, Vaillant spoke once again in order to call for his proposed resolution to be adopted without changes. The Belgian delegate Verrijcken spoke out for Bastelica's resolution proposal:

Verrijcken contests the right of the Conference to discuss this proposition [Vaillant's] – the Sections have not been consulted on this matter – he cites a paragraph of the Rules and says that their action must remain free¹¹² – that one must be able to get involved in politics or not according to the country in which one finds oneself.¹¹³

'He asks that [the proposition] be postponed until the next congress.'¹¹⁴ The resolution proposed by Verrijcken and Bastelica – which stated that the London Conference did not have the right to pass resolutions on questions of principle – was defeated soundly by a majority of delegates, including Utin and Perret as well as all but two of the members of the General Council.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ Henri Louis Tolain, who belonged to the founders of the International in Paris, gave the following testimony in court regarding the significance of the 'Inaugural Address', a copy of which had been found in his possession: 'This piece is my personal property; I think I am the only one who has it in France. It has been published by English workers, for the tribunal must know that each group, in each country, has the right to publish such or such an opinion, without rendering the groups of other nations solidary with it' (Commission de propagande du Conseil fédéral parisien de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs [ed.], *Procès de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Première et deuxième Commissions du Bureau de Paris*, 2. ed. [Paris: Association générale typographique Berthelemy et Ce, 1870], p. 23). James Guillaume considered the 'Inaugural Address' 'as expressing simply the personal opinion of those who wrote it and the members of the General Council who had approved it' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 203).

¹⁰⁸ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 201 (resolution proposal with the signatures of Perret, Utin, Hales, Jung, Serrailier, and Frankel).

¹⁰⁹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 716 (rough notes by Le Moussu).

¹¹⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 618 (minutes by Martin).

¹¹¹ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 105.

¹¹² See above, p. 471, n. 64 and n. 69.

¹¹³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 711 (minutes by Martin).

¹¹⁴ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 204 (rough notes by Le Moussu).

¹¹⁵ *In favour*: Coenen, Verrijcken, Lorenzo. *Against*: Utin, Perret, Marx, Engels, Vaillant, Mottershead, Herman, Frankel, Serrailier, Jung, Eccarius, Hales. *Abstentions*: Steens, Bastelica, Fluse. *Absent*: César De Paepe, McDonnell.

The subsequent vote on Utin and Perret's resolution – the details of Vaillant's proposed resolution would be revised by the General Council – was easily passed by a majority of delegates, including Utin and Perret as well as all but two of the members of the General Council.¹¹⁶ And so the *members of the General Council* made use of their majority to task the *General Council* with revising Vaillant's resolution proposal – an unheard-of practice at a meeting of the International.

Two weeks later the General Council did indeed form a commission – with Engels, Martin and Le Moussu as members – to revise Vaillant's proposed resolution.¹¹⁷ And at a special meeting of the General Council on 16 October 1871, Engels put forward the reformulated resolution, which was adopted despite an objection that the text could be misunderstood.¹¹⁸ Marx then again changed the wording of the resolution even though it had already been adopted: while preparing the conference resolutions for publication, he made a number of changes to the text and sent the resolutions to Vaillant for proofreading on 22 October with the following note:

As I am having my pamphlet printed next Monday, please make your corrections as soon as possible. As to the resolution on political action, the form initially produced by the Committee (Engels, [Martin], Le Moussu) and the amendments subsequently adopted by vote of the General Council have created such an imbroglio that I have been compelled to alter the arrangement.¹¹⁹

Thus the resolution Vaillant had proposed (see above, p. 95) had been modified a number of times before the conference resolutions were finally printed in the first half of November 1871 in English, French and German. Conference resolution no. 9 on the 'political action of the working class' exalted the prospects of the *conquest of political power* and declared

that against this collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party [...]; That this constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social Revolution [...]; That the combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists – The conference recalls to the members of the *International*: That in the militant state of the working class, its economical movement and its political action are indissolubly united.¹²⁰

The calls for the *constitution of the working class into a political party* and *conquest of political power* signified central points of Marx and Engels' programme that had hardly been discussed at the Conference. This landmark decision would put an end to the pluralism that had existed in the International up to this point.

Steens explained his abstention in a written statement appended to the minutes: 'I abstain because, since this question has not been carried to the International, I cannot arrogate to myself the right to vote without a mandate.' Bastelica explained in a second appendix: 'Accepting the principle that this proposition sets forth, I justify my abstention by arguing the incompetence of the Conference in this matter.' (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, pp. 711–12 [minutes by Martin].)

¹¹⁶ *In favour*: Utin, Perret, Marx, Engels, Mottershead, Frankel, Serrailier, Jung, Eccarius, Hales. *Against*: Vaillant, Herman. *Abstention*: Bastelica, Fluse, Verrijcken, Lorenzo, [Steens]. *Absent*: César De Paepe, McDonnell, Coenen (*ibid.*, p. 712 [minutes by Martin]).

¹¹⁷ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 619 (special meeting on 7 October 1871).

¹¹⁸ The objection was against the paragraph referring to the 'militant state of the working class' (*ibid.*, p. 626).

¹¹⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 230–31.

¹²⁰ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 343.

CHAPTER 8. The *Sonvillier Circular*

A CASE COULD BE MADE THAT resolution no. 9 was the result of a concerted effort between Marx and his friend Vaillant¹ just as Marx obviously worked together with Perret on the items related to the Alliance and Jura sections (resolutions nos. 16 and 17) and with Utin during the discussion about the Nechaev trial (resolution no. 14). Marx must have been completely satisfied with the outcome of the London Conference as his tactics led to the desired results: on the last day of meetings, he wrote his wife that ‘more was done than at all the previous Congresses put together’ at the Conference.² Marx let Friedrich Bolte, member of the International in New York, know that ‘at last’ – by means of resolution no. 2 (ban on separatist bodies), no. 9 (the political action of the working class, i.e. their constitution into a political party and the conquest of political power), no. 16 (Alliance), and no. 17 (Jura) – the General Council had ‘delivered its long-prepared blow’.³

Other conference participants were not so happy about the results. The Spanish delegate Lorenzo later complained that most of the delegates

were above all concerned with the question of leadership. By that time it was not a question of how to support a revolutionary force giving it organisation and maintaining a strict course of action towards its objective, rather how to put a grand meeting of men in the service of a leader. In my thoughts and feelings I saw myself as being alone, I thought [...] that I was the only international present [...].⁴

In a last letter to Marx written on 28 September 1871, Robin reproached Marx: ‘giving in to personal enmities, you have brought forth or supported unjust accusations against members of the International who are either the objects of these enmities or whose sole crime is not sharing them.’⁵ He specified his criticism of the London Conference in a letter to his former colleagues in the Belgian Federal Council dated 9 October 1871:

¹ For more about Marx and Vaillant’s close relationship, see M. Dommanget, Édouard Vaillant. *Un grand socialiste, 1840–1915* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1956), pp. 52–56. Marx referred to Vaillant as his friend in a dedication found in a surviving copy of Marx’s book *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, 2. ed. (Hamburg: Otto Meißner, 1869) from 2 December 1871: ‘to his friend Ed. Vaillant’; see B. Andréas, J. Grandjonc and H. Pelger (eds.), *Unbekanntes von Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx. Teil 1: 1840–1874*, Schriften aus dem Karl-Marx-Haus 33 (Trier: Karl Marx Haus, 1986), p. 140. Miklós Molnár wrote about their cooperation at the London Conference: ‘Nothing allows us to believe that Vaillant’s proposition was made at Marx’s instigation. Vaillant was perfectly free to act on his own, and his proposition regarding political action was quite within his Blanquist political line. Nevertheless, one might suppose that Marx was familiar with his project. He didn’t stop him from pursuing it, probably quite content thus to be able to let a problem fall on other shoulders.’ (Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*, p. 51).

² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 220.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 255.

⁴ Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 184.

⁵ RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2546.

Because the General Council, irregularly constituted,⁶ improperly convened a conference at which nine members (doubtless fewer) had serious mandates,⁷ and because it has been invested with rights by this conference that tend to introduce into the International the authoritarian principle against which I protest.

3rd Because the leaders of the General Council, by means of unfair intrigues, inspired by personal hatred, have urged the conference to condemn sections that have not been formally indicted nor even *informed* about the convening of a conference.

4th Because among the rights given to the General Council is that of commenting, in an address, on the political role of the International, and because the General Council wishes to act according to entirely personal ideas which are contrary to the theory and practice of Belgium, Spain, and the Swiss Jura, the countries where the organisation of the International is the most serious, the most democratic, and the most free from any contamination, and contrary to the majority of the sections of the International in France during their brief formal lifespan.⁸

Robin again informed his friends in Jura about what happened.⁹ Likewise, the French delegate André Bastelica – who had tried in vain to stop the London Conference from adopting sweeping changes to the International's programme – wrote Joukovsky, the former secretary of the Alliance section:

I took away a sad impression from these sessions. If I am not mistaken, there is a plot at work in the midst of the International Association, skilfully, cleverly, patiently designed and led, which, if it is successful, will one day lead to the dictatorship of a few that we shall never be able to break. This is not the least of all the dangers that threaten the existence of the International. [...] If some force or event does not fatefully intervene to check the virulent tendencies of these minds, they will cause a split within the International. Aided by favourable circumstances, some members of the G[eneral] C[ouncil] – more concerned with their doctrines than with the constitution of a universal proletarian exegesis based on natural law and applied according to the historical and ethnographic environment, etc., – are seeking or unconsciously drifting toward an abstract, uniform, simplistic conception, inconsistent with the character of all peoples of the south. To be more specific I should simply say that we are on the verge [...] of witnessing the absolutist triumph of what is unquestionably the least revolutionary element in our Association – I shall leave you to guess which. – The schisms already exist; the desire to launch a few bulls of excommunication is already present: these will come in due time.¹⁰

⁶ A reference to the small number of General Council members who were elected directly by a congress: the French and English editions of the resolutions of the London Conference listed 40 member of the General Council; the German edition added Harriet Law for a total of 41 members (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, pp. 332–33, 346, 358). Of these only 13 were elected in September 1869 at the Basel Congress (reelection of General Council members elected at the Brussels Congress, see *Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, p. 36. Freymond [ed.], *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 1, pp. 404–5, 443).

⁷ For more about the mandates of the nine delegates from sections and federations of the International, see above, p. 87.

⁸ Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 337.

⁹ Guillaume wrote about this to his friend Gustave Jeanneret on 27 September 1871: 'Robin has sent me news from London. The Conference has only floundered. In our affair, Utin has woven a veritable conspiracy, with Marx and his friends lending a hand. It seems that this has become scandalous for lies and prejudice. Despite everything, the Conference has not expelled us; it has decided to leave everything within the *status quo*. Here it is: our federation must either go to the side of Geneva or else take a name other than that of the *Romance Federation*.' (M. Vuilleumier [ed.], 'La correspondance du peintre Gustave Jeanneret', *Le Mouvement social* 51 [1965], 85).

¹⁰ Bastelica to Joukovsky, 28 September 1871, in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 565–66.

Already in a letter dated 3 October 1871, Guillaume started talking about plans for a protest congress of the Jura sections ‘when we have had official word of the decision taken by the London Conference of which we still only know by private correspondence’.¹¹

Crucial support for the counter-manoeuvre the Jura sections were preparing came from the Commune refugees living in Switzerland. After the Paris Commune was crushed, thousands of Communards narrowly escaped abroad. A few hundred of them fled to Switzerland with the help of the Jura sections, among others. On 3 July 1871, Schwitzguébel smuggled a number of Swiss passports and documents of Swiss citizenship into Paris in a knapsack with a secret compartment. Several members of the Commune who had gone into hiding were able to flee abroad thanks to these papers: for example, the author Léo Champseix (1824–1900) – famous under the pseudonym André Léo – arrived in Switzerland a half month later.¹² Some Communards settled in Lausanne, Berne or Jura but most in Geneva.¹³ There they were soon confronted with the simmering conflict surrounding the split in the Romance Federation and the underlying debate about political-parliamentary or social-revolutionary socialism, which they were unable to keep out of for long. It is not surprising that very few Communards – with the memories of the greatest revolution of the century still fresh – would be sympathetic to the tame line of the Geneva *fabrique*, which was integrated in local politics. Just as Bakunin and his friends in the Alliance had two years before,¹⁴ the Commune refugees soon came to realise that the spokesmen of the *fabrique* – who set the agenda of the Geneva International – were primarily following their political ambitions (electoral alliance with the bourgeois *parti radical*, Grand Council elections of 12 November 1871, etc.). The work of organising the sections was left by the wayside.¹⁵ Even the

¹¹ Guillaume to Hins, 3 October 1871, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 328; see also Guillaume to Jeanneret, 3 October 1871, in Vuilleumier (ed.), ‘La correspondance de Gustave Jeanneret’, p. 86.

¹² Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 166–67.

¹³ M. Vuilleumier: ‘Les Proscrits de la Commune en Suisse (1871)’, *Revue Suisse d’Histoire* 12 (1962), 500.

¹⁴ See above, pp. 11–12.

¹⁵ The refugee Jules Guesde, who was in Geneva until the end of March 1872, wrote: ‘In place of the workers’ organisation promised by the title, [we have] a few sections, more or less disorganised, lacking initiative, and led by a man [Perret] whose pretensions are only surpassed by his ineptitude.’ (Guesde to ‘V...d’, 13 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/5). And in recollections written at Guillaume’s behest, Malon and Lefrançais – two Communards living in Geneva – remembered ‘the impressions that we have gathered since our arrival here, i.e. since the end of last July’ as follows: ‘In spite of the freedom enjoyed by the Genevans, in spite of all the means at their disposal – freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, of association – the International has, in reality, no intellectual presence here: no meetings, no conferences, no discussions of principles. Most members are absolutely ignorant of the principles of the International and of the ends it pursues. Each is content to say: I belong to the International! But once again, nothing is serious – the intelligent people withdraw in disgust or are excluded by the committees, which alone govern and direct the sections, which barely meet once a month!’ (Gustave Lefrançais and Benoît Malon to Laurent Verrijcken, 16 December 1871, in Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 358–59). See also Vuilleumier, ‘Les Proscrits’, pp. 525–56. The other side didn’t understand the criticism. In the opinion of the old hand of the Geneva International, Johann Philipp Becker, the only answer to the Communards’ craving for a lively organisation was strong discipline, otherwise, he explained, ‘their irrepressible garrulity would have talked our Association to death long ago’ (Becker to Sorge, 27 October 1871, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen von Joh. Phil. Becker, Jos. Dietzgen, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx u. A. an F. A. Sorge und Andere* [Stuttgart: Verlag von J. H. W. Dietz Nachfolger, 1906], p. 31). Franky Candaux, member of the Geneva Local Committee, belonged to the few members of the International in Geneva who deplored the *status quo*. According to Candaux, the spokesmen of the Geneva International ‘have succeeded in disgusting and putting off the entire French expatriate community, which hampered these gentlemen by reasoning, by arguing, wishing for light to issue freely from useful, instructive, necessary deliberations, rather than to say an amen over the resolutions taken and fixed in advance by a little committee’ (F. Candaux, *A Monsieur le Président et Messieurs les Membres de la Société des Faiseurs de Ressorts de Genève*, [Geneva 1873], p. 3).

Geneva central section was much too involved in local politics to organise educational initiatives or the exchange of ideas between workers in the different trades as was its duty. The Communards thus began toying with the idea in July 1871 of forming their own section in order to create propaganda for France.¹⁶ It took until 6 September 1871 for the Geneva Communards to form the Propaganda and Socialist Revolutionary Action Section (*Section de propagande et d'action révolutionnaire-socialiste*) – section of propaganda in short. On 8 September, their Administrative Committee (*Comité d'Administration*) sent an application for membership along with their programme and section rules to the General Council.¹⁷

The spokesmen of the Geneva *fabrique* quickly saw the section of propaganda as unwelcome political competition and thwarted their admission in the International: two weeks after the membership application was sent, Perret – secretary of Committee of the Romance Federation in Geneva – proposed a resolution at the London Conference ‘in order to avoid new conflicts’: it called to mind art. 5 of the Basel administrative resolutions which states that the General Council must consult with the corresponding Federal Council before it decides on the membership application of a section.¹⁸ The message was received – the minutes state: ‘*The General Council takes note of this recommendation.*’¹⁹ And so the section of propaganda didn’t even receive a reply even though it applied to the General Council a second time on 4 October and third time of 20 October 1871.²⁰ Perret was perhaps also responsible for the General Council’s continued silence: he sent a perturbing letter to Marx on 8 October 1871 saying that the members of the then dissolved Alliance section were supposedly behind this new section; according to Perret, the section of propaganda was ‘the rebirth of this sect under another name’.²¹ In reality there

¹⁶ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 167. Schwitzguébel to Pauline Prins, around 16 July 1871, excerpts in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 168; manuscript in IISG, Descaves Papers, no. 713.

¹⁷ The Propaganda and Socialist Revolutionary Action Section to the General Council, 8 September 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/1. See also Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 573. The statutes of the section were printed in *Révolution Sociale*, 9 November 1871, p. 4. Jung at first wanted to refer the section of propaganda to the Committee of the Romance Federation; see below, p. 486, n. 98.

¹⁸ See below, p. 147.

¹⁹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 741 (minutes by Rochat).

²⁰ The Propaganda and Socialist Revolutionary Action Section to the General Council, 4 October 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/2; the wording of this letter was decided on the section’s meeting on 25 September 1871 (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 218). The Geneva French Section to the General Council, 20 October 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/3. Malon, who wrote the letter on 20 October, even referred to *three* letters from the section of propaganda to the General Council that had proceeded his. Although he was not a member, Malon spoke out at a section meeting in favour of trying to contact the General Council again, and was able to convince the majority of the members present of this (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 8 [letter from Jules Montels]). Hermann Jung, corresponding secretary for Switzerland, made the following note on Malon’s letter: ‘reply to the citizen that I have asked for information from the Romance Federal Committee and write to the Romance Federal Committee.’ This was also the outcome of the discussion at the General Council meeting on 24 October 1871 after Jung reported that he had received the three membership applications: it was decided ‘that Citizen Jung should write to the Sections informing them of his communication to the Federal Council of Geneva’ (‘Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871’, p. 632). Jung apparently did not contact the section of propaganda but only the Geneva Federal Committee whose secretary, Perret, informed the General Council on 5 November 1871 that the section’s application had been turned down (IISG, Jung Papers, no. 901); on 26 November, Perret repeated this fact; see below, p. 486, n. 98.

²¹ RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 327/9. Marx repeated this accusation at the Congress of The Hague while calling for Joukovsky’s delegate mandate from the section of propaganda to be revoked; see below, p. 311. Marx and Engels also made this accusation in the *Fictitious Splits* (Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, p. 95) and in the pamphlet ‘L’Alliance’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 311).

were only two or three former members of the Alliance among the 62 members of the section of propaganda.²²

So the situation was already quite tense when the *Égalité* published an authorised advanced copy of various resolutions of the London Conference on 21 October 1871. The Communards finally found out that effective immediately it was ‘no longer allowed [...] to form separatist bodies under the names of *sections of propaganda*, *Alliance de la Démocratie socialiste*, etc.’ in the International according to resolution no. 16.²³ By being lumped together with the dissolved Alliance and defamed as a *separatist body*, the section of propaganda was confronted with resentment that they had never before thought possible. It became immediately apparent that the General Council had been purposely delaying accepting the Communards’ section because of political reservation. For the Communard André Léo, these reservations flew in the face of the established mores of the International. On 2 November 1871, she wrote the following in the *Révolution Sociale*, the newspaper of the Commune refugees in Geneva:

And I, who have until now believed that the International Association was the most democratic, the broadest, the most fraternal association one could dream of; the great mother, with immense breasts, of whom every worker of good will is the son. [...] may the goddess Liberty help us! For we have violated the last papal bull in divulging these things to the Gentiles²⁴ and in debating the infallibility of the supreme council. Now, we too are threatened with excommunication, and we have no other course than to yield our soul to the demon of Anarchy for what remains for us to say.²⁵

In the week after the advanced copy of the conference resolution appeared in the *Égalité*, the section of propaganda held a meeting where the decision was made to publicly protest against the resolutions of the London Conference and to invite other sections and federations to join this protest. Joukovsky was given the mandate to go to Jura to inform the sections there of this initiative. The meeting in Neuchâtel held upon his arrival on 29 October 1871 called for

²² The Committee of the Jura Federation stated that the section of propaganda had 62 members in 1872 and paid the corresponding union dues to the General Council (The Committee of the Jura Federation to the General Council, 1 June 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 394/2); see also Vuilleumier, ‘Les Proscrits’, pp. 529–30. The members of the section of propaganda responded in a variety of ways to the accusation that they were only an extension of the Alliance; see A. Claris, *La proscription française en Suisse 1871–72* (Geneva: Imprimerie Ve Blanchard, 1872), p. 59; Guesde to ‘V...d’, 13 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/5; and Joukovsky’s declaration at the Congress of The Hague (see below, p. 311). The former members of the Alliance included Joukovsky and Charles Perron, who were very popular among the Communards; see G. Lefrançais and A. Arnould, *Souvenirs de deux Communards réfugiés à Genève 1871–1873*, ed. by M. Vuilleumier (Geneva: Edition Collège du Travail, 1987), pp. 72, 76–77; [A. Léo], ‘Meeting de l’Internationale’, *Révolution Sociale*, 26 October 1871, p. 3.

²³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 345. See above, p. 90.

²⁴ A reference to the resolution no. 17.2 of the London Conference, which came across as a gag order. It included the General Council’s threat to publicly denounce all organs of the International that ‘should discuss in their columns, before the middle class public, questions exclusively reserved for the local or Federal Committees and the General Council, or for the private and administrative sittings of the Federal or General Congresses’ (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 346).

²⁵ [A. Léo], ‘Comment des socialistes honnêtes, intelligents et dévoués, sont expulsés de l’Internationale de Genève’, *Révolution Sociale*, 2 November 1871, p. 3. For more about André Léo’s authorship, see Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2. pp. 220–21. Jules Guesde was also up in arms: ‘In reality, we have been excluded from the *International* because the General Council wished to exclude us. No serious, legitimate reasons. It is arbitrary to the hundredth power’ (Guesde to ‘V...d’, 13 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 389/5). Guesde later became one of the main propagandists for Marxism in France. He was one of the founders of the French Workers’ Party in 1882.

a joint letter of protest to be adopted at the next congress of the Jura sections and circulated internationally.²⁶ A circular on 31 October announced that a federal congress would be held on 12 November 1871 in Sonvillier.²⁷

The need for public protest became more apparent after all of the resolutions of the London Conference were released the week before the federal congress.²⁸ In a further article for the *Révolution Sociale*, André Léo wrote:

From the beginning of the International Association to this day, when we heard the good bourgeois refer to it as a secret society, constructed after their manner, i.e. hierarchically, with a watchword, a secret council, the old pyramid, finally, with God the Father, an Old Man of the Mountain or a Council of Ten²⁹ at its summit, we shrugged our shoulders and told them, not without pride: – all of this is a bunch of old tales! You know nothing of the new spirit; your worn molds cannot contain it. We who want to destroy your hierarchies are not about to establish another. Each section is sovereign, as are the individuals who compose it, and what binds them all is the profound belief in equality, the desire to establish it, and the practice of our Rules: the emancipation of the workers by the workers themselves; no rights without duties, no duties without rights. Everything is done in the broad daylight of freedom, which alone is honest and fruitful; we have no leaders, for we do not recognise any, only an administrative council.

But now, alas! – now we bow our heads before the accusations of Mr Prudhomme,³⁰ or rather, we deserve his admiration; we suffer this supreme insult, because the resolutions published here construct the old pyramid in the International as elsewhere: ‘It is forbidden,’ ‘it will not be allowed,’ ‘the General Council has the right to admit or to refuse the affiliation of any new section or group,’ ‘the General Council has the right of suspending, till the meeting of next Congress, any section of the International’. I beg your pardon; are we mistaken, here, as to the code? This is an article of the law on the general councils of France, made by the Assembly of Versailles: ‘The executive power shall be entitled to suspend the council that ...’ – No, that’s right, but the article is the same in both laws, – ‘henceforth the General Council will be bound to publicly denounce and disavow all newspapers ...’ – By our holy father the Pope, where are we? Bismarck has turned the heads of everyone from the Rhine to the Oder, and at the same time that Wilhelm I made himself emperor, Karl Marx consecrated himself Pontiff of the International Association.³¹

²⁶ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 223. Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 574–75. After his return, Joukovsky reported to the general meeting of the section of propaganda that the Jura sections shared their view: ‘it is recognised for the [Jura] sections as for us that the London Council acts in an arbitrary and authoritarian manner, and that it is necessary, first, to call it back to a respect for principles, and then, if it continues to violate them, to dismiss it.’ (RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 388 [meeting on 3 November (incorrect in the manuscript: 8bre = October) 1871.])

²⁷ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 225–26.

²⁸ The French edition of the conference resolutions provided by the General Council was first sent out on 6 November 1871; see *Résolutions des délégués de la Conférence de l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Réunie à Londres, du 17 au 23 Septembre 1871. Circulaire publiée par le Conseil Général de l’Association* (London: L’Imprimerie Internationale, 1871). Marx to Ferdinand Jozewicz, 6 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 237. According to Marx’s records, 30 copies of this edition were shipped by Jung to his correspondents in Switzerland and 50 more copies were sent to Utin; see RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 2940.

²⁹ Council of Ten (*Consiglio dei Dieci*): Central body of the Republic of Venice established in 1310 with policing and judicial functions.

³⁰ A reference to Joseph Prudhomme, a well-known caricature of the stereotypical bourgeois in 19th century France.

³¹ [A. Léo], ‘L’esprit de l’Association internationale’, *Révolution Sociale*, 9 November 1871, p. 2.

The strong words shocked Guillaume and his friends,³² however, the manner in which Léo concluded her article was irreproachable:

We have just begun to understand that true unity does not consist in the absorption of all into one, that strange equation, that fatal delusion which has mystified humanity for so many centuries! And if asked how else to establish unity, most of us would hesitate to answer, because it is not only a matter of finding new means but of changing the ideal itself. – The new unity is not uniformity, but its opposite, which consists in expanding all initiatives, all freedoms, all conceptions, bound only by the fact of a common nature that gives them a common interest, upon which – on their own, and by different routes, however winding they may be – free forces converge. This is natural and universal harmony in place of the narrowness, the vicious unfairness of the personal plan. It is this autonomy of the citizen, achieved through the autonomy of the primary social group, the commune, that France has just tentatively sketched out with a hand wounded by the sword of despotic unity. This is the second act of the great Revolution that is beginning, the realisation after the revelation, the performance after the promise. And the International Association, a natural agent for this task, would, following these mad and narrow minds, repeat the experiments that were made, and made so badly, between 1802 and 1871! This cannot be. Let all the old world's politics go that way; socialism has nothing to do with it, for it must take the opposite path, that of the freedom of all in equality.³³

Guillaume also tried to come to grips with the fundamental questions that had been raised through the split in the Romance Federation and the conflict with the General Council. He drafted a lengthy protest resolution against the General Council and the resolutions of the London Conference for the federal congress of the Jura sections.³⁴ Delegates from eight sections in Jura were gathered for the opening of the congress on the morning of 12 November 1871 in Sonvillier. Joukovsky and Jules Guesde also participated as delegates with mandates from the Geneva section of propaganda, which wanted to join the federation. For the agenda item 'reorganisation of the Federation and revision of the Rules', the commission responsible for this matter proposed the following resolution, which was adopted by the congress:

Considering that the Romance Federation, of which the congress is the sole legitimate representative, has lost its original character due to the withdrawal of a part of the sections constituting it,

We believe that it is time to dissolve this federation and hereby declare it dissolved.

Considering that, moreover, a congress of the Romance sections, having met at St. Imier in 1870, discussed a proposal to constitute a new federation under the name of the *Jura Federation* [*Fédération jurassienne*], a proposal that was then abandoned as premature,³⁵ but which today is again represented by several sections;

³² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 222.

³³ [Léo], 'L'esprit de l'Association internationale', p. 2.

³⁴ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 226–27. The section of propaganda had already drawn up corresponding resolutions that may have been used by Guillaume in his draft; see Joukovsky to Paul Deshusses [?], 30 October 1871, in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 574–75.

³⁵ The suggestion was made by Auguste Treyvaud, the delegate of the central section of Neuchâtel, at the Federal Congress of St. Imier on 9 October 1870 ([Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 189. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 107–8). Guillaume had already suggested the name Jura Federation in an editorial in August 1870 (*Solidarité*, 20 August 1870, p. 2).

The congress hereby declares that a new federation under the name of the *Jura Federation* shall be constituted by the sections represented at the congress and those which shall join it.³⁶

This resolution, which is the Jura Federation's birth certificate, offered a way out of the dilemma surrounding the split in the Romance Federation: the Jura sections combined an apparent concession to the General Council – which had repeatedly demanded a regional name³⁷ – with a reassertion of the vote by the majority of delegates at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds, the disbanding of the Romance Federation and a reference to a proposal of their *own* from 1870 to call themselves Jura Federation.³⁸

The second agenda item, 'The General Council and the London Conference', resulted in a commission being formed – made up of Joukovsky, Guillaume, and Christian Hofer, the delegate from Moutier. They spoke out in favour of the protest resolution Guillaume had drafted and proposed it at the afternoon meeting.³⁹ The resolution was passed unanimously by the delegates who all signed the text called *Circular to all the federations of the International Working Men's Association* (*Circulaire à toutes les Fédérations de l'Association internationale des travailleurs*). They also decided to have 500 copies printed as a leaflet, which were to be sent to all countries that had a section of the International.⁴⁰

The text, which became known as the *Sonvillier Circular* (*Circulaire de Sonvillier*), summed up the previously described question regarding the internal organisation of the International: was the International organised in a pluralistic fashion with a democratic leadership or was the General Council – leaders charged with enforcing a common programme – a *governing body* with its own collective policy and independent from the sections and federations. In particular, the *Sonvillier Circular* stated:

Gradually, these men [in the General Council], who are merely our proxies – and most of them are not even our regular officers, not having been elected by a congress,⁴¹ – these men, we say, accustomed to walking at the head of the march and speaking in our name, by the natural flow of things and by the very force of this situation, began to wish for their special program, their own teachings, to dominate over the International. Having become, in their own eyes, a kind of government, it was natural that their particular ideas should appear to them to be the official theory that alone held a rightful place in the Association, while competing ideas, issuing from other groups, no longer appeared to them the legitimate expression of an opinion with rights equal to theirs, but a real heresy. [...]

The general congress of the Association not having been convened since the Basel Congress in 1869, the General Council has been left to its own devices during the last two years. The Franco-German War was the reason given for the absence of a congress in 1870; in 1871, the congress was replaced by a secret conference, convened by the General Council without the Rules authorising them to act in anything like this way.⁴² This secret conference, which certainly did not provide

³⁶ *Révolution Sociale*, 23 November 1871, p. 3. Furthermore, the congress adopted new rules for their federation that Guillaume had drafted in the Neuchâtel section's name; see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 226 (for the text, see *Révolution Sociale*, 14 December 1871, p. 3).

³⁷ See above, pp. 62, 90–91.

³⁸ See also Guillaume to Jeanneret, 14 December 1871, in Vuilleumier (ed.), 'La correspondance de Gustave Jeanneret', p. 93.

³⁹ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 234–35.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 241.

⁴¹ See above, p. 479, n. 6.

⁴² Privately, Engels was not apt to give the London Conference much credence either; see above, p. 86.

a complete representation of the International, as many sections, ours especially, had not been convened there; this conference, at which the majority had been falsified in advance by the fact that the General Council had assumed the right to seat six delegates appointed by itself with voting powers;⁴³ this conference, which could not possibly be regarded as vested with the rights of a congress, but which made resolutions that seriously undermine the General Rules, and which tend to make the International, a free federation of autonomous sections, into a hierarchical and authoritarian organisation of disciplined sections placed entirely under the hand of a General Council which may, at its own discretion, refuse admission to them or suspend their activity. [...]

Faced with this situation, what can we do?

We do not cast aspersions on the intentions of the General Council. The personalities that it comprises have been the victims of a fatal necessity: they wanted, in good faith and for the triumph of their particular doctrine, to introduce the principle of authority into the International: the circumstances seemed to encourage this tendency, and it seems natural that this school, whose ideal is *the conquest of political power by the working class*, believed that the International, as a result of recent events, had to leave behind its original organisation and transform itself into a hierarchical organisation, directed and governed by a Committee.

But while these tendencies and events are explainable, we feel no less obliged to fight against them in the name of the Social Revolution that we pursue, of which the program is 'the emancipation of the working classes by the working classes themselves',⁴⁴ without the direction of any authority, even an authority elected by and consented to by the workers.

We demand that the International hold fast to that principle of the autonomy of the sections which has hitherto been the foundation of our Association; we demand that the General Council, whose functions have been distorted by the *administrative resolutions* of the Basel Congress,⁴⁵ return to its normal role, which is that of a simple correspondence and statistics bureau;⁴⁶ – and we wish to achieve unity, which others want to establish by means of centralisation and dictatorship, through the free federation of autonomous groups.

The future society must be nothing other than the universalisation of the organisation that the International shall make for itself. Therefore, we must take care to bring this organisation as close as possible to our ideal. How could a free and egalitarian society arise from an authoritarian organisation? Such a thing is impossible. As the embryo of the future human society, the International is obliged to present a faithful image of our principles of freedom and federation here and now, and to expel from its midst any principle tending towards authority or dictatorship.⁴⁷

⁴³ Next to the nine delegates of the sections and federations of the International, *twelve* General Council members had the right to vote: six delegates elected by the General Council and six corresponding secretaries for the countries without delegates. See above, pp. 86–87.

⁴⁴ A reference to the first point of the General Rules' preamble: 'Considering, That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves' (*Rules of the International*, p. 3).

⁴⁵ For more about the Basel administrative resolutions, see below, p. 147.

⁴⁶ Before the General Council's authority was considerably expanded by resolutions of the Basel Congress (1869) and the London Conference (1871), it was primarily responsible for coordination and information related to the development of the international labour movement. In view of the rights and duties initially bestowed upon the General Council, it was only deemed a correspondence and statistics centre or bureau in the discussions of the day. An article in the organ of the Belgian Federation already used this term in early 1869; see below, p. 483, n. 59.

⁴⁷ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 404–6.

As opposed to the resolutions of the London Conference, where the political differences were largely masked by quibbles and arguments about legal formalities, the *Sonvillier Circular* very effectively focussed on the *essence* of the conflict. All of the sections and federations of the International were invited to join the protest against the General Council's leadership grab and to collectively push for a general congress to be held as soon as possible 'to prevent our great Association from being unwittingly pushed down a fatal slope, at the bottom of which it shall meet with its dissolution'.⁴⁸

Reaction of the Belgian Federation of the International (November–December 1871)

While the Commune refugees in Geneva and the Jura Federation launched their protest against the resolutions of the London Conference, Bakunin was far from the epicentre of the conflict at his home in Locarno where he kept in touch with his political friends through regular correspondence. He does not seem to have had much influence on the conflict as his unsuccessful calls in early August 1871 for the Geneva section of the Alliance to stay together indicate. He had written two manuscripts ('Protest of the Alliance' ['Protestation de l'Alliance'] and 'Report on the Alliance' ['Rapport sur l'Alliance']) in July/August 1871 in their defence, which he sent to Guillaume because he thought they could provide useful material and contribute to the planned memorandum on the conflict with the General Council.⁴⁹ Between 25 and 28 July as well as from the end of August until December 1871, Bakunin concentrated on defending the Paris Commune and the International in Italy that were being attacked by Giuseppe Mazzini.⁵⁰ It seems that he only remained at the disposal of his friends in Jura during this time – the initial phase of their protests against the London Conference – through correspondence. He later wrote of the *Sonvillier Circular* that he played absolutely no part in its formulation, 'neither directly, nor even indirectly, not having attended the Sonvillier Congress, but having endorsed it as soon as I had read it'.⁵¹

Bakunin also hardly had any contact with the Geneva section of propaganda.⁵² Marx on the other hand claimed in a grim letter sent 23 November 1871 that Bakunin 'is making every possible effort to get protests started against the Conference among the remnants of his following. For this purpose he has got into contact with the riff-raff among the French refugees in Geneva and London (a numerically weak component, anyway)'.⁵³ A short while later in a letter to Paul and Laura Lafargue, he wrote:

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

⁴⁹ See below, p. 415.

⁵⁰ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 15, 18–31. Giuseppe Mazzini (1805–1872), Italian freedom fighter, publicist and central figure of the Italian unification movement (*risorgimento*). For more about the conflict with Bakunin, see below, pp. 126–27.

⁵¹ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. See also Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 229–30. In the four weeks prior to the Sonvillier Federal Congress, however, he was frequently in touch with his friends in Jura (at least according to Bakunin's diary, see Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, p. 23–26) having written about 17 letters, some of which were very extensive but none of which have survived.

⁵² Bakunin only recorded sporadic correspondence with Eugène-Bertrand Saignes (August and September 1871) who he knew from Lyon, and Benoît Malon (starting in mid October), *ibid.*, pp. 17–20, 23.

⁵³ Marx to Bolte, 23 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 256. There is no evidence of contact between Bakunin and the Commune refugees in London; see Nettleau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 574.

All this [protest against the London Conference] emanated from Bakunin (acting through the Russian N. Zhukovsky [Joukovsky], Secretary of the Alliance in Geneva, Guillaume, etc.) whose clique (far from numerous in Switzerland by the by) had coalesced with Madame André Léo, Malon, Razoua and a small group of other French refugees who were not satisfied with playing second fiddle or no part whatever.⁵⁴

The nervousness evident in these remarks can also be seen in his reaction toward Belgium. In the *Internationale*, the organ of the Belgian Federation, the Federal Council member Eugène Steens' editorial quoted a couple of sentences from issue no. 2 of the *Révolution Sociale*, which he called a 'socialist journal of Geneva'.⁵⁵ That issue of the *Révolution Sociale* also included André Léo's first criticism of the resolutions of the London Conference (see above). The resolutions themselves were not printed in Belgium in the *Internationale* on 12 November or 19 November. Marx's confidant Rochat, the General Council's corresponding secretary for Belgium, called on the Belgian Federal Council to explain why the conference resolutions had not yet been printed and why the passages from the *Révolution Sociale* had not only been printed but lauded.⁵⁶ At the meeting of the Federal Council on 24 November 1871, Rochat's letter provoked a protest by Laurent Verrijcken 'against the right of censorship' the General Council was unduly claiming.⁵⁷ César De Paepe, corresponding secretary of the Federal Council, relayed the following comment by Steens in his reply to Rochat: the sentences quoted from the *Révolution Sociale* (which refer to France) 'are excellent; why shouldn't I reproduce them? This does not at all imply approval of the following article (which could, at any rate, be the work of another collaborator), nor even the approval of other passages from the same article which are not quoted.'⁵⁸

Steens also wrote an editorial on the internal organisation of the International in the *Internationale* on 19 November 1871. He did not directly address the General Council or the London Conference but attacked the insinuations of the reactionary press and their

eternal accusation that the International blindly obeys the suggestions of a dictatorial committee in London. This is an absurdity, contradicted by our General Rules, which are freely available, and contradicted by the facts. The International is, in the most anarchic sense of the word, a confederation of workers' associations grouped by *nationality*. Moreover, each of these associations and national branches reserves for itself the most complete autonomy and the most absolute independence.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ Marx to Paul and Laura Lafargue, 24–25 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 268.

⁵⁵ E. S[teens], 'La Situation', *Internationale*, 12 November 1871, p. 1. Steens took the quotes from *Révolution Sociale*, 2 November 1871, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁶ See the answer from De Paepe to Rochat, 27 November / 8 December 1871, Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 349.

⁵⁷ 'Procès-verbaux des séances du Conseil général belge de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs', RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 159, list 47 ob.

⁵⁸ De Paepe to Rochat, 27 November / 8 December 1871, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 350–51.

⁵⁹ E. S[teens], 'La Situation', *Internationale*, 19 November 1871, p. 1. The point of view Steens was expressing had a history in Belgium: already in February 1869 in an article for the *Internationale* titled 'The present institutions of the International in view of its future', the General Council had been characterised as a 'central bureau for correspondence, information and statistics'. Every executive body in the International had a democratic linchpin, it continued: 'Instead of commanding, as present administrations do, it obeys those it administers' (*ibid.*, 28 February 1869, p. 1). Eugène Hins is a possible author of the article; see Devreese, 'An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of Organization', p. 293. Mayné, *Eugène Hins*, p. 101.

Steens' statement may have further irritated Marx and led him to write to Belgium personally. Marx wrote De Paepe privately on 24 November 1871 and fiercely attacked his Federal Council colleagues Steens and Eugène Hins, the general secretary of the Belgian Federal Council. Marx had already had a conflict with Hins almost two years earlier: in January 1870, Hins had quipped that Marx's attack on Bakunin was 'unworthy'. Since then, Marx thought that Bakunin had 'in that blatherer Hins a fanatical instrument at his disposal' in the Belgian Federal Council.⁶⁰ Marx's resentment toward Hins was solidified after he married the Russian cashier of the Paris Federation (*Fédération parisienne*) Maria Yatskevich whom he met in the summer of 1870. Engels also now seemed convinced that Hins 'is a tool of Bakunin both by virtue of a spiritual affinity and because of his Russian wife'.⁶¹ In his letter to De Paepe, Marx summarised:

The conduct of the Belgian Federal Council vis-à-vis the General council strikes me as suspect. Mr Hins and his wife – I am speaking frankly – are Bakuninists and Mr Steens has doubtless discovered that his eloquence is insufficiently admired. In Geneva it is even being said, as Utin wrote and told me (he doesn't believe it, needless to say), that you have sided with the Alliancists who are in league with André Léo, Malon, Razoua, etc.⁶²

It seems clear that such rude attacks by Rochat and Marx were not going to win over the Belgian Federal Council members who had always tried to calm things down. Of course, Hins was not Bakunin's 'fanatical instrument', but a proponent of an autonomous and deeply rooted anti-parliamentary movement in Belgium; in the question of parliamentary participation or abstention, the majority in the International in Belgium – just like most of the sections in other countries – had social-revolutionary tendencies. On 28 November 1871 – only a few days after Marx had christened Hins and Yatskevich Bakuninists – the Belgian Federal Council dispatched a circular, in reaction to domestic political controversies, that reaffirmed the abstention of Belgian workers from parliamentarianism for the following reasons:

Thus, your abstention is not motivated by indifference; it is because you separate yourselves completely from the aristocratic-financial caste that has arrogated the government to itself.

It is because the day when the workers shall occupy themselves with public affairs, it shall not be in order to bring about the advent of one party in place of another; it shall be to sweep both away, to replace the reign of organised fraud with the reign of Justice.⁶³

Guillaume wrote a letter of support on 4 December 1871 to the Brussels newspaper the *Liberté*, which was edited by members of the International and had published the Federal Council's circular:

Like ourselves, you are anti-authoritarians, adversaries of the political state; and we are persuaded that, as has often occurred to us before, we find ourselves animated by the same feelings at the same moment, even without having conferred with one another. Reading your current

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 38–40.

⁶¹ Engels to Theodor Cuno, 10 June 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 394. There is no evidence that Yatskevich and Bakunin even knew each other; see Mayné, *Eugène Hins*, p. 137; Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 246. Maria Yatskevich (dates of birth and death unknown) was a teacher from Russia who came to Paris at the end of the 1860s. She worked there as a box-maker (*cartonnière*), got involved with the sections of the International and was the cashier at the *Marmite* (restaurant collective) and later for the Paris Federation of the International; Yatskevich and Hins married in October 1870. See L. Descaves, 'Une rectification', *La Vie Ouvrière*, 5–20 June 1913, pp. 688–89.

⁶² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 263. A corresponding letter from Utin to Marx has not survived.

⁶³ 'Adresse du Conseil belge de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs aux Sections belges en particulier et aux Travailleurs belges en général', *Liberté*, 3 December 1871, p. 1.

issue and the proclamation of the Belgian council, I am confirmed in this sense of things once again.⁶⁴

That the members of the International in Belgium, just as those in Jura,⁶⁵ could develop and express their own ideas and not act as Bakunin, Hins, or Steens' marionettes seems never to have occurred to Marx. While hardly a critical word was heard from the Belgian delegates at the London Conference, the criticism in Belgium of the General Council's quest for power finally became louder in the question of the internal organisation of the International. The following letter that De Paepe wrote on 8 December 1871 in reply to Rochat illustrates the development of ideas in the Belgian Federation of the International:

we shall discuss the position that we must take with regard to the split taking place in Switzerland and London; do not imagine, for this reason, that we think to join those who favour secession, or even that we so much as hesitate to remain on the side of the General Council. [...] However, I must say that there are among us a few members who, while rejecting the split, think that there are grounds for some small complaints, to some extent against the General Council, but also against the organisation given to the International by successive Congresses, and most recently by the London Conference.⁶⁶

Despite Rochat's reprimand, there was more news to be read in the *Internationale* that did not strictly follow the rules set out by the resolutions of the London Conference. For example, the issue on 17 December 1871 casually reported on the following flagrant contradiction to resolution no. 9 regarding the 'political action of the working class':

Political attitude of the Spanish workers. – The Spanish workers continue to maintain their policy of abstention from political affairs, which has served them rather well so far, as it hastens the decomposition of the bourgeois parties. Concerning the municipal elections in Madrid, the *Emancipación*, journal of the International's federation in this city, publishes an article, the title of which suffices to indicate its direction: 'Workers, Do Not Go to the Polls' ['Trabajadores, no vayamos á las urnas'].⁶⁷

The next congress of the Belgian Federation held on 24 and 25 December 1871 in Brussels revealed the mood among the rank and file. A lively discussion took place regarding the London Conference and its resolutions, in which first the Belgian delegates were criticised and then Marx was. Edouard Glaser de Willebrord, Marx's correspondent in Belgium, reported that the Belgian delegates of the London Conference had to defend themselves

that they were only consulted [at the Conference] as a formality, that the General Council had arranged to pass all the resolutions, and that their protests would have been ignored since, in

⁶⁴ Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 348–49. Guillaume attached the *Sonvillier Circular* to this letter and called for it to be printed with the following words: 'the General Council, departing from its normal attributes, is tending to become a kind of oligarchical government. If we accept this state of things without protest, we shall allow a seed of dissolution to be planted within the International; whereas it is easy for us, without in any way compromising the unity of the workers, to call back to the true principles [of the International] a few friends who have strayed from them, who believe themselves to be acting in the best interests, and who, in their intemperate zeal, risk killing off the International by implanting the principle of authority in it' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 348; transcription error 'genre de dissolution' instead of 'germe de dissolution' [seed of dissolution] corrected according to the manuscript in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 394/1). The *Sonvillier Circular* was, however, never printed in the *Liberté*.

⁶⁵ See above, pp. 14–16.

⁶⁶ Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 352–53.

⁶⁷ *Internationale*, 17 December 1871, p. 3. For more about the article 'Workers, Do Not Go to the Polls', which appeared originally in the *Federación*, see below, pp. 170–71.

short, they were forced to bow to the majority vote. [...] I attended the meetings of the Belgian congress, and it seems to me that you were personally accused of having drawn the Association into politics when, according to the Rules, it must restrict itself to issues within the domain of social economy.⁶⁸

The Belgian federal congress passed several resolutions that spoke out against all authoritarian forms of organisation within the International: Alfred Herman was elected the Belgian Federation's delegate to the London General Council and given an imperative mandate. He was the only member of the General Council to be made a delegate by a federation in this manner. The Belgian Federal Council was bound more strongly to the sections as the local federations were given the power to send delegates with voting rights to the monthly special meetings of the Federal Council.⁶⁹ The report on the congress in the *Liberté* explained that the goal was 'to avoid any appearance of an authoritarian regime'.⁷⁰

Finally, the congress passed a resolution that obviously was directed against the London Conference. Like the above-quoted article by Steens in the *Internationale*, the Belgian federal congress didn't speak out against the General Council but against the reactionary press which had made allegations of a leadership grab:

In light of the absurd calumnies daily spread by the reactionary press, which wants to depict the International as a despotic association subject to a discipline and orders given from on high and reaching all members by hierarchical means;

Considering that, on the contrary, the International, wishing to react against despotism and centralisation, has always felt obliged to make its organisation conform to its principles;

[The Congress] declares, once and for all, that the International is only and has always been a group of completely autonomous federations;

That the General Council is only and has always been merely a correspondence and information centre. [...]

Considering, on the other hand,

That the Rules of the International, established at the birth of the Association, and supplemented, a bit randomly, at each congress, do not clearly define the rights of the federations and do not correspond to existing practice,

[The Congress] declares that it is necessary to undertake a serious revision of the Rules;

Therefore,

The Belgian federation instructs the Belgian Council to make a project of new Rules and to publish it in order that it should be discussed in the sections and then at the next Belgian congress. Once adopted by the Belgian federation, the project should be submitted to the next international congress.⁷¹

'As one can see', the report on the congress in the *Liberté* concluded, 'it shall be difficult, after the foregoing, to continue to speak of an authoritarian regime in the International'.⁷² Without naming the General Council or the London Conference, the Belgian federal congress had in essence joined the Jura Federation's protest, except that they did not call for a general congress

⁶⁸ Glaser de Willebrord to Marx, 26 April 1872, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, pp. 375–76.

⁶⁹ 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 24 et 25 décembre', *Internationale*, 31 December 1871, p. 2.

⁷⁰ 'Le Congrès Belge', *Liberté*, 31 December 1871, p. 2.

⁷¹ 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 24 et 25 décembre', p. 2.

⁷² 'Le Congrès Belge', p. 2.

to be convened immediately. The rest of the resolution was amazingly similar to the *Sonvillier Circular* all the way down to the wording:⁷³

- The General Council's power:

Belgium: The General Council is merely a 'correspondence and information centre'

Jura: 'a simple correspondence and statistics bureau'

- Internal organisation of the International:

Belgium: 'a group of completely autonomous federations'

Jura: 'a free federation of autonomous sections'

- Relationship between goal and means:

Belgium: The International is aimed 'against despotism and centralisation' and always strives 'to make its organisation conform to its principles'

Jura: The International 'is obliged to present a faithful image of our principles of freedom and federation here and now, and to expel from its midst any principle tending towards authority or dictatorship'

The Belgian federal congress even went further than the *Sonvillier Circular* by calling for a revision of the Rules in order to prevent any 'authoritarian regime' in the International. A week after the congress, Marx angrily reported to the General Council 'that the Belgian Congress had voted against the Congress [Conference] resolutions, not directly, but indirectly'.⁷⁴ Engels noted in a letter written on the same day that 'Hins, Steens and Co., in Belgium, have played us a fine trick'. He cockily added that the Belgians 'would have their day of reckoning, too'.⁷⁵

Engels' article about the *Sonvillier Circular* and the declarations in support of the London Conference from Saxony and Geneva

Engels was so alarmed by the Belgian federal congress's critical vote that he decided to immediately go public – only he did not target the Belgian congress's insinuating resolutions but the *Sonvillier Circular*. On 3 January 1872, he sent Liebknecht a text to be printed in the *Volksstaat* (the organ of the SDAP) with the note that 'the *immediate* printing of the enclosed article is *very necessary*'. He also announced that it would be circulated to 'every corner of Belgium, Italy and Spain'.⁷⁶

In his article, which appeared in the *Volksstaat* on 10 January 1872 under the title 'The Congress of Sonvillier and the International', Engels wrote about the criticism the *Sonvillier Circular* had directed at the General Council:

⁷³ The *Sonvillier Circular* was read at the congress; see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 255, who apparently had his information from Bastelica who attended the congress; *ibid.*, p. 256.

⁷⁴ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 67 (meeting on 2 January 1872).

⁷⁵ Engels to Liebknecht, 2 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Werke*, vol. 33, p. 368 (the translation in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 289, is inaccurate).

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

To our German readers, who know only too well the value of an organisation that is able to defend itself, all this will seem very strange. And this is quite natural, for Mr Bakunin's theories, which appear here in their full splendour, have not yet penetrated into Germany. A workers' association which has inscribed upon its banner the motto of struggle for the emancipation of the working class is to be headed, not by an executive committee, but merely by a statistical and correspondence bureau!⁷⁷

Apparently Engels could not imagine the proletariat emancipating itself *without a leadership*. He lashed out sharply at the circular's call for a relationship between goal and means, namely that the 'principles of freedom and federation' should be mirrored in the internal organisation of the International. Bakunin had already elucidated this idea in July 1871:

Since the organisation of the International aims not at the creation of new states or despotisms but at the radical destruction of every form of domination, it must have a character essentially different from the organisation of states. As the latter is authoritarian, artificial, and violent, alien and hostile to the interests of natural development and popular instincts, so the organisation of the International must be free, natural, and fully in conformity with these interests and these instincts.⁷⁸

Engels on the other hand argued the *authoritarian* form of the struggle for *emancipation* was a fact of nature, objectively an inherent necessity at a moment of danger: 'Just now, when we have to defend ourselves with all the means at our disposal, the proletariat is told to organise not in accordance with requirements of the struggle it is daily and hourly compelled to wage, but according to the vague notions of a future society entertained by some dreamers.'⁷⁹ In his article 'On Authority' ('Dell'Autorità'), Engels later followed up on this argument: 'A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; [...] and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries.'⁸⁰ Only in the reactionaries?

In his article for the *Volksstaat*, Engels painted an oddly horrific picture of an impotent and degenerative federalist organisation that attempts to live up to its ideals:

Instead of fighting the government and the bourgeoisie, it would meditate on whether each paragraph of our General Rules and each resolution passed by the Congress presented a true image of the future society. [...] And above all, there should be no disciplined sections! Indeed, no party discipline, no centralisation of forces at a particular point, no weapons of struggle! But what, then, would happen to the model of the future society? In short, where would this new organisation get us? To the cowardly, servile organisation of the early Christians [...].⁸¹

Engels summed up his criticism of the federalist organisational concept with the words 'pray and hope instead of fighting'.⁸² After reading the article, Bakunin commented that Engels 'has naturally levelled all his habitual calumnies against us'.⁸³ What other members of federally organised (and definitely militant) sections had to say about this criticism is unknown because

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 66.

⁷⁸ Bakounine, 'Protestation de l'Alliance', p. 68.

⁷⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 66.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 67. Engels ended the article with a controversy regarding the Basel administrative resolutions (see below, p. 147) and the organisational problems of the Jura sections (see below, p. 205).

⁸³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 77.

Engels' article – despite his promise to spread it to 'every corner of Belgium, Italy and Spain' – only ever appeared in the *Volksstaat*.

For Liebknecht on the other hand, Engels' article was a godsend. He even wanted another instalment and was able to return the favour in the form of a declaration of loyalty to the General Council. On 10 January 1872, Liebknecht reported to Engels about a regional meeting of social democrats in Saxony, which took place on 6 and 7 January in Chemnitz: 'The regional meeting was splendid: resolutions in today's *Volksstaat*. During a *private discussion* delegates unanimously decided to side with you in the fight against the Bakuninists, and I've been expressly instructed to inform you of this'.⁸⁴ There is no evidence of this decision in the resolutions of the Saxon regional meeting printed in the *Volksstaat*, nor does the report about the events and negotiations at the meeting give any hints on this matter.⁸⁵ Liebknecht also let Engels know exactly how he was to pass on the information about the mysterious resolution:

When you or M[arx] mention the thing about the regional meeting at the General Council, do it so that everything comes across as *private remarks* and statements by *individual* members. Something like this: the regional meeting gave the representatives of social democracy in Saxony the chance to privately – because the matter could not appear publicly on the agenda – express their opinion on the status of the General Council. They were unanimously in favour of etc. (We were not able to put the matter on the agenda as otherwise the regional meeting would not have been allowed, and the police in the audience threatened to break up the meeting immediately if the agenda was not strictly adhered to! We have a quite nice state of affairs! I will also make you an *official* report, which will also appear in the *Volksstaat*.)⁸⁶

Despite Liebknecht's promise, he never mentioned the matter again in his correspondences and no report ever appeared in the *Volksstaat*.

In the same letter Liebknecht announced the membership of certain individuals in the International: 'You will be receiving many letters from Germany in the next while because of this'.⁸⁷ This also didn't happen.⁸⁸ Liebknecht's words were possibly meant to pacify Marx and Engels who had repeatedly admonished the German social democrats' disinterest in the International.⁸⁹ Apparently in order to make amends, Liebknecht signalled that ideological support was on the

⁸⁴ *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, p. 625. A social democrat from Saxony who sympathised with the *Sonvillier Circular* wrote a letter to Joukovsky before the meeting. He described the difficulties his sympathy had caused him: 'Being alone, I cannot, in spite of all my good will, fight against the multitude, and I strongly doubt I shall find a single man who will support me in this matter. If I raise my voice, they will start (as is their wont) to make noises about my being a spy' (Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. +276).

⁸⁵ 'Die Landesversammlung der Sächsischen Social-Demokraten', *Volksstaat*, 10 January 1872, p. 1. 'Die Landesversammlung in Chemnitz', *Volksstaat*, 13 January 1872, pp. 1, 4. See also *ibid.*, 24 January 1872, p. 3. Neither can anything be found in 'Die Landesversammlung der sächsischen Sozial-Demokraten', *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 11 January 1872, p. 1.

⁸⁶ *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, pp. 626–27. See also Liebknecht to Luigi Stefanoni, 29 February 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 577.

⁸⁷ *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, pp. 625–26.

⁸⁸ 'Letters from Germany about enrolment *are still not forthcoming*' Engels complained on 15 February 1872 to Liebknecht (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 318); his reply is printed in *Die I. Internationale in Deutschland*, pp. 633–34.

⁸⁹ A few weeks earlier, Liebknecht had once again revealed his reserved attitude toward the International in a letter to Engels dated 8 December 1871, which resulted in harsh criticism from London; see below, p. 293. In his letter, Liebknecht had criticised – among other things – the formalistic argumentation of the General Council ('our people don't give a damn about violations to the statutes'). He noted that more members of the International supported the abstention from parliamentarianism than the Marxist doctrine: '*Other than in Germany*, where (perhaps while making

way along with new members – who, however, remained fictitious. Nevertheless, the somewhat fishy vote of the social democrats in Saxony served its purpose and was well appreciated: ‘The news about the Saxons’ resolution gave us great pleasure.’⁹⁰ Marx brought it up in the General Council and Engels spread the word through letters.⁹¹

The support of the German section in Geneva – whose leading figure was Johann Philipp Becker – for the London Conference’s resolutions lent these more credence than the resolution Liebkecht claimed had been passed by the regional meeting of Saxony. Becker had cooperated with Bakunin from 1868 to 1869 in the Alliance only to part ways with him in 1870. He then sought to regain his prestige in London by getting on Marx and the General Council’s good side.⁹² Repeatedly changing sides had, however, tarnished his reputation. The Group of German-speaking Sections of the International, formed by Becker in 1866 and whose ‘mother section’ was the German section in Geneva, was also well past its zenith⁹³ and its organ the *Vorbote* had been discontinued after six years in December 1871.

The Group of German-speaking Sections had its own delegate, Utin, at the London Conference. Utin had departed for London with a mandate that Becker had given him personally. Three days before the London Conference, Becker suggested at the general meeting of the German section in Geneva that Utin should be elected a delegate retroactively and be sent a proper mandate with detailed instructions. Becker spoke out in favour of Utin by saying that everyone knew he was a very enthusiastic and capable member, and that he had been willing to ‘take the journey at his own expense’. Despite the ‘somewhat unusual procedure of the election’, Utin was eventually given the mandate.⁹⁴

After Utin’s return from London, his report about the Conference was put on the agenda of the general meeting on 10 October 1871, which was ‘not well enough attended’ to deal with this important issue as Becker pointed out.⁹⁵ A German translation of Utin’s report was read at the special meeting held four days later for this purpose – there was so much to be discussed that it was unanimously decided to hold a further meeting to continue the debate.⁹⁶ This suggestion came from Carl Boruttau, who had voiced a number of concerns.

Boruttau, who came to Geneva in March/April 1871, had worked as a doctor in Leipzig and was a member of the SDAP and friends with Liebkecht.⁹⁷ His views became radical during his stay

the opposite mistake now and then) we have thoroughly eradicated the abstention nonsense, the same can be found more or less *everywhere* in the International.’ (RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2663).

⁹⁰ Engels to Liebkecht, 18 January 1872, Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 298.

⁹¹ The following was noted in the General Council’s minutes: the congress of Saxon social-democrats ‘had in its secret sittings passed a resolution’ (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 86 [meeting on 23 January 1872]). On the other hand, the public version was more open: ‘It had passed resolutions’ (*Eastern Post*, 27 January 1872, p. 5). Engels wrote letters to Paul Lafargue on 19 January 1872 (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 304) and Theodor Cuno on 24 January 1872 (*ibid.*, p. 310).

⁹² See details in Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 151–94.

⁹³ See R. Morgan, *The German Social Democrats and the First International 1864–1872* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), pp. 175–79.

⁹⁴ ‘Protokollbuch der internationalen Arbeitergenossenschaft Genf’, AdsD, Bestand Frühzeit der Arbeiterbewegung, A 21 (general meeting on 14 September 1871). Becker issued the mandate on the following day (RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3095).

⁹⁵ ‘Protokollbuch der internationalen Arbeitergenossenschaft Genf’ (general meeting on 10 October 1871).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* (general meeting on 14 October 1871).

⁹⁷ For more on Boruttau, see S. Prüfer, ‘Ethischer Sozialismus vor 1890. Der Arzt und Sozialdemokrat Carl Boruttau (1837–1873)’, *IWK* 35 (1999), 327–48. For more about his move to Geneva, see Robert Schweichel to Wilhelm

in Geneva because of his contacts with the socialist milieu (sections of the International, refugees of the Commune, etc.). He belonged to the founders of the Section of Socialist Atheists (*Section des Athées Socialistes*) who had unsuccessfully applied to the General Council for membership in the International on 15 September 1871 with an anarchist declaration of principles.⁹⁸ He also opposed the Russophobic hostility toward Bakunin prevalent in Liebknecht's *Volksstaat*: we have, he wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Volksstaat* on 26 October 1871, 'every reason to treat Russian social democracy with respect and, in just honour of its undeniable merit, to *carefully avoid any petty grumbling* that is based on *personal misunderstandings or hate*'.⁹⁹ In a two-part article, which to Marx's horror was printed in the *Volksstaat*, he criticised the General Council.¹⁰⁰ This led Marx to issue the following command to Liebknecht:

You may rest assured that I am better informed than you about the intrigues within the International. So when I write to you that letters from Boruttau with *any bearing at all* on the International [...] should not be printed in the *Volksstaat*, you have simply to make up your mind whether you wish to act *against* us or *with* us. If the latter is the case, then my instructions, which are based on a thorough knowledge of the circumstances, should be followed to the letter.¹⁰¹

Six weeks after passing the aforementioned resolution to continue the debate on the London Conference, the general meeting of the German section in Geneva finally convened again. Boruttau again voiced his concerns and Becker and Utin had to resort to manipulation in order to refute them:

Cit. Becker notes that the purpose of the debate could not be to change the resolutions [of the London Conference], but that the issue at hand was the discussion of all that which requires clarification. Cit. Dr Boruttau proposes to first discuss the Conference's authority. Cit. Becker: every conference has the same significance as a congress. Moreover no resolutions were passed

Liebknecht, 17 April 1871, in Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 1, p. 384. Boruttau was one of the speakers at a meeting of German workers on 8 April 1871 in Geneva's *Temple Unique* ('Adresses à la Commune de Paris', *Solidarité*, 12 May 1871, p. 3; for more about the Temple Unique, see below, p. 567, n. 106)

⁹⁸ La Section des Athées Socialistes to the General Council, 15 September 1871 (in the appendix: Déclaration de Principes), RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 390 (see also below, pp. 375–76). Jung planned to refer the Section of Socialist Atheists just like the section of propaganda to the Committee of the Romance Federation: 'to the two new branches who demand to be recognised I shall write that they must apply to the committee fédéral Romand' (Jung to Marx, 12 October 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2570). Perret brushed off the sections' membership bid: 'we can only repeat to the General Council to *reject them completely*.' (The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 26 November 1871, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 902).

⁹⁹ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 348/8.

¹⁰⁰ 'Is it a weakness less deserving of ridicule when a faction in the International, one that *currently forms the majority in the General Council*, considered it necessary to *openly deny* the atheist character of the socialist movement and so expose the members of this association to the suspicion that they deem moral-religious education to be nothing and economic-political power everything?! I don't want to have to examine here whether this denial of atheism stemmed from motives based on principles or tactics; I will content myself with establishing that in the first case these deniers are not socialist and in the second case they have acted against our principles' (C. Boruttau, 'Sozialismus und Kommunismus', *Volksstaat*, 4 November 1871, p. 3). In his criticism, Boruttau was referring to the General Council's declaration against Jules Favre's circular in which the General Council distanced itself from the first point of the Alliance programme – 'The Alliance stands for atheism'. The declaration, written by Marx, was also published in the *Volksstaat* (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 176).

¹⁰¹ Marx to Liebknecht, 17 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 248. Liebknecht also sent Marx Boruttau's letter from 26 October 1871 (Liebknecht to Marx, 11 November 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2624).

that had not been dealt with at earlier congresses. Cit. Utin says that the invitation was just as legal as to all the congresses and that the Conference thus had the same authority as a congress. Cit. Kannenberg seconds Boruttau's proposal. This is passed. Cit. Boruttau continues that Italy, Austria, Russia, Germany and America were not properly represented. As an example of the selective invitations by the General Council, a letter from Yor[c]k in Hamburg is read, which claims that the social-democratic party did not know about the Conference.¹⁰² Even if we agreed whole-heartedly with every resolution, the General Council has to be sternly criticised from a democratic point-of-view because we would otherwise be guilty of that which our opponent accuses us of (reference to the International's Popes). The same also puts forward a motion that a public congress be convened as soon as possible.¹⁰³

Becker and Utin must have been very alarmed by Boruttau's position as he was repeating the arguments in the *Sonvillier Circular* (no decision-making authority for the London Conference, unilateral course of action by the General Council, general congress should be convened immediately). In response to the accusations of 'selective invitations by the General Council', Becker countered that

the General Council knew all too well about the political situation in Germany and thus had to refrain from any official invitation, and thus did refrain. Cit. Holzwarth noted the same for Austria, which was nevertheless, if not directly then indirectly, represented by Cit. Fränkel. Cit. Utin noted that Russia could not be represented because it did not have a social-democratic party or section of the International, but that all other countries that were not represented directly by delegates were represented by their corresponding secretaries who were entitled to do this in this case. Cit. Gutschmann puts forward the motion: the section recognises the authority of the Conference and the legality of its resolutions. After several speakers talked about Boruttau's motion (about holding a congress soon), this came to a vote where it was defeated 17 to 4. In contrast, Gutschmann's motion was passed in a vote by 14 to 4.¹⁰⁴

A similar resolution was passed by the French-speaking sections of the International in Geneva, who were part of the Romance Federation. The spokesmen of the federation must have been very happy about the resolutions of the London Conference because resolution no. 17 had sided with them in their conflict with the Jura sections and resolution no. 9 reaffirmed their political-parliamentary line. Objections were nevertheless raised on 23 November 1871 at a general meetings regarding the London Conference after the Geneva delegate Perret gave his report: some of the Commune refugees present criticised the London General Council and the resolutions of the Conference. This led to a long debate and the meeting had to be adjourned just like that of

¹⁰² Theodor Yorck (1830–1875), carpenter in Harburg, was one of the founding members of the ADAV in 1863 and the SDAP in 1869; 1871–1873 secretary of their committee in Hamburg. Only Liebknecht was informed that the London Conference would take place (see above, p. 85). According to his own account, he did not pass this information on to the other party members; see Liebknecht to Engels, 8 December 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2663.

¹⁰³ 'Protokollbuch der internationalen Arbeitergenossenschaft Genf' (general meeting on 28 November 1871). Boruttau also asked in his letter from the previous month 'Why did the German social democrats not send a delegate to the London Conference [...]?' That is what we are futilely racking our brains about here. I can only think, as hard as it is to accept, that the party did not have enough money. [...] Hopefully a proper general congress will be held soon.' (Boruttau to the editors of the *Volksstaat*, 26 October 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 348/8).

¹⁰⁴ 'Protokollbuch der internationalen Arbeitergenossenschaft Genf' (general meeting on 28 November 1871).

the German section.¹⁰⁵ The Communards Benoît Malon, Gustave Lefrançais, and Charles Ostyn – ‘Members of the [Geneva] central section and of the Jura Federation’ – prepared a resolution for the follow-up meeting, which was to take place nine days later: aside from various points of criticism and demands that had already been brought up in the *Sonvillier Circular*, there was also the declaration ‘that the essential principle on which the Association stands is that of the autonomy of the member within the group or section, of the group or section within the federation, and of the federation within the International, so that the initiative should reside with each individual and each collectivity composing the great Association’. The resolution concluded with a call to reject the London Conference’s resolutions.¹⁰⁶

The spokesmen of the Geneva sections also prepared a resolution for the follow-up meeting that amounted to a declaration of incompatibility with the Communards who were called upon ‘to choose, from now on, between the right of belonging to one of our sections [in Geneva] or that of remaining in the separatist faction [the section of propaganda belonging to the Jura Federation]’.¹⁰⁷ Two days before the meeting, Becker angrily wrote in a letter:

The Parisian refugees are causing one scandal after another here; there are only a few older members of the International and even fewer, in fact, almost no workers among them – instead, a heap of status-seeking loudmouths and crazed chauvinists. That’s why there will be a serious meeting of all involved sections the day after tomorrow and it could very well be the case that a number of gentlemen will be thrown out of the Association, perhaps even with physical force.¹⁰⁸

Becker also wrote in a letter to the General Council that ‘the authority of the Conference, the legality and the implementation of its resolutions (as had occurred this last Tuesday in the German mother section, where Dr Boruttau tried to fool us) will be recognised and declared at this meeting’.¹⁰⁹

Even before the discussion about the London Conference’s resolutions could be continued, the aforementioned declaration of incompatibility was put up for debate at the general meeting on 2 December 1871 and adopted by a large majority. The Commune refugees, who were thus expelled from the section, left the hall in protest; the resolutions of the London Conference were then accepted ‘enthusiastically and without discussion’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ ‘L’Internationale à Genève’, *Révolution Sociale*, 30 November 1871, p. 3. ‘Résolutions de l’Assemblée générale du 2 décembre’, *Égalité*, 24 December 1871, p. 3. ‘Rapport du Comité Fédéral romand’, *Égalité*, 13 June 1872, p. 5. The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 26 November 1871, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 902.

¹⁰⁶ *Révolution Sociale*, 7 December 1871, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Résolutions de l’Assemblée générale du 2 décembre’, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Becker to Sorge, 30 November 1871, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 48.

¹⁰⁹ Becker to Jung, 1 December 1871, in Jaechh, *Die Internationale*, p. 233.

¹¹⁰ G. Lefrançais, ‘L’Internationale à Genève. Fédération Genevoise – Assemblée générale du 2 décembre 1871’, *Révolution Sociale*, 7 December 1871, p. 2. ‘Résolutions de l’Assemblée générale du 2 décembre’, p. 3. ‘Rapport du Comité Fédéral romand’, p. 5. ‘Résolution de l’Assemblée générale de la Fédération genevoise concernant la Conférence de Londres’, *Égalité*, 7 December 1871, p. 1. Franky Candaux complained in January 1873: ‘By repelling the handful of expatriates who remain attached to us [...] they have forced them to withdraw, not without having stirred up against them some furious madmen who were on the verge of assailing them’ (Candaux, *A Monsieur le Président*, p. 3). Léon Denivelle, a long-time member of the Geneva central section, spoke of a ‘systematic war against the French refugees, the Communards, who, after having nobly sacrificed everything to the universal cause of the proletariat, and for the sole crime of asking questions of principle, of desiring a free debate, free inquiry, find themselves exposed to all kinds of attacks: intimidation, insults, malicious innuendo, incitements to fistfights’ (Léon Denivelle to the citizens, president, and the members of the Geneva central section, 3 December 1872, in F. Candaux, *L’Internationale et les intrigants ou suite d’un rapport sur l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs à Genève* [Plainpalais: Imp. Taponnier & Studer, 1873], p. 4). The Geneva resolution was reaffirmed at a meeting of four sections in La Chaux-de-Fonds on

Two and a half weeks later, on 20 December 1871, the Committee of the Romance Federation approved a manifesto to counter the *Sonvillier Circular*, which stoked the conflict once again. It claimed that the *Sonvillier Circular* was written by a small group of individuals who wanted to spread dissent, suspicion, and resentment; the criticism of the London Conference put forward in the circular was unjustified, and its only motive was to find an excuse to disorganise the International; while resolution no. 9 of the London Conference on the ‘political action of the working class’ called – in unison with the entire working class – for political power to be conquered in order to achieve the social revolution, the *Sonvillier Circular* preached chaos and so on.¹¹¹ It is hard to imagine how such a bizarre reply could convince anyone. Unsurprisingly though, Engels found the counter manifesto to be ‘*excellent*’.¹¹²

28 January 1872 (*Égalité*, 15 February 1872, p. 4), as well as at the Romance Federation’s congress from 2 to 3 June 1872 (‘Résolutions du quatrième Congrès romand tenu à Vevey, les 2 et 3 juin 1872’, *Égalité*, 13 June 1872, p. 2).

¹¹¹ ‘Réponse du Comité fédéral romand à la Circulaire des 16 signataires, membres du Congrès de Sonvilliers’, *Égalité*, 24 December 1871, pp. 1–2.

¹¹² Engels to Paul Lafargue, 30 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 284.

CHAPTER 9. The International in Italy

THE INTERNATIONAL GREW QUICKLY IN ITALY after its first official section was formed in Naples on 31 January 1869.¹ The Neapolitan section, which was declared a provisional central section for Italy, was quickly joined by a number of trade sections so that there were 3,000 members by the beginning of 1870.² On the evening of 5 February 1870, police in Naples put an early end to this development when they broke up a meeting of 150 members of the International, confiscated the section's documents, and arrested three people described as ringleaders including Bakunin's friend Carlo Gambuzzi.³ Gambuzzi (1837–1902) was a lawyer from Naples. In his youth, he took part in a conspiracy against the rule of the Bourbons in Southern Italy. He was arrested for the first time when he was 22 years old for printing an illegal paper. He joined Garibaldi's troops in 1862 and got to know Bakunin in Naples in June 1865. He was one of Bakunin's closest friends in Italy.

In addition to Gambuzzi, Bakunin made the acquaintance of a variety of people during his three-year stay in Italy (1864–1867) who would later become members of Italian sections of the International. Marx and Engels didn't have any contacts in Italy during this time – in light of the looming conflict in the International, Engels wrote with resignation to Marx on 11 February 1870 that 'Italy will have to be left' to Bakunin and his friends, 'at least for the time being'.⁴ And so Marx and Engels must have been very pleased to get to know and win over Carlo Cafiero between the end of 1870 and early 1871. Cafiero (1846–1892) had a law degree and was the son of a big landowner in Apulia.⁵ He was apparently travelling through Europe at the time to broaden his horizons and had taken a lively interest in the socialist movement and the International. Before Cafiero left London to return to Italy in May 1871, Engels assigned him the task to reorganise the Italian International to the General Council's liking and gave him a letter of reference for Gambuzzi.⁶ However, when he arrived in Naples in June 1871, he was given the cold shoulder by the local section because he was seen as *an agent of the General Council*.⁷ A year earlier

¹ See the minutes of the founding meeting in *Popolo d'Italia*, 18 February 1869, p. 3. For more about earlier attempts to form sections, see A. Romano, *Storia del movimento socialista in Italia*, 3 vols., 2. ed. (Bari: Editori Laterza, 1966–1967), vol. 1, pp. 379–80.

² See Carmelo Palladino's report about the state of the section dated 13 November 1871 (C. Palladino, 'Relazione sulla Sezione Napoletana dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori', in G. Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels con italiani 1848–1895* [Milano: Feltrinelli Editore, 1964], p. 62). For more about the socialist movement in general in Italy and Bakunin's influence on it, see M. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia dal 1864 al 1872* (Geneva: Edizione del Risveglio, 1928), and Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vols. 1–2.

³ See D. Demarco, 'La Fondation de la Première Internationale à Naples: 1869–1870', in D. Fauvel-Rouif (ed.), *La Première Internationale. L'institution, l'implantation, le rayonnement. Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 16–18 Novembre 1964* (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1968), p. 294.

⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 427.

⁵ For more on Cafiero, see P. C. Masini, *Cafiero* (Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1974).

⁶ Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 2, pp. 269–70 (police report dated 28 February 1872).

⁷ See Palladino to Costa, 1 October 1876: 'Towards June 1871 Carlo Cafiero came to Naples, back from London. We believed he was an emissary and agent of Marx: we kept an eye on him' (F. Della Peruta, 'Il socialismo italiano

the same section had barred its own president Stefano Caporusso, who had always referred to his special relationship with the General Council when justifying his arbitrary decisions and dictatorial affectations.⁸

Bakunin's political allies Gambuzzi, the member of parliament Giuseppe Fanelli,⁹ and the 28-year-old lawyer Carmelo Palladino were members of the Neapolitan section as well as International members of the Geneva section of the Alliance.¹⁰ The Neapolitan section's members also included the 17-year-old medical student Errico Malatesta (1853–1932) and his friends, who had joined the International in May 1871 and breathed new life into it. By the time Cafiero arrived from London to reform the section that had been deemed lost, it was already back on solid ground and had almost 300 registered members.¹¹ Cafiero sent the following report to London on 28 June 1871:

We need to start over again properly in Naples. A section which already had several thousand members and for which 13 days' imprisonment for two or three of its leaders [in February 1870] was enough to disorganise it completely, is something which is anything but well built. [...] Here in Naples I found a Genevan tendency,¹² I mean amongst our people; this is bad, as it fragments our forces. Would it not be wise to make our Genevan friends understand that they are not helping our Association by having certain currents diverge onto Geneva, groups whose normal course should lead them only to the constituted General Council in London, which is unanimously recognised as the centre of our social movement?¹³

Engels then suggested to Cafiero, 'if you can find people in Naples or in some other town who are not connected to this current in Geneva it will be so much the better'.¹⁴

Engels had already used his first letter to Cafiero in Italy for a crude description of his ideological differences with Bakunin. Upon Cafiero's inquiry about Caporusso,¹⁵ the expelled former president of the Neapolitan section, Engels gave the following odd reply at the beginning of July 1871:

Now, as regards Naples and Caporusso, the latter attended one of our Congresses¹⁶ although he never kept a regular correspondence with the Council. To explain this I need to go into certain historical details. – Caporusso and his friends were members of the sect of the Russian

dal 1875 al 1882. Dibattiti e contrasti', *Annali [dell'] Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli* 1 (1958), p. 66). Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 420.

⁸ See Palladino, 'Relazione sulla Sezione Napoletana', p. 63.

⁹ Giuseppe Fanelli (1827–1877) was at 17 already a member of Mazzini's Young Italy (*Giovine Italia*). He took part in the attempted rebellion of 1848 and was in Garibaldi's army (1860 against the kingdom of Sicily and 1866 against Austria). He was a member of several of Bakunin's secret societies since 1865, and of the Italian parliament from 1865 to 1874.

¹⁰ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', Annexe C (Liste des membres), pp. 250–51. For more about the Alliance's members abroad, see below, p. 155.

¹¹ M. Toda, *Errico Malatesta da Mazzini a Bakunin. La sua formazione giovanile nell'ambiente napoletano (1868–1873)* (Naples: Guida editori, 1988), pp. 61–63. Cafiero to Engels, 12 June 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 14. M. Nettlau, *Errico Malatesta. Das Leben eines Anarchisten* (Berlin: Verlag 'Der Syndikalist', 1922), pp. 26–27. A police report dated 10 July 1871 mentions 338 members; see Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 1, p. 553.

¹² He is referring to the aforementioned Italian members of the Geneva Alliance section.

¹³ Cafiero to Engels, 28 June 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 18–19.

¹⁴ Engels to Cafiero, 16 July 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 172.

¹⁵ Cafiero to Engels, 12 June 1871, in Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 14.

¹⁶ Caporusso was the delegate for the Neapolitan central section at the Basel Congress of the International (September 1869); see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 12.

Bakunin. Bakunin has a theory peculiar to himself, which is really a mixture of communism and Proudhonism; the fact that he wants to unite these two theories in one shows that he understands absolutely nothing about political economy. Among other phrases he has borrowed from Proudhon is the one about anarchy being the final state of society; he is nevertheless opposed to all political action by the working classes, on the grounds that it would be a recognition of the political state of things; also all political acts are in his opinion 'authoritarian'.¹⁷

Of course, Bakunin was not 'opposed to all political action by the working classes' but against the formation of parties and the conquest of political power. Bakunin professed to the 'international politics of the proletariat', which

contrary to the bourgeois radicalism that only dreams of reconstituting states anew, i.e. new prisons and new houses of correction and forced labour for the people, tends to the abolition of borders, of political fatherlands, of states, along with the abolition of class differences, of the very existence of different classes, of all legal, economic and social privileges [...].¹⁸

Later on in his letter to Cafiero, Engels made a rare admission that Bakunin's ideas were in tune with principles of the International as expressed in art. 1 of the General Rules (the protection, advancement and complete emancipation of the working classes)¹⁹ and that therefore the differences between them could not weaken the International:

Since the particular theories of Bakunin and his friends come under this rule, there can be no objection to accepting them as members and allowing them to do what they can to propagate their ideas by every appropriate means. We have people of all sorts in our Association – communists, Proudhonists, unionists, commercial[trade]-unionists, cooperators, Bakuninists, etc. [...] Our power lies in the liberality with which the first rule is interpreted, namely that all men who are admitted aim for the complete emancipation of the working classes.²⁰

Astonishingly, it was Engels who helped pass the resolutions of the London Conference a few months later, which – by way of ideological codes – restricted the 'liberality' that he said represented the power of the International. Because of the commitment to the 'political action of the working class', i.e. constituting them in political parties and conquering political power (resolution no. 9), the communists were the only of those tendencies mentioned that continued to have the right to exist in the International. Engels understood the ramifications of ideological constraints all too well: 'The moment the Association were to become a sect it would be finished.'²¹ But the others were always the sect:

Unfortunately the Bakuninists, with the narrowness of mentality common to all sects, were not satisfied with this. In their view the General Council consisted of reactionaries, the programme of the Association was too vague. Atheism and materialism (which Bakunin himself learnt from us Germans) had to become compulsory, the abolition of inheritance and the state, etc., had to be part of our programme.²²

¹⁷ Engels to Cafiero, 1–3 July 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 162 (here erroneously 'followers' instead of 'members of the sect' [*settari*]; corrected according to the original wording in Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 20).

¹⁸ Bakounine, 'Article français', p. 11. See also above, pp. 16 and 477, n. 98.

¹⁹ *Rules of the International*, p. 4.

²⁰ Engels to Cafiero, 1–3 July 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 162–63.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²² *Ibid.*

In reality, Bakunin stood for the opposite: 'But are we to believe that if one had written this simple word, "atheism", on the banner of the International, this association would have been able to unite in its bosom only a few hundred thousand members? Everyone knows otherwise'; the working masses 'would refuse to join the International if one had written on its flag, as official doctrine, this word *atheism*'.²³ Bakunin always advocated pluralism in the programme of the International and opposed any ideology becoming an obligatory part of it – not even his own. He wrote his political friends in Italy in January 1872 that the International's goal – *the emancipation of the proletariat* – meant in his opinion

the radical and ruthless destruction of the present social world, both from the standpoint of economics and from the religious, metaphysical, political, legal and civil standpoints, to replace all existing institutions with an order of things created by the dual action of positive science, on the one hand, and the spontaneous and absolutely free movement of autonomous associations on the other – these ideas are certainly, and we are all deeply convinced, the latest, most accurate, most consistent and highest expression and explanation of the program of the International, *but they are in no way mandatory, neither for members, nor for sections, nor for the federations of the International.*

Be convinced of it, dear friend: the International has no obligatory doctrine whatsoever, as Mazzini's Alleanza Repubblicana has one, for example; each member, in order to join this Alleanza, had to adhere absolutely to the master's religious, metaphysical, political and bourgeois socialist program. With respect to theories as well as to practical organisation, the International leaves the greatest freedom to all of its sections. The Mazzinians, who are authoritarian from head to toe and do not understand how people can think, live, or organise without a single thought and regime imposed from above, have criticised the lack of an official theory as a great crime or at least as a madness unworthy of the International, and they will not understand that with theories imposed from above one shall only create sects stricken with impotence and sterility, like Mazzini's Alleanza Repubblicana, but not a huge Association of the proletariat of all countries, like the International.

Suppose that we should wish to impose our ideas on all sections of the International; to what end would this lead us? To the creation of a sect even smaller and more helpless than Mazzini's. Therefore, the International opens the door wide to the propagation of all ideas: of our own as well as those of our opponents [...].²⁴

Curiously it was not Bakunin but Marx and Engels who wanted to make their ideology an obligatory part of the International's programme: at the Congress of The Hague, they tried to establish their programme – 'constitution of the proletariat into a political party' and the 'conquest of political power has therefore become the great duty of the working class' – in the General Rules of the International even though it was opposed by the majority of the International.²⁵

²³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 177–78. Cafiero also explained to Engels: 'Bakunin and the Jura dissidents have never had it in mind to substitute their ideas for the wider programme of the International; they have always held that the great merit of the International lies in the very breadth of its programme, capable alone of gathering the large mass of the proletariat together with a single final goal: *the economic struggle for its full emancipation*; while instead desiring to leave to the various branches and federations the matter of resolving the various questions of the *means* and the *tactics* to adopt in each country.' (Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 221).

²⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 207–8.

²⁵ See below, pp. 339–42. The historian Petra Weber has pointed out 'that [for a large part of International] accepting the Marxist demand to form centralised parties would have meant a complete break with the existing

In his reply, Cafiero – who was apparently better able to orient himself in Naples – tried to correct what he saw as insinuations and false accusations by Engels. With regard to Caporusso, whom Engels had branded a member of Bakunin's sect, Cafiero wrote:

I can assure you that he has not been, is not, nor ever will be a Bakunist, a Proudhonist or anything else definite. [...] Caporusso was without doubt the sole cause of the break-up of this section [in Naples], which [in the early 1870s] had around 3,000 members, and he has now returned to nothing, from where – you can rest assured – our friends will not be trying to bring him out.²⁶

'With regard to Bakunin', Cafiero continued,

I can assure you that he has several friends here in Naples who share many of his principles and have a similar point of view as him, but to go so far as to say that he has a sect, a party that clashes with the principles of the Gen[eral] Coun[cil], that I can justifiably deny.

[...] the Gen[eral] Coun[cil] should allow sections the fullest freedom and independence in everything that concerns their own particular way of acting with the means that each may have. No member of the International with whom I have spoken in Italy expects those principles of atheism, materialism, the abolition of hereditary rights, common property, and so on, to be written into articles of our society's pact; on the contrary, they would oppose this with all their strength; but on the other hand they are quite tenacious in wanting to lead all the members of their branch into sharing those ideas. [...] In conclusion, I can assure you that without belonging to any particular sect, our men in Italy firmly desire an end to all the current *disorder* of things and the principle of *social order* which must have equality as its basis if it is to be such. It is pointless to tempt them again with abstractions, they demand something more concrete and have already had enough abstractions from bourgeois Gentlemen who have taken their blood in return.²⁷

Engels answered on 28 July 1871: 'We are pleased to hear that there is no sign of the *Bakunist* sect over there [in Naples].'²⁸ As opposed to Engels' first letter where he pretended to stand for pluralism in the internal organisation of the International, Engels allowed his true motives to shine through this time:

You say that our friends in Naples are not content with mere abstraction, that they want something concrete, that they are not satisfied with anything except equality, social order instead of disorder. Good; we are willing to go further. There is not a single man in the General Council who does not support the total abolition of *social classes* and there is not a single document of the General Council which is not in accordance with this aim. We must free ourselves from landowners and capitalists, and for this end promote the development of the associated classes of agricultural and industrial workers and all the means of production, land, tools, machines, raw materials and whatever means exist to support life during the time necessary for production. In

working-class culture, which was characterised by an associative culture of community and resistance. The autonomy that they were trying to gain through the association would have been lost through the centralisation' (P. Weber, *Sozialismus als Kulturbewegung. Frühsozialistische Arbeiterbewegung und das Entstehen zweier feindlicher Brüder Marxismus und Anarchismus* [Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 1989], p. 168). The historian Daisy Eveline Devreese sums it up: 'Apparently, political action, such as the founding of a political party, could only be interpreted as joining the enemy, through their kind of organization, by participating in bodies and organizations ruled by the enemy.' (Devreese, 'An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of Organization', p. 297).

²⁶ Cafiero to Engels, 12 July 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 24.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24–27.

²⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 180.

this way inequality must cease. And to bring this about we need the political supremacy of the proletariat. I think that is concrete enough for our friends in Naples.²⁹

Reaction of the International in Italy (until January 1872)

Like Engels and Cafiero, Bakunin exchanged letters with his Italian friends during this time: according to his diary, he corresponded with Gambuzzi, Giuseppe Fanelli, Achille Bizzoni, Giuseppe Berti-Calura, and Gaspardo Stampa in June and July 1871.³⁰ On 24 July 1871, Bakunin received a copy of the weekly *Roma del Popolo* of 13 July 1871 (apparently along with a letter from Stampa of the same day) in which Mazzini attacked the Paris Commune once again and the International for the first time. In his article 'To the Italian Workers' ('Agli operai italiani'), Mazzini denounced the International by claiming that it wanted to replace the nation with a commune, thereby disowning the fatherland, and had declared the negation of God and property to be its principles.³¹ Within four days, Bakunin wrote his brochure *Response of a Member of the International to Mazzini* (*Réponse d'un international à Mazzini*), which on 16 August 1871 was included as a supplement to the Milanese newspaper *Gazzettino Rosa* edited by Bizzoni.³² The brochure included the following:

Mazzini reproaches us for not believing in God. We reproach him, however, for believing, or rather, we do not even reproach him, we merely regret that he is a believer. We profoundly regret that this intrusion of mystical feelings and ideas into his conscience, his activity, his life, forced him to take sides against us with all the enemies of the emancipation of the masses. [...] at the moment when the terrible coalition of all the filthy reactions now celebrating their triumphant orgy at Versailles, not content with killing and imprisoning *en masse* our brothers and sisters of the Paris Commune, pours upon them all the calumnies that only a boundless turpitude can imagine, Mazzini, the great and pure democrat Mazzini, turns his back on the cause of the proletariat, and remembering only his prophetic and priestly mission, hurls his insults against them as well!³³

Bakunin followed up his brochure with series of articles and long manuscript fragments relating to his conflict with Mazzini. A substantial part of this was published as a book called *The Political Theology of Mazzini and the International* (*La Théologie politique de Mazzini et l'Internationale*) in December 1871.³⁴ Bakunin's defence of the International and the Paris Commune caused a stir in Italy and provoked many renunciations of Mazzini and declarations of support for the International in the press. It also led to the first nationwide increase in membership in the organisation: 'Mazzini is alone', Antonio Riggio, the editor of the newspaper the *Eguaglianza*, wrote London. 'New sections are continually appearing and we have a large number of newspapers'.³⁵ The In-

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

³⁰ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 9–15. None of the letters has survived.

³¹ G. Mazzini, 'Agli operai italiani', *Roma del Popolo*, 13 July 1871, pp. 153–55. For more about Mazzini's reactions to the Paris Commune, see Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 1, pp. 493–519.

³² M. Bakounine, *Risposta d'un Internazionale a Giuseppe Mazzini*, Supplemento al N. 227 del giornale *Il Gazzettino Rosa* (Milano: Presso l'amministrazione del 'Gazzettino Rosa', 1871).

³³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 1, pp. 3, 10.

³⁴ M. Bakounine, *La Théologie politique de Mazzini et l'Internationale. Première partie* (Neuchâtel: Commission de Propagande socialiste, 1871).

³⁵ Riggio to Engels, 16 October 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 50. See also Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 1, pp. 570–71.

ternational first came to life in Italy, an Italian delegate to the congress of the federations of the International on 1 September 1873 remembered, 'when Mazzini insulted the Parisian workers'.³⁶ Because of his conflict with Mazzini, Bakunin gained the respect of many Italians who got in touch with him in the subsequent period through letters or visited him in Locarno.³⁷

After reading Mazzini's appeal to the congress of Italian workers' associations that he had initiated and which was to take place in Rome on 1 November 1871,³⁸ Bakunin started to pen a comprehensive response titled 'To My Friends in Italy' ('A miei amici d'Italia') on 19 October. Here he once again criticised Mazzini and urged his friends to defend the principles of the International at the congress in Rome. He sent his appeal to Italy piece by piece between 22 and 28 October as there was little time until 1 November. When the text arrived in Naples at the end of the month, Gambuzzi, Palladino, Malatesta, Cafiero and company still hadn't decided whether they would go to the congress. But Bakunin's text apparently electrified them: they decided to take part in the congress and *within only one night* translated the first quarter of Bakunin's 100-page appeal and printed it as a 15-page brochure with the title *To the Worker Delegates at the Congress of Rome (Agli Operai delegati al Congresso di Roma)* and signed 'A group of Internationalists'. They were at the congress's opening on 1 November to distribute the brochure to the delegates.³⁹

Cafiero, who went to Rome as a delegate, sent Engels a copy of the brochure. After Engels praised the brochure in his reply as 'an excellent production' that he 'would undersign in all its parts', Cafiero wrote back: 'But it is Bakunin that you should congratulate, not me.'⁴⁰

The resolutions of the London Conference caused further irritation after they became known in Italy in November. Palladino wrote to Engels on 13 November 1871:

I have read some of the decisions taken at the last Conference; and I must tell you frankly that I simply do not accept them; both for the way that the Conference itself was convened, which was certainly not in compliance with our General Rules; and for the paucity of delegates, who arrogated the rights of a general congress; and finally for the very tenor of those decisions, which in my opinion openly contradict the principles of our Association as established by our General Rules.

I really do not know how the General Council could have taken upon itself the responsibility for publishing them, urging them on the various federations of the International as legitimate regulations, legitimately approved by the Association. It seems to me that it has taken upon itself a very grave task. As soon as I have finished reading them, and as soon as I have read the

³⁶ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 37.

³⁷ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 19–31.

³⁸ Mazzini had already proposed a workers' congress in his article of 13 July 1871 where he attacked the International; after it was convened the following month, Mazzini published an appeal to its delegates on 12 October: see G. Mazzini, 'Ai rappresentanti gli Artigiani nel Congresso di Roma', *Roma del Popolo*, 12 October 1871, pp. 43–45.

³⁹ Cafiero to Engels, 29 November to 23 December 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 94. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, pp. 255–58. See also Palladino to Costa, 1 October 1876, in Della Peruta, 'Il socialismo italiano dal 1875 al 1882', p. 67. Reprint of the text distributed to the delegates in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 313–21; an Italian translation of Bakunin's entire text was published posthumously (reprint *ibid.*, pp. 5–49).

⁴⁰ Cafiero to Engels, 29 November to 23 December 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 94.

other *particulars*,⁴¹ I shall perhaps write more about them, providing you with all the appropriate observations I have to make on them.

I regret that, from the very first letter that I send you, I hold a different opinion to that of the General Council; but since there must be no misunderstanding between us, I have wanted to open my mind frankly to you, in the belief that no one can object to free discussion.⁴²

Engels sent Palladino a condescending reply ten days later:

I am sorry you think yourself duty-bound to tell me that you in no way accept the resolutions of the last Conference. Since it is evident from your letter that an organised section of the International no longer exists in Naples,⁴³ I can only assume that the above declaration expresses your individual opinion and not that of the Naples Section, now forcibly dissolved.⁴⁴

Engels nevertheless set about answering Palladino's criticism point by point in the same letter: Engels used the repressions against the International in the various nations to justify holding a secret conference instead of a public one. He claimed the General Council had suggested to the sections that because of the current situation 'the impracticable Congress be temporarily replaced by a practicable Conference [...]. The sections gave their assent, none protested, and the Council is prepared to answer to the future Congress for its actions.'⁴⁵ In reality, not a single section or federation was asked whether they approved of a conference – the Jura section was not even informed that it was being convened. The theory about the *practicable* conference and the *impracticable* congress begs the question: how could a public congress take place in 1872 despite the continued repressions?

Engels continued: 'Furthermore, if any observations on the legality or the method of convening the Conference were to be made, this should have been done before or during the Conference. *None* were made.'⁴⁶ In reality, the authority of the Conference was called into question both before⁴⁷ and during the London Conference.⁴⁸ Even Engels privately referred to the London Conference as 'an illegal mechanism, justified only by the gravity of the situation'.⁴⁹ Engels continued:

You complain of the 'small number of delegates'. For that, the General Council is not to blame. Nonetheless, Belgium, Spain, Holland, England, Germany, Switzerland and Russia were directly represented. As to France, it was represented by practically all the members of the Paris Commune then in London, and I hardly suppose you would dispute the validity of their mandate.⁵⁰

⁴¹ Resolution no. 13 'Special votes of the Conference' is probably meant (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 344).

⁴² Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 61.

⁴³ Because of a decree by the head of the Italian government and interior minister Giovanni Lanza dated 14 August 1871, the prefect of the province of Naples disbanded the Neapolitan section of the International on 20 August, seized its papers, and arrested several members. Proceedings were initiated against eight of them without any charges ever being laid. The section continued its work informally and reconstituted as the Neapolitan Workers' Federation at the beginning of 1872; see Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 1, p. 556; vol 2, pp. 235, 239.

⁴⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 259.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

⁴⁷ The Jura sections had already declared that the Conference had no right to decide on the Swiss conflict in their letter dated 4 September 1871; see above, p. 79.

⁴⁸ See above, pp. 95–98.

⁴⁹ Engels to Liebknecht, 18 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 296.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

In reality, only *Belgium, Spain, and Switzerland* were ‘directly represented’. Holland and Russia *were not represented at all*. The other nations were only indirectly represented by their corresponding secretaries in the General Council. For example, Engels conveniently fails to mention that he represented Italy. The validity of the Communards’ mandates for France cannot be contested *because there were no such mandates*: the Communards taking part in the London Conference were delegates of the General Council.

Palladino’s objections that the Conference had usurped the rights of a congress and adopted resolutions that were in violation of the statutes were countered by Engels by claiming that the resolutions were of a ‘purely administrative nature’ and were no more than an affirmation of previous resolutions made at congresses.⁵¹ In reality, especially resolution no. 9 on the ‘political action of the working class’ – i.e. their constitution into a political party and the conquest of political power – was not covered by the General Rules nor any previous congress resolutions and was thus not of a ‘purely administrative nature’. As has already been explained, it instead represented a controversial ideological code.

The many falsities and distortions in the letter seem to show that Engels was hoping a distant observer like Palladino in Naples would not be able to refute his claims. Just in case Palladino proved otherwise, Engels already let him know:

The founders of the International, those who drafted the Rules and the resolutions of our Association’s Congresses, were very well represented at the Conference, and you will forgive me if, in the first instance, I lend credence to their interpretation of those Rules and to the interpretation given by successive Congresses ever since.⁵²

On 17 November 1871 – together with Palladino’s letter – Cafiero for the first time reported concerns to Engels and informed him about the mood in Naples:

There has been a little agitation here because of that blessed Conference, which I shall not repeat as Palladino already speaks of it in his letter. That resolution no. 9 has been understood as a concession on the 3rd recital⁵³ of our Rules. The idea of a political party, even one opposed to all the other bourgeois parties, caused scandal and there were cries of treason about bourgeois elements having joined the International and made their way as far as the Conference. I love to see how our founding pact is watched over so that it not be violated but rather scrupulously fulfilled. But I always like to keep quarrels and splits at bay. Please give us more information about this matter, though I believe that by this stage other complaints of the same nature will have reached you.⁵⁴

On 28 November 1871, Cafiero added:

Let me return again to the Conference, to tell you that this resolution no. 9 is creating embarrassment of all sorts for us, as it confuses a position that had been quite distinctly defined in the General Rules. [...] In other words, if that resolution remains, either my hands will be tied as far

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ The fourth point of the General Rules’ preamble is meant: ‘the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means’ (*Rules of the International*, p. 3). For more about interpretations of this point, see above, pp. 95–96.

⁵⁴ Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 75–76.

as my propaganda work, etc. is concerned and I shall be unable in any way to do what I do, or I shall have to stand unequivocally alongside those who reject it [...].⁵⁵

As such, even Engels' confidant and correspondent Cafiero was criticising the resolutions of the London Conference *before* the *Sonvillier Circular* even became known in Italy.

Bakunin was only informed about the *Sonvillier Circular* in a letter from Guillaume on 20 November 1871.⁵⁶ Bakunin enthusiastically distributed the circular to acquaintances old and new in Italy after it was printed at the end of November 1871 in Geneva.⁵⁷ He wrote his friend Joukovsky about this on 18 December 1871:

I had to write a lot of letters to all parts of Italy in order to explain the true meaning of our conflict with London to friends and to win over our half and quarter friends. I completed this task as completely and conscientiously as possible by, one might say, flooding all of Italy with your circulars through friends, of course, and not personally. I am really behind the scenes and am doing everything possible that people don't remember me;⁵⁸ through my friends I suggested that all sections [who agreed with the *Sonvillier Circular*] do the following:

(1) Declare their support through a direct reply to the Jura Federation's Committee via Schwitzguébel's address.

(2) Notification of all Italian sections of this and generally all workers' associations in Italy while inviting them to do the same.

(3) Announcements to all more or less sympathetic newspapers.

In this way, I hope – if one helps the other, naturally with the support of friends – a fierce fire will ignite.⁵⁹

Bakunin's diary also bears witness to his campaign of support. A number of letters to Italy, some of them comprehensive, are mentioned and 15 recipients are listed from 9 to 16 December.⁶⁰ A letter Bakunin recorded sending to Lucca (to Celso Ceretti in Mirandola) on 15 December 1871 is the only one from this campaign to survive. It includes the following:

I will directly send you a written circular and a printed circular,⁶¹ the first from the Committee of the Jura Federation and having no other object than to recommend to labour organisations belonging to the International or sympathetic to the International the circular just adopted by the Jura sections and the communalist section of French refugees in Geneva, meeting in congress.

It is a solemn protestation on behalf of freedom, the true principle of the International, against the dogmatic and governmental pretensions of the London General Council, whose entire mission, according to the letter and spirit of our General Rules, is limited to that of a simple *central bureau of statistics and correspondence*.

The International admits neither orthodox dogma, nor official theory, nor central government. It is all based on autonomy, on spontaneous development, freedom of opinion and the free fed-

⁵⁵ Cafiero to Engels, 27/28 November 1871, *ibid.*, p. 91. Engels' replies to this and the previously quoted letter have not survived.

⁵⁶ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, p. 28. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 229. See also Guillaume to Jeanneret, 14 December 1871, in Vuilleumier (ed.), 'La correspondance de Gustave Jeanneret', p. 93.

⁵⁷ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 244.

⁵⁸ See also below, p. 152.

⁵⁹ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 577.

⁶⁰ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 30–31.

⁶¹ The *Sonvillier Circular* ('printed circular') was sent with an accompanying letter from Adhémar Schwitzguébel ('written circular'); several copies of the accompanying letter are archived in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 393/1.

eration of workers' associations – which should reassure those who fear the imposition of any philosophical, political, or socialist opinions whatsoever, or of a foreign government, a direction from outside. –

Since opinions are absolutely free, every section and every individual can profess their own – with the right to propagate them, but not to impose them on anyone – Mazzini himself, with his Good Lord and all his guardian angels, could, if he wished it, become a member of the International, on condition that he would accept, with all its consequences, the supreme law, the only binding law of the International: that of *the practice of international solidarity*.

The unity of the International is not based on uniformity of an official theory or of a dogma that would be declared orthodox, as in the Church of Mazzini. It is based solely on the identity of the poverty, the economic servitude, the immediate needs, instincts and aspirations of the proletariat of all countries, on the one hand, and on the other, on the perfectly free organisation, from the bottom up, not from the top down, through a spontaneous federation, across boundaries of municipalities, regions, states, of that *practice of international solidarity*.

Any worker in any country whatsoever, as long as he fulfils the duty of solidarity with the international workers of all countries, is a brother. – If the workers of another trade, another city, another region, or of a foreign country go on strike, all the members of the International should aid them to the extent of their abilities. If they make a revolution, then all the more so, they owe them, more than their sympathy, their support – and they can support the revolution of their brothers in a foreign country no better than by an indigenous revolution – all genuinely popular revolutions being sisters, as are all the reactions, both the bourgeois and the governmental.

These are the foundations of the International – everything else must be the work of freedom.

The resolutions of the general congresses themselves are not binding on the sections, for which nothing is mandatory other than this solidarity. – But any breach of solidarity is considered a crime.

If the congresses themselves have no right to impose an opinion passed by a majority upon the free conscience of autonomous sections, then such a right could never belong to an *irregularly composed secret conference*, arbitrarily selected and arbitrarily convened by the General Council, last September, in London – [...] The circular of the Sonvillier Congress will tell you the rest.⁶²

While Bakunin was disseminating the *Sonvillier Circular* in Italy, Mazzini continued his attacks against the International. In the first instalment of a three-part series of articles titled 'Documents About the International' ('Documenti sull'Internazionale'), again published in the *Roma del Popolo*, the congress of Italian workers' associations that Mazzini initiated was defended against the International.⁶³ In a footnote at the end of the article, Mazzini included an alleged quote from a speech Bakunin gave at the congress of the League of Peace and Liberty in 1868. Engels – since 1 August 1871 corresponding secretary for Italy in the General Council – leaped at the chance to write an open letter to the *Roma del Popolo* in response to Mazzini's article.⁶⁴ His letter, however, didn't defend the growing International in Italy in their conflict with Mazzini, which would have improved the General Council's reputation, nor did it even go into Mazzini's criticism of the International. Engels' astonishing letter instead stated the following:

⁶² Bakunin to Celso Ceretti, 15 December 1871, pp. 1–3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁶³ *Roma del Popolo*, 16 December 1871, pp. 82–84; 23 November 1871, pp. 91–92; 7 December 1871, pp. 106–7.

⁶⁴ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 587.

In number 38 of *La Roma del Popolo* Citizen Giuseppe Mazzini publishes the first of a series of articles entitled 'Documents about the International'. Mazzini notifies the public:

'I ... have gathered from all the sources I was able to refer to all its resolutions, all the spoken and written declarations of its influential members.'

And these are the documents he intends publishing. [...]

'In a speech at the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Freedom in 1868, Bakunin said:⁶⁵ 'I want the equalisation of individuals and classes: without this an idea of justice is impossible and peace will not be established. The worker must no longer be deceived with lengthy speeches. *He must be told what he ought to want, if he doesn't know himself.* I'm a collectivist, not a communist, and if I demand the abolition of inheritance rights, I do so to arrive at social equality more quickly.'

Whether Citizen Bakunin pronounced these words or not is quite immaterial for us. What is important for the General Council of the International Working Men's Association to establish is:

1) that these words, as Mazzini himself asserts, were spoken at a congress not of the International but of the bourgeois League of Peace and Freedom;

2) that the International congress, which met at Brussels in September 1868, disavowed this same congress of the *League of Peace and Freedom* by a special vote;⁶⁶

3) that when Citizen Bakunin pronounced these words, he was not even a member of the International;⁶⁷

4) that the General Council has always opposed the repeated attempts to substitute for the broad programme of the International Working Men's Association (which has made membership open to Bakunin's followers) Bakunin's narrow and sectarian programme, the adoption of which would automatically entail the exclusion of the vast majority of members of the International;

5) that the International can therefore in no way accept responsibility for the acts and declarations of Citizen Bakunin.⁶⁸

The historian Aldo Romano noted that Engels' curious letter marked 'the end of the General Council's influence in Italy'⁶⁹ – before it ever really got on its feet. The letter, which Engels thought very astute,⁷⁰ was a flop for more than one reason: since Marx and Engels never told anyone in Italy (except for Cafiero) about their conflict with Bakunin, the branding of his ideas as 'narrow and sectarian' must have seemed absurd and disconcerting to even the most ardent

⁶⁵ The alleged quote is for the most part an erroneous rundown of Bakunin's speech at the Berne Congress of the League of Peace and Liberty (September 1868) according to E. E. Fribourg, *L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Origines, Paris, Londres, Genève, Lausanne, Bruxelles, Berne, Bale. Notes et pièces à l'appui* (Paris: Armand Le Chevalier, éditeur, 1871), p. 128. Bakunin denied Fribourg's portrayal; see Bakounine, 'Rapports personnels avec Marx', variante, pp. 3–4.

⁶⁶ See above, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Bakunin was already a member of the International during the Berne Congress of the League (September 1868); see above, p. 442, n. 14.

⁶⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 60–61. A reply from Mazzini appeared together with Engels' letter in *Roma del Popolo*, 21 December 1871, pp. 125–26.

⁶⁹ Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 2, p. 231.

⁷⁰ 'I have been working hard at Italy', Engels wrote on 9 December 1871 to Paul Lafargue, 'and we have now begun to shift the battleground; from private intrigue and correspondence we are moving into the public arena. Mazzini has given us an excellent opportunity, for in an article in his paper he has made the International responsible for Bakunin's words and deeds. So here was a chance to attack Mazzini and disavow Bakunin at one and the same time' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 278). In accordance with his *second strategy* with respect to Marx, Bakunin did not respond to this campaign; see above, p. 70.

follower of the General Council. Why an open letter to Mazzini was used at all for such an elaborate attack on Bakunin – who was only mentioned in a footnote by Mazzini – is thus doubly puzzling. Engels' accusations must have seemed completely outlandish to those who – like Celso Ceretti – had received Bakunin's genuine messages regarding his ideas on a free internal organisation and pluralism within the International (see above). It was not Bakunin's 'narrow and sectarian programme' that was constricting the pluralism of the International but compulsory ideological codes like resolution no. 9 of the London Conference. Engels made this all the more noticeable by using his authority on 30 November 1871 to make the admission of new members in the International in Italy dependant on their recognition of the London Conference resolutions 'as obligatory'.⁷¹ It was *this* decree that would actually 'automatically entail the exclusion of the vast majority of members of the International' in Italy when one considers that the resolutions of the London Conference were overwhelmingly rejected there.

Cafiero felt obliged to inform Engels about the bad impression his open letter to Mazzini had made, even coming to Bakunin's defence:

Bakunin has many personal friends in Italy, having lived in this country, and he corresponds with some of them. While, both because of his past and because of the continual work he does for our cause, he is also loved by many who do not know him personally. Bakunin's various replies to Mazzini which have appeared in the *Gazzettino Rosa* and in pamphlet form, the text that he sent for the congress in Rome, and a work that he is currently completing on the 'Mazzinian theology, and a complete exposition of the Inter[national]',⁷² could only be of the greatest interest to Italian Internationalists. [...] With regard to your declaration in reply to Mazzini, I must confess that if it had depended on me, I would have done everything possible to avoid its publication. I feel it is my duty to set out my opinion of this document clearly to you. I believe that declaration to be an eminently misguided act, [...] I believe that it was a mistake to pick an argument over a note [about Bakunin] lost at the foot of an article in the *Roma del Popolo* in order to fire the first shot of a battle whose outcome could not be calculated. With that document you have broken the eggs in my hand, as they say in Italy. With the help of the last clarifications⁷³ on res[olution no.] 9, I was in quite a strong position and I was all set to write to you saying that I was delighted that you had given me the means with which I could ward off a terrible crisis in Italy, warmly entreating you not to insist on publication of the reply to Mazzini. And now I receive the *Gazzettino Rosa*⁷⁴ with the fatal document there, black on white [...].⁷⁵

Cafiero emphasised his objectivity as follows:

As for me, and I do not know if you have realized it, I am nothing but a materialist rationalist; but my materialism, socialism, revolutionarism, anarchism, and all that the continued development of thought may give us in the future, that may be *rationally* accepted by me, can only be for me eminently subjective means to rational development.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 56.

⁷² For more about these texts, see above, p. 489, n. 32, n. 34, n. 39.

⁷³ Apparently this is in reference to letters from Engels that have not survived.

⁷⁴ Engels' open letter to Mazzini was already printed on 12 December 1871 in the *Gazzettino Rosa* nine days before Mazzini's paper *Roma del Popolo* published it.

⁷⁵ Cafiero to Engels, 29 November to 23 December 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 96–98.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

It must have pained Engels to read Cafiero's corrections and his profession to *revolutionarism* and *anarchism*.

This wasn't the only unpleasant mail that Engels had to deal with. Carlo Terzaghi, editor of the Turinese newspaper the *Proletario Italiano*, informed the General Council on 10 October 1871 that a Workers' Federation (*Federazione Operai*) had been formed two days earlier as a section of International in Turin.⁷⁷ In the aftermath of the conflict between Mazzini and the members of the International in Italy and the ensuing factional division, the majority of the 800–900 members of the *Federazione Operai* sympathised with Mazzini's programme instead of the socialism of the International. As a result Terzaghi was barred from the federation in mid-December 1871. However, he and about 270 followers formed the group Emancipation of the Proletarian (*Emancipazione del Proletario*),⁷⁸ which was set up as a section of the International and sent 20 francs in union dues to the London General Council.⁷⁹ Terzaghi asked Engels whether there was a way that his paper the *Proletario Italiano* could receive financial support. Engels first wrote that he would offer Terzaghi five pounds sterling in exchange for stock in the *Proletario Italiano*.⁸⁰

Bakunin was also in touch with Turin in the second half of December 1871⁸¹ as part of his campaign supporting the *Sonvillier Circular*, and appears to have been successful: according to a report in the *Gazzettino Rosa*, Terzaghi's section Emancipation of the Proletarian decided to send a delegate to the extraordinary congress of the International called for in the *Sonvillier Circular*.⁸² After getting wind of this resolution, Engels rewrote his letter to Terzaghi (which he had not yet sent) on 6 January 1872 and replaced his offer of money with the following irate lines:

We would have voted 150 frs for you in spite of our penury, but the *Gazzettino Rosa* arrived with the news, etc. This changed everything. If you had simply decided to send people to the future Congress, fine. But what you had in mind was a Congress called for in a circular full of lies and false accusations against the General Council! And if you had only waited for the General Council's reply to this circular! The Council could not but see in your resolution the proof that you had taken the side of the accusers, and without having waited for the Council's defence, – and the authorisation to send you the money in question was withdrawn from me.⁸³

Incidentally, the General Council's 'reply' to the criticism made in the *Sonvillier Circular* was only published at the end of May 1872⁸⁴ – *four and a half months* after Engels insisted that Terzaghi wait for the General Council's rebuke. In all probability Engels never had a mandate to offer the money nor was that mandate ever retracted – he was obviously offering his own money, which he now withdrew for political reasons.

⁷⁷ Terzaghi to the General Council, 10 October 1871, *ibid.*, p. 49.

⁷⁸ Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 2, pp. 227, 244. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p. 233.

⁷⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 86 (meeting on 23 January 1872). Sent along with Terzaghi's letter to Engels dated 19 January 1872; see Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 131.

⁸⁰ Terzaghi to Engels, 4 December 1871, *ibid.*, p. 112. Engels to Terzaghi (draft, first version), after 6 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 291–92.

⁸¹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 30–33. None of the letters mentioned there have survived.

⁸² *Gazzettino Rosa*, 28 December 1871, p. 2. See also *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 2.

⁸³ Engels to Terzaghi (draft, second version), 14/15 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 294.

⁸⁴ See Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits'. For more about the date of publication, see Marx to Sorge, 27 May 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 379; Imprimerie coopérative to Engels, 22 June 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3255; *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 220–21 (meeting on 11 June 1872).

To the further chagrin of Engels, a letter arrived from Pisa that followed the lead of the *Sonvillier Circular* and zeroed in on the Basel administrative resolutions:

Considering that, with the decisions made at the Basel Congress, the General Council was – to the detriment of the autonomy of the various sections – given a power which is incompatible with the very temperament of the Association, which excludes any principle of authority whatsoever, [the Pisa section] hereby decides to adhere completely to the Circular released by the Jura sections, and requests that a general congress be convened as soon as possible.⁸⁵

Critical letters of the sort from Italy increasingly annoyed Engels: ‘These damned Italians’, he cursed in a letter dated 16 February 1872,

make more work for me than the entire rest of the International put together makes for the General Council. And it is all the more infuriating as in all probability little will come of it as long as the Italian workers are content to allow a few doctrinaire journalists and lawyers to call the tune on their behalf.⁸⁶

He wrote a testy reply to Pisa two days later:

I am sorry that these Congress resolutions weigh so heavily upon the sense of autonomy of the self-styled Pisa section, which despite being only recently formed and not yet admitted, naturally knows the ‘temperament of the Association’ much better than those who have belonged to it since its inception and who drafted its Rules. [...] As for the demand for an extraordinary Congress, I cannot submit it to the General Council unless your section is regularly admitted.⁸⁷

It is hard to believe that Engels could have aroused sympathy in anyone with such letters. But apparently the new sections in Italy weren’t particularly interested in hearing from the General Council anyway: ‘A great number of sections’, a report from Bologna in mid-January 1872 states, ‘have expressed support for the circular of the Jura Federation which insists on the full and total autonomy of each section or group of the International and fights against the autocratic principle’.⁸⁸ According to Terzaghi’s paper the *Proletario*, more than 20 sections in Italy had by mid-January backed the call in the *Sonvillier Circular* for an extraordinary general congress.⁸⁹ A declaration of support for the *Sonvillier Circular* also came from Sicily. The section in Girgenti (today Agrigento) publicly associated itself with the *Sonvillier Circular* in the 7 January 1872 issue of its organ the *Eguaglianza*:

The sections of the Jura, in Switzerland, gathered for their Federal Congress, have made an appeal to all the federations of the International to prevent – with an early general congress of workers – the London [General] Council, which has been its own boss for the past two years, from running down the slope of authoritarianism and threatening the freedom and autonomy of the sections. The International, based on the most absolute liberty, is the uncompromising enemy of hierarchy, dogma and authority. It wants the civil society of the future to model itself on its current organisation; it is therefore necessary that we firmly insist that no central power should

⁸⁵ Giuseppe Benedetti to the General Council, 7 January 1872, in Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 124–25. See also *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, 16 February 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 321. At the same time, Bakunin was more than satisfied with the developments in Italy: ‘As to Italy: don’t worry, brother. It’s completely on our side.’ (Bakunin to Joukovsky, 14 February 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.)

⁸⁷ Engels to Benedetti (draft), 18 February 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 323.

⁸⁸ Message to the section of propaganda of the Geneva Commune refugees (meeting on 15 January 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 388).

⁸⁹ Quoted according to the *Federación*, 14 January 1872, p. 2. Copies of the *Proletario* (follow-up to the *Proletario Italiano*) from 1872 are considered lost.

arise, that sections be inspired only by the aspirations and general interests of the workers, and that the London General Council return to being simply a central bureau for correspondence and statistics.

By placing themselves at the head of a great revolutionary ferment within the International itself, the Jura sections have done great a service to the workers and to humanity. May they hold firm, may every federation respond to their noble appeal and our enemies will once again understand how unshakable the workers are in the broad, clear and unyielding way they understand freedom.

Having considered the letter and circular by the Jura Federation⁹⁰ for the early convening of a general congress, acclaiming the widest possible principles of freedom and the sentiment that demands respect for the autonomy of the sections, the Girgenti section unanimously declared at its last meeting it would adhere to the circular by the Jura Federation.⁹¹

In the following issue of the *Eguaglianza*, the Sciacca (Sicily) section also backed the Jura Federation's call for a general congress to take place immediately and protested 'against the authoritarianism of the General Council'.⁹² Saverio Friscia was probably behind this as he was a close friend of Bakunin and member of the Geneva section of the Alliance.⁹³ Friscia (1813–1886) was a doctor from Sciacca who had been involved in revolutionary groups since the 1830s and was one of the most influential members of the International in Southern Italy. A week after the protest of the Sciacca section, Friscia sent a letter to the *Campana*, the newly launched organ of the Neapolitan section of the International:

I was greatly pleased to see that in the disputes that have regrettably broken out within the International, the Italian sections have already declared themselves for liberty and for the independence of sections and federations against every tendency towards authoritarianism, which would attack the essence and life of the great Association itself.

The news which has reached us here from Belgium and Spain on the same subject has consoled all true friends of freedom, who are hoping that the new congress can establish the bases of independence and federalism for the sections of the International more solidly.⁹⁴

As the *Campana* had avoided making a statement about the *Sonvillier Circular* until this point, Friscia's letter seems to be an appeal to finally take a position. The paper's hesitation probably mirrored differences within the Neapolitan section where Cafiero continued to act as Engels' confidant and correspondent. In the meanwhile, Cafiero had his doubts and had yet to receive a reply to his critical letter to Engels – who increasingly viewed his correspondence with Italy as a burden. Cafiero's distress led him to include the following message to Engels in the same issue of the *Campana* in which Friscia's letter appeared:

London – I.W.A. – G.C. – F.E.

Waiting for answer

Y.S.C.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ See above, p. 490, n. 61.

⁹¹ *Eguaglianza*, 7 January 1872, p. 3. See also *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 2.

⁹² *Eguaglianza*, 14 January 1872, p. 3.

⁹³ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', Annexe C (Liste des membres), p. 250. For more on Friscia, see G. C. Marino, *Saverio Friscia socialista libertario. Con un'appendice antologica di documenti e testimonianze* (Palermo: Istituto Gramsci Siciliano, 1986).

⁹⁴ *Campana*, 21 January 1872, p. 3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[London – International Workingmen’s Association – General Council –
Friedrich Engels
Waiting for answer
Yours Sincerely Cafiero]

The editors published a reply – possibly written by Cafiero – to Friscia in the next issue of the *Campana*. Its call for patience was analogous to Engels’ plea to give the General Council a chance to reply:

Convinced that our organisation is independent of the General Council and of any one or more sections, simply because it is based on the rights and needs of the entire proletariat, we view the movement started by the Jura Federation with interest, but without concern, and we shall contribute a civil, fraternal word to the peaceful conflict. We have not yet made any decision on the various questions, nor shall we do so now, since it is our intention to examine calmly the manifesto that we are awaiting from the General Council, in the same way as we calmly studied the protest and appeal by the Jura Federation.⁹⁶

Friscia was naturally not satisfied with this. He wrote a bold reply to the editors of the *Campana* on 30 January 1872:

Regardless of the way it was convened and composed, the London Conference undeniably transcended the limits of its mandate and, with its decisions, threatened the autonomy of groups and the independence of federations, which go to make up the essence and greatness of the International.

The Congress of Sonvillier, in protest against the decisions of the Conference which attributed the Grand Council with authority that no one had delegated it and that everyone had not so much the right as the duty to protest against, and by appealing strictly to the spirit and letter of the General Rules, requested the early convening of a general congress of the great Association, which alone would be able to terminate and resolve the dispute that had broken out.

Could the friends of liberty and the International have hesitated at all about joining those who were calling for the quarrel to be judged by free discussion at a free general congress, at which the Grand Council could present its justification for the events of the Conference [...]. Having made these personal and most comradely points, there remains only for me to wait for the *Campana*, which has formally declared itself as far as principles are concerned, to declare itself equally explicitly on this simple, objective matter as I have set it out and as it truly is in itself, without waiting any longer for the manifesto promised by the General Council, which at most could only be the object of discussion and comment by the General Assembly, which can and must collectively judge it.

S. Friscia.⁹⁷

These arguments apparently won over the remaining sceptics among the editors of the *Campana*: the editors made a statement affirming they were ‘against all centralisation and all authority’ and reprinted the *Sonvillier Circular* and the resolution of the Belgian federal congress below Friscia’s letter.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ [C. Cafiero], ‘L’Internazionale’, *ibid.*, 28 January 1872, p. 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 February 1872, p. 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–4. For more about the Belgian congress resolutions of December 1871, see above, pp. 113–14.

Engels' letter to Theodor Cuno in Milan of 24 January 1872

Engels also failed in his attempts in Milan to gain sympathy for the London Conference resolutions and to prevent the printing of the *Sonvillier Circular* – despite receiving unexpected help from Theodor Cuno (1847–1934). Cuno was a member of the SDAP who had worked in Chemnitz and Vienna as a mechanical engineer. He fled to Italy because of police repression and settled in Milan where he found a job. From there he contacted Engels on 1 November 1871 asking him if there were members of the International in Milan.⁹⁹ As Engels could not help him for the lack of contacts,¹⁰⁰ Cuno visited the meeting of the local chapter of Mazzini's workers' association in November where Vincenzo Pezza and Vincenzo Testini, both Bakunin correspondents, were already making propaganda for the International. As in Turin, Mazzini's organisation lost some of its members in Milan on 24 December 1871 because of his attacks on the International and the ensuing factional division. Two weeks later the former members established a section of the International and Pezza and Cuno were among those voted into its committee.¹⁰¹

Bakunin also sent copies of the *Sonvillier Circular* to Milan. Only one of the many letters he wrote to Milan during this time has survived.¹⁰² In this letter dated 23 December 1871, Bakunin reacted to a misleading article in the Milanese newspaper *Gazzettino Rosa*.¹⁰³

By the way, this is a rather remarkable article, with which I would have agreed with pleasure, except for one sentence:

'Letters from the General Council assure us that this declaration by the Spaniards is in perfect harmony with *its views*', as if the *view* of the General Council had a dogmatic or governmental significance, which would necessarily imply the existence of a single and absolute dogma in the International, and the supposition that the General Council would be the official and binding expression of it; two things we absolutely deny, for then the International would no longer be a free federation but a unitary Church, and the General Council a kind of collective Pope, whose speech, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, would become law for the entire Association. The General Council has the right to hold all the opinions it pleases to accept, i.e. to be precise, it has every right to be the platform for Marx's opinions, but obviously, these opinions have no more *official* value than those of any section.¹⁰⁴

[...] There is no doubt that the intelligent cooperation of scientists who are sympathetic and sincerely devoted to the cause of the proletariat can greatly aid in the birth of popular thought. But one condition is that they never impose their own ideas and are content just to offer them.

It is obvious that given the natural diversity of men and especially the enormous difference between the various strata of the proletariat in various countries, relative to the economic and political situation, relative also to their different degrees of education and of their intellectual

⁹⁹ Cuno to Engels, 1 November 1871, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 55–56.

¹⁰⁰ Engels to Cuno, 13 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 245.

¹⁰¹ Cuno to Engels, 27 December 1871 to 11 January 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 119–21. Circolo Operaio di Milano to Engels, 11 January 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 125–26. Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 2, pp. 240–41.

¹⁰² See Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 29–32.

¹⁰³ [C. Cafiero], 'L'Internazionale', *Gazzettino Rosa*, 20 December 1871, pp. 2–3. Cafiero apparently wrote the article, which included a long quote from the Madrid newspaper *Emancipación* (see below, p. 502, n. 96), based on Engels' advice. Cafiero later judged his article 'a thoroughgoing misinterpretation'; see Cafiero to Engels, 12/19 June 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁴ See also Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 152.

and moral development, popular thought can never become uniform, absolutely identical in all countries or even in one country, as Mazzini would have it, at least for Italy. But uniformity is not unity at all; it is the abstraction of it, its *caput mortuum*,¹⁰⁵ its death. Unity is only real and living amid the greatest diversity.¹⁰⁶

Bakunin's arguments in this and other letters apparently hit a nerve among the International's sympathisers in Milan. In a letter to the editors of the *Gazzettino Rosa* dated 27 December 1871, 'A group of members of the International' from Milan made the following statement:

Convinced that the principle of the autonomy of sections and regional and national federations constitutes the true strength of the International; that the development of the great Association especially in Latin [i.e. French-speaking] countries is due to this life-giving principle which is found in the spirit and in the letter of its founding statutes; confident more than ever of the future of the International, which cannot be subjected to the will and authority of a few individuals, but must be the work of collective activity and freedom; [the undersigned] accept the invitation of the Jura Federation for the convening of a general congress with the intention of halting the authoritarian tendencies manifested within the General Council and of returning it within the limits of its attributes.¹⁰⁷

In the context of this statement, the editors of the *Gazzettino Rosa* congratulated all 'Italian sections that have already accepted the invitation of the Jura Federation' and subsequently published an Italian translation of the *Sonvillier Circular*.¹⁰⁸

Cuno, who apparently had no idea what was going on, wrote a cross letter to Engels about this: 'Bakunin, who corresponds with Pezza, sent us an appeal from the Jura Federation a short time ago in which the arbitrary manner etc. etc. of the General Council is egregiously complained about and a congress is being readied. Be so kind as to enlighten me about this.'¹⁰⁹ In the same letter, Cuno also ordered an Italian edition of the General Rules. Engels replied to this request:

I would gladly send you the *Rules* if only I had them. They have been printed in French and English; a German version is due out any day, the Italian translation is lying in my desk ready for printing, but 1. we have no money to have them printed on our own account, and 2. in view of the general rebellion against the Conference and the General Council instigated by Bakunin among the Italians, it is highly questionable whether they would in fact recognise an edition revised by the General Council in accordance with the Conference resolutions.¹¹⁰

In reply to Cuno's question regarding the *Sonvillier Circular*, Engels repeated Marx's aforementioned false accusations against Bakunin regarding the founding of the Alliance, the term 'abstention', the alleged plans to move the General Council from London to Geneva, etc.¹¹¹ Here he added the following contentious piece of criticism:

Bakunin has a singular theory, a potpourri of Proudhonism and communism, the chief point of which is first of all, that he does not regard capital, and hence the class antagonism between capitalists and wage workers which has arisen through the development of society, as the main

¹⁰⁵ *Caput mortuum* (from alchemy): dead head – i.e. something worthless.

¹⁰⁶ Bakunin aux Internationaux de Milan, 23 December 1871, pp. 1, 4–5, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁰⁷ *Gazzettino Rosa*, 29 December 1871, p. 2. See also *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ *Gazzettino Rosa*, 29 December 1871, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰⁹ Cuno to Engels, 27 December 1871 to 11 January 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 120.

¹¹⁰ Engels to Cuno, 24 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 306. The translation mentioned is published in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 372–81.

¹¹¹ See above, pp. 2–6, 15–16, 29–31.

evil to be abolished, but instead the *state*. While the great mass of the Social-Democratic workers hold our view that state power is nothing more than the organisation with which the ruling classes – landowners and capitalists – have provided themselves in order to protect their social privileges, Bakunin maintains that the *state* has created capital, that the capitalist has his capital only *by the grace of the state*. And since the state is the chief evil, the state above all must be abolished; then capital will go to hell of itself.¹¹²

Engels was insinuating just as wildly about the nature of Bakunin's 'theories' as Marx had in his three 'communications' concerning Bakunin in 1870.¹¹³ Engels' characterisation of Bakunin in this letter – him wanting to spare 'capital' so to speak and only go after the state – is of course pure fiction. Bakunin always called for a militant organisation of the workers' struggle against their exploiters and saw the state 'with all its repressive and coercive power, and *in whatever form it may exist*' as a consequence of this exploitation.¹¹⁴ He criticised political revolutions, like the French revolution of 1789, because they ignored economic oppression:

It boldly overturned all political barriers and tyrannies, but it left intact – it even declared sacred and inviolable – the economic foundations of society [...]. It proclaimed the freedom of each and all, or rather it proclaimed the right of each and all to be free. But it had really given the means to achieve this freedom and enjoyment to the proprietors, the capitalists, the rich.¹¹⁵

Invoking a traditional social-revolutionary idea, Bakunin thus called for the abolition of state *and* economic oppression – i.e. for all power structures to be overcome by a 'universal revolution that is social, philosophical, economic and political all at once'¹¹⁶ and by the destruction of class rule 'not only politically but also economically'.¹¹⁷

In his letter to Cuno, Engels on the other hand supported taking over the state in order to take action against capital – *after which the state would die off on its own*: 'Abolish capital, the appropriation of all the means of production by the few, and the state will fall of itself.'¹¹⁸ This fit in with Marx and Engels' earlier argumentation in the *Communist Manifesto*, for example, where they postulated that the *conquest* of political power and the modification of the relations of production would almost automatically result in the *abolition* of political power.¹¹⁹ In 1850 Marx wrote that

¹¹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 306–7.

¹¹³ See above, pp. 38–45, 55–57.

¹¹⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 74. In a letter to the *Liberté* written at the beginning of October 1872, it was Bakunin who criticised Marx for his fixation on the state: 'he who forbids his adversaries to attack political slavery, with the state, as a *present* cause of poverty, he commands his friends and the disciples of the party of socialist democracy in Germany to consider the conquest of power and of political liberties as the absolutely necessary precondition of economic emancipation' (*ibid.*, p. 163).

¹¹⁵ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, pp. 225–26.

¹¹⁶ 'Statuts secrets de l'Alliance: Programme et objet de l'organisation révolutionnaire des Frères internationaux', p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹¹⁷ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 209.

¹¹⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 307.

¹¹⁹ If the proletariat 'makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class' (*ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 506). A year earlier in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx had also testified to the automatism: 'The working class, in the course of its development, will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called' (*ibid.*, p. 212). In the mid-1870s, Marx still held to this thesis in his comments on Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*: the proletariat would take over government and 'use forcible means, that is to say, governmental means'. When it is finally victorious 'its rule too is therefore at an end' and there will be 'no state in the present political sense' (*ibid.*, vol. 24, pp. 517, 519).

for him socialism meant ‘the *class dictatorship* of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the *abolition of class distinctions generally*’.¹²⁰ Engels also later argued that ‘the proletarian class will first have to possess itself of the organised political force of the State and with its aid stamp out the resistance of the Capitalist class and re-organise society’; with the disappearance of the capitalists ‘the necessity for an armed repressive State-force disappears also’.¹²¹ Bakunin later pointed out the irony in this dialectic link between the *conquest* and *disappearance* of the state: ‘They say that this state yoke, this dictatorship, is a necessary transitional device for achieving the total liberation of the people: anarchy, or freedom, is the goal, and the state, or dictatorship, the means. Thus, for the masses to be liberated they must first be enslaved.’¹²²

In a letter to Spain, Bakunin wrote that he had always called for the abolition of all that is called domination, tutelage and power, including of course the so-called revolutionary and provisional kind, which the Jacobins of the International, disciples of Marx or otherwise, recommend to us as a means of transition absolutely necessary, they argue, to consolidate and organise the victory of the proletariat. I have always thought, and I now think more than ever, that this dictatorship, a resurrection of the state in disguise, will never produce any effect other than to paralyse and kill what is the very vitality and power of the popular revolution.¹²³

‘For us,’ Bakunin summarised, ‘the revolution is the unshackling of the popular masses, and dictatorship, on the contrary, is their shackling.’¹²⁴ And in a letter to Italy, Bakunin wrote:

nothing is more opposed to social revolution than dictatorship. [...] Dictatorship is good, it is necessary, for political revolutions that overthrow states in order to create others, and that destroy one domination in order to immediately establish a new one. It is impossible for the social revolution, which wants to end all dominations once and for all, along with all states.¹²⁵

Engels continued in his letter to Cuno:

Now as, according to Bakunin, the International was not formed for political struggle but in order that it might at once replace the old machinery of state when social liquidation occurs, it follows that it must come as near as possible to the Bakuninist ideal of future society. In this society there will above all be no *authority*, for authority = state = evil in the absolute. (How these people propose to operate a factory, run a railway or steer a ship without one will that decides in the last resort, without unified direction, they do not, of course, tell us.)¹²⁶

The same attempt to legitimise power by ways of inherent necessities was later used by Engels in ‘On Authority’:

Let us take by way of example a cotton spinning mill. The cotton must pass through at least six successive operations before it is reduced to the state of thread, and these operations take

¹²⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 10, p. 127. In a letter to Joseph Weydemeyer, Marx claimed to be the first one to have proven that the dictatorship of the proletariat ‘constitutes no more than a transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*’. (Marx to Weydemeyer, 5 March 1852, *ibid.*, vol. 39, p. 65).

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 24, pp. 477–78. In summary, Engels spoke of ‘the views of German scientific socialism on the necessity of political action by the proletariat and of its dictatorship as the transition to the abolition of classes and, with them, of the state’ (*ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 370).

¹²² Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, p. 179.

¹²³ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 10, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹²⁴ ‘Fragment d’écrit (4)’, p. 4, *ibid.* This fragment is one of the drafts of the letters to Lorenzo; the connection of the manuscripts has been overlooked until now.

¹²⁵ Bakunin to Ludovico Nabruzzi, 3 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 203.

¹²⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 307. Cafiero countered in his letter from 12/19 June 1872: ‘He who commands a ship or a machine cannot be said to have authority, but is instead charged with a special commission which falls to him through the division of labour’ (Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 220–21).

place for the most part in different rooms. Furthermore, keeping the machines going requires an engineer to look after the steam engine, mechanics to make the current repairs, and many other labourers whose business it is to transfer the products from one room to another, and so forth. All these workers, men, women and children, are obliged to begin and finish their work at the hours fixed by the authority of the steam.¹²⁷

‘I should very much like to know’, Engels railed in a letter to Paul Lafargue on 30 December 1871, ‘whether the good Bakunin would entrust his portly frame to a railway carriage if that railway were administered on the principle that no one need be at his post unless he chose to submit to the authority of the regulations’.¹²⁸ Friedrich Engels let the manufacturer in him shine through here by revealing how little he thought of workers’ self-management.

Engels refined his arguments in the aforementioned article by saying that reoccurring detailed questions related to production

must be settled at once on pain of seeing all production immediately stopped; whether they are settled by decision of a delegate placed at the head of each branch of labour or, if possible, by a majority vote, the will of the single individual will always have to subordinate itself, which means that questions are settled in an authoritarian way.¹²⁹

According to this line of reasoning an order enforced with brutal force is the same as a decision reached through a discussion among concerned parties because in both cases the individual who disagrees will have to relent. Engels probably left other forms of decision-making processes out his line of reasoning because he presumed that authority meant the ‘imposition of the will of another upon ours’: ‘on the other hand, authority presupposes subordination.’¹³⁰

Bakunin attempted a more nuanced definition by juxtaposing authority and power. And he used decision-making processes within society to illustrate the difference between the two. In reply to the question whether he rejected authority, Bakunin answered:

Far from me such a thought. In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a *savant*. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the *savant* to impose his authority upon me. [...] I receive and I give – such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn. Therefore there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination. [...] In general, we ask nothing better than to see men endowed with great knowledge, great experience, great minds, and, above all, great hearts, exercise over us a natural and legitimate influence, freely accepted, and never imposed in the name of any official authority whatsoever, celestial or terrestrial. We accept all natural authorities and all influences of fact, but none of right; for every authority or every influence of right, officially imposed as such, becoming directly an oppression and a falsehood, would inevitably impose upon us, as I believe I have sufficiently shown, slavery and absurdity.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 423.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 286.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 423. See also Engels to Lafargue, 30 December 1871: ‘Whether it be the will of a majority of voters, of a managing committee or of one man alone, it is invariably a will imposed on dissidents; but without that single, controlling will, no co-operation is possible.’ (*ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 286).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 422.

¹³¹ M. Bakunin, *God and the state* (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), pp. 32–33, 35.

A further feature that distinguishes the two positions becomes clear when the emancipatory content of the respective perspectives is examined. Engels says: 'If man, by dint of his knowledge and inventive genius, has subdued the forces of nature, the latter avenge themselves upon him by subjecting him, in so far as he employs them, to a veritable despotism independent of all social organisation.'¹³² With reference to Dante's vision of hell, Engels would thus write upon the portals of the factories: *Abandon all autonomy, ye who enter here!*

The question is what does Engels actually mean by socialism if according to him the world of work is an untameable inferno *independent of all social organisation* and authority will 'only have changed its form'?¹³³ Engels' socialism apparently does not draw its inspiration from an emancipatory vision but from a technocratic one. This seems to fit in with calls in the *Communist Manifesto* for the 'Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan' and for the 'Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture', etc.¹³⁴ This vision is based on the conviction that *a functional organisation can only have an authoritarian structure* – even though systems of order can obviously be both coercive or voluntary. There can be no life outside of freedom, Bakunin postulates, 'and a socialism that would expel it from its bosom or that would not accept it as its sole creative principle and foundation would lead us directly to slavery and bestiality'.¹³⁵

Most members of the International in Italy sympathised with Bakunin and Engels knew it: 'At any rate the situation in Italy is such', he wrote Cuno, 'that, for the present, the International there is dominated by Bakuninist intrigues'.¹³⁶ Engels explained this to the General Council on 12 March 1872:

Hitherto, all accounts received from the country, both by the correspondence of the Council and the newspapers of the Italian International, had represented the latter as unanimous in upholding the doctrine of complete abstention from political action, and in repelling the Conference resolution upon that subject.¹³⁷

And Cuno, by now Engels' most important supporter in Italy, was arrested on 28 February 1872 and deported to Germany.¹³⁸

¹³² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 423.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 505.

¹³⁵ 'Lettre à La Démocratie', p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. In a notable critique of Engels' article 'On Authority', Hans Magnus Enzensberger wrote: 'The ideology that Engels' deliberations express is technocratic. Technology appears as a meta-social process in them, which seems to exist outside of all human control [...]. However, this authority must be broken, too. Technology is not a metaphysical fate. It fulfils a social role. A socialist society that cannot formulate and implement this role differently than its predecessor will reproduce its relations of production. A technology that resolves its questions in an authoritarian manner, subjects humans to a true despotism and doesn't care about their autonomy is counterrevolutionary; a revolutionary technology would above all have to create different production and distribution conditions, which would first and foremost allow for a free association of the producers.' (H. M. Enzensberger, 'Glosse zu einem alten Text', *Kursbuch*, August 1968, p. 70).

¹³⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 309.

¹³⁷ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 123.

¹³⁸ Cuno to Engels, 17 April 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 179–80. Cuno published the article 'Italienische Polizei-Willkür' (*Volksstaat*, 24 April 1872, p. 1) describing this event.

Bakunin's Italian manuscripts (end of 1871 to beginning of 1872)

Bakunin also used his correspondence with Italy to outline his political vision and to tell the story of his conflict with the General Council from his point of view to his new acquaintances: 'Until September 1871', Bakunin explained in December 1871 in a letter to members of the International in Bologna,

the action of the General Council, from the standpoint of the International as such, was completely null, so null that it did not even fulfil the very obligations that each Congress had imposed on it in turn; for example, the circular it was to publish every month on the general situation of the International,¹³⁹ which it never published. – There were many reasons for this. First, the General Council was still very poor. Those of us who know all too well the finances of the International laughed about it a lot, and we still laugh when we read, in the official and unofficial newspapers of various countries, fables of immense sums sent from London to all corners to foment revolution. – The fact is that the General Council still found itself in exceedingly poor financial condition. It would not have had to be so if all the sections established under the banner of the International in every country had regularly sent it the 10 centimes per member prescribed by the Rules. Up to this point, the majority of the sections haven't done so. [...] Yet it was precisely during this period of its enforced idleness that the International underwent a tremendous expansion in most of these countries – Brussels, Paris, Lyon and, at that time (but not now), Geneva formed so many centres of propaganda, sections of all countries fraternised and federated themselves spontaneously, inspired by the same thought [...]. The very remoteness of the General Council, its real impotence, now as then, to intervene effectively in the affairs of the sections, the regional federations, and the national groups, were still blessings. Unable to interfere in the everyday discussions of the sections, it was all the more respected, and yet it did not prevent the sections from living and developing in complete freedom.¹⁴⁰

Bakunin elaborated on this idea in a letter 'to Rubicone [Ludovico Nabruzzi in Ravenna] and friends' at the end of January 1872:

Until the Basel Congress (September 1869), the direct, effective action of the General Council, properly speaking, was exercised only on these two countries [England and the USA], as well as on Germany. It was absolutely null in Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. And things were none the worse for that. On the contrary, this total freedom, the absence of official intervention, so to speak, spurred the self-development, the spontaneous birth and federation of sections and groups, both regional and national. [...] The enforced idleness of the General Council – doubly forced, both because we did not grant it any right to intervene more fully and because it did not have sufficient financial resources to do so – this inaction, I say, far from astonishing and distressing the Latin sections, was considered rather as quite a regular, legitimate and useful thing. The General Council was, in everyone's conception of it, no more than a kind of flag,

¹³⁹ A reference to the following articles of the Administrative Regulations of the International: '2. As often as its means permit, the General Council shall publish a report embracing everything that may be of interest to the International Working Men's Association, taking cognizance above all of the supply and demand for labour in different localities, Co-operative Associations, and of the condition of the labouring class in every country. 3. This report shall be published in the several languages and sent to all the corresponding offices for sale.' (*Rules of the International*, p. 6).

¹⁴⁰ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 108, 113–14.

reminding all the sections of their international character and as a sort of dot on the i. No one recognised it as a government invested with powers of any kind. [...]

We all thought that the General Council, hovering high above all the national and local disputes and disinterested in all the matters that might divide local sections and national groups, would best represent, above all conflicts, the great principle of international justice. We were all wrong.¹⁴¹

Bakunin had to admit in the same letter exactly where he and his friends had deluded themselves. Before the Basel Congress, Bakunin thought he had the support of the General Council in the conflict between the Geneva section of the Alliance and the Committee of the Romance Federation in Geneva.¹⁴²

Thus I arrived at the Basel Congress in September 1869 with the impression that a regional federation [in Geneva], led by a reactionary and conspiratorial faction, might commit an abuse of power, and I sought a remedy in the authority of the General Council. – The Belgians, on the contrary, who moreover knew better than us the secret and very authoritarian dispositions of certain persons who composed the General Council – particularly those of Marx, the dominant figure of this Council, a very remarkable character, very intelligent, and very well educated, who has rendered great services to the International, but who makes the mistake of wanting to become a dictator and whose friends, whose followers, make the even greater mistake of wanting to make him a sort of Pope of the International – the Belgians had arrived at the Basel Congress with contrary dispositions. They absolutely denied any power to the General Council. Hins, the Belgian delegate, fought fiercely with me. We were charged with reaching an understanding and collaborate on writing a draft of some resolutions. We drafted it, and it was adopted.¹⁴³

Indeed the new resolutions, which came to be known as the Basel administrative resolutions, provided the General Council with considerably more power. Among other things, it stated:

IV. – Every new section or society intending to join the International, is bound immediately to announce its adhesion to the General Council.

V. – The General Council has the right to admit or to refuse the affiliation of any new section or group, subject to appeal to the next Congress.

Nevertheless, wherever there exist Federal Councils or Committees, the General Council is bound to consult them before admitting or rejecting the affiliation of a new section or society within their jurisdiction; without prejudice, however, to its right of provisional decision.

VI. – The General Council has also the right of suspending, till the meeting of next Congress, any section of the International.

Any Federation may refuse to admit or may exclude from its midst societies or sections. It is, however, not empowered to deprive them of their International character, but it may propose their suspension to the General Council.

VII. – In case of differences arising between societies or sections of the same national group, or between groups of different nationalities, the General Council shall have the right of deciding such differences, subject to appeal to the next Congress, whose decision shall be final.¹⁴⁴

‘These are the articles’, Bakunin continued,

¹⁴¹ Bakunin to Rubicone [Nabruzzi] and friends, 23–26 January 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 218–19.

¹⁴² See above, pp. 9–12.

¹⁴³ Bakunin to Rubicone [Nabruzzi] and friends, 23–26 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 214–15.

¹⁴⁴ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 129.

to which I contributed at least three quarters' worth, and I can only repeat again the cry: *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa!*

But I add once again that neither I, who had proposed these items, nor the Basel Congress that voted on them, could have imagined that the General Council, which had been hitherto been so thoroughly moderate and sagacious, would ever conceive the crazy idea of becoming a government. This fear was so far from the minds of everyone, it was so widely understood that the General Council was the servant of the International, not its director and master, its mere bureau, not its government, that for three consecutive years (1867–1869), the congresses that followed the first, those of Lausanne, Brussels, and Basel, had not been afraid to leave the same men, the same staff, on the General Council.¹⁴⁵

It must have been a rude awakening for the Jura sections to be the first group of sections to bear the consequences of the Basel administrative resolutions. After the split of the Romance Federation at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds (April 1870), the General Council was able to decide in the Geneva Federal Committee's favour because of art. 7 of the administrative resolutions.¹⁴⁶ And in autumn 1871, the Geneva Federal Committee stopped the General Council from accepting the new section of the Commune refugees in Geneva based on art. 5.¹⁴⁷

After Marx and Engels acquired even more ideological and administrative power for the General Council at the London Conference, it became apparent that the Basel administrative resolutions were a step in the wrong direction, which required urgent correction. In the discussion surrounding the *Sonvillier Circular*, Engels couldn't help but gloat that the power given to the General Council by Basel administrative resolutions had the support of Bakunin and the Jura delegates Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, etc. at the Basel Congress: 'do you know', Engels asked in a letter to Terzaghi,

who the authors and advocates of these *authoritarian* resolutions were? The delegates of the General Council? Not at all. These authoritarian measures were put forward by the Belgian delegates, and the Schwitzguébels, the Guillaumes, the Bakunins were *their most ardent advocates. That's the truth of the matter.*¹⁴⁸

And on 24 January 1872, Engels wrote triumphantly to Cuno: 'But who were the authors of the Basle resolutions? *The same Mr Bakunin and Co.*!'¹⁴⁹

On the other hand, the Belgian member of the International, Pierre Fluse – like Bakunin – highlighted the historical context of the Basel administrative resolutions and criticised art. 6 in particular, which gave the General Council the right to suspend sections:

This formidable right, which in a moment of blind confidence and social inexperience, if we may say so, we granted to the Council, placed it above the whole of the Federation to which the

¹⁴⁵ Bakunin to Rubicone [Nabruzzi] and friends, 23–26 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 215.

¹⁴⁶ See above, p. 62.

¹⁴⁷ See above, pp. 103–4.

¹⁴⁸ Engels to Terzaghi (draft, second version), 14/15 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 295. See also 'Réponse du Comité fédéral romand', p. 2. In his article 'The Congress of Sonvillier and the International', Engels even combined this attack with the story that Bakunin wanted to move the General Council from London to Geneva (see above, pp. 29–31): 'At that time they wanted to make the General Council as strong as possible. And now – now it is quite a different matter. Now the grapes are sour, and the Council is to be reduced to a simple statistical and correspondence bureau, so that Bakunin's chaste future society should not have to blush.' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 68).

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 308. See also Engels to Paul Lafargue, 30 December 1871, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 285.

excommunicated section belonged. We bitterly regretted our error, but we could entertain the hope that this resolution would never be applied.¹⁵⁰

James Guillaume confirmed this with the words:

we were all inspired with the most comprehensive benevolence towards the men of London; their confirmation as members of the General Council was passed unanimously [...]. And our confidence was so blind that we contributed more than anyone to push through those famous administrative resolutions, which would give the General Council an authority of which it made such an unfortunate use. A profitable lesson, and one that opened our eyes to the true principles of federative organisation.¹⁵¹

While the *Sonvillier Circular* and the Belgian congress resolutions concentrated on the call for the preservation of the federalist internal organisation of the International in their protest against the expanded authority of the General Council, Bakunin further developed the arguments of the General Council's critics by applying his criticism of the state to the International:

The General Council, relying on resolutions passed by an irregular and secret conference [in London], arbitrarily convened and arbitrarily composed, which cannot be recognised as having the character of a general congress, claims to govern and to impose its authority, henceforth official, upon all of the International Working Men's Association, which it has transformed into an enormous state. [...]

As soon as it wants to become a real government, it necessarily becomes a monstrosity, an absolute impossibility. Imagine a kind of universal, collective monarch, imposing its own law, its own thought, its own movement, its own life, upon the proletarians of all countries, who would be reduced to the condition of a machine! But such would be a ridiculous parody of the ambitious dream of the Caesars, of Charles V, of Napoleon, in the form of a universal socialist and republican dictatorship. – It would be a death blow to the spontaneous life of all the other sections – the death of the International.

These doctrinaires and authoritarians, Mazzini as well as Marx, always confuse uniformity with unity – formal, governmental, and dogmatic unity with real, living unity, which can only result from the freest development of all individuals and all communities and from the federative and absolutely free alliance, on the basis of their own interests and their own needs, of the workers' associations within the municipalities and beyond them; of the municipalities within the regions, the regions within the nations, and the nations within the great and fraternal, international human union, organised in federal form by freedom alone, on the basis of the labour of all in solidarity and the most comprehensive economic and social equality.

That is the program, the real programme of the International, which we oppose to the new dictatorial programme of London. [...]

The socialism of the International wants the emancipation of the proletariat, which, among other things, means that it wants to end the domination of tutors, directors, benefactors, instruc-

¹⁵⁰ See below, pp. 360–61.

¹⁵¹ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 82. On 10 June 1872, Guillaume wrote: 'Yes, it is all too true, and we recognise it, it is we who, trusting blindly, gave the General Council the switches with which to scourge us; we had no trouble admitting it; and after our experience of the disastrous results of the *administrative resolutions of the Basel Congress* – which we had voted for with the end of giving the General Council a little more activity and initiative, and which proved to be the tools of despotism – we feel not at all embarrassed to recognise that we were wrong to furnish authoritarianism with arms, and that it is high time to repair our mistake' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 6). Guillaume made a similar statement at the Congress of The Hague; see below, p. 332.

tors, revelators, politicians, doctrinaire intellectuals, patented scholars, prophets, and apostles, or to sum it all up in one word, the exploiters of the masses. It wants to put an end to all *official* directions and influences. The International admits of no government, no organisation from the top down, in her midst.

This is the meaning, I think, of the beautiful and entirely legitimate protest of the Franco-Jura Congress that you have published in your journal.¹⁵² The General Council of London, the majority of which have undoubtedly rendered great services to the International, has forgotten that it is an agent and come to believe itself a government. The Jura Federation, together with the section of the Communards and other socialist-revolutionary French refugees in Geneva, fraternally reminds it of its much more modest mission. This is a point well taken, for from the moment there would be a government, a dictatorship, authority in the International, the purpose of the latter would no longer be the emancipation of everyone but the domination of a few over all, and the International, entirely losing its rationale, would cease to exist.¹⁵³

Apparently in reply to an inquiry by an Italian correspondent about how the conflict with Marx had begun, Bakunin wrote:

Fortunately for the International, there was in London a very dedicated group of men in this great Association, of which, strictly speaking, they were the real founders and initiators: I mean this little German group, including Karl Marx at their head.

These honourable citizens consider me, and treat me wherever and whenever they can, as an enemy. They are quite wrong. I am not their enemy, and I am deeply satisfied, on the contrary, when I can do them justice. For me the opportunity arises often, because they are really remarkable men, worthy of respect, in point both of intelligence and learning, as well as in point of their passionate devotion and unswerving loyalty to the cause of the proletariat – a dedication and loyalty proven by twenty years of service.

Marx is the first socialist scholar of economics of our day. I have met many scholars in my life, but I do not know of one as wise nor as profound as him. Engels, currently the secretary for Italy and Spain, disciple and friend of Marx, is also a very remarkable intelligence. [...] As you see, my dear friend, these are truly great and beautiful services, and it would be great ingratitude on our part if we did not appreciate their importance.

How is it, then, that my friends and I have broken from Marx and his friends?

There are two reasons for this:

The first is that our theories are different, one might even say diametrically opposed.

Marx is an authoritarian and centralist communist. He wants what we want: the complete triumph of economic and social equality, but within the state and through the power of the state, through the dictatorship of a strong and almost despotic provisional government, that is to say, through the negation of freedom. His economic ideal is for the state to become the sole owner of the land and of all capital, cultivating the former via well-paid agricultural associations run by its civil engineers, and financing all other industrial and commercial associations by means of the latter.

We want to achieve the same triumph of economic and social equality through the abolition of the state and of all that is called juridical right, which we believe is the permanent negation

¹⁵² Bakunin's letter was addressed to the editors of the *Gazzettino Rosa*, who published the *Sonvillier Circular* on 29 December 1871; see above, p. 492, n. 108.

¹⁵³ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 151, 105–6, 163–64.

of human right. We want the reconstitution of society and the constitution of human unity, not from the top down, by means of some authority, through the agency of socialist functionaries, engineers, and other official intellectuals, but from the bottom up, by means of the free federation of workers' associations of all kinds, emancipated from the yoke of the state ...

You can see that it would be hard to find two theories more thoroughly opposed than ours, but there is another difference between us, this time entirely personal. We are not at all surprised, appalled, or offended by the fact that Marx and his friends profess a doctrine different from our own. Enemies of all absolutism, in doctrine as well as in practice, we will bow our heads with respect, not before theories that we cannot accept as true, but before the right of everyone to follow and propagate his own. We eagerly read everything Marx publishes, for there are always many excellent things to be learned from them.

Such is not Marx's temper. He is as absolute in theory as he is, whenever possible, in practice. A truly outstanding intellect, he joins two odious faults: he is vain and jealous. He holds Proudhon in horror, only because he takes umbrage at that great name and the legitimate reputation attached to it. There are no calumnies he has not written against him.¹⁵⁴ Marx is egotistical to the point of dementia. He says: *my* ideas, not wanting to understand that ideas belong to no one,¹⁵⁵ and that if one looks hard enough, one will find that precisely the best, the greatest ideas have always been the product of the instinctual labour of everyone; what belongs to the individual is only the expression, the form. Marx will not understand that as soon as an idea, even if expressed by him, has been understood and accepted by others, [it] becomes the property of those others as well as his own.¹⁵⁶

He added in a letter to Nabruzzi:

The work of the social revolution in general, and of the International in particular, is not an individual labour; it is essentially collective. Where we are concerned, individuals – all individuals – are submerged in the community, and we hate pretentious, vain, ambitious, and dominyatory individuals. We are the sworn enemies of all rule, whether collective or individual. We welcome all individuals of good will, provided that this will be sincere, they shall find among us [discretion] to freely deploy all their power to act and all their faculties, but only on one condition: that they do not want to play-act and that they do not dream of domination. We do not want leaders

¹⁵⁴ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), French socialist, co-founder of anarchism. As a reaction to Proudhon's work, *Système des contradictions économiques, ou philosophie de la misère* (Paris: Chez Guillaumin et Cie, 1846), Marx published the polemic paper, *Misère de la Philosophie. Réponse à la Philosophie de la Misère de M. Proudhon* (Paris, Brussels: A. Frank, C. G. Vogler, 1847). In an article on the occasion of Proudhon's death, Marx once again expressed his contempt for his rival (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 20, pp. 26–33).

¹⁵⁵ As a similar passage ('Écrit aux Alliés d'Espagne' [Lettre aux Frères de l'Alliance en Espagne, 12–13 June 1872 (actually: 27 April 1872)], pp. 14–15, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*) shows, Bakunin is referring to Marx's preface to the first volume of *Capital*, which Bakunin translated into Russian from November 1869 to January 1870; see below, pp. 324–26. In the preface to *Capital*, Marx wrote: 'If Ferdinand Lassalle has borrowed almost literally from my writings, and without any acknowledgment, all the general theoretical propositions in his economic works, e.g., those on the historical character of capital, on the connection between the conditions of production and the mode of production, etc., etc. even to the terminology created by me, this may perhaps be due to purposes of propaganda.' (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. II/9, p. 15). In *Statism and Anarchy* (1873), Bakunin refined his criticism as follows: 'Marx's protest, then, printed *after Lassalle's death* in the preface to *Capital*, seems all the more strange. Marx complains bitterly that Lassalle robbed him, that he appropriated his ideas. It is a particularly odd protest coming from a communist, who advocates collective property but does not understand that once an idea has been expressed it ceases to be the property of an individual.' (Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, p. 176).

¹⁵⁶ Bakunin to Rubicone [Nabruzzi] and friends, 23–26 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 216–17.

and we shall never tolerate them. An idea, even emanating from a single individual, if it is good, if it is accepted, becomes collective property, so that our ideas never wear personal labels. This is our custom, our law.

I beg you to apply this in my case. It is especially necessary to do so from an Italian point of view, so that it is not said that a Russian, a barbarian, a Kalmyk dreams of creating a party in your country, which would certainly harm our propaganda tremendously. [...] I whole-heartedly tell you all that I think, all I feel, all I wish and all I am. It is up to you to accept what suits you and reject what does not suit you, – and once an idea is accepted by you, it ceases to be my idea; it is your idea.¹⁵⁷

Just how much Bakunin's Italian correspondence partners internalised his position can be seen in Vincenzo Pezza's postscript to this letter (which Bakunin signed with his pseudonym Sylvio): 'What do you think about *Sylvio's* programme? Tell me frankly what you think. – *Sylvio* is a revolutionary phenomenon, but individual doctrines must not be our dogma.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Bakunin to Nabruzzi, 3 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 203–4.

¹⁵⁸ Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p. 297.

CHAPTER 10. The International in Spain

AFTER YEARS OF ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, REPRESSION, and domestic political crisis, a group of conspirators headed by Admiral Juan Bautista Topete organised a coup in Spain against Queen Isabella II and her government on 18 September 1868. The military revolt (*pronunciamento*) was immediately backed by the people. The revolutionary committees (*juntas*), with the strong support of republicans, repelled the ruling forces from large parts of the country and proclaimed the nation sovereign, overthrowing the Spanish Bourbon dynasty. The workers in Seville and other cities joined the rebellion and farmers took up arms in many places. On 30 September 1868, Isabella II and her court fled to France. The successful political revolution was followed by a provisional government headed by General Francisco Serrano Domínguez, which introduced a series of domestic reforms – freedom of assembly, universal suffrage, etc.

The September revolution in Spain resonated among socialists and republicans in various countries throughout Europe. On 21 October 1868, the Central Committee of the Geneva Sections of the International approved an appeal to the workers of Spain, which had been penned by Charles Perron (1837–1909) and Bakunin, both of whom belonged to the Central Office of the International Alliance formed some days earlier. Alliance member Giuseppe Fanelli even volunteered to travel to Spain to rally the workers at his friend Bakunin's suggestion. Bakunin, who considered the September revolution in Spain unfinished, was hoping for an intensification of the revolutionary process and the emancipation of the Spanish workers from the republicans, who had taken a leading role in the September revolution. Perron and Bakunin's appeal to the workers of Spain included the following:

The freedom attained by an exclusively political revolution is insufficient to lift the people out of the material and moral inferiority in which it has been systematically maintained by the privileged in every era. [...] Brothers, do not allow yourselves to be disarmed or deceived; beware of your priests, your generals, your so-called bourgeois democrats who all have an interest in deceiving you, enslaving you, since the existence of all of these is more or less entirely based on the exploitation of the people's labour. People of the countryside and of the cities, find your power within yourselves, in your union.¹

On his trip to Spain, Fanelli took along the General Rules of the International, the rules of several Swiss workers' associations, the Alliance programme from September/October 1868, various newspapers of the International, and Bakunin's speeches to the League printed in the *Kolokol*.²

¹ Ch. Perron and M. Bakounine, 'L'association internationale des travailleurs de Genève aux ouvriers d'Espagne', in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. For more about Perron and Bakunin's authorship, see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 92.

² Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 42. For the bibliographic data of the speeches that Bakunin made at the second congress of the League of Peace and Liberty, see above, p. 444, n. 42. For more about Francisco Mora's use of an excerpt of Bakunin's second speech for the purpose of propaganda in early 1869, see Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 151–52.

Upon arrival in Madrid on 24 November 1868,³ Fanelli contacted the brothers José and Julio Rubau Donadeu. In Julio Rubau Donadeu's home, Fanelli gave his first speech about the International and social-revolutionary socialism to a group of young militant workers and craftspeople: the true revolution – he explained in keeping with the aforementioned appeal to the workers of Spain – must do away with the republicans just as it has done away with the monarchists.⁴ One of those present later recalled the enthusiastic reception to Fanelli's words:

The strange thing is that he could not speak Spanish, so by speaking French – that we understood through some of those present – or Italian, that we could only understand a little by comparison, some more, some less, we not only identified with his thoughts, but also, thanks to his expressive gesture, all came to feel possessed by a great enthusiasm. [...] Fanelli delivered three or four propaganda sessions, interspersed with private conversations in alleys or in cafes [...].⁵

On 21 December 1868, Fanelli was able to establish a first group in Madrid (*Núcleo provisional*), which adopted the Rules of the International on 24 January 1869 and declared itself the provisional central section for Spain (*Núcleo provisional de la Asociación internacional, central de Trabajadores de España, sección de Madrid*).⁶

In January 1869, Fanelli went to Barcelona where another group of 20 to 25 people formed around him. Barcelona had a decade-old union tradition, which was picking up steam after the September revolution; because of the new freedoms, many new workers' associations formed in October 1868 and a congress was held on 13 December 1868 where 61 workers' associations from across Catalonia took part.⁷ In addition to being the secretary of the Federal Centre for Worker's Societies (*Centro federal de las Sociedades obreras*) established in 1869, the printer Rafael Farga Pellicer (1840–1890) was also the secretary of Fanelli's group, which formed the first section of the International in Barcelona on 2 May 1869.⁸

The situation in Spain became complicated because Fanelli was making propaganda for both the International and the Geneva Alliance. Fanelli was propagating this problematic mix of organisations because the Alliance initially considered itself an *independent* international organisation on the one hand and an *integral part* of the International on the other,⁹ and Fanelli thought that *being a member of the Alliance* made him part of the International. However, this didn't dampen

³ Fanelli to Bakunin, 26 November 1868, excerpts in M. Nettelau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza en España (1868–1873)* ([Buenos Aires:] Editorial La Protesta, 1925), pp. 26–28.

⁴ Elie Reclus to Max Nettelau, personal interview on 18 January 1895, see Nettelau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 426. See also Mora's recollections: F. Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español desde sus primeras manifestaciones hasta nuestros días* (Madrid: Imprenta de I. Calleja, 1902), p. 50.

⁵ Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 41–42. See also T. G. Morago, 'A los individuos que componen el consejo de redacción de la Federación', *Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 3.

⁶ V. M. Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español (Barcelona, 18–26 de junio de 1870)* (Madrid: zyx, 1972), p. 153. Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, pp. 50–51. 'Acta de la constitución del Núcleo provisional de la Asociación internacional, central de Trabajadores de España, sección de Madrid', *Solidaridad*, 15 January 1870, p. 4; 22 January 1870, pp. 1–2.

⁷ R. Farga Pellicer and G. Sentiñón, 'Rapport des délégués du Centre fédéral des sociétés ouvrières de Barcelona', in Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, pp. 42–43. J. Termes, *Anarquismo y sindicalismo en España: La Primera Internacional (1864–1881)* (Esplugues de Llobregat, Barcelona: Ediciones Ariel, 1972), pp. 30–32.

⁸ R. Farga Pellicer and J. L. Pellicer, 'L'Association internationale des Travailleurs, Section de Barcelone, aux sections d'Europe et d'Amérique', *Égalité*, 22 May 1869, pp. 2–3. C. Martí, *Orígenes del anarquismo en Barcelona* (Barcelona: Editorial Teide, 1959), p. 87.

⁹ Bakunin voted against this course of action, but the majority of the Alliance's founding members were in favour; see above, pp. 2–3.

the militant Spaniards' spirits: Nicolás Alonso Marselau, founding member of the Seville Local Federation, explained that he was always convinced that the Alliance 'would synthesise the aims and objectives of the International'.¹⁰

By mid-February 1869, Fanelli had returned to Geneva and gave a report about his trip to the general meeting of the Alliance on 27 February.¹¹ Fanelli's confusion with regards to the organisations caused irritation at the meeting of the Alliance's Committee that followed on 5 March: the meeting's minutes state 'that the report concerning the founding of the Alliance in Spain must be clarified at the next meeting, for we do not really know if cit. Fanelli was speaking of the Alliance or of the International Working Men's Association'.¹² After the Alliance had to cease being an independent international organisation because of the intervention of the London General Council, which accepted only the local Geneva section of the Alliance into the International in July 1869,¹³ the organisation mix made up of the Alliance and International that Fanelli had propagated in Spain became obsolete.

The Geneva Alliance tried to adapt to the new situation through a series of structural changes: by virtue of a change to the rules made in April 1869, the Alliance declared itself a local Geneva section 'without any organisation, bureaus, committees, or congresses other than those of the International Working Men's Association'.¹⁴ All of the members were called upon to sign a membership form (*carte d'adhésion*) in order to join the reconstituted Alliance section; specially printed members' booklets (*livrets*) proved their membership.¹⁵

The members outside Switzerland of the defunct International Alliance were invited to join the Geneva section of the Alliance by signing the *carte d'adhésion*. For this purpose, Albert Richard in Lyon was sent 20 membership forms and booklets in July 1869, for example. In an accompanying letter to Richard, Bakunin stated that he had sent information related to the organisational change in the Alliance to Naples, Sicily, and Spain.¹⁶ In July 1869, Bakunin also sent an Alliance section membership form and booklet to Farga Pellicer in Barcelona and called on other militant members of the International in Barcelona to join the Geneva section of the Alliance. Farga Pellicer replied to Bakunin on 1 August 1869: 'At the next session on Sunday, I will communicate to my friends from the International (the Barcelona section) your letter and your wish that the most

¹⁰ See below, p. 253.

¹¹ Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 29. Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 153.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 154. The question was never addressed again.

¹³ See above, pp. 4, 6.

¹⁴ 'Programme et règlement de la section de l'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste à Genève de l'A.I.T.', p. 10, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁵ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', pp. 159–62.

¹⁶ 'Pursuant to your request, 20 membership forms and booklets as well as a box of cigars have been sent to you [...] We have given the most detailed information and the wisest counsel to Mme La Motte [Naples] as well as the person who owes us 134 francs [Sicily], not to mention, of course, Mr Roux [Spain]' (Bakunin to Albert Richard, 24 July 1869, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*). The code was deciphered according to the list in Richard's papers; see O. Testut, *L'Internationale et le jacobinisme au ban de l'Europe*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Lachaud, éditeur, 1872), vol. 1, p. 143. For more about how the membership forms and booklets were sent to Italy, see Bakunin to Carlo Gambuzzi, 3 August 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, pp. 163–64. Schwitzguébel ordered 20 membership forms and six booklets for the 'group of the valley of Saint-Imier' in a letter dated 29 September 1869 (Andréas/Molnár [eds.], 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 169).

democratic, socialist and radical affiliate with the *Alliance*. As for me, I *fully* accept everything that is stated in the booklet you have sent to me.¹⁷

Bakunin also reminded his political friends in France, Italy, and Spain about the International's upcoming Basel Congress, called on them to become delegates and suggested a meeting on the opening day of the congress. Bakunin wrote Albert Richard: 'I wrote to all our friends everywhere to meet on 6 September'.¹⁸ Farga Pellicer responded on 1 August 1869 to Bakunin's reminder about the Basel Congress:

As general secretary I read it [Bakunin's letter] at once to the Federal Centre of Worker's Societies and when familiar with the content it was agreed to send to Basel one or more (the number is not yet decided) representatives of the worker's societies of Catalonia. [...] Let us distinguish ourselves: I am also the secretary of the Barcelona section of the *International Working Men's Association*, which was founded with the direction and encouragement of your dear friend Fanelli.

Our ongoing political concerns have prevented us from further propagating the Association; but soon we will meet together with fellow members of the International (three or four of whom were presidents of the federal societies in the Federal Centre) to deal with your letter, but I doubt that we will send somebody to Basel, as we are poor and few. We will clarify this as soon as possible. Either way as members of the International we will send to London our dues of 1/10 fr. per member which we have not done yet.¹⁹

A short time later, the delegates for the Basel Congress were chosen: Farga Pellicer for the Federal Centre and the doctor Gaspar Sentiñón Cerdaña for the Barcelona section.²⁰ Sentiñón (1835–1902) was born in Barcelona but lived for several years in Vienna and thus spoke German fluently. He wanted to return to Spain in June 1869 after a long absence and tried to contact the section of the International in Barcelona.²¹ The section's secretary Farga Pellicer appears to have suggested that they meet in Geneva and then travel together to the Basel Congress, for which he would bring along Sentiñón delegate's mandate.

They met in Geneva at the end of August 1869 and got to know Bakunin. Farga Pellicer had already bonded with Bakunin politically and personally through correspondence.²² Bakunin and

¹⁷ Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 47. In addition to Farga Pellicer, his uncle José Luis Pellicer and the doctor Gaspar Sentiñón from Barcelona appear on the membership list of the Alliance in summer 1869; furthermore, Farga Pellicer was sent two blank membership booklets with which to solicit members; see Andrés/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', Annexe C (Liste des membres), pp. 250–51.

¹⁸ Bakunin to Albert Richard, 29 July 1869, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁹ Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 45, 47. A letter from the Barcelona section to the General Council was read at its meeting on 17 August 1869: 'A letter was read from Barcelona stating that the Section was small in number but of good quality, would be represented at Bâle.' ('Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 687, see also p. 691 [meeting on 24 August 1869].)

²⁰ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 12.

²¹ Guillaume stated that Sentiñón studied medicine in Vienna; however, there is no record of his enrolment (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 242. J. V. Martí Boscà, *Medicina y sociedad en la vida y obra de Gaspar Sentiñón Cerdaña (1835–1902)* [Valencia: Universitat de València, Servei de Publicacions, 1997], pp. 24–25). For more about his attempts to contact the Barcelona section from East Prussia, see 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 663 (meeting on 15 June 1869).

²² He concluded the above-quoted letter dated 1 August 1869 as follows: 'Rest assured my friend and brother, I will always work with all my might to obtain in the shortest step social redemption, the complete emancipation of the working classes, and the death of every privilege and monopoly' (Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 47). In an article, apparently written by Farga Pellicer, he describes his first meeting with Bakunin in Geneva: 'M. Bakounine embraced him saying: By embracing you I embrace all of the Catalan workers that you sent,

Sentiñón also became friends²³ based on their agreement on political issues: on 28 August 1869, Sentiñón joined the Alliance via its Committee and was unanimously elected their delegate to the Basel Congress on the following day,²⁴ giving him a second mandate in addition to the one from Barcelona.

As Guillaume's memoirs and Bakunin's correspondence in the following months show,²⁵ Farga Pellicer and Sentiñón were welcomed into Bakunin's inner circle during their stay in Geneva and Basel. Bakunin had been trying to mould his conspiratorial web of relationships – varyingly called *Fraternité internationale*, *Société de la Révolution internationale*, *Société internationale secrète de l'émancipation de l'humanité*, etc. – into an organisation since his stay in Italy from 1864 to 1867.²⁶ He considered a clandestine cooperation necessary because revolutions

are never made either by individuals or even by secret societies. They come about of themselves, produced by the force of things, by the movement of events and facts. They develop for a long time in the depths of the instinctive consciousness of the masses – and then they erupt, often provoked by seemingly trivial causes. All that a well-organised secret society can do is primarily to assist in the birth of a revolution [...].²⁷

Bakunin wrote the following to Celso Ceretti, one of the aforementioned activists from Romagna:

if you succeed, by dint of skilful and energetic struggle, in protecting the existence of your public sections [of the International], I think sooner or later you will come to understand the need to found within them *nuclei* composed of the most reliable, dedicated, intelligent and energetic members, in a word, those of them who are the closest with one another. These *nuclei*, intimately linked with one another and with similar *nuclei* that have organised or will organise themselves in other regions of Italy and abroad, have a dual mission: first, they will form the soul inspiring and invigorating this immense body called the International Working Men's Association in Italy and elsewhere, and then they will address issues *that cannot be dealt with publicly*. They will form the necessary bridge between the propaganda of socialist theories and revolutionary practice. For men as intelligent as you and your friends, I think I have said enough.²⁸

Farga Pellicer and Sentiñón's subsequent actions were in line with that idea. After the Basel Congress, Sentiñón travelled to Liège and German cities 'to gather information on various techni-

and in general all workers of Spain, whom, my dear brother, I have deep hopes for; I have high hopes for worker's Spain.' ('Congreso internacional de obreros en Basilea', *Federación*, 19 September 1869, p. 1).

²³ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 242.

²⁴ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 167.

²⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 220, vol. 2, pp. 270, 353. Bakunin to Albert Richard, 1 December 1869, p. 1; 7 February 1870, p. 5; 10 August 1870, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes* (the code was deciphered according to the list in Richard's papers, see Testut, *L'Internationale et le jacobinisme*, vol. 1, p. 136).

²⁶ There has yet to be a comprehensive study of Bakunin's secret societies. The existing studies, for the most part, concentrate on their first phase in the mid-1860s. See, among others, L. Krusius-Ahrenberg, 'Bakunins 'internationella brödraskap' och aftonbladsradikalismen vid mitten av 1860-talet', *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift för politik, statistik, ekonomi* 56 (1953), 41–74. E. L. Rudnitskaya and V. A. D'yakov, 'Vozniknovenie tainogo internatsionala Bakunina', *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, November–December 1971, pp. 113–24. S. Furlani, 'Bakunin e la sua associazione segreta dei fratelli scandinavi del 1864', *Rivista storica italiana* 89 (1977), 610–51. M. Mervaud, 'La 'Société internationale secrète de l'émancipation de l'humanité' (Bakounine et Sohlman)', in J. Catteau (ed.), *Bakounine. Combats et débats* (Paris: Institut d'études slaves, 1979), pp. 107–15. M. Kun, *Útban az anarchizmus felé. Mihail Bakunyin politikai pályaképe és eszmei fejlődése az 1860-as évek közepén* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982). See also below, pp. 317–19.

²⁷ Bakounine, 'Statuts secrets de l'Alliance', p. 7.

²⁸ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 251–52.

cal questions with regard to an eventual armed uprising by the workers of Catalonia'.²⁹ The first 'nuclei', formed in Spain around April 1870,³⁰ intensified the propaganda for the International in accordance with the aforementioned plan and sought to organise its most active members for this purpose. The founders chose the name Alianza de la Democracia Socialista in honour of Fanelli's mission. A memorandum about the Alianza at the end of 1872 described it as follows: 'We gave it this name for it came from the section [in Geneva] from whose programme and propaganda we had learned to be revolutionaries.'³¹ According to the memorandum, the main reason for forming the Alianza groups was the need for propaganda; after the first sections of the International were established in Madrid and Barcelona

the men – who with more devotion and consciousness had consecrated themselves to the grand cause for the emancipation of the proletariat – understood that given the limited knowledge the Spanish working people have of the social question and given their engrained religious concerns and the political fanaticism that has seized them, it was necessary – so that the propaganda for the revolutionary ideas of the International Working Men's Association would be faster and more efficient and that it would be created and developed pure – that they came to agreement to do it in a way that coordinated these efforts so as to multiply the effect.³²

The Alianza's programme was largely based on that of the Geneva Alliance section while its statutes were new and described the Alianza's goal as being 'propaganda, the development of the principles of its [the International's] programme and the study and practice of all proper means in achieving the direct and immediate emancipation of the working class'.³³ The statutes only allowed for local groups of the Alianza: 'there was not even a regional committee, but all sections communicated and consulted with each other'.³⁴ The members of the Alianza seemed above all interested in working together within the sections of the International. They seemed just as uninterested in institutionalising their work as in contact to Bakunin, who only had a very superficial idea of what they were up to. When Bakunin took part in the Commune uprising in Lyon and called for his Spanish friends to participate, he apparently asked Sentiñón to come to Lyon with a stamped mandate from the Alianza. Sentiñón sent an irate reply: 'I absolutely can't understand what you mean when you speak to me of authorisation. We have no stamp because we are not constituted as an association or section.'³⁵

In summary, the following organisations existed in Spain: a militant member of the International could belong to

- a local section of the International in Spain (*organisation 1*);

²⁹ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 242. Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 3, p. 113. See also Sentiñón to Becker, 8 December 1869, IISG, Becker Papers, D II 1173. *Progrès*, 27 November 1869, p. 1. J. Guillaume, 'Varlin conspirateur', *La Vie Ouvrière*, 5 May 1913, p. 566.

³⁰ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ 'Alianza de la Democracia Socialista', *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 2. Other than this authentic publication, a manuscript exists (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, listy 212–13) which the New Madrid Federation sent the General Council on 23 August 1872 and which included what they thought were the Alianza's statutes. However, there is no evidence that it came from the Alianza except for the rather ambiguous title: 'A.' In reality, it was a draft of the statutes for the Spanish Federation of the International that was proposed at the Valencia Conference.

³⁴ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 5.

³⁵ Sentiñón to Bakunin, 23 September 1870, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, p. 347.

- the Geneva section of the Alliance (*organisation 2*), which was officially accepted into the International in July 1869 by the General Council; individuals from different countries were members, for example Richard, Gambuzzi, etc. The following eight Spaniards were listed as members of the Alliance section in the summer of 1869: Farga Pellicer, Francisco Córdova y Lopez, José Rubau Donadeu, Cenagorta, Tomás Gonzalez Morago, Sentiñón, José Louis Pellicer, Celso Gomis;³⁶
- the Alianza (*organisation 3*), which was established in Barcelona as a secret society;
- Bakunin's inner circle (*organisation 4*).

Each of these networks was partly independent and partly overlapping and had its own cohesion and actors.

The International in Madrid and the founding congress of the Spanish Federation in Barcelona (1869–1870)

The engraver Tomás Gonzalez Morago (?–1885) belonged to the most active members of the International in Madrid; he had already helped Fanelli organise his first meeting in Madrid. Like Farga Pellicer in Barcelona, he received a member's booklet from the reconstituted Geneva Alliance³⁷ and declared his 'enthusiastic membership' by sending them his membership form in a letter dated 24 October 1869 (*organisation 2*).³⁸

As was typical, the programme of the Alliance *provided a basis for Morago's work in the International*: he and his friend took 'the essence of their propaganda from the programme of that very Alliance'.³⁹ Accordingly his propaganda for the International soon took on new dimensions: a manifesto by Morago to the Spanish workers dated 24 December 1869⁴⁰ described the social and political situation of the workers, called for their emancipation from political parties,

³⁶ Andréas/Molnár (eds.), 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', Annexe C (Liste des membres), pp. 249–51. Many of these names only seem to be on the membership list pro forma. On 4 February 1870, the Committee of the Geneva section of the Alliance contacted Morago to ask who in Madrid could actually be considered a member of the Geneva Alliance (*ibid.*, p. 178). 'I have no detailed knowledge of them', Morago answered on 19 February 1870, 'I am assuming that José Rubau y Donadeu and Francisco Córdova y Lopez are members. [...] There are on the other hand some young workers who are *de facto* members although not in a recognised way, and they act upon and practice the principles of the Alianza more and better than those I previously mentioned.' (RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 384/15).

³⁷ Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 39–41. Morago, 'A los individuos', p. 3. Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, p. 126.

³⁸ Morago to the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, 24 October 1869, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 384/11 (contemporary French translation of the Spanish original, whose last known whereabouts was a private archive in Geneva in 1962, see Andréas/Molnár [eds.], 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 217).

³⁹ Morago, 'A los individuos', p. 3.

⁴⁰ 'Manifiesto de los trabajadores internacionales de la sección de Madrid, á los trabajadores de España', *Federación*, 9 January 1870, pp. 1–3. The manifesto was read by Morago at a meeting of 200 members of the International in Madrid on 12 December 1869 and unanimously endorsed; see Morago to the Committee of the section of the Alliance, 18 December 1869, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 384/12. For more about Morago's first draft of the manifesto, see Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 83. That the programme of the Geneva Alliance inspired Morago can be seen, for example, in his call for 'political, economic and social equality of classes and individuals' (p. 1 of the 'Manifiesto'), which is the second point in the Alliance's programme; see above, pp. 4–5.

introduced the International and announced the publication of its organ the newspaper *Solidaridad*, first printed on 15 January 1870. The mass circulation of the manifesto resulted in a boom for the International, which was spreading so quickly in Spain that a general meeting of the Madrid members of the International on 14 February 1870 decided to call a congress to form the Spanish Federation (*Federación Regional Española*) of the International.⁴¹ This initiative by the Madrilenians – who did not consult with the other Spanish sections beforehand – was greeted in principle by the Barcelonans, who nevertheless criticised the suggestion that the congress take place in Madrid.⁴² In a vote to decide the congress city organised by the three newspapers of the International in Spain (*Federación* in Barcelona, *Solidaridad* in Madrid, and *Obrero* in Palma de Mallorca), 15,215 ballots were cast by 153 sections in 26 districts by mid-May 1870 and Barcelona was chosen as the location for the next congress with 10,030 votes.⁴³

At the founding meeting of the Spanish Federation, which was held between 19 and 25 June 1870 in the Teatro del Circo in Barcelona, 90 delegates from more than 150 sections and workers' associations representing 40,000 members took part.⁴⁴ In addition to opening speeches by various delegates, official greetings from the Belgian Federal Council and the Committee of the Romance Federation in Jura were read at the opening meeting.⁴⁵ Farga Pellicer expressed his convictions at the opening with the following words: 'we want justice and therefore we want that empire of capital, the church and the state to cease to exist, in order to build upon their ruins the government of all – anarchy, the free federation of free associations of workers.'⁴⁶

Delegates voiced similar social-revolutionary positions during the debate about the International's position on politics – the fifth item on the congress's agenda. The commission report prepared on this question, which contained a harsh criticism of the state from a social-revolutionary perspective, ended by proposing the following resolution:

Considering:

That the people's aspirations towards their welfare, aspirations based on the conservation of the state, have not only not been realised, but, moreover, the power of the state has been the very cause of their death.

That authority and privilege are the most stable columns supporting this society of slaves, and the reconstitution of this society as a society based on equality and liberty is entrusted to us as our right.

⁴¹ 'A los obreros españoles', *Solidaridad*, 19 February 1870, p. 1. The same issue reported on the sudden jump in membership: 'we had barely 300 members when the Manifesto appeared (the 29 December last) and in all of January and early February 1300 people have joined, so we have a current membership of 1623.' (*ibid.*, p. 3).

⁴² 'We applaud this idea that will see the realisation of a more fruitful Spanish or Iberian worker's movement [...]. We believe, however, that the location of where this congress should be celebrated should be fixed in an agreement after the Federal Centres or worker's associations that exist in the peninsula express their opinion, so that this worker's congress – which must be the result of our cooperation with all of our resources – produces the best results which it must produce' (*Federación*, 27 February 1870, p. 1).

⁴³ 'Comunicaciones relativas á la designación del sitio donde debe celebrarse el próximo congreso obrero regional', *Solidaridad*, 28 May 1870, pp. 3–4.

⁴⁴ Detailed minutes of the congress were printed along with additional material in Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español*. For more about the number of delegates and the sections they represented, see *ibid.*, pp. 12, 100–2. Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 53.

⁴⁵ Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español*, pp. 109–13. Further greetings (from Rouen und Lyon) were read on 21 June 1870 at the fifth meeting of the congress (*ibid.*, pp. 195–97).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

That the organisation of the exploitation of capital, favoured by the government or the political state, is none other than an evergrowing and perennial slavery, and its forced submission to free bourgeois competition is called legal or judicial, and therefore obligatory right.

That all participation of the working class in the governmental politics of the middle class can only produce results that consolidate the existing order which paralyses the revolutionary action of the proletariat.

The congress recommends that all sections of the International Working Men's Association renounce all corporative action that has as its aim social transformation through national political reform, and the congress invites them to employ all of their activity in the constitution of federalist trade organisations – the only way to secure the success of the social revolution.

This federation is the true representation of labour, and should substantiate itself outside of political governments.⁴⁷

The discussion about the commission report gives an impression of the mood among the delegates. Ignacio Tapias, the representative of the weavers from Granollers (near Barcelona), opposed the commission report saying that all of the delegates took part in politics:

if all of us are acting politically and we accept and defend by all lawful means individual rights – our rights and the rights of all –, then why can we not declare that society should support the form of government that guarantees the most protection for the working class? [...] I believe that to gradually win protection from the state, it is necessary, that we workers take part in the municipal elections, the provisional council elections and most of all in parliamentary elections, electing workers or people who are known as protectors of the working class; for it is clear, citizens, that if the capitalists and the privileged make the laws, they will always have them in their favour, but to the extent to which the workers take part in the formation of these laws, they will certainly make them in our favour. That is why I believe that workers should take a more active part in said elections.⁴⁸

Morago replied emphatically: 'we do not need the help of the government to undertake our work, because every government is the result, not more, not less, of the aspirations and factional struggles of the privileged classes'.⁴⁹ José Roca y Galés, a veteran of the cooperative movement, responded to Morago's words:

how many means and vicissitudes must we overcome to arrive at the aspiration of obtaining a democratic state in which the working class has direct participation and could one day be in the majority? Well, I wish that we could act politically so we could eventually arrive at the end our society is proposing; that is to achieve *anarchy*, a *non-governance*; but it is my understanding that it is first necessary that a democratic principle prevails which provides the people with the means to educate themselves, and in this way, when anarchy arrives, it can rule well. Do you know what anarchy means, citizens? It means that the conscience of man alone must be enough to move as he likes; in no way *lawless*, disorderly or socially disruptive, it is the absence of government because government is no longer necessary, and to achieve this requires education and morality, which by themselves are not sufficient; a level of education is necessary, that is so high that we

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 257. The wording was partially based on the Jura sections' resolutions at the second congress of the Romance Federation (April 1870); see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 54.

⁴⁸ Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español*, pp. 262–63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 275.

are fully aware of our duties, at the end of which everyone meets their duties and knows that reciprocal rights rely on mutual self respect for each other [...].⁵⁰

Enrique Borrel Mateo, one of the five delegates from Madrid, then highlighted the anarchist principles of the International:

As for those who come in defence of the state, it surprises me that they recognise the International, because now, knowing already its principles and declaring themselves in compliance with them, they come declaring their acknowledgement of the state as necessary for the emancipation of the worker [...]. Now I wonder if the emancipation of the worker necessarily tends towards the destruction of the current organisation of society? Is it possible that the state, which is based upon this social organisation that brings it to life, can grant the means to arrive at this emancipation? No. Today the state is constituted by the privileged classes, who directly maintain it (while we indirectly maintain it) and directly bring it to life. So is it possible to hope that the state – which guarantees the exploitation by the middle class and the oppression practised today – will grant us social emancipation if we establish ourselves politically? I believe it is vain and useless to think about this. [...]

However, supposing that a political party appeared in the political arena needing to present a motive, a very radical aim, but when it comes to power, which is its true aim, we will see it impose itself upon the masses again. This demonstrates that the working class suffers an incessant illness that will not be cured through politics [...]. I should say to this individual⁵¹ that, effectively, we have all been acting politically, but, at least for my part, I refuse to do it now [...]. So we should not deal with politics but with revolution. We may not deal with politics, because politics cannot carry us towards anything good; and therefore, if we defend the government, whichever form it may take and whether it is in the hands of the privileged classes, the hands of the upper classes, the hands of the middle class, or in the hands of the workers, it will nevertheless, never cease to be a government; what happens now is what will always happen, and although it could pass into the hands of the workers, the same thing will happen, because the government cannot cease to be what it is, that is to say, a weapon directed against freedom which – wielded in certain hands or in others – will always produce victims, and it is this that I wish to avoid. [...]

They believe that we should take part in the municipal elections, the provincial council elections and the parliamentary elections, adding that we should pursue a worker's politics. What candour! You know what will happen in the councils? Either the workers win a minority representation in the national congress, or they win a majority. If the workers achieve a minority representation then their representation is worth nothing, because – as the representatives of the privileged classes are intelligent, and possess all of the privileges of the social sciences and wealth – if they do not buy these representatives of the working class (because they don't sell themselves), they have a grand intelligence and will trick them and it therefore comes to pass that like today we have a tiny labour representation. Very well: if the representation that you manage to win is a majority, it will also be useless, because we already have the means to bring about the triumph of our principles, without having to leave the house, and without, above all, the necessity of going with the government. (*Bravo, Bravo.*)⁵²

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁵¹ He is referring to the aforementioned speaker Tapias.

⁵² Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español*, pp. 281–84.

Ramón Solá, representative of the 'pintadores a la mano' from Barcelona, subsequently objected:

having a government that guarantees what I have just said – the freedom of association, of meeting, of propaganda – is a necessity that we have. Can we propagate the International idea if the government that we have does not allow meetings? [...] it is necessary to support the government that gives us more space for meetings, for making propaganda and for associating. We may bear in mind that we could use our resources to support a government that could give us these guarantees or, if we remain indifferent, we may see how a power that is more reactionary rises and carries us to tyranny – I ask you: what benefits could the workers achieve with this if it depends on all of us to bring about the former and avoid the latter? I believe that we would commit a crime if we would not support a government which agrees with our ideas [...].⁵³

Antonio Illa, delegate for the fine weavers from Manresa and Barcelona, replied:

Do you believe that regardless of what happens the government will protect us? No, you do not think so. Hence, who do we ask for protection? The government has been asked a thousand times, but they have not answered. [...] It seems clear that the deputies of the minority – these men whom we delegate to represent us – should have informed themselves of our misfortunes and asked how to remedy our ailments; but yet, it is clear that they have completely forgotten us, in such a way that we feel the need for protection, and we asked for it and continue to ask for it but we were never ever noticed. In such a situation, when all of our petitions are useless and nobody listens to us – how can we continue to ask?

Delegates, we must try to attend to social propaganda in every sphere of the world – to install associations and form grand bodies and robust worker's centres, and the day will arrive when there will be enough people, or more than enough people, to topple and crush the forces of our enemies; only in this manner, bundled together and forming a strong and resistant column, will we be heard [...].⁵⁴

The debate concluded with a word from Francisco Tomás Oliver⁵⁵ from Palma de Mallorca:

Do those from the International know what they are required to do when they go to the municipality? The duty they have is to destroy the municipality; hence, a member of the International who accepts a political post ceases to be a member. When a member of the International occupies a military post, for example, he ceases to be a member if he does not seek to destroy militarism, because as socialists we do not want a permanent army or any sort of militia. And when he is occupying a post in the parliament, do you believe that he can still be a member of the International? If we declare the complete abolition of all states, do you believe a member of the International could become an instrument of authority? No, but the state must be abolished, and if one cannot abolish it, one cannot nor should not go to the parliament. If we do not accept the current order of things and wish to destroy it, then how is it possible to occupy a post in the house that we wish to destroy?⁵⁶

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 301–2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 309–10.

⁵⁵ For more on him, see M. T. Martínez de Sas, 'Francisco Tomás Oliver. Notas sobre la vida de un internacionalista', in *Profesor Nazario González. Una historia abierta* (Barcelona: Publicacions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 1998), pp. 200–7.

⁵⁶ Arbeloa (ed.), *I congreso obrero español*, p. 318.

After a very lively discussion lasting over four meetings, there was finally a vote on the commission report calling on the International to abstain from parliamentarianism. The report was accepted by a large majority (55 in favour out of 74 votes).⁵⁷

The congress subsequently adopted statutes for the federation and elected Morago, Borrel, Lorenzo and the brothers Angel and Francisco Mora Méndez to the Federal Council (*consejo federal*), which was to have its headquarters in Madrid. All five Federal Council members had taken part in Fanelli's meetings in December 1868 and January 1869. Now, one and a half years later, the Spanish Federation already belonged to the biggest federations in the International.

Slow reaction of the Spanish International to the Sonvillier Circular (November 1871–early 1872)

For a long time, the General Council did not pay very close attention to the Southern European countries. In a letter to Engels in 1869, Marx even scoffed at the need 'to print idiotic addresses to the Spaniards'.⁵⁸ He was probably referring to the appeal to workers in Spain that Perron and Bakunin wrote in the Geneva sections' name. Marx procrastinated when it came to writing his own address to Spain – a task with which *the General Council* had charged him and for which he himself had voted.⁵⁹ In March 1869, the newly formed section in Madrid sent a reply to the Geneva section in which they gave their warm thanks for the appeal and made the following request: 'We also wish to enter into relations with the London centre; in short, we count on your friendship to apprise us of the general duties of members of the Association, and we ask you, if you think it will help, to forward this letter to London.'⁶⁰

The letter from Madrid was discussed at the General Council meeting on 23 March 1869: 'a section had been formed & wished to correspond with London.'⁶¹ But it was apparently left unanswered: 'there was nothing now in Spain upon which the working class could be congratulated', Marx explained a few minutes later at the same meeting, thus washing his hands of his promise to write an address to the Spaniards.⁶² Finally a year later, after receiving news of the founding congress of the Spanish Federation, the General Council decided to send a letter to the Madrid section – in order to remind them of their union dues.⁶³

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

⁵⁸ Marx to Engels, 4 August 1869, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 340.

⁵⁹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 606 (meeting on 3 November 1868). Upon Johannard's enquiry on 15 December 1868 about what happened to the address, Marx promised 'he would get it ready in time' (*ibid.*, p. 615).

⁶⁰ A. Cenagorta Mazon and E. Borel, 'Association internationale des Travailleurs, section de Madrid, à l'Association internationale de Genève', *Égalité*, 20 March 1869, p. 3.

⁶¹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 17, 1867 to August 31, 1869', p. 635.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Hermann Jung 'proposed that Cit. Serrailier write to Madrid to remind the Section that they had not yet conformed to the rules. Cit. Dupont seconded. Carried' ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 761). The greetings from the General Council appeared (apparently only in excerpts) in *Federación*, 17 April 1870, p. 2. Anselmo Lorenzo wrote the following about the General Council's long silence: 'I do not remember how much time passed – undoubtedly a lot – without hearing something from the General Council or receiving answers to our communications; I have very vague memories about this but I swear no piece of advice nor one spark of excited enthusiasm came to us from London by then.' (Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 82–83).

Upon receiving a few copies of the three Spanish newspapers of the International (the *Federación*, the *Solidaridad*, and the *Obrero*) that Marx sent him a month later, Engels immediately took offence to the social-revolutionary sentiments being spread by the Spanish papers: 'You can see', he warned Marx, 'how Bakunin's phraseology shines through'.⁶⁴ Marx also had his suspicions about the Spanish papers: during the General Council meeting on 31 January 1871, he mentioned the first issue of the Palma de Mallorca paper *Revolución Social* 'in which were some very foolish observations'; specifically, it spoke of 'the complete destruction of the political and judicial states to create a world of *free federations of agricultural and industrial worker's sections*'.⁶⁵ The publishers of this paper, Marx cautioned the General Council, 'were reproducing some of the things that had been objected to with the Alliance Democratique'.⁶⁶ So the General Council decided to send their resolutions related to the Alliance to faraway Palma de Mallorca and Engels was named the provisional corresponding secretary to Spain.⁶⁷

Thus, the unpleasant task of replying to a number of unanswered letters fell on Engels. The Spanish Federal Council had also written to the General Council on 30 July 1870 after their election at the Barcelona Congress.⁶⁸ Even though this letter was mentioned at the meeting of the General Council on 9 August,⁶⁹ it was also never answered. On 14 December 1870, the Spanish Federal Council wrote another letter to London⁷⁰ that was also mentioned at a General Council meeting: 'The instruction for a reply', the minutes reveal, 'was postponed till the next meeting'.⁷¹ It was not mentioned again. Two weeks after Engels was elected the corresponding secretary for Spain in the General Council on 13 February 1871, he finally got around to replying to this letter – only to blame the late response on his predecessor Serrailier:

The General Council was very pleased to receive your letter of December 14. Your previous letter dated 30 July also reached us; it was passed to Citizen Serrailier, the Secretary for Spain, with the instruction to forward our answer to you. But soon Citizen Serrailier went to France to fight for the Republic, and then he was confined in Paris. If, therefore, you have not received any answer to your letter of 30 July, which is still in his hands, it is due to these circumstances. Now,

⁶⁴ Engels to Marx, 1 May 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 502.

⁶⁵ 'Trabajadores', *Revolución Social*, 8 January 1871, p. 1. It continued: 'We, the enemies of all political form of government, fight with equal ardour absolute and constitutional monarchy and the republic of the bourgeoisie because they all oppose the social emancipation of the white slave, and are always the personification of authority, exploitation and social injustice. For these reasons, every man that talks of forms of government is a reactionary' (*ibid.*).

⁶⁶ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 875. Another article included the following: 'From the first day the *Revolución Social* will be a loyal and sincere enemy of all those colleagues who do not want "The equality of classes by way of economic equalisation"' ('A la Prensa', *Revolución Social*, 8 January 1871, p. 2). They were possibly referring to the Alliance programme; see above, p. 499, n. 40.

⁶⁷ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 875–76. For more about the General Council's resolutions regarding the Alliance, see above, p. 4.

⁶⁸ Summarised in M. Nettelbladt, *La Première Internationale en Espagne (1868–1888)*, ed. by R. Lamberet (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1969), p. 83. See also C. Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos y Comisión Federal de la Región Española (1870–1874)*, 2 vols. (Barcelona: Publicaciones de la Cátedra de Historia General de España, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Barcelona, 1969), vol. 1, p. 9 (meeting on 27 July 1870).

⁶⁹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 818.

⁷⁰ The Spanish Federal Council to the General Council, 14 December 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 836. See also Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 33 (meeting on 6 December 1870).

⁷¹ 'Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', pp. 868–69 (meeting on 3 January 1871).

the General Council, at its meeting of the 7th inst. has charged the undersigned F. E. to handle correspondence with Spain in the interim and has passed on your last letter to him.⁷²

Just like in Italy, Engels abused the power bestowed on him to propagate the political-parliamentary line that he and Marx advocated:

Everywhere experience has shown that the best means of freeing the workers from this domination by the old parties is to found in each country a proletarian party with a political programme of its own, a political programme that is very clearly distinguished from those of the other parties since it must express the conditions for the emancipation of the working class. The details of this political programme might vary according to the special circumstances in each country; but the fundamental relations between labour and capital being everywhere the same, and the fact of political domination by the propertied classes over the exploited classes existing everywhere, the principles and the goal of the proletarian political programme will be identical, at least in all the western countries. The propertied classes, landed aristocracy and bourgeoisie, hold the working people in thralldom, not only by virtue of their wealth, by the simple exploitation of labour by capital, but also through the coercive power of the state, the army, the bureaucracy, the courts. To refrain from fighting our enemies in the political arena would be to abandon one of the most powerful means of action, and particularly of organisation and propaganda. Universal suffrage gives us an excellent means of action.⁷³

But like in Italy, Engels was unable to garner any sympathy for parliamentarianism; the aforementioned discussion at the congress regarding the International's position on politics had made the social-revolutionary sentiments in Spain clear enough. So the Spanish Federal Council ignored Engels' instructions⁷⁴ and the latter decided to keep his opinion to himself in later letters. Sentiñón went so far as to reassert the Spaniards' social-revolutionary position in his letter from Barcelona to the General Council on 15 April 1871: 'Our attitude related to politics, which you don't or didn't agree with at all, is starting to bear fruits.'⁷⁵

The Valencia Conference of the Spanish Federation, which met from 10 to 18 September 1871, also picked up on the Barcelona Congress resolutions related to the International's position on politics and resolved the following: 'That the real *Federal Democratic Republic* is *common property, anarchy and economic federation*, or in other words *the free worldwide federation of free agricultural and industrial worker's associations*, a formula that is accepted in its entirety.'⁷⁶ Furthermore Anselmo Lorenzo was elected the delegate to the London Conference by the Valencia Conference. He was given a memorandum by the Spanish Federation on the organisation of the International⁷⁷ and a report to the London Conference describing the development of ideas within the Spanish Federation:

In the midst of this great worker's movement, what is admirable and worthy of more attention is the spontaneity of thought, purism of principles and elevation of vision manifested in the

⁷² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 277.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁷⁴ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 45 (meeting on 21 February 1871). The Spanish Federal Council to the General Council, 11 April 1871, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 837.

⁷⁵ Sentiñón to Eccarius, 15 April 1871, *ibid.*, no. 977. See also 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 544 (meeting on 2 May 1871).

⁷⁶ *Resoluciones de la Conferencia*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ 'Proposición que la Conferencia de delegados de las Federaciones locales de la Región española verificada en Valencia el día 10 de septiembre de 1871, presenta a la Conferencia Internacional de Londres', in Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*, pp. 208–10.

working class of this region. In breaking with all kinds of concern whether it be religious, political or social, it renounces resolutely the idea of God, denies the miserable idea of nationality and fatherland, and breaks *en masse* from the bourgeois parties that rely solely upon political revolutions as the solution for all problems. Their [the movement's] plan of action is already mapped out and it consists of the transformation of property and the abolition of the political, judicial and religious state as their ends, collective organisation and war against capital as the means to lead us to the emancipation of the proletariat and the realisation of justice in the world.⁷⁸

Inspired by the militant mood in Spain and armed with their energetic declarations to the London Conference, Lorenzo was very enthusiastic when he left for London. However, his excitement soon turned into disappointment and resignation in light of the conference organisers' overt manoeuvres (see above, pp. 87–100):

I have sad memories of the week I spent in that Conference. The effect it caused upon my mind was disastrous; expecting to see great thinkers, heroic defenders of the worker, enthusiastic harbingers of new ideas and precursors of that society transformed by the revolution in which happiness will be enjoyed and justice practised, I found instead serious quarrels and tremendous animosities amongst those who should be united in a willingness to achieve a same goal. [...] that meeting amounted to nothing more than an extension of the General Council, a sanction of its plans that was strengthened by the vote attributed to the Association through its delegates, and as such parodying parliamentary politics. In all that I could not see anything great, anything salvational or even corresponding harmoniously with the language used in the propaganda. [...]

I had the grand honour of presenting to that Conference the only thing that was genuinely working-class in character and purely emancipatory: the memorandum concerning the organisation formed at the Conference in Valencia.

Before the delegates from industrial nations such as England, Germany and Belgium – nations seasoned, especially the first, in economic struggles – the memorandum caused great effect with its mechanisms of societies and federations of all trades, of similar trades and of single trades, and with their commissions for propaganda and correspondence, their statistics, their congresses, their funds for resistance and all that intellectual life and action. All of which when well practised and carried out can not only bring us to the social revolution in short steps, but are also the organisational means of the future society. All for nought – the General Council and the majority of the delegates were not there for this: the thing that concerned them most was the question of leadership. [...] I returned to Spain possessed by the idea that the ideal was further away than I believed, and that many of its propagandists were its enemies.⁷⁹

Lorenzo seems to mainly have coped with his discontent on his own in Spain; for example, he only told his close friends about what he described as the dishonourable behaviour of the members of the General Council during the London Conference: he had 'been ashamed to see the servile compliance and stupid deference to M. Marx, who governed [the Conference] at his will'. He privately referred to the General Council as 'court of Karl Marx' or '*court of the great pontiff*'.⁸⁰ However, Lorenzo did not make any public statements – which soon resulted in criticism from

⁷⁸ The Valencia Conference to the London Conference, 12 September 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 40.

⁷⁹ Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 183–85.

⁸⁰ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 3. José García Viñas to Francisco Mora, 3 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 2. See also the following note.

various sides.⁸¹ The Spanish Federal Council at first also remained neutral: it left the London Conference uncommented, and confined itself to publishing its resolutions along with those of the Valencia Conference – just as it later sent the *Sonvillier Circular* to all the local federations for publication.⁸²

The London Conference resolutions were initially not seen as important in Spain and criticism of them became relevant a lot later than, for example, in Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland. This state of affairs may have been due to Lorenzo sidestepping the matter or due to threats of state repression⁸³ that engrossed the Spanish members of the International at the time, and had led them to start preparing for illegality. A member of the Geneva Communards' section of propaganda who contacted the members of the International in Barcelona was welcomed warmly but his staunch criticism of the General Council was met with initial incomprehension.⁸⁴ This may have been because the General Council had only been conspicuous in its passivity (and sloppiness when it came to correspondence) until this point and had not yet tried to assert its leadership. Only a few Spanish members of the International even knew about the conflict in Switzerland that led to the split in the Romance Federation. Thus, the criticism by the Geneva section of propaganda – who were the first to take a clear position against the General Council and the London Conference resolutions in their paper the *Révolution Sociale*, for example – initially fell on deaf ears in Barcelona. Just how little the Spaniards knew about the conflict at first can be seen in a letter by Charles Alerini,⁸⁵ a French refugee living in Barcelona, written on 14 November 1871 in the name of the 'members of the International active in Barcelona' to his compatriot André Bastelica, a refugee in Jura. The letter – *written before the wording of the resolutions of the London Conference and the Sonvillier Circular became known* – suggested that the conflict could be resolved as follows:

⁸¹ For example, the *Federación* wrote: 'Anselmo Lorenzo was sent to the London Conference in September of 1871 by the Spanish Federation. There, he saw a lot of what we find regrettable. On his return, his duty would have required – something he cannot not ignore – to give an account of his mandate and then to make a public declaration concerning his observations and reflections on the *court of the grand pontiff*, like he had done in private and with some people of his liking. If he had reasons of state or not for his silence before the people, who had paid for him, or for his conduct, we can tell him that the people need less reasons of that nature and more fidelity and adherence, when they make dispositions with their money' (*Federación*, 14 September 1872, p. 3. See also below, p. 175). In a memorandum to the Federal Congress of Saragossa (April 1872), the Spanish Federal Council stated that it had given Lorenzo the task of writing a memorandum regarding the London Conference. A draft (which is lost) was submitted, but never endorsed; see *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 12.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 11–12, 17. Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, pp. 96–98. Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 75 (meeting on 4 October 1871) and p. 83 (meeting on 17 November 1871). *Resoluciones de la Conferencia*. Lorenzo even seems to have tried to prevent a statement supporting the *Sonvillier Circular* behind the scenes; see Lorenzo to Engels, 4 May 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3219.

⁸³ See Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, p. 97. O. Vergés Mundó, *La I Internacional en las Cortes de 1871* (Barcelona: Publicaciones de la Cátedra de Historia General de España, 1964). Lafargue to Engels, 25/26 January 1872, in F. Engels, P. and L. Lafargue, *Correspondence*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959–(1963)), vol. 3, pp. 415–16.

⁸⁴ What was at first seen as political consensus (see *Révolution sociale*, 23 November 1871, p. 4) was a short time later referred to as merely the private opinion of an editor (*Federación*, 3 December 1871, p. 4).

⁸⁵ The Corsican Alerini (born 1842), an active member of the International in Marseilles, worked together closely with Bakunin during the revolutionary uprising in Lyon and Marseilles. After the uprising in Marseilles was crushed on 23 March 1871, Alerini – who was one of its main actors – fled to Spain before being sentenced to death in absentia. In Barcelona, he became an editor of the *Federación* and joined the Alianza at the end of 1871; see *Cuestión de la Alianza*, pp. 4–5.

We believe that part of our duty is to tell the General Council how much it pains us to see it behave in such an illiberal manner, and so contrary to our principles, expressing the displeasure that its conduct towards you causes us, and to specify our desire to see it reverse the decision taken against you. As for the other part, we urge you to be a little more conciliatory, and we call on you to demonstrate the selflessness that commands the sacrifice of a good in order to ward off a disaster more costly than the good is profitable. In assessing the conduct of both parties, we must judge harshly the untimeliness of your plan to assert your justifiable demands against the G[eneral] C[ouncil]'s arrogation of despotic rights. If an agreement is made impossible by the obstinacy of either side, which we would witness with the most extreme displeasure, we would not think it fitting, in the interest of the cause, to follow you down the path you indicate, and you should rely on neither our support nor our assistance.

The current General Council cannot last beyond next year's Congress and its harmful effect can only be temporary. *At any rate, if we judge it by its influence on our region, it cannot do much harm.* A public split, on the contrary, would deliver a blow to our cause from which it would recover with difficulty, if indeed it could. Therefore, in the current dispute, even if we might otherwise agree with you, we can in no way encourage your separatist tendencies, whatever sympathies we might have for you.

We must also inform you, without it being our general view, of the doubts that have arisen among some of us. They have wondered if, beyond questions of principle, there might be underneath all this, or apart from them, personal issues, issues such as a rivalry between our friend Mikhail and Karl Marx, between members of the erstwhile A[lliance] and the General Council. We dare not assume that this is so, but to restore our shaken confidence, or at least to remove any suspicion, you must consult with us further on this subject (lest this leave the intimate circle of those who have the duty to take counsel from one another in the critical circumstances of our cause) and reassure those that are sceptical.

It has been with pain that we have witnessed attacks against the General Council and Karl Marx in the *Révolution Sociale*.⁸⁶ (As it is said, we should not *wash our dirty laundry in public.*) Just as much, we deplore the slanders Utin directs against Mikhail. In short, we must rise above all personal issues and personalities.

Such is, put a little too bluntly, perhaps, but frankly, honestly, and straightforwardly, all our thought on the subject. Thus we would have you provide us with yours.

Once we know the opinion of our friends on the peninsula who are active in the local councils, [we shall] modify our stance in accord with the general decision, with which we shall comply in every respect, accepting the vote taken once and for all, uniting behind it.

Greetings and solidarity

on behalf of the Barcelona group

Alerini⁸⁷

A few months later, however, Alerini no longer spared any criticism for the General Council.⁸⁸ But as this letter dated 14 November 1871 shows, the Spanish Federation still had not taken a position on the London Conference resolutions at that point in time. After discussing the matter

⁸⁶ See above, p. 105.

⁸⁷ RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, listy 30–31. Excerpts from the letter were printed in the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' by Engels/Lafargue (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 488–89); the letter was incorrectly referred to as a reaction to the *Sonvillier Circular*, which was first printed two weeks later in Geneva.

⁸⁸ For more about Alerini's criticism of the slanderous behaviour of General Council members, see below, p. 209.

with friends in Jura, Bastelica – whom Alerini had addressed his thoughts to – forwarded the letter on 20 November to Joukovsky, a member of the Geneva section of propaganda. Bastelica noted: ‘The Geneva comrades must also confer and an agreement must be made before action is taken.’⁸⁹ Joukovsky then sent the following response to Alerini in Barcelona:

1) You see a ‘mortal danger’ in a split with the General Council. Let us say, first, that we never sought this; secondly, that it is the G[eneral] C[ouncil] that has caused it; and finally, we will tell you that a break with an element contrary to the spirit of the Int[ernational] presents no danger to us. As for the ‘mortal danger’, it lies in an alliance with bourgeois elements, particularly with authoritarians, when they have the right to issue bulls and orders of exclusion on behalf of the Association.

2) You say that you wish to express to the G.C. ‘how much it pains us to see it behave in such an illiberal manner’ toward us, the Jurassians. But with that letter you would give the G.C. a governmental prestige, which we do not want at any price. When a committee of the section performs its duties badly or purports to be a protector, a director – it is replaced by another, we do the same with the Federal Committee; why should the G.C. be an exception to the rule? Is it meant to serve the Association, or was the Association founded in order for some ambitious centralisers to dispense, according to their pleasure, benedictions to Geneva, maledictions to the Jura, benevolence toward Germany, etc.?

The matters of the Jura and of the two sections of propaganda⁹⁰ who had the misfortune to displease the permanent members of the G.C. are merely accidental. It is no more a question of personalities, whoever they may be: as grand as Marx or Bakunin, or as petty as Utin; men come and go, the International remains. You should look at the matter from a more serious perspective, dear friends. The secret conference may, according to resolution no. 15, replace our Congress forever,⁹¹ and it will still be the permanent members of London who will convene it. Then the resolutions remain partly secret for the sections; only the committees shall know them.⁹² Thus, they have a government in London which retains for itself what it pleases, which tells its sub-governments what it wishes to tell, and the rest for the populace, i.e. for the section.

We believe, dear friends, that doubt is no longer possible. We must act, we must put a stop to this as soon as possible, for therein, perhaps, lies the true ‘mortal danger’ for the International. [...] Awaiting your prompt reply, we send you, dear friends, our greetings and solidarity.⁹³

In his reply, Alerini noted that an opinion was still being formed in Spain, and that the matter was already being discussed.⁹⁴ For example, the *Federación* had printed the London Conference resolutions on 26 November 1871 without comment; but the adjacent article ‘Workers, Do Not Go to the Polls’ (‘Trabajadores, no vayamos á las urnas’) supported a position very different from the political-parliamentary line:

⁸⁹ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 585.

⁹⁰ This refers to the section of propaganda of the Geneva Communards and the Section of Socialist Atheists. Both were refused membership in the International by the General Council; see above, p. 486, n. 98.

⁹¹ The resolution no. 15 of the London Conference allowed the General Council ‘to fix, according to events, the day and place of meeting of the next Congress or Conference’. (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 344).

⁹² This refers to a note at the end of the London Conference resolutions as published by the General Council: ‘The resolutions not intended for publicity will be communicated to the Federal Councils or Committees of the various countries by the corresponding secretaries of the General Council.’ (*ibid.*, p. 346).

⁹³ Joukovsky to Alerini, no date, in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 586.

⁹⁴ Alerini to Joukovsky, 2 January 1872, in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 588.

Only now, that we know the game that is parliamentarianism are we to know how inefficient are all the rights that arise from the institutions, [institutions] that we try to destroy in order to win the freedom that we lost the moment the first slave was born [...] Workers: do not go to the polls, because justice will never come from them, it is necessary to seek it by other means, the means which we undertake, to arrive at the freedom that we long for! Do you believe that they would concede elections if it represented the slightest risk to bourgeois interests? No, workers; and the proof is that they have taken from us the right to associate, because it is the only thing that can instil some respect in them, because it is the only thing that runs the risk of capsising their privileges.⁹⁵

The London Conference resolutions and the article ‘Workers, Do Not Go to the Polls’ were reprinted in the *Emancipación*, the organ of the International in Madrid established in June 1871 and the follow-up to the *Solidaridad*. An article titled ‘The Politics of the International’ (‘La Política de la Internacional’), which proceeded the resolutions, tried to explain away the contradictions between the social-revolutionary position prevalent in Spain and the London Conference resolutions:

Some people believed to have discovered contradictions between the attitude that we have been recommending to our comrades, the workers, regarding the political question and the resolutions of the London Conference on the same question. We should focus on this point, because it is of supreme importance for the future of the dispossessed classes and because clarification of this point is necessary in order to stop our eternal exploiters from using us as instruments in their political plots and as steps upon which they can climb to the heights of power.

We have never said that the working class, nor the International Association, which represents its highest inspiration, should do without any political idea; on the contrary, what we have maintained and what we continue to maintain is that the working class should have its own politics, a politics that is in harmony with its class interests and responds to its legitimate aspirations; a politics that can never in any way be that of the bourgeois parties, as they are all interested in the continuation of the existent institutions. [...] Our mission is greater, more revolutionary. It consists of the ‘organisation of universal suffrage’ by the means of the bonding and federation of the worker’s societies, without whose organisation suffrage would always be a bloody joke for us.⁹⁶

The author of this article, José Mesa y Leompart,⁹⁷ only opposed parliamentarianism as long as only bourgeois parties took part in elections and thus totally agreed with the resolutions of the London Conference. It wouldn’t take long for opposing viewpoints to be heard.

Paul Lafargue goes to Spain

Paul Lafargue’s activities in Spain provoked fierce disputes within the Spanish International in the coming months. Lafargue had already acted as his father-in-law Marx’s go-between in Paris

⁹⁵ *Federación*, 26 November 1871, p. 2. The organ of the Belgian Federation of the International also referred to the reprint of this article in the Madrilerian newspaper *Emancipación*, see above, p. 112.

⁹⁶ [J. Mesa], ‘La Política de la Internacional’, *Emancipación*, 27 November 1871, p. 1; Reprinted in *Federación*, 3 December 1871, p. 2; see also below, n. 114. Cafiero used this article for a piece in the *Gazzettino Rosa* as Engels suggested; see above, p. 492, n. 103.

⁹⁷ For more about his authorship, see J. J. Morato, *Líderes del movimiento obrero español (1868–1921)*, ed. by V. M. Arbeloa (Madrid: Editorial Cuadernos para el diálogo, 1972), pp. 46, 109.

in 1870.⁹⁸ Following the repression of the International's members in France, he fled over its southern border on 4 August 1871.⁹⁹ In Spain, he represented the interests of the General Council – 'it is most fortunate that you should be there at the moment', Engels wrote enthusiastically.¹⁰⁰

Lafargue immediately became aware of the social-revolutionary sentiments in Spain and the aftereffect of Fanelli's propaganda for an organisational mix between the Alliance and the International. During his first stay in Madrid, Lafargue seems to have met Tomás Gonzalez Morago and Celso Gomis – members of the Alliance's Geneva section (*organisation 1*) – and others. His displeasure is evident in his report of those meetings: 'Spain is where you can appraise Bakunin's influence [...]. I have met several people here who came from Switzerland and were affiliated to the *Alliance* and who were convinced that it was Bakunin who had introduced communism into the Int[ernational] under the name of collectivism.'¹⁰¹ News like this was bound to increase Marx and Engels' nervousness in the tense months following the London Conference. Their contemptuous letters to the Belgian Federation of the International had already raised tempers there.¹⁰² Now, sabre-rattling in Spain was about to jeopardise further sympathies for the General Council. In reply to Lafargue's offer of help – 'I could also act on the Federal Council of Madrid, but I need instructions'¹⁰³ – Marx wrote in a letter of 24/25 November 1871 that the position of the Federal Council

is highly suspect. Since Lorenzo's departure [from the London Conference] Engels has received no reply whatever to his many letters.¹⁰⁴ They are imbued with the doctrine of abstention in politics. Engels has written and told them today that, if they persist in their silence, steps will be taken. In any case Toole [i.e. Paul Lafargue] must act.¹⁰⁵

In a postscript to Marx's message, Engels – since 2 October 1871 the official corresponding secretary for Spain in the General Council¹⁰⁶ – drew up a master plan for Spain for Lafargue, which assumed the Spanish International would split, called on Lafargue to form sections and promised that the General Council would give him full power 'for the whole of Spain':

My ultimatum to the Federal Council in Madrid goes off today, *by registered mail*; I tell them that, if they persist in their silence, we shall have to take such steps as the interests of the International dictate. If they fail to reply, or do so in an unsatisfactory manner, we shall at once appoint you plenipotentiary for the whole of Spain. In the meantime, our Rules confer on you, as on any other member, the right to form new sections. It is important that, in the event of a split, we should continue to have a pied-à-terre in Spain, even if the whole of the present organisation were to go over, lock, stock and barrel, to the Bakuninist camp; and you will be the only person we shall then be able to count upon.¹⁰⁷

Engels wrote the following threatening letter to the Spanish Federal Council on the same day:

⁹⁸ See above, pp. 55–57.

⁹⁹ See Derfler, *Paul Lafargue*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁰ Engels to Paul Lafargue, 30 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 284.

¹⁰¹ Paul Lafargue to Engels, 2 October 1871, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 27.

¹⁰² See above, pp. 110–11.

¹⁰³ Paul Lafargue to Marx, 9 November 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 276/6.

¹⁰⁴ According to Engels, he had sent all of two letters; see below, p. 173.

¹⁰⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 270.

¹⁰⁶ 'Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871', p. 616.

¹⁰⁷ Engels to Paul Lafargue, 25 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 271.

Since the return of Citizen Lorenzo from the last conference we have not had any news from you. I have written two letters to you;¹⁰⁸ the last one, dated the eighth of this November, which was registered, asked you to write to us immediately to explain this long silence. We have not yet received any answer but we have heard that a small minority of members of the International, seeking to sow divisions in the ranks of the association, is conspiring against the resolutions of the [London] Conference and the General Council, spreading calumnies of all sorts. We have no doubt that your mysterious silence is caused by your having received letters of this type. If this is the case, we want you to inform us of the accusations and insinuations expressed against us, as is your duty, so that we can refute them.

In any case, you cannot prolong this silence which is contrary to our General Rules which instruct you to send us regular reports.¹⁰⁹ We ask for an immediate reply to this letter; if you do not reply to it, we shall have to conclude that your silence is deliberate and that you believe the calumnies which we have mentioned, without having the courage to inform us of them. And we shall have to proceed in that case in the manner which the interest of the International will dictate.¹¹⁰

In a letter laced with irony, Mora, secretary of the Spanish Federal Council, fearlessly replied:

Since when do you believe it justified to suppose that our silence is complicit with plans directed against the Association? Our silence arises only and exclusively from the little free time afforded to us by our many activities. Put simply, you should have understood that the abnormal situation that the Association faces in our region has left us with much to do.

I do not know what defamatory communications you refer to and as for your last paragraph, which is a veiled insult and a threat that I will ignore, I believe that you have written it in a moment of good humour perhaps whilst celebrating the appearance of the sun after three consecutive days of that fog you are having in London.

Friends, be more fair with us [...].¹¹¹

Engels was just as exuberant upon hearing that the London Conference resolution had been printed alongside Mesa's aforementioned article 'The Politics of the International' as he had been hostile toward the Spaniards for their supposed insubordination. Engels conveniently ignored the article 'Workers, Do Not Go to the Polls' which followed the conference resolutions. 'There must have been internal struggles within the Spanish International', Engels fantasised in a letter to Lafargue, 'struggles that were finally decided in our favour. [...] the decision of the Spaniards to come over to our side will decide the matter – upon the whole – all along the line.'¹¹² Naturally Mesa's article was only that and did not represent a 'decision of the Spaniards'; Engels didn't let that deter him from making a big deal about the article and declared his 'victory' to all who would listen. 'In *Spain* we are in the clear', Engels crowed prematurely on 15 December 1871;

¹⁰⁸ These letters have not survived. The Spanish Federal Council minutes only mention that the London Conference resolutions were received; see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 83 (meeting on 17 November 1871).

¹⁰⁹ According to the Administrative Regulations of the International, 'Central Committees representing groups of branches', i.e. Federal Councils and Federal Committees, 'shall send their reports at least once a month, oftener if need be' to the General Council (*Rules of the International*, p. 7).

¹¹⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 53.

¹¹¹ Mora to Engels, 29 November 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 200/7.

¹¹² Engels to Lafargue, 9 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 277–78.

‘we have gained a resounding victory. The relevant Conference resolution [resolution no. 9] has been *recognised*.’¹¹³ And in a letter to Italy, he bragged:

With regard to the Conference’s resolution on politics, I am pleased to announce that the Spanish federation has fully accepted it [!], as can be seen from the latest issues of the *Emancipacion* of Madrid and [the reprint of Mesa’s article in] the *Federacion* of Barcelona (December 3). The transformation of the *International* in Spain into a distinct and independent political party is now secure.¹¹⁴

Engels’ remarks at the General Council meeting on 19 December 1871 were just as exaggerated.¹¹⁵ But the published version of the minutes of that General Council meeting was the most preposterous of all:

A Congress of delegates from all the sections [!] of the Association had been held in Madrid, at which the whole of the resolutions of the London conference were adopted. It was also decided that the Spanish members should no longer abstain from politics, but that a new party should be formed, a *Labour* party, which should be distinct from all existing parties.¹¹⁶

Pure fiction. Despite being forced to publish a half-hearted retraction on 30 December 1871, Engels still firmly believed that Mesa’s article was proof ‘that the Spanish section thoroughly approved of the resolutions of the London conference, and had determined to act in accordance with the resolution relative to the union of political and social action’.¹¹⁷

In reality, an opinion had not even really started to form in Spain. The Madrid Federal Council remained strictly neutral and at its meeting on 23 December 1871 decided to send the *Sonvillier Circular* to all of the local federations for publication.¹¹⁸ Lafargue reported to London that ‘it was too late to stop the publication of this document’ on 23 December, the same day he moved from San Sebastián to Madrid.¹¹⁹ Lafargue wrote the following about how the Federal Council arrived at its decision:

since they had received 150 printed copies of the [Sonvillier] circular from Barcelona, they believed there was no means of hiding the light of Master Bakunin’s illustrious *chef-d’œuvre* under a bushel and that, should they attempt to conceal it, the reactionary papers would be certain to publish it themselves; and as, on his return from the [London] Conference, Lorenzo told only his most intimate friends about these filthy intrigues, the Madrid and Spanish sections

¹¹³ Engels to Liebknecht, 15 December 1871, *ibid.*, p. 282.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 59. The *Égalité* wrote in a similar vein: ‘read also the well-founded opinion of our Spanish brothers, as proclaimed in the *Emancipación* and in the *Federación*; everywhere, it is recognised that the [London] Conference, having formulated once more the principle of political action, responded perfectly to the aspirations of thousands of members of the International, save for the abstentionists’ (*Égalité*, 24 December 1871, p. 2). The *Federación* replied to the *Égalité*: “‘The Spanish sections have not made any declaration about such a thing.” And we will add that the *Federación* has also not issued anything concerning the [London] Conference, but the *Federación* has limited itself to inserting in their columns what our colleague the *Emancipación* published, in order to inform our readers.’ (*Federación*, 31 December 1871, p. 2).

¹¹⁵ According to the minutes, he said: ‘the Spanish sections accepted the resolutions of the Conference, especially the one referring to the union of the political and social questions’ (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 64).

¹¹⁶ *Eastern Post*, 23 December 1871, p. 5.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 30 December 1871, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 90. The *Sonvillier Circular* first appeared in the *Emancipación*, 25 December 1871, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Lafargue to Engels, 26 December 1871, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 408. See also Lafargue to Engels, 23 December 1871, *ibid.*, p. 407. P. Lafargue, *A los internacionales de la región española* (Madrid: Imp. de La Emancipacion, 1872), p. 1.

were furious with him for keeping silent as soon as they learnt of the exposure of this internal dissension from the bourgeois press: the Federal Council did not want to incur further blame on this score.¹²⁰

Lafargue, who must have sensed that the discussion about the London Conference resolutions would not go his way, got himself worked up about the *Sonvillier Circular*: 'I believe the time has come for the [General] Council to finish off the Jurassians and the Bakunists.'¹²¹ Galaxies away from Engels' dream of a *transformation of the International in Spain into a political party*, the first voices critical of the General Council were now heard in Spain. On 31 December 1871, the *Federación* printed the *Sonvillier Circular*, which it supported in a preface with the following words:

We received the circular that we publish below, directed by the congress of the worker's federation of Bernese Jura (Switzerland) towards all the federations of the International Working Men's Association.

The content of the circular is of great importance. And we do not doubt that the local Spanish federations will study, with due care, a question so momentous for our beloved Association.

The idea to convene a general congress – the only body that can and should clarify everything and determine perfectly the functions of the General Council – in the shortest time possible seems to us very opportune.

We do not doubt that the Congress will resolve satisfactorily this question.

The enemies of the International should not clap hands thinking they can benefit from our split. All institutions and every association in their life and in their development come up against such questions to resolve.

The International has, above all others, the great advantage of its essentially free organisation and its anarchist constitution. An enemy of authoritative powers and the resolute defender of freedom – it possesses an organisation of pure democratic shape knowing on a given day the will of the majority of the proletarians; and when whichever question arises (this one for example) a general congress made up of delegates, who are given a mandate to follow by the electorate and are representatives of the will, the aspirations and the ideas of the International in every country, will clarify and perfectly resolve it satisfactorily however serious, deep and momentous the question may be.

Therefore we should study the question, and we should prepare to give an imperative mandate to our delegates; and we await the resolution of the universal congress, that will, undoubtedly and as always, conform with justice and liberty.¹²²

The Spanish sections of the International were even more motivated to reach a decision after the *Federación* reported two weeks later about the support of various Italian sections for the *Sonvillier Circular*.¹²³ The Seville section contacted Madrid saying they wanted a discussion on the '*the question of the Jura Federation, a question that appears very important to us*'.¹²⁴ The Palma de Mallorca Local Federation became the first group of sections in Spain to support the *Sonvil-*

¹²⁰ Lafargue to Engels, 26 December 1871, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 408–9.

¹²¹ Lafargue to Engels, 23 December 1871, *ibid.*, p. 407.

¹²² *Federación*, 31 December 1871, p. 2.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 14 January 1872, p. 2. Among others, the declaration of the *gruppo internazionale* from Milan was reported on; see above, p. 140.

¹²⁴ The Seville section to the Madrid section, [about January 1872], RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, list 221.

lier Circular on 14 January 1872. They explained their support by referring to the congruence between the resolutions of the Spanish International and the line of reasoning in the circular:

last year in September, the Valencia Conference of delegates of the Spanish federation accepted unanimously the definition of the republic conceived in these three grand ideas: common property, anarchy and economic federation;¹²⁵ a formula that sees the future social organisation of society as a free universal federation of free producers in free associations. This definition was accepted by all sections of our regional federation without the slightest protest from within. Said definition implies the complete abolition of all authoritarian power, even in the sections themselves, giving them the most complete autonomy, so that through the free federation of autonomous groups the revolutionary action of the proletariat obtains that unity, which authority and centralisation try to realise.

For these reasons the Assembly accepts the idea of a general congress and unites with the Jura Federation, for said aims, in the hope that all of the federations of our great Association will unite with us so the congress can be held as soon as possible.¹²⁶

The conflict in Switzerland that had led to the split in the Romance Federation was also examined in the *Federación*. A letter from Geneva published in the issue of 21 January 1872 focussed on the main issues of the conflict – pluralism, the internal organisation of the International and the role of the General Council:

All of the discussions converge upon the same theme: while the principles of the International are accepted, should it change the basis of its organisation or not? Two opinions exist between the supporters of the current organisation of our Association. One tends to transform the General Council of London into a type of government that is more or less authoritarian, more or less constitutional but in any case, a government. The other tends towards the idea that the General Council of London would be simply a correspondence and statistics bureau. The *Romance Federation* belongs to the former, the *Jura Federation* to the latter. [...] it is an important question that should be well studied and all opinions should be heard, in order to better shape the mandate to be given to the delegates at the next congress, which has to resolve all of these questions.¹²⁷

On 24 February 1872, the Barcelona section also declared its support for the *Sonvillier Circular* announcing the following in its own circular:

The Jura Question

1) It is the opinion of the Barcelona section, that given the imperfection of the organisation of the International in some regions, it is desirable that an international congress be held as soon as possible to reform said organisation.

2) That the secretaries of the different regions in the General Council should be elected by their respective regions.

3) That the function of the General Council should not be anything other than a central office for correspondence, statistics and information.

4) That the admission of sections is effected by the local federations or by regional federations when the former do not exist.

¹²⁵ See above, p. 166.

¹²⁶ *Federación*, 21 January 1872, p. 3. See also *ibid.*, 4 February 1872, p. 3. *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 2. In a circular published during the first half of February 1872, the Palma de Mallorca section reiterated its support of the *Sonvillier Circular*, 'because it represents our ideas' (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, list 217).

¹²⁷ *Federación*, 4 February 1872, p. 3.

5) That otherwise, the Barcelona section is in compliance with the resolutions of the last Belgian Federal Congress on this question.¹²⁸

In an accompanying letter, Rafar [i.e. Rafael Farga Pellicer], explained: ‘We believe that a revision of the Rules and a reorganisation of our Association are needed to stifle the reactionary influences and authoritarian tendencies of the General Council.’¹²⁹

¹²⁸ RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3311, list 219. For more about the Belgian congress resolutions of December 1871, see above, pp. 113–14.

¹²⁹ RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3311, list 220.

CHAPTER 11. Lafargue's activities in Spain

BY FEBRUARY 1872, A NUMBER OF sections of the International in Spain and Italy had cast their weight behind the *Sonvillier Circular* – while the Belgian federal congress (December 1871) agreed with the circular in principle.¹ The Jura sections could not dispute the logic behind the Belgian demand for a revision of the Rules and so supported the Belgian resolutions in January 1872, giving up their own demand for an immediate extraordinary congress.²

While the General Council's critics prevailed in Jura, Belgium, Italy and Spain, there were four groups who declared their absolute support for the resolutions of the London Conference in the months that followed it:

- The regional meeting of Saxon social democrats (resolution of 6/7 January 1872 according to Liebknecht's claim).³
- The general meeting of the German section in Geneva attended by about two dozen people (resolution of 28 November 1871).⁴
- The general meeting of Geneva sections (resolution of 2 December 1871).⁵
- The British Federal Council approved the resolutions on 8 February 1872.⁶ This council was only established because of a London Conference resolution.⁷

In addition, Marx and Engels asked several of the General Council's correspondents for their opinion. Because of the lack of resolutions, it is unclear whether these are personal opinions or represent a general mood in the countries. Engels told his Danish correspondent Louis Pio on 7 March 1872 'that the Danish Federal Council should recognise the Conference resolutions'.⁸ Even though a corresponding resolution had in all likelihood not been adopted, Pio replied: 'It goes without saying that we absolutely don't concur with the Bakuninist hotheads, who basically don't know what they want. Therefore we can calmly declare that so far we have agreed in everything with the General Council, with its decisions as well as with its conduct.'⁹

¹ See above, pp. 113–14.

² On 7 February 1872, the Committee of the Jura Federation sent a letter to the Belgian Federal Council that stated, among other things, that the Jura Federation 'believes that all the regional federations shall do well to adhere to the resolutions of the Belgian Congress and thus to prepare, for the next regular general congress, a serious revision of our General Rules, taking account of the experience of the Association since its founding' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 3). See also: *ibid.*, p. 2. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 258.

³ See above, pp. 116–17.

⁴ See above, pp. 117–19.

⁵ See above, pp. 119–20.

⁶ See *Eastern Post*, 17 February 1872, p. 5. See also *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 107 (meeting on 13 February 1872).

⁷ Resolution no. 12, see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 344.

⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 332.

⁹ Pio to Engels, 24 March 1872, in B. Schmidt (ed.), *80 Louis Pio Breve og en Bibliografi* (Kopenhagen: Forlaget Fremad, 1950), p. 32.

Pio had obviously formed his opinion without having detailed knowledge about the position of both sides – despite travelling to Switzerland in early 1872 to learn more about the International and getting to know Liebknecht on his way back through Leipzig. Liebknecht wrote about their meeting to Engels on 15 February 1872:

Luckily his [Pio's] lack of French forced him to socialise with Becker and the German members of the International for the most part, so that he steered clear of the Bakuninistic temptations. I talked to him about everything in great detail and I think that the Copenhageners will get rid of the unclean elements who also have been smuggled in and have smuggled themselves in there.¹⁰

A further statement regarding the London Conference resolutions came from Friedrich Sorge (1828–1906), the General Council's correspondent in New York. In November/December 1871, there had also been a split among the sections of the International in the United States, which led to the formation of two competing Federal Councils (the Spring Street Council and the Tenth Ward Hotel Council) – unlike Europe, the conflict was not rooted in the debate between political-parliamentarian or social-revolutionary socialism. Sorge tried to gain recognition from the General Council for his Tenth Ward Hotel Council in New York, despite in fact representing only eight sections – seven of them German-speaking. Thanks to Marx and Engels' efforts, the General Council lent its support to Sorge in March 1872.¹¹ Before this happened, Sorge had hurriedly announced his complete approval of the London Conference resolutions: 'The resolutions of the "International Conference" at London', he wrote on 17 December 1871 in his monthly report to the General Council, 'have been received & find general approbation in our Sections'.¹²

In addition to these messages, some groups partially approved of the resolutions. The uncertainty of the members may have been why the issue was resolved with a compromise. The organ of the German-speaking Swiss sections the *Tagwacht*, for example, supported constructive debate and pluralism within the International by pointing out that

the most diverse political views are represented in the International from the staunch centralism of Austrian workers to the anarchist federalism of our Spanish comrades. The latter call for non-participation in elections, and our German comrades exercise their right to vote in every election. In one country our comrades support other progressive parties, in other countries they always take part as their own party. Only monarchists don't exist in the International.

It's the same with respect to socio-economics. Communists and individualists work side by side and one can very well say: there is no socio-economic ideology that is not represented in the International. Of course, the like-minded and similarly minded groups stick together. The different ideologies also fight each other, of course in a brotherly manner. Regardless of this, the International has always stood united against the enemy without and the different ideologies unite and understand one another when necessary. [...]

¹⁰ RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2766.

¹¹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 120 (meeting on 5 March 1872) and pp. 124–26 (meeting on 12 March 1872). 'Resolutions on the Split in the United States' Federation Passed by the General Council of the I.W.A. in Its Sitzings of 5th and 12th March, 1872', *ibid.*, pp. 410–13. For more about the conflict in the U.S. sections of the International, see T. Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International: Marxism and the American Reform Tradition, 1848–1876* (Chapel Hill, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), pp. 158–76.

¹² IISG, Jung Papers, no. 858. 'Records of the Central Committee, North American Federal Council. Correspondence. Letterbook, 1871, April 2 – 1877, June 6', in *The International Workingmen's Association papers*, microfilmed by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, division of archives & manuscripts, Madison 1972.

Why then does the bourgeois press babble on about a split in the International? Is it because some groups have a different opinion than others on the question of organisation? Or because some groups protested against the authority of the recent London Conference?

It is woeful self-deception when the hostile press for one minute gives in to the sweet delusion: 'Now the International is breaking apart and then we will be rid of the red menace.' One only has to read the protest circular by the Jura Federation that ends with the cry:

'Long live the International Working Men's Association!'

Does that sound like a split? No! Esteemed gentlemen! To your great dismay, the International will not split [...].¹³

The remarkable similarities with the line of reasoning in the Belgian resolution of December 1871 – emphasis on a pluralist internal organisation of the International, position expressed as part of a criticism of the reactionary press – were not a coincident as it turns out. The Zurich section reached a compromise at its meetings on 20 and 27 January 1872, rejecting the initial demand of the *Sonvillier Circular* that a general congress be called immediately, responding both negatively and positively to the contentious issues brought up in the circular, and backing the Belgian call for revision of the Rules.¹⁴

The Dutch Federal Council reacted to the London Conference resolutions with similar ambivalence: in a statement dated 27 December 1871, the Federal Council only supported 'the *general* tenor of the decisions mentioned before' and explained its position regarding resolution no. 9 (constitution of the working class into a political party, conquest of political power), which was the subject of controversial discussion in many places:

As regards the phrase 'To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes' appearing in art. IX, the Council holds the view that people might wrongly conclude that we aim to *take the place* of the party now in power *excluding it* from the power altogether. For this reason the Council would rather like this phrase to read: the great duty of the working class is to secure a part of the political power in proportion to its numbers.¹⁵

The members of the General Council were unaware of this ambivalence – at the General Council meeting on 2 January 1872, Rochat merely stated 'that the Dutch Federal Council gave in its adherence to the Conference resolutions'.¹⁶

¹³ *Tagwacht*, 6 January 1872, p. 2.

¹⁴ 'Beschuß der Sektion Zürich in Betreff des Zirkulars der Föderation des Jura gegen den Generalrat und die Londoner Konferenz vom September v. J.', *ibid.*, 3 February 1872, p. 3.

¹⁵ RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 193/10. This still vexed the Soviet historians in 1981 as can be seen in their official account of the First International: 'In this way the revolutionary spirit of the resolution [no. 9] was interpreted in a vulgar-democratic manner' (*Die Erste Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 387). Doubt was also raised by the Dutch Council about resolution no. 13.1 of the London Conference (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 344), which confirmed the membership of various Commune refugees in the General Council: 'As we don't know enough of the character and past of the persons concerned the Council doesn't feel competent to pronounce a positive or negative judgement; however, we believe we may feel confident that the General Council will proceed cautiously in completing its numbers.'

¹⁶ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 68.

Lafargue and the *Emancipación*'s contact with the Republican Party (January to March 1872)

In keeping with Engels' master plan, according to which Lafargue was to establish a base in Spain in case of a split,¹⁷ Lafargue did his best to set a factional divide in motion within the Spanish Federation. In late January 1872, he pushed the Madrid Federal Council into directing a declaration at the Republican Party (*Partido Republicano Federal*): 'The main points in it will be', he told Engels in advance, 'report on the situation – report on the political parties now in the forefront and what our attitude towards them should be, ending with a programme setting out the general aspirations of the Int[ernational]. As you see, it is an affirmation of the workers' party.'¹⁸ Already in mid-February, Lafargue disclosed that the Federal Council had changed its mind on politics:

As you can see, the Int. has taken a new position here, establishing itself as a workers' party, determined to take up arms in order to accomplish its programme. [...] In the [Federal] Council here you have two rather superior men, Mesa and Mora, [...] who have guided the Council and have led it to take this new position, which all the other sections welcomed enthusiastically [...].¹⁹

As Lafargue himself explained in the letter, the proposed contact with the Republican Party meant a 'new position' for the International in Spain, if not a radical change of course. In the previous summer, the Spanish Federal Council brushed off the advances of the Republican Party by saying the Federal Council 'considers the projects of reform carried out in the form proposed to us to be harmful and inefficient.'²⁰ The newspapers the *Federación* and the *Emancipación* also emphatically rejected the party ('Why We Fight the Republican Party' ['De por que combatimos al partido republicano']).²¹ The republicans also urged the Saragossa Local Federation to form a coalition with them in November/December 1871. The Council of the Local Federation, however, rejected this initiative saying that, in accordance with the General Rules of the International, they would never 'compromise on politics'. The Federal Council in Madrid approved of this response wholeheartedly and wrote to the Saragossa Local Federation 'that they had done good'.²²

It must have been very alienating to see the editors of the *Emancipación* – apparently inspired by Lafargue – send an appeal to the party meeting of the republicans in Madrid only eleven weeks later on 25 February 1872. In the appeal, the Republican Party was posed a number of questions, told the authors' positions and invited to do the following: 'The republican papers have kept a disdainful silence regarding our programme, [...] we ask that you formulate a clear and explicit opinion on the topic.'²³ Mora and Lafargue later justified their contact to the Republican Party by saying it was meant to 'quench people's illusions surrounding the republican's pseudo-socialist phraseology'.²⁴ They also had the intention 'of forming a big working men's party in Spain.

¹⁷ See above, p. 173.

¹⁸ Lafargue to Engels, 25/26 January 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 421.

¹⁹ Lafargue to Marx, [after 14 February 1872], RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2765.

²⁰ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 65.

²¹ 'Los partidos políticos', *Federación*, 23 July 1871, pp. 1–2. 'De por que combatimos al partido republicano', *Emancipación*, 24 July 1871, p. 1.

²² Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 87 (meeting on 10 December 1871).

²³ *Emancipación*, 3 March 1872, p. 1.

²⁴ Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, p. 128 (based on and corroborating the wording in the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' by Engels/Lafargue, see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 490).

To achieve this aim, the working class would first have to be completely isolated from all the bourgeois parties'.²⁵

Lafargue's above-cited fantasy – *all the other sections welcomed the new position enthusiastically* – was far from the truth, as the overwhelming majority of the International in Spain did not support making contact with the Republican Party or the plan to *form a big working men's party*. Hence, the members of the Madrid Local Federation of the International decided to dispel the misleading notion that the editors of the *Emancipación* were speaking in the name of the International and according to its instructions. After the editors of the *Emancipación* turned down a request for a correction,²⁶ the council of the Madrid Local Federation decided to send their own message to the Republican Party on 7 March 1872. In it, they explained that the appeal from the editors of the *Emancipación* 'did not only not come from the International', but that it also contradicted the Federal Council's above-cited message from the previous summer, which declared the political projects of the Republican Party to be 'harmful and inefficient'.²⁷

The *Emancipación* editor and Federal Council member Mesa exacerbated the situation by first brusquely refusing to print this statement in the *Emancipación*²⁸ and instead bringing the matter up in the Federal Council. As six of the nine Federal Council members were editors of the *Emancipación*, it is not surprising that the Federal Council sided with it and supported its appeal to the Republican Party.²⁹ Mesa himself – in his position as interim general secretary of the Federal Council – even drew up a corresponding declaration,³⁰ bringing the antagonism between the Madrid *Federal Council* and the Madrid *sections* of the International to a head. As a result, the six editors of the *Emancipación* and Federal Council members Mesa, Mora, Lorenzo, Paulino Iglesias, Hipólito Pauly and Víctor Pagés were kicked out of the Madrid Federation of the International on 27 March 1872.³¹

The Saragossa Congress (4–11 April 1872) and Lafargue's reports in the *Liberté*

In spite of the fact that first voices critical of the General Council were being heard in Spain,³² Paul and Laura Lafargue created the impression in their letters to London that Spain was entirely on the General Council's side.³³ Blinded by these positive signals, Marx and Engels once again believed that the International in Spain agreed with them in the spring of 1872: 'this attempted rebellion has come to an ignominious end', an excited Engels wrote of his supposed success in Spain, 'and we can proclaim a victory all along the line'.³⁴ Marx also fell for this illusion – he seriously described the mood in the International in a letter to Lafargue as follows:

²⁵ *Ibid.* This passage was apparently written by Lafargue.

²⁶ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 1.

²⁷ *Emancipación*, 16 March 1872, p. 2.

²⁸ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 1.

²⁹ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 105 (meeting on 9 March 1872).

³⁰ The Spanish Federal Council to the Republican Party Convention, 9 March 1872, in *Emancipación*, 16 March 1872, p. 2.

³¹ Nettlau, *La Première Internationale en Espagne*, p. 115.

³² See above, pp. 175–77.

³³ See, for example, Laura Lafargue to Marx, 9 December 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2664; Lafargue to Engels, 26 December 1871, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 408–9.

³⁴ Engels to Laura Lafargue, 11 March 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 338.

In Italy the only serious sections, in Milan and Turin, are ours;³⁵ the others are led by lawyers, journalists and other bourgeois doctrinaires.³⁶ (Apropos, one of Bakunin's personal grounds for complaint against me is that he has lost all influence in Russia where the revolutionary youth tread the same path as myself.)³⁷

The Resolutions of the London Conference have already been recognised by France, America, England, Ireland, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland (minus the Jurasians), the genuine working men's sections in Italy and, finally, the Russians and Poles. Those who fail to recognise them will do nothing to alter this fact, but will be forced to part company with the vast majority of the International.³⁸

Of the countries in this curious list, only the British Federal Council, the Geneva sections and the social democrats of Saxony had really issued more or less well documented declarations of support for the London Conference resolutions. The Dutch Federal Council and Zurich sections had agreed, with reservations. Pio and Sorge – the correspondents to the General Council from Denmark and one of the American factions – had pledged their support without a corresponding resolution from their country. No decisions had been reached in Ireland, Austria, Hungary, France, Russia, and Poland. Marx was obviously relying on the opinion of the General Council's corresponding secretaries for these countries – the same arrangement as during the London Conference. The corresponding secretaries were namely Marx himself (Russia) and his confidants Joseph Patrick McDonnell (Ireland), Walery Wróblewski (Poland), Leo Frankel (Austria-Hungary)³⁹, and Auguste Serrailier (France).⁴⁰

In reality, together with the General Council's critics who dominated in Jura, Belgium, Italy and Spain, a wide spectrum of more or less ambivalent views had been expressed within the International regarding the London Conference resolutions by March 1872. In view of this unresolved situation, the congress of the Spanish Federation in April 1872 was of great importance – its resolutions were sure to attract international attention. Engels, who absurdly thought he had a chance because 'the workers will predominate at this congress',⁴¹ confidently called on the

³⁵ In reality, declarations of support for the *Sonvillier Circular* were published in both cities; see above, pp. 135, 140.

³⁶ For example, Cafiero in Naples, who studied law and worked for the International's newspapers. Marx and Engels, however, only criticised him after he was no longer their confidant.

³⁷ For more about Bakunin's, if anything, growing influence on the Russian revolutionary movement in the 1870s, see Bakunin, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 4, pp. 63–68.

³⁸ Marx to Lafargue, 21 March 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 346–47. Lafargue borrowed this curious list of countries for his brochure *To the members of the International in Spain (A los Internacionales de la región española)*; however, he did not claim that these countries had accepted the London Conference resolutions but that they had full confidence in the General Council; see Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 27.

³⁹ On 19 January 1872, Engels had written that the members of the International in Austria-Hungary were not able to speak out publicly because of persecution. Nevertheless, he claimed: 'The Austrians and Hungarians are also unanimous in their support of the General Council, though prevented by persecution from giving public proof of same' (Engels to Lafargue, 19 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 304).

⁴⁰ The International was largely incapacitated in France because of the persecution that followed the end of the Paris Commune. The correspondence from individual sections and people either with the General Council or the Committee of the Jura Federation led both sides to assume the French sections supported them; see *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 91–92 (meeting on 30 January 1872). *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 20 March 1872, pp. 3–4; 1 June 1872, p. 1; 8 June 1872, p. 2; 15 August to 1 September 1872, p. 1. For developments after the Congress of The Hague, see below, pp. 358, 395–96.

⁴¹ Engels to Cuno, 24 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 309. See also Engels to Liebknecht, 18 January 1872, *ibid.*, p. 299.

Spanish Federal Council on 27 March 1872 to 'submit the resolutions of the London Conference to the Regional Congress for their approval'.⁴²

In view of the persecution that the International faced in Spain, the Madrid Federal Council summoned the delegates to Saragossa on 4 April 1872 – four days before the official opening of the federal congress – in order to deal with the pressing questions of the federation before the state authorities intervened.⁴³ One of the most important items on the agenda was the conflict regarding the six editors of the *Emancipación* and Federal Council members who were kicked out of the Madrid Local Federation. The congress delegates took eight hours to debate this issue.⁴⁴ They reached a compromise that was not destined to last long as the contentious issues had been set aside. The following resolution was passed:

That the editors of the *Emancipación* withdraw everything that led to their expulsion and that the Madrid Local Federation also withdraw everything offensive in character to said editors and their resolution to expel them.

It was also agreed to exclude all doctrinaire issues which were brought up in said periodical under the title 'The Organisation of Work' ['Organización del trabajo'] and which should be dealt with in a friendly manner between the delegates.⁴⁵

As such, the attempt to contact the Republican Party by the editors of the *Emancipación* was not judged for the time being. However, the congress delegates decided to move the Federal Council from Madrid to Valencia and only two of its previous nine members were nominated for re-election: Francisco Mora and Anselmo Lorenzo.⁴⁶ As Mora turned down his nomination, Lafargue – the delegate for the Alcalá de Henares section at the Saragossa Congress – saw almost all of his political allies neutralised at once.

The Federal Council had entrusted Lafargue and Lorenzo with drafting resolution proposals for the agenda items organisation⁴⁷ and property.⁴⁸ Lafargue prepared most of the report on property on his own.⁴⁹ However, two weeks before the opening of the congress he pleaded for

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 130. In the manuscript (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3169) Engels at first wrote that the resolutions should be given to the congress 'for their deliberation' (*para su deliberación*). This was crossed out and replaced with 'for their approval' (*para su aprobación*).

⁴³ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 106 (meeting on 13 March 1872).

⁴⁴ *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 53. Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 282.

⁴⁵ *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 54. The anonymous series of articles 'The Organisation of Work' appeared in the *Emancipación*, 11 February 1872, pp. 3–4; 18 February 1872, pp. 3–4; 25 February 1872, pp. 2–3; 3 March 1872, p. 3. Lafargue was the author of the series (see Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 6), and was criticised for this in a circular by the Federal Council; see Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Circular', 30 July 1872, *Condenado*, 12 August 1872, p. 4.

⁴⁶ *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, pp. 51, 57–58. Mora had already informed Engels about not running for office again in a letter dated 15 March 1872 (RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 200/10).

⁴⁷ '4th question: 1. To edit a project about the general organisation of the workers to be presented at the next international workers' congress. 2. The social organisation of the workers. Revision of the Rules.' (*Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 7)

⁴⁸ '8th question: If property as it exists is constituted by injustice, and if it is one of the causes that contributes the most to the exploitation of man by man; how to transform it in order to make it conform to justice and to stop the earth and instruments of work from serving as a base and means for exploitation, misery and ignorance in the future.' (*ibid.*)

⁴⁹ [P. Lafargue], 'La Propiedad', in *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, pp. 76–103; 'written under the influence of Karl Marx's theories', Lafargue proudly proclaimed (Paul Lafargue to the editors of the *Bulletin de la fédération jurassienne*, 17 May 1872, in *Égalité*, 1 June 1872, p. 4). Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 263.

Marx and Engels' help in drawing up an organisational plan for the International.⁵⁰ Lafargue presented the congress's commission on this matter with an organisational plan that pretended to be grassroots. It was really centralist though as each body was responsible for the acts of its members: the section committees were responsible for the section members, the councils of the local federations for all of the sections and the federal council for all of the local federations.⁵¹ A second organisational plan was proposed by the Alianza member Morago: it promised greater autonomy for the sections and strengthened the regions at the expense of central bodies, which would only be entrusted with correspondence and statistics.⁵² The congress didn't agree with either proposal, but instead adopted the Alianza member Francisco Tomás' proposal to keep the *status quo* (introduced at the Valencia Conference) – and Lafargue ended up agreeing with this.⁵³ Regarding the question of international organisation, which had become urgent because of the *Sonvillier Circular*, Morago proposed a resolution whereby the Spanish Federation would completely support the resolutions of the Belgian federal congress of December 1871 – i.e. referring to the General Council as a 'correspondence and information centre', characterising the International as a 'group of completely autonomous federations' with regard to its internal structure and calling for a revision of the Rules. Morago's suggestion was passed unanimously.⁵⁴

Considering the positive signals Lafargue was sending to London, the results of the Saragossa Congress were pretty devastating: Lafargue abruptly lost his influence in the Spanish Federal Council through the election of new members and the move to Valencia; the very opposite of Engels' wish that the congress endorse the London Conference resolutions came true as the delegates instead supported the Belgian resolutions. Nevertheless, Lafargue wrote the following to Engels after the congress:

Before going further I must let you know that the result of the Congress is excellent, not only by reason of the impression it has produced in Spain, but also because the Bakunists have been vanquished [!]. I will not enter into the details of their rout, since you will find it reported in *La Emancipación*, to which I contributed a report from Saragossa.⁵⁵ I had to observe some degree of moderation in *La Emancipación*, but I shall let myself go in a report that I am sending to the Brussels *Liberté*; yesterday I sent them a first completely innocuous instalment, but *in canela venenosa* [the sting is in the tail].

It is some time now since the Bakunist mystery was revealed to me, I did not want to make my discovery known to you for tactical reasons which may well prevent me from making public what I have learnt here. The Alliance has always existed in Spain and continues to exist at the present time, but it loses its influence with every day that passes. The Alliance here was a secret body, which set out to recruit from amongst the best elements in the International and whose function it was to supervise the Int[ernational], to preserve the purity of such principles as atheism, rights of inheritance, etc. A real Council of Ten, but spreading to every town in Spain.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Lafargue to Engels, [21 March 1872], in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 426–27.

⁵¹ [P. Lafargue], 'Congrès de Saragosse. (Correspondance particulière de la *Liberté*.) Saragosse, 12 avril 1872', *Liberté*, 5 May 1872, p. 2.

⁵² *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 110.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 111–12. For more about the resolution of the Belgian federal congress on 25 December 1871, see above, pp. 113–14.

⁵⁵ *Emancipación*, 13 April 1872, pp. 1–2.

⁵⁶ Lafargue to Engels, 12 April 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 428–29. Council of Ten, see p. 482, n. 29.

As promised Lafargue wrote his report for the *Liberté* with great zeal and ‘denounced’ the secret Alianza to the European public:

The two questions that most drew the attention of the congress were that of the organisation of the working class and that of property.⁵⁷ Today, I shall occupy myself only with the first. The Jura circular, threatening the International with a schism and with the creation of two centres, only had any significance in Italy, where the proletarian movement is quite young and in the hands of idealist doctrinaires. In Spain, however, it has furnished some members of the Alianza with a pretext to agitate and disturb the International. The Alianza constituted itself here as a secret society, recruiting the most energetic and superior members of the movement, giving itself the mission of leading the International and guarding the purity of its principles; in a word, the Alianza was an aristocracy within the International. The members of the Alianza in Madrid went so far as to have six members of the Spanish Federal Council expelled from the Association by the Federation of Madrid.⁵⁸

Lafargue’s report contains a number of inconsistencies:

- The *Bulletin* of the Jura Federation countered the claim that the *Sonvillier Circular* threatens ‘the International with a schism and with the creation of two centres’ by saying:

the Jura circular never had the goal of producing a split in the International or creating a second centre, but of reorganising the International and returning it to the principles of the General Rules; [...] the Jura Federation proceeds in this way together with the Belgian Federation – whose resolutions it has adopted – along with the existing French sections, with the Spanish Federation, and with the Italian sections.⁵⁹

- A delegate of the Saragossa Congress denied Lafargue’s account of the Federal Council members’ expulsion: ‘it was not the members of the Spanish Federal Council who were as such expelled by the Madrid Local Federation, but rather certain editors of the periodical the *Emancipación*.’⁶⁰ In point of fact, Lafargue kept silent on the reason for the expulsion of the *Emancipación* in his report for the *Liberté* in view of the deep-seated anti-parliamentarian sentiments in Belgium.
- Lafargue actually understood the Alianza – which he referred to as an ‘aristocracy’ in the *Liberté* – better than he let on. He personally told Engels what the Alianza members were really up to: ‘they wanted to form a body of the most intelligent, most active people who were to be the propagators and defenders of the Int[ernational] etc. and who, in the event of dissolution, would always stick together and re-establish it.’⁶¹

Lafargue sent further ‘revelations’ about the Alianza to Engels, who was naturally overjoyed about the news, if not obsessed. Engels added new spins to Lafargue’s disclosures before spreading them further; all the while refusing to listen to reason – even from friends. In a letter to

⁵⁷ At any rate, it was Lafargue who had drawn up resolution proposals for both of these questions; see above, p. 185.

⁵⁸ [Lafargue], ‘Congrès de Saragosse’, p. 2.

⁵⁹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 10 May 1872, p. 4.

⁶⁰ Gabriel Albajés to Paul Lafargue, 27 July 1872, in *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 3.

⁶¹ Lafargue to Engels, 29 May 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 446.

Cuno, Engels reached the bizarre conclusion that in fact the Alianza was 'aimed, not against the government, but against the mass of the workers! I have every reason to suspect that the same thing is going on in Italy. What information do you have on this subject?'⁶² Cuno responded:

I have heard little about the Bakuninists' secret association: I have read a few letters from Locarno and Barcelona, but they spoke rather generally and not about an actual organisation at any rate. I fear you are taking a dark view on things [...].⁶³

However, Engels didn't feel like lightening up: 'I do not doubt for an instant that the same secret society exists in Italy, though, perhaps, not in as rigid a form as in formalistic Spain.'⁶⁴

Engels wrote triumphantly to Wilhelm Liebknecht, editor of the *Volksstaat* in Leipzig, on 7 May 1872:

Lafargue is doing a terrific amount of work in Spain and very skilfully too. The report from the *Liberté* on the congress in Saragossa was also by him. Incidentally, *do not forget to publish the second report, the one in the previous issue of the 'Liberté'*, in which he unmasks the secret intrigues of the Bakuninists and describes the spectacular victory gained over them by our supporters (!) there. This was the decisive defeat for that pig-headed Bakunin.⁶⁵

The Alianza member Tomás, whose resolution proposal on the organisation question was adopted by the congress, would have been quite surprised to see Engels refer to him as one of *his supporters*.

Engels also told the General Council about Lafargue's reports of victory. According to a published version of the minutes of the General Council meeting on 7 May 1872 that appeared in the *Eastern Post*, Engels described the reactions to the appeal by the editors of the *Emancipación* to the Republican Party as follows: 'Those amongst its members who really had the interest of the International more at heart than that of a petty sectarian clique [i.e. the Alianza], were attacked by the fanatics and intriguers of the sect'.⁶⁶

The adoption of the organisation resolution put forward by the Alianza member Tomás prompted Engels to make the following lofty claim to his General Council colleagues:

The Congress unanimously, only two or three delegates abstaining, declared that the rules, as voted at Valencia, were to remain in full effect,⁶⁷ and thus the attempt to annihilate (!) the International in Spain, under pretext of more perfectly organising it, signally failed. This result is of great importance for the whole of our Association. It proves again that the strong good sense of the working class, in Spain as well as elsewhere, need only be appealed to, in order to put down the tricks and the sectarian crotchets of bogus reorganisers and would-be prophets. Bakunin and his followers considered Spain as their stronghold, because for a few years they had directed the propaganda in that country. But no sooner had the proletarian movement become general in Spain, than the Spanish working men refused to be fettered by the narrow tenets of a sect [i.e. the Alianza], and to sacrifice the organisation they themselves had erected and perfected to the

⁶² Engels to Cuno, 22/23 April 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 358.

⁶³ Cuno to Engels, 25 April 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 191.

⁶⁴ Engels to Cuno, 7/8 May 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 369.

⁶⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 365. See also Engels to Liebknecht, 23 April 1872: 'Our people have defeated the Bakuninists at the Spanish Congress in Saragossa' (*ibid.*, p. 361); and Engels to Cuno, 22/23 April 1872: 'A congress of the Spanish members of the International was held in Saragossa on 8–11 April, at which our people won a victory over the Bakuninists.' (*ibid.*, p. 358).

⁶⁶ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 293.

⁶⁷ Before that Engels is summarising Lafargue's *Liberté* report ([Lafargue], 'Congrès de Saragosse', p. 3).

private ends of a few intriguers, who, having been foiled in their oft-repeated attempts to make the International their instrument, now do everything they can to practically dissolve it.⁶⁸

Considering how far Engels had gone out on a limb, he must have been quite shocked when he read the real resolutions of the Saragossa Congress a short time later. For example, the *Bulletin* of the Jura Federation published them according to an official communication from the newly elected Spanish Federal Council.⁶⁹ Engels complained to Liebknecht on 15 May 1872: 'Lafargue forgot to tell us that at the same time a resolution had been passed recognising and adopting the resolutions of the *Belgian* Congress (of 25 December 1871). So that the victory was by no means as complete as he described it to us.'⁷⁰ And on 22 May 1872, he wrote Liebknecht about the above-cited General Council meeting minutes printed in the *Eastern Post*:

Please do *not* publish it. It was based on Lafargue's letters, but since the Jurassians are interpreting another resolution of the Congress in their own favour, and since Lafargue's initial reports of victory were somewhat exaggerated in any event, it would be desirable for them *not* to circulate with a seal of approval from the General Council. I am not sending it to Italy or Spain either.⁷¹

Lafargue's *Liberté* report had quite another effect in Spain where it caused an outburst of hostilities. After a first letter of protest from Seville, the editors of the *Liberté* distanced themselves from Lafargue:

We have received a letter from one of our friends in Seville who is quite upset by the correspondence that we have published on the Saragossa Congress. In Seville it seems to be thought that our correspondent has undertaken the task of sowing division in Spain and that we would like to help him do so. We are thoroughly convinced that such could never be the intent of our correspondent, and it certainly is not ours; however, since we are unable to control the acts that he has reported, we can only recommend to our Spanish readers to judge for themselves the credibility of our correspondent's assertions. While having confidence in his good faith, we cannot align ourselves with all of his opinions.⁷²

As the protests from Spain about Lafargue's report did not stop, the editors of the *Liberté* felt obliged to make the following explanation, which links the controversial report and the continuing conflict about internal organisation and pluralism in the International.

We willingly acknowledge the declarations of our friends from Spain, while continuing to insist, on our side, that malign intentions have inspired neither our correspondent nor ourselves.

Nonetheless, what this conflict makes evident is that the organisation of the International is conceived in two different, even opposite manners, although the end to be attained is the same for both sides. Our correspondent inclines towards greater centralisation of the workers' forces;

⁶⁸ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 294–95.

⁶⁹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 May 1872, pp. 1–2. The *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne de l'Association internationale des travailleurs* first published on 15 February 1872 succeeded the *Révolution Sociale* last published on 4 January 1872 as the organ of the Jura Federation.

⁷⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 374–75.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 375–76.

⁷² *Liberté*, 26 May 1872, p. 4. The resolutions of the Saragossa Congress from the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* were printed below. The Spanish Federal Council was also irritated by the reports in the *Liberté* and wrote a letter to their editors asking the correspondent's name; see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 140 (meeting on 2 June 1872). In response to Lafargue's letter of complaint to Seville (which has not survived), the Seville Local Council confirmed that the principals of the Alianza were 'the synthesis of our aspirations' (The Seville Local Council to Paul Lafargue, 20 June 1872, in RGASPI, fond 10, opis' 1, delo 423).

he tends to favour the authority of the General Council; the comrades who protest against his letter are inclined toward a more complete autonomy of the local and national groups. Here, once again, is the opposition between the unitary principle and the federative principle, but a less radical opposition, which cannot become violent.

For our part, our sympathies are clearly in favour of the federative principle, but we will restrain ourselves to developing in the near future our ideas on this serious matter, which is tied to other discussions arising within the International [...].⁷³

The *Federación* took satisfaction in noting this correction: 'Effectively, like it [the *Liberté*], we think that the foundation, the aspiration and the lasting tendency of the organisation of the International Working Men's Association has been essentially federalist'.⁷⁴ This made Lafargue's revelations seem all the more ideologically motivated. Gabriel Albajés, a Saragossa Congress delegate from Barcelona, wrote an open letter to Lafargue:

Your letter to Brussels' *Liberté* is a well constructed set of lies. Its intention is not, as you put it, to expose the men who are part of a secret society aspiring to control the destiny of the International. No, this is of little importance to you and furthermore you are convinced of the opposite. Instead, you would rather destroy – through the media that offer you assistance – any fruitful propaganda that is in favour of ideas that are not yours and that belong to the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista.⁷⁵

Because of the conflict surrounding Lafargue's *Liberté* report, the compromise reached between the Madrid sections of the International and the editors of the *Emancipación* at the Saragossa Congress didn't stand a chance. In accordance with the reconciliation resolution of the congress, the editors were accepted back into the Madrid Local Federation on 5 May 1872.⁷⁶ However, neither Lafargue nor the *Emancipación* acted with restraint. After the uproar regarding Lafargue's *Liberté* report, an article titled 'Revolutionary Information' ('Información revolucionaria') that appeared in the *Emancipación* on 1 June 1872 was the last straw. The article's anonymous author argued against what in his opinion was useless criticism of the corruption of the Spanish political class which was public knowledge and against demands to make them directly accountable. Instead it called for a registry to be created, listing the financial situation of the politicians according to data from government land registry offices. After the revolution this registry could be used 'in the hands of revolutionary power [...] to enact confiscation or rather restitution' of the politician's wealth.⁷⁷ This idea did not correspond to the emancipatory sentiments held by the radical majority of the International in Spain, who called for the direct 'social liquidation' (instead of studying data at the land registry office), demanded the creation of common property (instead of regulating private property through laws), and advocated anarchy (and not the creation of a 'revolutionary power').⁷⁸

⁷³ *Liberté*, 30 June 1872, p. 4.

⁷⁴ *Federación*, 14 July 1872, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Albajés to Lafargue, 27 July 1872, in *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 3.

⁷⁶ See *Emancipación*, 11 May 1872, p. 3.

⁷⁷ 'Información revolucionaria', *ibid.*, 1 June 1872, p. 1.

⁷⁸ See *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 2. The worker's journal *Justicia* from Malaga criticised the article by saying it was 'more typical of a politician's periodical – which only aim at power, which isn't any longer considered a prey – than an organ of socialism'. The *Emancipación* countered that the bourgeois papers had not reacted to the 'Revolutionary Information' (*Emancipación*, 15 June 1872, p. 3). For more about the *Justicia*, see M. Morales Muñoz, 'Dos periódicos obreros desconocidos: 'La Justicia' (1871–1872) y 'La Internacional' (1873–1874)', *Baetica* 11 (1988), 541–49.

The members of the Section of Various Trades (*Sección de oficios varios*) in Madrid, who had helped the *Emancipación* get on its feet financially more than anyone else,⁷⁹ saw the paper drifting off for good toward Lafargue and Mesa's small group, who were considered responsible for all of the recent conflicts. Two days after the article was published, the editors of the *Emancipación* Mesa, Mora, Iglesias, Pauly, and Pagés were kicked out of the Section of Various Trades for a second time, 'and were declared traitors because of their published writings and for propagating ideas that contradicted the aspirations of the section that they belonged to'.⁸⁰

Bakunin's letters to Mora and Lorenzo (April–May 1872)

Lafargue continued his successful strategy of provoking a factional divide by further fuelling the conflict over the next while. On 27 June 1872, he published the brochure *To the members of the International in Spain* (*A los internacionales de la región española*) in which he again justified his report in the *Liberté* and began a new attack on Bakunin and the Alianza. He was very proud of the brochure: it 'will do all that is necessary to finish off the Alliance here', he bragged on 1 July 1872 to Engels.⁸¹ But the reaction in Spain was limited. The *Federación*, for example, only took note 'with a profound disgust' and declared: 'We believe that the individuals who are attacked will answer, not because those who write such things and operate in such a way deserve a reply, but rather to lend a clarity to the facts and so that people paying attention to such fanfare will not be caught unawares'.⁸²

Lafargue invented close ties between Bakunin and the Spanish International because Bakunin was the real target behind his denunciation of the Alianza – as he revealed to Engels.⁸³ For example, the protests of the Spanish sections against Lafargue were described by him in a letter to the editor of the *Liberté* dated 12 July 1872 as 'calumnies following the slogan emanating from Switzerland'.⁸⁴ He also brashly claimed that the Alianza's headquarters 'is in Switzerland, and that is the source of the membership cards, the slogans, and the *Monita secreta* [secret instructions] coming entirely from the pen of the mysterious Pope of Locarno'.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ The *Emancipación* had itself pointed this out three months before (*ibid.*, 16 March 1872, p. 1).

⁸⁰ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 3. With the exception of Lorenzo, who had resigned as editor of the *Emancipación* in a letter dated 14 April 1872 (*Emancipación*, 20 April 1872, p. 2), the same people were kicked out on 3 June as on 27 March 1872 (see above, p. 183). The editors of the *Emancipación* considered the criticism of the article 'Revolutionary Information' a mere pretence and declared that their statement regarding the Alianza was the true reason for their expulsion, which was in violation of the section rules that state that expulsions had to be heard by a court of honour; see *Emancipación*, 27 July 1872, p. 3. Felipe Martín, who was not a member of the Alianza and had called for the expulsion in the Section of Various Trades, countered that *the reference to the Alianza criticism* was the pretence and denied that a court of honour was necessary because this wasn't a personal matter but a violation of the political objectives of the section; see *Cuestión de la Alianza*, pp. 2–3.

⁸¹ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 463.

⁸² *Federación*, 21 July 1872, p. 3. A letter from the Local Council of Plasencia to the Spanish Federal Council stated: 'We received a pamphlet from Lafargue and once familiar with its content we were left to lament the intrigue and baseness of certain men that have come to believe that the International Working Men's Association is akin to the bourgeois parties of all political colours. [...] We want the complete autonomy of the locals, without the mystification of any authoritative power.' (Seco Serrano [ed.], *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 238 [meeting on 27 August 1872.])

⁸³ The *Liberté* report, Lafargue gloated, 'will do Bakunin a fine service, for I refer to the Alliance by name and denounce it' (Lafargue to Engels, 27 April 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 439).

⁸⁴ *Liberté*, 4 August 1872, p. 3.

⁸⁵ Paul Lafargue to the editors of the *Bulletin de la fédération jurassienne*, 17 May 1872, in *Égalité*, 1 June 1872, p. 4. For more about Bakunin's sparse correspondence with Spain, see below, pp. 192–93.

The Jura Federation's *Bulletin* wrote the following with regards to Lafargue's attempt to lump the Geneva Alliance (*organisation 2*) together with the Alianza (*organisation 3*):

In fact, the *Alliance*, in Switzerland, was simply a section of the International with its seat and members in Geneva; this section was recognised by the General Council in London and had sent a delegate to the Congress of Basel; all of its actions were public; and as it has been dissolved for almost a year now, it can have absolutely no influence on the Congress of Saragossa.⁸⁶

In reality, Lafargue knew very well that the Geneva section of the Alliance and the Alianza were two different entities. He wrote Engels – albeit privately: 'Since B[akunin] is very lazy, what went on here in Spain is in no wise connected with what went on in Geneva. Mora, Tomás of Palma, Lorenzo, Farga of Barcelona, etc., in forming this secret society here, had had a sound if slightly mystical aim'.⁸⁷ In public though, Lafargue continued to show his disgust with the Alianza, which was supposedly controlled from the outside and whose 'observed manoeuvres [...] disturb and divide the *International*'.⁸⁸ Despite knowing better, Engels made the following bizarre statement at the General Council meeting on 7 May 1872:

The Congress of the Spanish Internationals at Saragossa, which took place in the beginning of April, but the proceedings of which are only now published, has ended in the total defeat of that small but active faction, which, under the leadership of Bakunin, had for the last four years never ceased to promote discord in the ranks of our association. This faction, united in an international society calling itself the Alliance of Socialist Democracy, had, on its admittance into the International Working Men's Association, solemnly pledged itself to dissolve its separate organisation and to become entirely fused in the International. But in spite of this solemn pledge, the Alliance continued to exist, as a *secret* society, within the International; the first example of a secret society directed, not against the ruling classes and their governments, but against that very same proletarian organisation in which it had professed to disappear.⁸⁹

Engels both embellished Lafargue's bluff and exaggerated it to the extreme: the Alianza was now directed *against the International* and even *against the workers*, as well as being *under the leadership of Bakunin*, etc.

In reality, the Alianza (as explained above) developed autonomously in Spain – political dispatches like the one Alerini wrote on 14 November 1871 in the name of the 'members of the International active in Barcelona' clearly illustrate the independence of the Alianza members.⁹⁰ Contrary to Lafargue and Engels' conspiracy theories, Bakunin hardly communicated with Spain at all: since the summer of 1871, he was only regularly in touch with Sentiñón – thus, it appears their letters were mostly of a private nature as Sentiñón had stopped being active in the movement by then.⁹¹ Other than that, Bakunin only sent three letters to Spain in the very busy five months following the London Conference.⁹² Bakunin shared what little information he had on

⁸⁶ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 10.

⁸⁷ Lafargue to Engels, 29 May 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 446.

⁸⁸ Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, pp. 22–23.

⁸⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 293.

⁹⁰ See above, pp. 168–69.

⁹¹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 12–27. *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 1. In January 1872, Sentiñón wrote: 'The disgraceful murder of Prim [Spanish prime minister killed on 30 December 1870] [...] and the Commune tragedy in Paris have completely changed my attitude toward the labour movement.' (Sentiñón to Liebknecht, 26 January 1872, in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3134).

⁹² According to his diary, Bakunin corresponded with Spain on 2 November 1871, 18/19 December 1871 and 12/13 February 1872 (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 25, 31. 1872, p. 5).

Spain with his friend Joukovsky in a letter dated 14 February 1872: 'About Spain I don't know much, [but] according to the letters I've received and in all probability, judging by [the principles] loudly proclaimed at the Congresses, it cannot but take our side'.⁹³

Six weeks later, beginning in April 1872, Bakunin began to intensify his contact with Spain by corresponding with Alerini. It was from Alerini that Bakunin likely received his first insider information about the International in Spain as well as the (ill-conceived) tip to contact Mora in Madrid. While Mora was a member of the Alianza in Madrid,⁹⁴ he was also part of Lafargue and Mesa's inner circle and was involved in the scandal surrounding the editors of the *Emancipación* and their contact to the Republican Party on 25 February 1872.⁹⁵ Bakunin didn't know about any of this when he naively wrote a letter to Mora on 5 April 1872:

Dear Ally and Comrade,

As our friends at Barcelona have invited me to write to you, I do so with all the more pleasure since I have learned that I also, like my friends, our *allies* of the Jura Federation, have become, in Spain as much as in other countries, the target for the calumnies of the London General Council. [...]

To give you a fair idea of the line which we are taking, I have only one thing to tell you. Our programme is yours; it is the very one which you proclaimed at your Congress last year,⁹⁶ and if you stay faithful to it, you are with us for the simple reason that we are with you. We detest the principle of dictatorship, governmentalism and authority, just as you detest them; we are convinced that all political power is an infallible source of depravity for those who govern, and a cause of servitude for those who are governed. – The state signifies domination, and human nature is so made that all domination becomes exploitation. As enemies of the state in all its manifestations anyway, we certainly do not wish to tolerate it within the International. We regard the London Conference and the resolutions which it passed as an ambitious intrigue and a coup d'état, and that is why we have protested, and shall continue protesting to the end. [...]

It is good and it is necessary that the Allies in Spain should enter into direct relations with those in Italy. Are you receiving the Italian socialist newspapers? I recommend above all: the *Eguaglianza* of Girgenti, Sicily; the *Campana* of Naples; the *Fascio Operaio* of Bologna; the *Gazzettino Rosa*, above all the *Martello*, of Milan – unfortunately the latter has been banned and all the editors imprisoned. In Switzerland, I recommend to you two *Allies*: James Guillaume (Switzerland, Neuchâtel, 5, rue de la Place d'Armes) and *Adhémar Schwitzguébel*, engraver (member and corresponding secretary of the Committee of the Jura Federation), Switzerland, Jura Bernois, Sonvillier [...] Please convey my greetings to *brother* Morago, and ask him to send me his newspaper [the *Condenado*]. Are you receiving the bulletin of the Jura Federation? Please burn this letter, as it contains names.⁹⁷

⁹³ Bakunin to Joukovsky, 14 February 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. According to his diary, Bakunin received a letter from Sentiñón on 3 January 1872 (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 1).

⁹⁴ He signed the statement on the dissolution of the group dated 2 June 1872 (Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, pp. 21–22).

⁹⁵ See above, pp. 182–83.

⁹⁶ Meant are the resolutions of the Valencia Conference of the Spanish International (10–18 September 1871), see above, p. 166.

⁹⁷ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 637–39; italicised according to the first published version of the letter (Spanish translation in *Emancipación*, 1 February 1873, pp. 2–3). Bakunin sent his letter to Mora to Alerini on 7 April 1872 so he could forward it to Mora; see Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 13. None of the Bakunin's other letters to Spain mentioned above in this chapter have survived.

Mora must have been aghast upon reading Bakunin's social-revolutionary ideas and the greetings to his estranged brother and enemy Morago, etc.⁹⁸ With little to go on in Spain, Bakunin was blindly trying to make contacts according to Alerini's suggestion and to connect activists from different countries.

Bakunin apparently found another piece of information from Alerini particularly interesting: the Spanish delegate Lorenzo's hesitant and fragmented statements regarding the London Conference. As described above, Lorenzo had mostly dealt with his disappointment about what happened at the Conference on his own and only hinted at it to close friends.⁹⁹ Incidentally, Lafargue also knew about Lorenzo's confusion following the London Conference: 'Poor Lorenzo was dumbfounded', Lafargue wrote Engels, 'he said that "if what they say of B[akunin] is true, he is the greatest scoundrel alive" – but he did not believe it'.¹⁰⁰ Lorenzo had also written to his friends in Barcelona about his feelings,¹⁰¹ and Alerini informed Bakunin about this.

In the days before, Bakunin had considered trying to reach an understanding with the General Council in view of escalating conflicts in more and more federations. In a letter written in March 1872, Bakunin explained:

since it is only a matter of personalities and not of principles, I would like to try one last means of reconciliation. I wish first of all to address to the General Council a private letter, *of which I shall send you a copy*. And if they do not give me a satisfactory response, I shall force them to explain themselves in public.¹⁰²

As a matter of fact, Bakunin did mention a letter to the General Council in his diary on 13 and 20 April 1872.¹⁰³ Electrified by what Alerini had told him about Lorenzo,¹⁰⁴ Bakunin changed his plan and worked for several days on a letter to Lorenzo. In a surviving first draft dated 24 April 1872, he wrote:

Dear Citizen – Our friends from Barcelona have just informed me that following your return from London, where you attended the September conference as a delegate, these friends asked you about your thoughts and impressions concerning me, and that you replied: 'If Utin spoke truthfully in London, Bakunin is a wretch, and if not, then Utin is a vile slanderer'. Let me express my astonishment and my regret, Citizen, that being the friend of my friend Fanelli, who was the first to tell you about me, you did not see fit to write these words to him and to ask him for explanations on my account immediately after your return from London [...].¹⁰⁵

Bakunin posed Lorenzo eight questions on the matter, asked him to answer as soon as possible and signalled that he wanted to make the reply public as part of a counter-offensive. However, Bakunin did not send this letter and instead expanded it two weeks later to a seemingly endless

⁹⁸ Thus Mora did not answer the letter; see Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, p. 130. For more about Mora and Morago's relationship, see *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 2.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 167.

¹⁰⁰ Lafargue to Engels, 29 May 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 446.

¹⁰¹ See Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 185. In his memoirs, Lorenzo recalled writing the following in his message to Barcelona: 'If what Marx has said about Bakunin is true, then he is a scoundrel, and if not then the scoundrel is Marx – there can be no middle ground, the accusations and the reproaches that I have heard are too serious.' (*ibid.*)

¹⁰² Bakunin to Ceretti, 13–27 March 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 255.

¹⁰³ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 14–15. A corresponding manuscript has not survived.

¹⁰⁴ Bakunin received a letter from Alerini on 22 April 1872 (*ibid.*, p. 15).

¹⁰⁵ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo, 24 April 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

description of the personal conflicts and contentious issues within the International. On page 20 of the ever-growing manuscript, he finally arrived at the point of the letter:

Having what is basically only a rather simple thing to ask you, I have written you such a long letter, Citizen, because it seemed useful and fitting to me that after hearing all the lies that our enemies hawked against us everywhere, you and your friends should hear from our own mouth a complete and truthful presentation of our sentiments, our beliefs, and our intentions.¹⁰⁶

The three questions in the definitive version of Bakunin's letter to Lorenzo were as follows:

1) What are the facts that Utin, H. Perret, Marx or some other individual of the same circle have formulated either against me or against my friends Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, and what evidence has been presented to you in support of their accusations against us?

2) To whom and in what circumstances were these charges brought against us? In private conversations, or before the whole Conference?

3) Did the London Conference concern itself with this officially? And if so, what are the resolutions it has taken with regard to us?

I think I should tell you, Citizen, that we will send copies of this letter, which you shall receive from the hands of our friends in Barcelona, to a few close friends in different countries, and that I shall do the same with the reply that I hope to receive from you soon, whatever it may be. Must I add that in the absence of your sympathy, I shall rely on your loyalty and fairness?¹⁰⁷

After working on the letter from 6 to 15 May 1872, Bakunin had it delivered to Jura on 16 May, apparently to have it copied.¹⁰⁸ From there it was sent to Alerini who was to pass it on to Lorenzo.

Lorenzo, who was the only member re-elected to the Federal Council at the Saragossa Congress, came under increasing pressure because of his indecisive position. As the conflict between his colleagues in the previous Federal Council – who also edited the *Emancipación* – and the Madrid Local Federation intensified, he felt like he was 'caught between the hammer and the anvil' as both parties were trying to win him over.¹⁰⁹ Depressed, he finally resigned from the Federal Council on 20 June 1872,¹¹⁰ left Valencia and emigrated to France a few months later for several years. In this state, while visiting his friend Manuel Cano in Vitoria shortly after resigning from the Federal Council, he met Alerini who finally gave him Bakunin's letter on 15 August 1872.

The passionate letter brought Lorenzo back into the middle of the fray that he thought he had left behind him by resigning from the Federal Council. As such, he reacted coolly. In his reply to Bakunin on 24 August 1872, he wrote:

after so much time passed and without any type of document now at hand I can't specify any of the accusations made about you by Utin. [...] [In addition, there is no] necessity that I accuse anybody of what he said – with or without reason I can't assess – against you or against any

¹⁰⁶ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 20, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21–22

¹⁰⁸ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 16–17.

¹⁰⁹ Lorenzo to Guillaume, 19 December 1905, in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 308. Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 290.

¹¹⁰ Lorenzo to the Spanish Federal Council, 20 June 1872, IISG, CNT (España) Archives, C88. He told his Federal Council colleagues that he was resigning because of private reasons and because he wanted to retire from public life (Seco Serrano [ed.], *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 155–57 [meeting on 20 June 1872]). He only revealed his real reasons in his memoirs; see Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, pp. 311–12.

others. Thus, I avoid acting as an informer, for even if there would be a reason to do so, there would be no less reason to inform all others that you describe so harshly in your letter.¹¹¹

In his memoirs, Lorenzo also criticised the *anti-Jewish* sentiments in Bakunin's letter.¹¹² Strangely enough these were often a byproduct of his *anti-German* attitude and thus mostly came up in connection with his polemic against Marx.¹¹³ In various drafts of his letter to Lorenzo, Bakunin thus lashed out against the 'essentially pan-Germanic' theories of the 'grand leader of the synagogue', etc.¹¹⁴ Branding the political opponent with religious monikers had a long tradition among radicals in Europe – Lafargue for example attacked the 'fat Pope of Locarno' and the 'Cardinals of Sonvillier'.¹¹⁵ However, such remarks are not in keeping with the anarchist ideas which Bakunin became famous for.

Lorenzo later regretted that his reply to Bakunin's letter had been so harsh because of his personal problems: he honoured Bakunin with passionate praise in 1899.¹¹⁶ And, after James Guillaume wrote him a few years later while doing historical research, Lorenzo reread his reply to Bakunin's letter and noted the following:

the reading of it [the letter] had caused me pain because the shock of the special circumstances I was entangled in meant I wrote with a certain harshness that was very far from the admiration and respect that Bakunin always inspired in me. I tried to express this in a biography about him I wrote which was published in the *Revista Blanca*, volume 1 (1899). After my resignation from the Valencia Federal Council I felt myself victim of the hostilities and hatred that conflicts produce – while I always avoided these personal struggles and was in love with the ideas and incapable of putting my passions or temper in front of them (what seemingly many people have done) – and

¹¹¹ Lorenzo to Bakunin, 24 August 1872, IISG, Bakunin Papers, no. 2.

¹¹² Bakunin's resentment of Jews, Lorenzo wrote, 'was contradicting our principles, principles that impose fraternity without distinction along race or religion and it had a distastefulness effect on me. I am obliged to tell the truth and I accept this at the cost of the respect and consideration that the memory of Bakunin deserves for many reasons.' (Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 186).

¹¹³ See above, p. 27. Max Nettlau criticised Bakunin's Germanophobia as 'the seed of national hate – not to mention the anti-Jewish remarks' and as 'an introduction of nationalist thinking in the labour movement, a continuation and perpetuation of the war-time spirit of 1870, which, in my opinion, was just as disastrous as Marx's introduction of his personal ideas in the International' (Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 65). At another point, Nettlau makes the following hypothesis: 'Just as little as the Russian people – whom Bakunin always distinguished from the Russian government, the Russian state – were the German or any other people at fault that the very existence of states makes people hostile or indifferent to one another. Because Bakunin, when he spoke of Germans, Slavs, French, since 1870 constantly prodded at the antagonisms and animosities caused by states and not by people, nor parties for the most part – this is why he had so little effect on Germany because anyone can pit their historical elaborations and the like against those of another. Because he kept silent on such matters when he was dealing with Italy or Spain or Switzerland and refuted and rejected Italian nationalism, the father of fascism, that is why his activities for these countries were so successful, pure and unadulterated. It is too late to change anything about this, but this limit to the personal capabilities of one man, who towered over everyone back then and who no one opposed on this field, led to the one-sided geographical distribution of anarchism, which to this day has not been compensated.' (Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 2, p. 202).

¹¹⁴ Bakunin to Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 1, 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹¹⁵ Lafargue to Engels, 2 June 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 455.

¹¹⁶ A. Lorenzo, 'Miguel Bakunin', *La Revista Blanca*, 15 February 1899, pp. 449–55 ('This was Bakunin: he had a powerful intelligence, an unlimited will and an indomitable energy. A philosopher, economist, warrior, poet, he could not accept the dominant philosophy – criminal for its cruel effects, ridiculous for its stupid foundations according to which the evolution and the progressive transformation of all times in history are no more than simple variations to effect social injustice. [...] The work of Bakunin is imperishable; in the same way that the conservative reaction is impotent' [*ibid.*, p. 455]).

therefore saw myself as isolated and sad and I wrote in a tone which today I recognise as being unjustified [...].¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Lorenzo to Guillaume, 30 January 1906, in Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 90.

CHAPTER 12. The Belgian rules project and the *Fictitious Splits*

EVER SINCE THE BELGIAN FEDERAL CONGRESS passed resolutions critical of the General Council in December 1871, Marx and Engels only spoke of the members of the International in Belgium disparagingly in their correspondence. 'Apart from De Paepe', Engels was suddenly convinced, 'the Belgians were never anything much'.¹ 'De Paepe is the only one who is worth anything, but he is not very active. Steens is a jackass, a schemer and perhaps worse, and Hins is a Proudhonist who by that very fact, but even more because of his Russian wife,² has leanings towards Bakunin. The others are puppets.'³

Marx expressed his anger in the General Council on 13 February 1872 by saying 'that the Belgians were more strongly represented on the London Conference than any other section, and that it could not therefore escape its liability with respect to the Conference and its resolutions'. Marx then moved to send an official enquiry to the Belgian Federal Council 'if the *Liberté* is considered to be the official organ of the Belgian Federal Council. The latter was necessary inasmuch as the matters relating to the General Council were not fairly noted in that journal, while prominence was given to every little affair concerning the Swiss dissentients'.⁴ In reality, not a single remark had been made in favour of the Jura Federation or against the General Council in the *Liberté* since the report about the Belgian federal congress. Apparently Marx was expressing his general disapproval of the Belgian Federal Council members Steens and Hins, who belonged to the editors of the *Liberté* and whom Marx considered critics of the General Council.

On 23 April 1872, Engels again voiced his opinion about the Belgian members of the International: 'the fellows have never been worth much and are now worth less than ever. We have sent someone over there who will let us have a detailed report shortly'.⁵ Marx and Engels sent their confidant Charles Rochat, until then the corresponding secretary for Belgium in the General Council. In a first report from Belgium written on 1 May 1872, Rochat confirmed that some of the Belgian Federal Council members were critical of the General Council, of which they do not 'recognise the utility, which they consider harmful to the development of the assoc[iation]; for being disposed by its very position to act in an *authoritarian* manner, it creates conflicts'.⁶

This critical position was also expressed in Belgium during the debate about the revision of the International's General Rules. Because the Belgian federal congress of December 1871 had instructed the Federal Council 'to make a project of new Rules and to publish it in order that it

¹ Engels to Liebknecht, 2 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 289.

² Maria Yatskevich, see above, pp. 483–84, n. 61.

³ Engels to Liebknecht, 18 January 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 296.

⁴ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 106. The *Liberté* was not an organ of the International. In his reply to the General Council, De Paepe referred to it as 'a friendly paper, edited by some members of the International'. (De Paepe to Rochat, 16 March 1872, in Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 372).

⁵ Engels to Liebknecht, 23 April 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 361.

⁶ Rochat to Marx, 1 May 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 165/5.

should be discussed in the sections and then at the next Belgian congress',⁷ Hins initiated the formation of a committee for this purpose in the Federal Council on 6 January 1872.⁸ A draft of the rules was then submitted to the federal congress convened in Brussels on 19 and 20 May 1872. A preamble to the rules project stated:

Charged by the Belgian Congress of 25 and 26 December 1871 to draw up a project of General Rules to submit first to the Belgian Congress and then to the International Congress, today we publish the result of our labours. We believe we should preface this project with a brief explanation.

The most important innovation is the abolition of the General Council. None have more respect than ourselves for the eminent qualities and dedication of the men who compose that body, but it seems to us that the General Council, indispensable at the outset, has lost its reason for existence today. National federations have been formed everywhere or are in the process of formation, and they can correspond with one another without an intermediary from now on.⁹

Not surprisingly, the rules project didn't mention a body called the General Council. This sensational project, apparently penned by Hins and approved by the majority of the Belgian Federal Council, provoked lively debate at the federal congress.¹⁰ The following was recorded in the minutes:

From all sides, the best arguments converge either in abolishing the General Council and replacing it with correspondence between the federations or in maintaining it only to reform its attributes such that it is really an executive commission, the expression of the congress, and cannot degenerate into any form of power at all.

Some maintain that, while it was indispensable at the outset, its mediation has become useless, all the more so now that the national federations have been formed or are in the process of formation, and that they can dispense with the intermediary of the General Council¹¹ in order to correspond among themselves from now on. Others highlight the real services rendered by the General Council from the foundation of the International to the present, its loyalty in respecting the decisions of the congress and complying with it in all respects; for them, in the end, it is impossible to abolish this administrative institution without dislocating the Association, and to strip the International of its symbol of economic unity would be purely and simply to destroy it.¹²

Delegates also complained that the rules project was not submitted to the sections for discussion beforehand as stipulated by the Belgian federal congress in December 1871. Because two days of debate had not resulted in a resolution, a motion was passed close to the end of the congress to adjourn the decision until an extraordinary federal congress eight weeks later.¹³

The news regarding the lively discussion about abolishing the General Council alarmed Marx, Engels, and their correspondents: 'The idea must emanate from Bakunin', Lafargue declared on 1 June 1872, referring to the Belgian rules project.¹⁴ Marx was unable to see the suspected author

⁷ See above, p. 114.

⁸ 'Procès-verbaux des séances du Conseil général belge', list 48 ob.

⁹ 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 19 et 20 mai', *Internationale*, 26 May 1872, p. 1.

¹⁰ See also Glaser de Willebrord to Marx, 20 May 1872, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 383.

¹¹ In the original erroneously: '*Conseil fédéral*' (Federal Council) instead of '*Conseil général*' (General Council).

¹² 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 19 et 20 mai', p. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Lafargue to Engels, 1 June 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 451.

of the rules project, Hins, as anything but Bakunin's marionette and couldn't help once again alluding to the dangerous Mrs Hins: 'You will already know of the beautiful Belgian project to revise the Rules', Marx wrote Sorge on 21 June 1872. 'It stems from Hins, an ambitious nonentity, who, together with his Russian wife, takes orders from Bakounine.'¹⁵ As usual Engels went a step further: 'Through his Russian wife Hins is in direct [!] contact with Bakunin and on the latter's instructions [!] he has devised a salubrious project to abolish the General Council'.¹⁶ In the General Council, Marx unceremoniously dubbed the Belgian rules project 'the proposition of Bakunin'.¹⁷ All we know from documents from that period is that Bakunin had absolutely no contact with Belgium throughout this period. Apparently, Bakunin didn't even know Hins's wife, Maria Yatskevich, existed.

Irritated by the events in Brussels, Marx did not pass up on the chance to snub the Belgian Federal Council twice. On 4 June 1872, a letter from Brussels was read in the General Council announcing the formation of an independent section of Communards.

The letter asked that the section might be recognised as an independent section and there were several reasons why they could not enter the Belgian Federation. Some of the members of the Belgian Federal Council had advised them not to do so, saying that they would be liable to be denounced to the police and would possibly be expelled from the country; besides, the [Federal] Council refused to recognise the ninth resolution of the Congress resolutions¹⁸ which the section adhered to without reserve. It believed in the maintenance of discipline, and asked to be recognised as an independent section.¹⁹

Art. 5 of the administrative resolutions adopted at the Basel Congress settled this question: 'wherever there exist Federal Councils or Committees, the General Council is bound to consult them before admitting or rejecting the affiliation of a new section or society within their jurisdiction; without prejudice, however, to its right of provisional decision.'²⁰ This regulation was observed a half year earlier with respect to the newly formed section of the *Geneva* Communards: the refugees of the Commune in Geneva wanted to form their section of propaganda outside of the pre-existing federation (Romance Federation), as well. At its meeting on 24 October 1871, the General Council decided to wait for the Romance Federation Committee's decision on the membership of the section.²¹ The repeated objections by the Geneva Federal Committee and Marx and Engels' political reservations led the General Council to dismiss the membership bid of their critics, the Geneva Communards – they did not even see fit to answer the Communards' many enquiries.

Unsurprisingly, there was a different reaction to the General-Council-friendly membership bid of the Brussels Communards – who were apparently all too eager to point out their approval

¹⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 399.

¹⁶ Engels to Cuno, 5 July 1872, *ibid.*, p. 407.

¹⁷ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 222 (meeting on 11 June 1872). At the same meeting, the General Council adopted a curious resolution stating that it refused to disband itself (*ibid.*, pp. 222–23).

¹⁸ This refers to resolution no. 9 of the London Conference about the 'political action of the working class', i.e. their constitution into a political party and the conquest of political power; see above, p. 100.

¹⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 215. The letter has not survived; it was possibly written by Marx's confidant Glaser de Willebrord and sent by him to Marx on 26 May 1872: 'I leave open the letter that I address to Serrailier so that you may know of it.' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 386).

²⁰ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 129.

²¹ See above, pp. 480–81, n. 20.

of resolution no. 9.²² The minutes of the General Council meeting on 4 June 1872 recount the proceedings:

Citizen *Marx* said it must be remembered that the Belgian Federal Council had repudiated the resolution of the Conference upon the political action of the working class, though Belgium had a greater representation upon the Conference than any other country. The Council ought not to stultify itself.

Citizen *Dupont* thought the French were in an exceptional position: the refugees represented the spirit of the French revolution, and that rendered the circumstances exceptional; he believed it would be in accordance with the Rules to accept the section.²³

Even though the *Geneva* Communards – who certainly also ‘represent the spirit of the French revolution’ – were not accepted, the General Council adopted the following resolution with regard to the *Brussels* Communards: ‘That the French section of Brussels be admitted without first referring to the Belgian Federal Council, in conformity with the advice given to that section by members of the Belgian Federal Council themselves, and in order not to unnecessarily endanger the safety of the French refugees in Belgium.’²⁴ Of course, no mention was made of the ideological motivations. The demands to reduce the General Council’s authority certainly gained steam in Belgium after this provocation.²⁵

Marx also took advantage of another opportunity to snub the Federal Council in Brussels. On 20 June 1872, Octave Van Suetendael – a mechanic from Brussels – wrote a letter to Marx in which he made various accusations against the heads of the central section in Brussels; for example, the rules of the section had not been printed despite a resolution calling for this and the accounts were not kept properly. In reality the rules had been printed in 1868²⁶ and the books appear to have been in good order between 1870 and 1873.²⁷ Van Suetendael concluded:

[These are] all the small troubles which go to make up our greatest evil in Belgium. If it were possible to have a new section recognised by the [General] Council it would soon be done, for a workers’ federation is in the process of formation in Brussels, it is making serious progress

²² Whether the membership bid really represented the sentiments of the Communards is doubtful: three months later two sections of Brussels Communards elected Frédéric Potel and the Communard Victor Cyrille as their delegates to the Congress of The Hague. Cyrille belonged to the *minority* at the congress. Potel’s mandate (see *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 319) was signed by Camille E. Riduet and Gustave-Iréné Mondet. A spy reported on 14 August 1872 that a meeting of the Communards in Brussels, which Mondet attended, resolved ‘to send a delegate to the Congress of The Hague (of 2 September) in order to protest against the new way inaugurated by the General Council of London with the goal of transforming the *Internationale* into a political association’ (H. Wouters [ed.], *Documenten betreffende de geschiedenis der arbeidersbeweging ten tijde van de Ie Internationale (1866–1888)*, 3 vols. [Leuven-Louvain, Paris: Éditions Nauwelaerts and Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1970–1971], vol. 1, p. 486). In another report from Brussels, spy ‘no. 6’ (i.e. Gustave Puissant) noted on 27 August 1872 the ‘decisively hostile attitude toward the London Council by the French and Communard sections of the Internationale’ (Archives de la Préfecture de Police [APP], Paris, Ba 427; for more on Puissant see M. Vuilleumier, ‘L’exil des communeux’, in C. Latta [ed.], *La Commune de 1871: L’événement, les hommes et la mémoire. Actes du colloque organisé à Précieux et à Montbrison les 15 et 16 mars 2003*, [Saint-Étienne: Publications de l’Université de Saint-Étienne, 2004], pp. 282–84).

²³ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 215.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 216. With one dissenting vote, probably from Hermann Jung, *ibid.*, pp. 218–19 (meeting on 11 June 1872).

²⁵ Désiré Brismée also confronted the General Council on this issue at the Congress of The Hague; see B. Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 40.

²⁶ The text can be found in C. Oukhow (ed.), *Documents relatifs à l’histoire de la Première Internationale en Wallonie* (Leuven, Paris: Éditions nauwelaerts, 1967), pp. 5–9.

²⁷ See Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 406, n. 1843.

and on a good basis. Most of the societies which it comprises withdrew from the International because of the despotism reigning in it [...].²⁸

Van Suetendael also complained that there were only six unimportant workers' associations represented in the Belgian Federal Council, and recommended organising the marble workers. In reality, 17 workers' associations were represented in the Federal Council,²⁹ and the federation of marble workers had long been a member of the International.³⁰ In spite of these discrepancies, Marx was thankful for Van Suetendael's letter and tried to exploit the criticism it contained regarding the Belgian Federal Council. He replied immediately, informing Van Suetendael of the following:

the new section now forming in Brussels has only to write to the General Council (and it may use my address, the Belgian secretary being away) and state that it wishes to form 'an independent society', in direct relation with the General Council. [...] The Federation of Working Men's Societies of which you speak would be well-advised, when nominally constituting several sections (say 3 or 4), to request the Council to admit them all at the same time. Their very number would make it easier for the General Council to act. For the fact that *several* societies in Brussels desired to constitute themselves independently of the Belgian Federal Council would of itself provide serious presumptive evidence against the latter. Once admitted by the General Council, the said societies will have the right to send delegates to the next Congress – either a common delegate or one delegate per society.³¹

Fictitious Splits in the International by Marx and Engels

Marx and Engels seem to have agreed to write a pamphlet to counter the *Sonvillier Circular* shortly after its release: 'As to the cantankerous Jurassians, we shall soon indict them', Engels wrote Lafargue on 9 December 1871.³² The composition and publication of the controversial pamphlet was delayed for a number of reasons. In December 1871, Engels promised 'a circular embracing all phases of the dispute from its inception; [...] it will be lengthy and will take us some time'.³³ On 24 January 1872, Engels expressed the hope that the General Council 'will soon issue its own circular on this question'.³⁴ But he and Marx still seem to have been busy writing at the end of February 1872. Late in the evening and toward the end of the General Council's meeting on 5 March 1872, Marx introduced the extensive document:

Citizen *Marx* brought up the manifesto which had been drawn up relative to the Swiss disputes. It was in French but he gave an explanation of the salient points and stated that the great

²⁸ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 349

²⁹ H. Collin-Dajch, 'Contribution à l'étude de la Première Internationale à Bruxelles (1865–1873)', *Cahiers bruxellois* 1 (1956), 137.

³⁰ 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 19 et 20 mai', p. 1 (participation at the Belgian federal congress from 19 to 20 May 1872). See also Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 1, p. 441 (participation at the general congress from 6 to 13 September 1868). In a letter to Marx dated 14 October 1872, Van Suetendael corrected himself: the marble workers 'declare themselves to be affiliated with the International but do not pay [dues]' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 436).

³¹ Marx to Van Suetendael, 21 June 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 401.

³² F. Engels, P. and L. Lafargue, *Correspondance*, ed. by É. Bottigelli, 3 vols. (Paris: Éditions sociales, 1956–1959), vol. 1, p. 14 (the translation in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 278, is inaccurate).

³³ Engels to Lafargue, 30 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 284.

³⁴ Engels to Cuno, 24 January 1872, *ibid.*, p. 310.

value of the document consisted in the historical development of the principles and policy of the Association, which was traced most distinctly [...].³⁵

Thus the controversial pamphlet was presented to the General Council's members, who for the most part did not understand French, as a historical study of the 'principles and policy' of the International. In a private letter written earlier, Marx had highlighted the ideological nature of the pamphlet, which 'will give a clear account of the intrigues of Bakunin and his comrades, etc.'³⁶ Apparently Marx assumed that no one would get behind the true nature of the extensive document in the few minutes at the end of a General Council meeting. Marx even moved that the General Council approve the text and commission its printing, so that the pamphlet could be published in the General Council's name with the signature of all its members. Marx's scheme irritated the English General Council member Maltman Barry:

Citizen *Barry* asked for an explanation with reference to the disputes which necessitated the manifesto.

Citizen *Engels* entered into a lengthy explanation.

Citizen *Barry* hoped the Council would excuse him, but as the document was in French and [he] had not a thorough knowledge of it he wished to withhold his name – he did not wish his name to be appended to anything he did not understand.³⁷

Although Barry's objection rang true for the most of his General Council colleagues and despite the fact that most General Council members – regardless of their language skills – were not aware of the pamphlet's content, it was approved without any further discussion and cleared for printing.

By now three and a half months had passed since the *Sonvillier Circular* was released. Yet there were further delays during the printing of the controversial pamphlet in Geneva, which was organised by Utin – who also suggested corrections and additions.³⁸ The sheer extent of the text was one of the problems: the pamphlet was supposed to respond to the *Sonvillier Circular*, which fits *on a double-sided piece of paper*; Marx bragged in a letter written three days after the

³⁵ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 119. On the other hand, the published report of the meeting mentioned the ideological character of the pamphlet: 'It was a vigorous defence of the policy of the Association, and showed most conclusively that the doctrine "That the Working-class ought to abstain from Politics" was both absurd and dangerous.' (*Eastern Post*, 10 March 1872, p. 5).

³⁶ Marx to Jozewicz, 1 February 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 315.

³⁷ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 120. Barry is not mentioned as one of the signatories of the *Fictitious Splits*, despite saying at the next General Council meeting 'that he had had some friendly conversation with Citizen Engels upon the subject and after the explanation he had heard he was willing that his name should appear, but he must say as a justification that as a rule it was desirable that everyone should know the substance of every document to which he gave his adhesion' (*ibid.*, p. 121 [meeting on 12 March 1872]). Barry brought this up again four and a half months later and suggested 'that every member of the Council should be consulted before his name could be appended to any document issued by the Council and that every member should be at liberty to append or withhold his name'. Vaillant criticised this suggestion: 'he thinks it necessary for the Council to represent a unit; if some members are not satisfied with the action of the Council they can withdraw from it.' Barry's proposal was rejected by the General Council (*ibid.*, p. 262 [meeting on 23 July 1872]). Hales told the Spanish delegates to the Congress of The Hague that his signature had been added to the *Fictitious Splits* 'without his consent' ('Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles', in Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales* [Valencia: Imprenta de Salvador Amargos, 1872], p. 9). Hales was apparently referring to the deception regarding the brochure's content as he did not bring up any objections during the General Council meeting on 5 March 1872. See also below, p. 304.

³⁸ See his manuscript with notes by Marx (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, list 185).

General Council meeting on 5 March that the pamphlet would be as long as 'The Civil War in France', the General Council's address regarding the Paris Commune.³⁹

Technical difficulties incurred by the Cooperative Printers (*Imprimerie coopérative*) in Geneva and coordination difficulties with London delayed the printing.⁴⁰ This upset Marx, who already felt 'that the crucial moment had passed'.⁴¹ An annoyed Engels wrote: 'Our reply to the Jurasians is still in the press. The devil take all these co-operative printers.'⁴²

By the time the pamphlet was finally released by the General Council at the end of May 1872 as a 'private circular',⁴³ its subject matter and title – *Fictitious Splits in the International* (*Les Prétendues Scissions dans l'Internationale*) – no longer had a big effect. This was largely due to the pamphlet's polemic approach, which dealt with the conflict as a personality issue. The objective debate about the internal organisation and pluralism within the International could no longer be silenced by defaming alleged 'intriguers', as very real political differences had long since come to the forefront: 'today, there are two currents in the *International*', the French refugee Jules Guesde wrote, criticising the *Fictitious Splits*; 'to deny this antagonism exists is to deny that the sun is in the sky'.⁴⁴

Engels and Marx seem to have made the fateful decision early on to carry out the conflict personally and *not objectively*, i.e. by addressing the diverging ideologies inherent in political-parliamentary and social-revolutionary socialism. 'They would like to personalise the issue in order to be able to suppress it more easily', Bakunin noted.⁴⁵ Even Lafargue warned emphatically: 'Avoid giving a personal twist to your reply'.⁴⁶ But Engels insisted 'that these men [Bakunin and the members of the Jura Federation] will be very roughly handled by us'.⁴⁷

As such, Marx did not have to break new literary ground in writing the *Fictitious Splits*. He was able to fall back on his three 'communications' to Belgium, France and Germany regarding Bakunin from 1870 where he had already aggressively attacked Bakunin.⁴⁸ Thus it was not surprising that the aforementioned wrongful accusations against Bakunin were reused and given a prominent role. The *Fictitious Splits* again

- asserted that Bakunin attempted to move the General Council from London to Geneva (misinformation from Moses Hess)⁴⁹

³⁹ Marx to Sorge, 8 March 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 335; and likewise at the General Council meeting on 11 May 1872: 'a longer document than the Address on the Civil War' (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 188).

⁴⁰ See Utin to Marx, 11/15 April 1872, in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2841. Utin to Engels, 12 May 1872, *ibid.*, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 216/11.

⁴¹ Quoted according to Utin to Marx, 11/15 April 1872, *ibid.*, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 2841.

⁴² Engels to Liebknecht, 7 May 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 366.

⁴³ Marx to Sorge, 27 May 1872, *ibid.*, p. 379. The pamphlet was labelled a '*circulaire privée*' on the title page – i.e. it was not meant for the public – but obviously intended for mass circulation as 2,000 copies were printed and sold 'to the members and the general public' for 3 pence a piece (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 220–21 [meeting on 11 June 1872]). Cooperative Printers to Engels, 22 June 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3255).

⁴⁴ Guesde to 'V...d', 13 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 389/5.

⁴⁵ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 7, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁴⁶ Lafargue to Engels, 7 January 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 414. For more about Engels' dismissive reply in his letter dated 19 January 1872, see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 301.

⁴⁷ Engels to Lafargue, 11 March 1872, *ibid.*, p. 337.

⁴⁸ See above, pp. 38–44, 55–57.

⁴⁹ See above, pp. 29–31.

- accused Bakunin of wanting to make the abolition of the right of inheritance the ‘practical point of departure of socialism’ (corruption of the second point in the Alliance programme)⁵⁰
- harped on the phrase ‘equalisation of classes’ instead of ‘abolition of classes’ (Marx and Bakunin had both referred to the wording as a ‘slip of the pen’)⁵¹
- blamed Bakunin for Nechaev’s deeds in Russia (an accusation the London Conference had already judged baseless)⁵²

Fictitious Splits again did not lack in contemptuous remarks about Bakunin: the ‘Mohammed without the Koran’, ‘who has taken nothing from the socialist systems except a set of labels’, etc.⁵³ Likewise, other critics of the General Council in various countries were summarily accused of really being directed against the International and manipulated by the bourgeois press, the international police and Bakunin’s Alliance⁵⁴ – an unrestrained and bizarre attack on all those in the International whose opinions diverged from those of the General Council. Furthermore, Bakunin was accused of wanting to replace the International’s General Rules with the Alliance programme ‘and to replace the General Council by his personal dictatorship’.⁵⁵ What’s more, the pamphlet claimed that the Naples section was ‘detached from the International’ by Bakunin, etc.⁵⁶ The text also dealt with the to and fro regarding the membership of the Alliance in the International and the General Council’s conflict with a section of London Communards⁵⁷ who were accused of having ties with the Jura sections – even though they were barely in touch. The Geneva Communards were attacked viciously: according to the pamphlet, their newspaper the *Révolution Sociale* had – among other things – adopted the ‘slogan put in circulation by the European police’ in denouncing ‘the [General] Council’s *authoritarianism*’.⁵⁸ It is hard to believe that an uncommitted member of the International would subscribe to the General Council’s opinion based on such ferocious attacks.

⁵⁰ See above, pp. 19–20.

⁵¹ See above, pp. 4–6. ‘As if one or the other were not the same’, a Spaniard remarked; see *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 3. After reading the *Fictitious Splits*, Robin commented ironically: ‘Shall I speak as well of the countless disasters produced by the fact that the author of the original statutes of the Alliance wrote *equalisation* of classes rather than *abolition*. Everyone has had enough of this old story. The correction of the incorrect word was made immediately (1869), and the tribe of Marx still talks of it. This takes up more than one page in the noble work: ‘Fictitious Splits!’ (Robin, ‘Mémoire justificatif’, p. 387).

⁵² See above, pp. 92–93.

⁵³ Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, pp. 107, 121.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 85. Bakunin’s opinion was quite the opposite: ‘impose the programme of the Alliance upon the International, and the International will no longer count more than two or three thousand members throughout Europe. These will, indeed, be valuable members, the most developed, the strongest and most sincere revolutionary socialists of Europe – but what are three thousand men before the combined power of the rich classes and the state, of all the states? – Absolutely powerless.’ (Bakunin to Alerini, [3–6 May 1872], p. 8; the nine-page manuscript of this letter was erroneously published as a continuation of Bakunin’s letter to Morago written the same month; see Bakunin to Tomás Gonzalez Morago, 21 May 1872, pp. 7–15, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. See also Bakunin, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 6, p. 1205).

⁵⁶ Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, p. 91.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 85–89, 96–101.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 95, see also pp. 103–5.

Long passages also condemned the *Sonvillier Circular* – for its criticism regarding the composition and authority of the London Conference, for example. In response to this criticism, the odd theory was put forward that the General Council only had *one* delegate at the London Conference:

In actual fact, among the General Council delegates at the Conference, the French refugees were none other than the representatives of the Paris Commune, while its English and Swiss members could only take part in the sessions on rare occasions, as is attested to by the Minutes which will be submitted before the next Congress. One Council delegate had a mandate from a national federation [Alfred Herman]. According to a letter addressed to the Conference, the mandate of another was withheld because of the news of his death in the papers. That left one delegate [!]. Thus, the Belgians alone outnumbered the Council by 6 to 1.⁵⁹

In reality, the minutes which survive to this day attest to the fact that *twenty-one* members of the General Council attended the London Conference (not including Herman) and that twelve of them had the right to vote: six represented the General Council and six more were the General Council's corresponding secretaries for countries that did not send delegates.⁶⁰

The criticism in the *Fictitious Splits* was particularly weak when it came to the proposal in the *Sonvillier Circular* for a relationship between goal and means within the internal organisation of the International. The *Sonvillier Circular* stated the following on this subject:

Therefore, we must take care to bring this organisation as close as possible to our ideal. How could a free and egalitarian society arise from an authoritarian organisation? Such a thing is impossible. As the embryo of the future human society, the International is obliged to present a faithful image of our principles of freedom and federation here and now, and to expel from its midst any principle tending towards authority or dictatorship.⁶¹

In the *Fictitious Splits*, Marx and Engels dismissed this position as follows:

In other words, just as the medieval convents presented an image of celestial life, so the International must be the image of the New Jerusalem, whose 'embryo' the Alliance bears in its womb. The Paris Communards would not have failed if they had understood that the Commune was 'the embryo of the future human society' and had cast away all discipline and all arms [...].⁶²

An analysis of the different presuppositions inherent to the conflict – for example, the conviction expressed here that a functioning organisation can only be authoritarian – would have been fruitful and forward-looking; however, such an analysis was not undertaken.

The text further attempted to defend the London Conference resolutions – above all resolution no. 9 (constitution of the working class into a political party, conquest of political power), which the authors confidently claimed 'makes short work of the political abstention preached by Bakunin's programme'.⁶³ It went on to once again attempt to juxtapose the *sectarian movement* with the *real movement*.⁶⁴ What's more, the text tried to legitimise the General Council and its activities through the General Rules and congress resolutions.⁶⁵ The second last chapter paid meticulous attention to the organisational difficulties of the Jura sections over the last

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 102–3.

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 86–87.

⁶¹ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 406.

⁶² Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 115.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁶⁴ See above, pp. 82–83.

⁶⁵ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious splits', pp. 108–14.

year – without taking the Franco-German War into account, which caused the Geneva sections just as many problems.⁶⁶ The last chapter involved a detailed description of how Bakunin's former political friends Albert Richard and Gaspard Blanc had shifted their allegiance. They broke with their revolutionary past in 1871 and openly declared their support for Napoleon III.⁶⁷ This sparked widespread outrage: both the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* and Bakunin (in a letter to the editor in the *Tagwacht* on 14 February 1872) distanced themselves from the two. Bakunin wrote that already by autumn 1870 he had

seen Richard as a coward and traitor, and the tomfoolery that he had just committed with his accomplice Kasp. Blanc has proven to me that he is an imbecile on top. We should congratulate ourselves that both scoundrels have gone over to the empire. I myself only wish one thing: that all false brothers in the International take a position just as overt as these two have taken, and that all two-faced characters show themselves in their true colours.⁶⁸

The anti-Bakunist *Égalité*, edited by Utin, made a point of using Richard's shift in allegiance to damage Bakunin's reputation: 'Albert Richard was the golden boy, the prophet of Bakunin and his crowd'.⁶⁹ Marx also gleefully declared to the General Council: 'These men had belonged to the party in the International who preached abstention from politics, and that abstention had borne its fruits in making them imperialists.'⁷⁰

Carlo Cafiero in Naples later wrote about this to Engels:

And what about the Richard-Blanc affair? With what right does Marx, in relating that affair to the General Council, insinuate against all the individuals of a party, who do not share his opinions: 'They had belonged to that party who had always preached abstention from politics'? Here, then, is revolutionary socialism in Europe in its entirety, transfigured by Marx into a hotbed of traitors!⁷¹

Just as Cafiero resented such attacks, many members of the International must have been displeased reading all of the abuse in the *Fictitious Splits*. It must have been quite surprising that the final passage of the pamphlet, virtually at the last moment, attempted to make a statement on a contentious issue after all:

All Socialists see anarchy as the following programme: once the aim of the proletarian movement, i.e., abolition of classes, is attained,⁷² the power of the State, which serves to keep the great

⁶⁶ Thousands of German and French workers were conscripted and had to leave Geneva because of the Franco-German War. The number of sections shrank and the Geneva Federation's organ, the *Égalité*, had to be discontinued for a number of months; see Gruner, *Die Arbeiter in der Schweiz*, pp. 625–26; see also the letters from Perret to Jung, 14 August and 27 November 1870, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 894 and 895. The dramatic arrangement in the *Fictitious Splits*, which conjured up the image of a Jura Federation in decline, was meant to suggest that those who signed the *Sonvillier Circular* 'make more noise than their stature warrants' (Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 118). For more about the manipulations in this context, see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 233–34. The same topic was given an even rougher treatment in the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' by Engels/Lafargue; see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 478–79.

⁶⁷ A. Richard and G. Blanc, *L'Empire et la France nouvelle. Appel du peuple et de la jeunesse à la conscience française* (Brussels: Victor Devaux et Cie, 1872).

⁶⁸ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 6, p. 315. See also Bakunin's letter to Guillaume, excerpts of which were published in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1872, p. 4.

⁶⁹ *Égalité*, 15 February 1872, p. 6.

⁷⁰ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 96 (meeting on 6 February 1872).

⁷¹ Cafiero to Engels, 12/19 June 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 222–23. Cafiero was referring to the minutes of the General Council meeting published in the *Eastern Post*, 10 February 1872, p. 5.

⁷² The *Federación* said the following about anarchy as an ultimate goal for the future: "But anarchy – some say – is not a means, but an end." What are they trying to say? Do they believe that the working people are a flock to led by a shepherd? Do they want to have the power to govern them in their hands? Do they want to think for

majority of producers in bondage to a very small exploiter minority, disappears, and the functions of government become simple administrative functions. The Alliance reverses the whole process. It proclaims anarchy in proletarian ranks as the most infallible means of breaking the powerful concentration of social and political forces in the hands of the exploiters. Under this pretext, it asks the International, at a time when the old world is seeking a way of crushing it, to replace its organisation with anarchy.⁷³

This passage also insinuates wildly about the nature of the Alliance's goals – which again is assumed to represent all of the General Council's critics. In reality, the critics of the General Council – who dominated in Jura, Belgium, Italy and Spain – all wanted a return to pluralism and a federalist internal organisation within the International and not 'to replace its organisation with anarchy'. It would have nevertheless been interesting to see the contemporaries discuss about how government and state power disappear on their own in socialism. However, hidden beneath vast layers of hostilities and polemics, this last passage of the pamphlet was unable to stimulate a fruitful debate on principles.⁷⁴

Engels' wish that the polemic efforts put into the *Fictitious Splits* would 'produce a terrific row'⁷⁵ did not come true because the resolutions of the Belgian federal congresses in December 1871 and May 1872 had long before shifted the focus of the debate to the contentious issues (internal organisation and pluralism within the International), which were left unmentioned in the *Fictitious Splits*. The widely held anxiety that the General Council was becoming authoritarian seemed to be confirmed by the pamphlet, whose 'message' fizzled out against this backdrop. The *Federación* reported from Italy, for example, that 'the private circular from the [General] Council, in which active and conscientious men like citizen Bakunin were slandered so much, bore results that ran markedly contrary to those intended by its author, the German Karl Marx.'⁷⁶ And a text by Pezza or Cafiero dated 20 July 1872 complained:

The General Council sought to hide an important question of principles under a heap of gossip and personal hostility which it had no shame in recounting, presenting it to the international public as a document of great importance. Men to whom most of the facts narrated were unknown, and who thus could not be competent judges, did not hold back from putting their names to that mass of lies and malicious insinuations with their eyes closed,⁷⁷ blindly obeying the beck of Marx.

them? Like every tyrant or vain person are they trying to become their masters under the pretext of leading them to happiness? Those that titillate themselves as friends of anarchy and accept, albeit temporarily, authoritarian powers, should stop with these metaphysical speculations. They should speak frankly and disclose their real intentions; and we will see that they do not accept anarchy. After all, the idea of *anarchy* does not support anybody (even if they pose as their friend) who comes with the more or less declared pretension of being director, leader or owner. Anarchy, like solidarity and equality, is an aspiration of justice, the means and ends of it and a complete idea. And hence without any compromises of any type we should proclaim them and apply them to the utmost degree inside the circumstances that we find ourselves in.' (*Federación*, 7 December 1872, p. 1).

⁷³ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', pp. 121–22.

⁷⁴ James Guillaume later regretted this: 'there was in this same circular, on the penultimate page, a phrase which seemed to have passed unseen, since none took notice of it' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 298).

⁷⁵ Engels to Cuno, 22/23 April 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 358. A positive response to the *Fictitious Splits* came from Van Suetendael, who considered it 'most useful' in his battle against the Belgian rules project (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 407); whereby, the Belgian rules project wasn't mentioned at all.

⁷⁶ *Federación*, 14 July 1872, p. 4.

⁷⁷ This is a reference to the fact that almost all of the General Council approved the *Fictitious Splits* without knowing what it was about; see above, p. 202.

And this is the probity, the dignity of a Council which aspires to the absolute government of the International so as to make it an instrument of political struggle [...].⁷⁸

Even people who had endeavoured to remain neutral like Peter Lavrov,⁷⁹ a Russian emigrant living in London, and a General Council supporter like Theodor Remy in Zurich were ill at ease with the *Fictitious Splits*. Remy was first a member of the Alliance, but like Becker he turned his back on them and joined the section in Zurich, which was oriented toward social democracy and headed by Hermann Greulich. Two and a half months after the publication of the *Fictitious Splits*, Remy wrote Jung, the corresponding secretary for Switzerland in the General Council:

As for the pamphlet, permit me to tell you that I have never understood its necessity or suitability. Bakunin had almost destroyed himself in Geneva; with your pamphlet you gave life back to him. I pass over the indirect accusations that you level against Bakunin himself; but you attack more or less all the former members of the *Alliance*. It would take too long to start a discussion here on the *Alliance*; only allow me to assure you that many devoted and tested men have been members of it, and that in the circumstances in which the International found itself in Geneva, there was a reason for the existence of a society of energetic and resolute socialists. But according to your pamphlet all those men were – for anybody who can read between the lines – only fools and dupes of Bakunin or else traitors of the type of Alb. Richard and Co. Such an insinuation is neither fair nor apt. I do not wish to go so far as to say that your pamphlet raised an army for Bakunin, but it hardly increased the number of the General Council's friends, while it hurt the feelings of many sincere men.⁸⁰

Bakunin's third strategy: open criticism of Marx

If the General Council's own supporters like Remy were ill at ease with the *Fictitious Splits*, one can imagine how indignant the Communards, the Jura Federation's members and Bakunin were after such a ferocious attack. Shortly before the *Fictitious Splits* was released, the conflict was fuelled further by reports about the 'Confidential Communication' – Marx's anti-Bakunist diatribe written in March 1870 and addressed to the committee of the SDAP in Brunswick.⁸¹ The Prussian police authorities had learned about the 'Confidential Communication' regarding Bakunin in September 1870: After the *Manifesto of the Committee of the Social-Democratic Workers' Party* (*Manifest des Ausschusses der social-demokratischen Arbeiterpartei*)⁸² was released in opposition to the continuation of the Franco-German War, the five members of the committee (Bracke, von Bonhorst, Spier, Gralle and Kühn) and the manifesto's printer (Sievers) were arrested and taken away in chains to the Boyen fortress in East Prussia near what is now Giżycko,

⁷⁸ 'Risposta di alcuni internazionali, membri della Federazione del Jura, alla circolare privata del Consiglio Generale di Londra', Introduzione, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 395–96.

⁷⁹ For more on Lavrov, see P. Pomper, *Peter Lavrov and the Russian Revolutionary Movement* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press, 1972). In a letter to a member of the International in Brussels (possibly Désiré Brismée) dated 10 June 1872, Lavrov wrote with regret about the 'animosity which has developed between the parties. The Geneva brochure that was just published is a sign of bad times' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 392).

⁸⁰ Remy to Jung, 12 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 437–38.

⁸¹ See above, pp. 40–44.

⁸² Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, pp. 1062–66. For Bakunin's opinion on individual phrases in the *Manifesto*, see Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy*, p. 191. Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 159, and vol. 7, pp. 408–9.

Poland. While Samuel Spier was being arrested, the Prussian authorities found a copy of the 'Confidential Communication', which was mentioned at Bonhorst, Bracke, Kühn and Spier's trial on charges of 'breaching the public order' 14 months later.⁸³

Spier's copy of the 'Confidential Communication' also played a role in Bebel and Liebknecht's trial which took place the following year in Leipzig.⁸⁴ There the communication became general knowledge. The *Volksstaat* reported the following about the sixth day of the high treason trial on 16 March 1872:

Hereafter a confidential communication of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association from London dated 28 March 1870 is read REGARDING A RUSSIAN BAKUNIN AND HIS MACHINATIONS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL. This document written in German is accompanied by another in French, whose translation is also read. [...] Three points in this communication by the General Council are highlighted by the *President* as particularly serious: 1. It apparently states that 'the General Council has its hand directly on the great LEVER OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION,' whereby the President assumes that the General Council deems itself a SUPREME REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE AND THE BODIES BENEATH IT AS SUB REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES. 2. The document written in French mentions the General Council's 'serious underground work', i.e., a course of action that, as the President believes, has every reason to HIDE ITSELF FROM THE EYES OF THE LAW.⁸⁵ [...]

Liebknecht answers to this: indeed I was sent this confidential communication during its time [...]. The passage regarding the General Council's serious UNDERGROUND work is part of the French document, which was probably written by a Frenchman and definitely not Carl Marx. One has to bear in mind that this expression is used as a contrast to Bakunin's charlatan mongering [...]. As for the passage 'lever of the revolution', Liebknecht says, I wish to establish that 'the economic lever' was said. Bakunin wanted to see the General Council's headquarters moved from London to Switzerland, and the General Council countered: England is the centre of all

⁸³ The minutes of the second day of the trial (24 November 1871) state: 'Furthermore a copy of a 'Confidential Communication regarding the Russian Bakunin' dated 28 March 1870 from London found with Spier has been submitted. [...] The prosecutor notes that the communication concerning Bakunin apparently comes from Spier. Spier says that he received the communication in question from Bracke, but that he knew nothing else about it.' (W. Bracke jr., *Der Braunschweiger Ausschuß der socialdemokratischen Arbeiter-Partei in Lötzen und vor dem Gericht* [Brunswick: Verlag der Expedition des 'Braunschweiger Volksfreund', 1872], pp. 155–56. Missing in the trial report in the *Volksstaat*, 2 December 1871, p. 4.

⁸⁴ At demonstrations and on 26 November 1870 in the Reichstag of the North German Confederation, Bebel and Liebknecht had rejected new credits for the continuation of the Franco-German War and called for a peace agreement with the French Republic without annexations. Both were then arrested on 17 December 1870 for high treason and imprisoned until 28 March 1871. They were convicted of high treason at a trial in Leipzig (11–26 March 1872) and sentenced to two years in jail.

⁸⁵ Marx included the entire 'Private Communication' – his response written in French in the General Council's name to the attacks in the *Égalité* in January 1870 (see above, pp. 36–37) – in his German 'Confidential Communication'. The talk of the General Council's 'serious underground work' was taken from the 'Private Communication'; it was in reference to the *Égalité*'s enquiries as to why the General Council also acted as the British Federal Council, thus taking on multiple roles. The 'Private Communication' responded that 'If a *Federal Council* were formed apart from the *General Council*, what would be the immediate results? Placed between the *General Council* and the *General Council of Trades Unions*, the *Federal Council* would have no authority whatever. On the other hand, the *General Council of the International* would lose control of the great lever. If we had preferred the showman's chatter to serious underground work, we would perhaps have committed the mistake of replying publicly [to] the *Égalité*'s question' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 87 ['serious and unostentatious work' instead of the correct 'serious underground work' ('l'action sérieuse et souterraine'); corrected according to the original wording in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/21, p. 162]).

economic movements, the lever for all economic upheaval is here, it would be folly to leave this land where, for example, the trade crises also originate. [...] [The 'Confidential Communication'] was mainly intended to lay bare Bakunin's position with regard to the International Working Men's Association, by which – in opposition to critical-scientific socialism, which aims for an *organisation* of the state and society that corresponds to the interests of mankind – he advocates a rude communism that aims to *eliminate* the state and society.⁸⁶

The outrage about this sneaky rhetorical attack soon spread. In addition to Bakunin's close friends Mikhail Sazhin⁸⁷ (pseudonym: Arman Ross) and James Guillaume,⁸⁸ Charles Alerini in Barcelona also voiced his criticism. Four and a half months earlier Alerini had still blamed the conflict about pluralism and the internal organisation of the International on separatism and rivalries.⁸⁹ In response to a message from Engels about the General Council's new address, Alerini sent an official complaint to the General Council on 29 March 1872 where he tried to impart on Engels

the grievous impression that I received, and I can say without temerity that we received, on various occasions, when reading (most recently in connection with the case of the *Volksstaat*) personal attacks by members of the General Council against one of the most ardent propagators of our principles and one of the most zealous defenders of our Association among us, Mikhail Bakunin.

I would like to testify to you as to our displeasure, as I have not failed to express it in Geneva, Neuchâtel and Locarno when we read injurious innuendoes against Karl Marx issuing from there.

These personality issues, which are very distressing besides, are most harmful to our cause and support our enemies perfectly. We are therefore pledged to place our moral opprobrium upon anyone, from whatever quarter he may come, who shall retard or jeopardize the success of the social revolution by ill-considered and excessive attacks. Surely it is profoundly harmful to our cause if men whose zeal and intelligence, activity and selflessness are precious to us in hastening its triumph are discredited by unfounded accusations of which clear evidence cannot be provided.⁹⁰

Bakunin also expressed his outrage in his aforementioned letter to Lorenzo:

As early as 1870, at that time in the name of the General Council, Marx sent to all the regional councils or committees of the International a *confidential* circular, written simultaneously in German and in French, full of what seemed to be injurious invective and slander against myself (this is a fact of which I have only had knowledge for a few weeks, thanks to the last Liebknecht trial) [...].⁹¹

⁸⁶ *Volksstaat*, 20 March 1872, p. 4.

⁸⁷ For more about the cooperation between Ross and Bakunin, see M. P. Sazhin (Arman Ross), *Vospominaniya 1860–1880-kh g.g.* (Moscow: Vsesoyuznoe obshchestvo politicheskikh katorzhan i ssyl'no-poselentsev, 1925). For his remarks regarding the 'Confidential Communication', see Ross to Lavrov, 1 August 1872, in B. Sapir (ed.), *'Vpered!' 1873–1877. From the Archives of Valerian Nikolaevich Smirnov*, 2 vols. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1970), vol. 2, p. 57.

⁸⁸ For more about Guillaume's remarks, see below, p. 225.

⁸⁹ See above, p. 169.

⁹⁰ IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 44.

⁹¹ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. See also the corresponding passage in Bakunin's letter to the editors of the *Liberté* (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 158).

Despite this provocative situation, Bakunin stuck to his *second strategy* regarding Marx – which he had been pursuing since 1871 – and *did not address his political differences with Marx in public*.⁹² In view of this strategy, Bakunin wrote the following to Ceretti in March 1872:

Until now I had disdained to reply to them. They seem determined to force me to break this silence. I shall do so, although very reluctantly, because it disgusts me to bring personal issues into our great cause, and nothing so disgusts me as to occupy the public with my own person. I did everything I could to ensure that my name did not intervene in the controversy about the International in the Italian newspapers.⁹³ That is why I stopped publishing my writings against the Mazzinians, and when Mr Engels indirectly attacked me in the response to Mazzini, I still kept silent ...⁹⁴

Also in keeping with his *second strategy*, Bakunin wanted to write the General Council in order to reach an understanding in mid-April 1872.⁹⁵ In case this failed, Bakunin then wanted to publish ‘a written challenge addressed to the schemers in the General Council’ in Italian newspapers.⁹⁶ In April/May 1872 Bakunin ultimately tried to talk Lorenzo into commenting publicly about what happened at the London Conference, with the aim of using this as the basis for a counteroffensive.⁹⁷ All of these initiatives were thrown out the window, though, after Bakunin received the *Fictitious Splits* on 1 June 1872.⁹⁸ All hope was lost of reaching an understanding or at the very least clarifying the differences with the General Council, which Marx dominated. Bakunin thus adopted his *third strategy* in June 1872 and for the first time answered the challenge in public: according to his diary, he began writing an ‘article or letter against the Marxian circular’ on 6 June and sent it on 7 June to James Guillaume, who was preparing to print numerous replies and viewpoints opposing the *Fictitious Splits*. Already on 8 June, Guillaume had added a note at the end of the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin* which illustrates the first impression that the *Fictitious Splits* made on those it berated:

The author of this *circular* can only be Mr Karl Marx,⁹⁹ whose hand can be recognised unmistakably in certain heavy-handed jests and in a clownish style of a very particular scent. We do not send him our compliments on this new work, which will only bring the disgust of all honest people upon him. We shall return to this point [...].¹⁰⁰

In a private letter, Guillaume expressed his bewilderment: ‘This obviously comes from Marx’s pen. How can a man of talent debase himself to the point of writing such despicable things? It is a mystery to me.’¹⁰¹ The special edition of the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin* published 15 June 1872 included several replies to the *Fictitious Splits*. The anger of the authors is evident: ‘I confess this is not what I was expecting’, the Communard Ernest Teulière declared. ‘Petty personalities,

⁹² See above, p. 70.

⁹³ See also above, p. 152.

⁹⁴ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 255. For more about Engels’ *indirect attack*, see above, p. 133.

⁹⁵ See above, p. 194.

⁹⁶ Bakunin to Ceretti, 13–27 March 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 255.

⁹⁷ See above, pp. 194–95. Bakunin to Lorenzo, 24 April 1872, p. 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁹⁸ Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 20.

⁹⁹ While the *Fictitious Splits* was signed by almost all of the General Council members, Marx and Engels wrote it; see above, pp. 201–2.

¹⁰⁰ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 8 June 1872, p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Quoted according to André Léo to Mathilde Roederer, 13 June 1872, excerpts in Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 295.

feeble invective, little grudges, perfidious little lies – such form the substance of this document. [...] The General Council's circular is a declaration of war on all the groups not inclined to bow their heads before the rod of the grand pontiff.¹⁰² And the Communard Benoît Malon wrote:

If the inhabitant of the *villa Modena* [Marx]¹⁰³ had known what it is to have days without bread and nights without shelter, to see his family starving and desolate, if he had sometimes collapsed from fatigue, if he had grown up with hardships, if he had bristled at the gross insults of a foreman, if he had actually fought and suffered in the ranks of the workers, then he would certainly show more respect for the holy league of the exploited, and he would not jeopardise it in order to defend his ego.¹⁰⁴

Aristide Claris, editor of the Geneva Communards' newspaper the *Révolution Sociale*, dismissed the accusations in the *Fictitious Splits* that his newspaper from 'its very first issue' put itself on the same level as conservative Parisian newspapers 'and other disreputable sheets, reproducing the mud they were throwing at the General Council'.¹⁰⁵ Claris wrote:

This is at once unacceptable and absurd. You have not read a single issue [of that journal] of which you speak, gentlemen of the circular. Otherwise I would be forced to acknowledge that you have a conscience blacker and a head *squarer* than I thought. But no, you place tendencies on trial, you make epilogues, you quibble, you pervert the acknowledged facts at whim, and you answer with ridiculous slanders the accusations of authoritarianism and ambition that we had the right and duty to address to you.¹⁰⁶

Guillaume also defended himself against the various attacks in the *Fictitious Splits*. Guillaume replied to the allegation that the *Progrès*, which he published, was Bakunin's personal mouth-piece:¹⁰⁷

When Bakunin became one of our collaborators, his articles, just like the others, went to the editorial committee, which often subjected them to considerable revision to adapt them to the requirements of the journal. Citizen Bakunin, for whom we have great esteem and amity, has always been treated by us with on a frankly equal basis, and if this seems peculiar to Karl Marx, it is because in his contempt for men, in whom he sees only more or less docile instruments, in his pronounced taste for Jesuitical dictatorship, he cannot imagine an organisation in which no one commands and no one obeys.¹⁰⁸

Bakunin's article – his first open criticism of Marx – wasn't in the least bit discreet, either:

Dear companions of disgrace!

The sword of Damocles with which we have so long been threatened has finally fallen on our heads. This is not strictly speaking a sword, but Mr Marx's usual weapon: a heap of garbage.

¹⁰² *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰³ Marx moved into the 'Modena Villas' in March 1864, a large house in North-western London (1 Maitland Park Road). A letter from Engels to Marx dated 11 May 1870 hints at the size of the house – Engels planned on moving to London in autumn 1870 and was looking for real estate: 'You know the sort of house I need: at least 4, if possible 5 bedrooms [...] and apart from a study for me, two living rooms and kitchen, etc. [...] It doesn't need to be as big as your house' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 514).

¹⁰⁴ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 3. A few months later, Malon regretted that his letter was written 'in a moment of anger' (Malon to Mathilde Røederer, 29 August 1872, IISG, Descaves Papers, no. 696).

¹⁰⁵ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 95.

¹⁰⁶ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 90.

¹⁰⁸ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 7.

Indeed, in the new *private* circular issued by the London General Council, dated 5 March 1872, but having come to public attention, it seems, only in recent days, nothing is lacking: ridiculous inventions, falsification of facts and principles, odious insinuations, cynical lies, infamous slander, in short, all the martial paraphernalia of Mr Marx's on a campaign. It is a collection, hodgepodge as much as systematic, of all the absurd and filthy tales that the malice (more perverse than spiritual) of the German and Russian Jews, his friends, his agents, his followers and at the same time, his henchmen, has peddled and propagated against us all, but especially against me, for almost three years, and especially since the unfortunate Basel Congress, in which we have dared to vote with the majority, against the Marxian policy.¹⁰⁹ [...]

For two and a half years we have endured this foul aggression in silence. [...] I had reasons to remain silent far more important than the natural repulsion one feels for fighting in the mud. I did not want to provide a pretext for these worthy citizens, who obviously were looking for one, to shrink a great debate of principles down to their own size, turning it into a wretched personal issue. I have not wanted to take upon myself any part of the terrible blame that must fall on those who were not afraid to introduce into this International Working Men's Association, from which the proletariat of so many countries now awaits its salvation, through the scandal of personal ambitions, the seeds of discord and dissolution. I have not wanted to offer the bourgeois public the spectacle, so lamentable for us, so delightful for them, of our internal dissensions.

Finally, I felt compelled to refrain from attacking, before the same audience, a coterie in which, as I have been happy to acknowledge, there are men who have rendered undeniable services to the International.

Of course, these men now dishonour and do great harm to the International by using slander against opponents, having probably concluded that they shall not subdue them with the power of their arguments. [...] Besides, I have always held out the possibility of summoning all of my slanderers before a jury of honour, which the next General Congress would doubtlessly not refuse me. And as long as the jury would give me all the guarantees of an impartial and serious judgment, I could expose before it all of the political and personal facts, in all the detail necessary, without fear of the disadvantages and dangers of indiscreet disclosure. [...]

Let me end this letter with one last observation. Nothing better proves the disastrous dominance of Mr Marx in the General Council than this circular. Browse the names of the forty-seven signatories and you will find only seven or eight who could pronounce on this case with *some* knowledge. All the others, blind and complacent tools of Marxian politics and rancour, signed off on an ignominious sentence against us, without ever having seen or heard us, trying and executing us without even deigning to ask us a question!

Is this how the London General Council understands *Justice, Truth, Morality*, which, according to the preamble of our General Rules, must serve as the basis for all relations, both collective and individual, in the International Working Men's Association?¹¹⁰ Ah! Mr Karl Marx, it is easier to put them at the head of a programme than to carry them out!

¹⁰⁹ Bakunin is apparently referring to the respectable result he achieved at the Basel Congress in the right of inheritance discussion; see above, pp. 21–23.

¹¹⁰ 'This International Association and all societies and individuals adhering to it will acknowledge truth, justice, and morality, as the basis of their conduct towards each other, and towards all men, without regard to colour, creed or nationality' (*Rules of the International*, p. 4).

One might say that at this moment, as the Belgian Federation puts the continued existence of the General Council to the question, all the members of this Council were anxious to prove not only that the institution has become useless, but that it is now no longer anything but noxious.

Greetings and solidarity.

Mikhail Bakunin¹¹¹

Just like in his letter to Lorenzo, Bakunin diminished the effect of this article by expressing his anti-Jewish sentiments (for example, the *Fictitious Splits* show the ‘malice (more perverse than spiritual) of the German and Russian Jews’, the ‘furious synagogue’ has made him the scapegoat, etc.). As such, Engels had an easy time of discrediting Bakunin’s article. Engels wrote Cuno on 5 July 1872: ‘Bakunin has issued a furious, but very weak, abusive letter in reply to the *Scissions* [...] he declares that he is the victim of a conspiracy of all the European – Jews!’¹¹²

In his aforementioned letter to Jung, Theodor Remy on the other hand held the *General Council* in part responsible for lowering the bar in the discussion with the rhetorical low blows in the *Fictitious Splits*: for example, the Alliance of the ‘Russian Mikhail Bakunin’ who was ‘preaching the ideas of Pan-Slavism’ was behind the international criticism of the General Council, etc.¹¹³ ‘Bakunin pays you back with *German Jews* for the *Russian* that you inflict on him’, Remy wrote Jung. ‘I was not the only one to regret that the General Council let itself be carried away so far as to use such language.’¹¹⁴

Guillaume announced in an editorial note in the *Bulletin*’s special edition that he wanted to get back to the contentious issues since the ‘personal responses’ to the *Fictitious Splits* had now been made. Furthermore, he mentioned the *Mémoire* the Jura Federation was working on, which would make do without any personal attacks.¹¹⁵

Debate over the Belgian rules project and the second Belgian federal congress (14 July 1872)

Regardless of the polemic in *Fictitious Splits*, the debate about the internal organisation and pluralism of the International grew as the Belgian rules project, which suggested the abolition of the General Council, gathered steam. At first, it was mainly the General Council’s supporters who expressed their reservations regarding the Belgian rules project by claiming that a weakened central body would damage the entire organisation. For example, the Romance Federation, whose Geneva Federal Committee had always agreed with the General Council on political issues, adopted a resolution at their congress from 2 to 3 June 1872, which included the following line of reasoning:

Whereas:

1.¹¹⁶ In abolishing the General Council, this most powerful and essential expression of *our Union*;

¹¹¹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, pp. 3–5.

¹¹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 408. See also Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 28.

¹¹³ Marx/Engels, ‘Fictitious Splits’, p. 85.

¹¹⁴ Remy to Jung, 12 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 438.

¹¹⁵ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 June 1872, p. 1. For more about the *Mémoire* of the Jura Federation, see below, pp. 415–416.

¹¹⁶ Mistake in the original: ‘2.’

In wanting to replace the functions of the General Council with direct relations between all the *national* federations *by themselves*;

And in imposing such heavy burdens (both materially and morally) upon the national federations, which it would be impossible to fulfil in a manner adequate to the cause;

– One would gradually see a weakening of the international bonds between the various branches, reduced to the condition of isolated *national* associations;

2. That as a result of this: the *emancipation of labour*, which, according to the fundamental principles of our Association, ‘is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and *depending* for its solution on *the concurrence, practical and theoretical*, of the most advanced countries’ (6th consideration of the General Rules), – this emancipation, *lacking* a centre for such a concurrence, would recede, and all the efforts made to this point would be rendered sterile by a fatal error on the part of the workers themselves;

For these reasons:

1. The Romance Congress makes a brotherly appeal to all branches, urgently inviting them to save our beautiful Association from a corrosive tendency;

2. The Congress believes that if there are revisions to be made to our constitution and our Rules, these should be in the direction of introducing a more solid and robust organisation to the local sections and federations, keeping intact the current federative system of international relations in the Association [...].¹¹⁷

In Germany Bernhard Becker, editor of the social democrats’ organ, the *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, addressed the issue. Becker (1826–1882) was a publicist from Thuringia who fled to London after the Baden Revolution (1849). At the beginning of the 1860s he returned to Germany, where he affiliated himself with Ferdinand Lassalle. He had been a member of the board of Lassalle’s ADAV since 1864 and succeeded Lassalle after his death as its president only to resign from this position in November 1865. In 1870 he had become a member of the ADAV’s rival, the SDAP, and had worked as an editor for the social democratic party’s press since 1871. Engels was puzzled about Becker’s employment: ‘Why bother to rehabilitate that good-for-nothing B. Becker?’¹¹⁸ Liebknecht replied that he gave Becker the position as editor after he repented.¹¹⁹ Engels responded: ‘as for the newspaper, better none at all than one of his sort! If Mr B. Becker has not betrayed the Party (which I do not know for certain), it can hardly be his fault. The man [...] is capable of everything.’¹²⁰ However, for a while Becker did act in the *interest of the party* – Becker, who was influenced by Lassalle and his ultra-centralist ideas, could agree with opponents of Lassalle like Liebknecht on one very important point: the dismissal of federalist forms of organisation. Becker wrote in the *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*: if the members of the International adopt the ideas in the Belgian rules project,

then the ‘International Association’ will waste away, if not into nothing, then in very unpleasant shenanigans regarding the Rules and into anarchy. It will then be far away from ever being able to become a vigorous association. The mystical equality of the foolish sovereign then takes the place of the intellectual leadership and the universal workers’ party collapses in on itself.

¹¹⁷ ‘Résolutions du quatrième Congrès romand’, pp. 2–3.

¹¹⁸ Engels to Liebknecht, mid-August 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 199.

¹¹⁹ Liebknecht to Engels, 8 September 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2505.

¹²⁰ Engels to Liebknecht, 11 September 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 216.

But the federation keeps dividing itself down to its smallest part, until every single worker forms their own federation [...].¹²¹

Eleven days later, Becker again came up with a similarly clever line of reasoning with regards to this issue – this time with reference to the persecution of the International by Continental Europe's great powers.

Our friends in Belgium can gather from this that it would be very unwise if one were to do away with the socialist centre of the Continental socialist network. If we sink down to a nationalist level [...] then we can be struck lethally in the individual nations by the reactionary powers. If we on the other hand stay European by maintaining our London centre: then we are invulnerable. Our General Council and general staff in London cannot be touched by any reaction: unless the government agents manage to incite a strong mutiny against them at the national level in the individual countries namely among the socialist party members themselves.¹²²

In Spain, the Belgian rules project infuriated Lafargue: 'The Belgians are certainly puffed up: abolish the *General Council* indeed! What next! And the Belgian Federal Council to become the General Council for France – that's going even further than the Jurassians.'¹²³ As for the rules project, Lafargue promised 'We shall attack it'.¹²⁴ And so the following critical appraisal appeared in the *Emancipación* on 8 June 1872:

The main reason they had for abolishing the General Council, say the project's authors, is that 'there are national federations formed (or in the process of being formed) everywhere and they can doubtless correspond without an intermediary'. This is not true, and the members of the International who are properly aware of the Association's true state would without doubt agree with us. Consequently, this destroys the basic reasoning of those that want the General Council to cease its existence.¹²⁵ On the other hand, following on from that logic, the federal councils, the local councils and the trade sections' committees should also be abolished as they share the same reason to exist as the General Council. But let us dispense with this and move forward.

While the men must deal with general issues between themselves, they will also need to meet all together (or by delegation) to take decisions regarding the same issues and entrust *someone* with the execution of decisions. The more general issues are and the more separated those dealing with them are, the greater is the need for an executor of the agreed-upon decisions.

This is such a simple idea that, as of yet, no collective has ceased to practise it. And so we see that the sections have their committees and the federations have their councils, which are entrusted with *putting the agreed-upon decisions into practice, and at the same time they are the guardians of the ideas they maintain and the rules governing them.*

Fine, abolish the General Council. Then who will provide for and carry out the execution of decisions of the congress? Who will pay the costs incurred by the congress and the general expenses? The project does not address these questions; questions which are really quite serious because whether the general organisation develops in a good or bad way depends on them.¹²⁶

¹²¹ B. Becker, 'Der Kongreß der belgischen Internationale', *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 5 June 1872, p. 1.

¹²² [B. Becker], 'Die anti-sozialistische Konferenz in Berlin', *ibid.*, 16 June 1872, p. 1.

¹²³ Lafargue to Engels, 29 May 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 450.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ On the other hand, the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* agreed with the Belgian rules project's assessment: 'according to our experience of it the action of the General Council, as a correspondence office, is completely null: the various federations correspond directly with one another and do not amuse themselves by sending their letters via London' ('Le projet belge de statuts généraux', *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 July 1872, p. 1).

¹²⁶ [F. Mora], 'El Proyecto Belga de Estatutos generales', *Emancipación*, 8 June 1872, p. 2.

According to the article's author, Francisco Mora,¹²⁷ the General Council was also necessary in case 'traitors' or 'bourgeois' took over the International in some country and because of the future development of the International, as growth generates more need. Lafargue was so delighted with the article that he translated it into French and sent it to Belgium for publication.¹²⁸ The article also excited Marx: 'The whole plan', he wrote on 21 June 1872 to Sorge, 'has been deservedly hauled over the coals in La Emancipación'.¹²⁹ On the same day, Marx wrote triumphantly to Van Suetendael, who had asked for material to use against the Belgian rules project:¹³⁰ 'As for the Hins draft (Hins and his wife [!] are correspondents and agents of Bakunin), this has had a *very bad* reception in all the countries from which we have heard so far, France, Germany, England, etc.'¹³¹ In the letter, he referred to the aforementioned statements from the Romance Federation's congress, the *Braunschweiger Volksfreund* and the *Emancipación* as well as letters from France.¹³²

On the other hand, the Brussels newspaper *Liberté* took the following position: the rules project

spontaneously accomplishes a universal movement that attempts to make of the International what it must be in reality, the absolutely free federation of all trades and industries, and that attempts to eliminate from the organisation as it exists today all that retains a more or less false character. It is from this perspective that we shall study the utility of retaining the London General Council and the permanent Federal Councils. These councils, however, render great services which strongly counterbalance their tendency toward authority; yet it is only after a deeper study that we shall permit ourselves to express an opinion on this point.¹³³

In marked contrast to the signals given in Mora's aforementioned *Emancipación* article, a *Liberté* article on 30 June 1872 highlighted the general anti-authoritarian mood in Spain:

It is the Spanish members of the International who are, along with the Belgians, the most steadfast partisans in Europe of abstention from governmental affairs.¹³⁴ They have no intention of being governed, but they also do not want to govern anyone. Like us, they push the fecund principle of federation, as well as that of the autonomy of groups, to its ultimate consequences. In

¹²⁷ For more about Mora's authorship, see Lafargue to Engels, 5 June 1872, in Engels/ Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 458.

¹²⁸ See Lafargue to Engels, 13 June 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 462–63. The article appeared in French in the *Liberté*, 14 July 1872, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 399.

¹³⁰ Van Suetendael had told Marx on 20 June 1872 that the Belgian rules project 'has very little chance of passing, for in the Brussels Section I have heard, apart from Hins, only two speakers in favour, while all the others are opposed. I am signed up to speak on this subject on Monday along with two others who I believe are opposed to the project. [...] If you could send me some information on what the other countries think of the Hins project, this would be quite useful to me for Monday.' (Devreese [ed.], *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 407).

¹³¹ Marx to Van Suetendael, 21 June 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 401. For more about the constantly alluded to 'dangerous' Mrs Hins, see above, pp. 483–84, n. 61.

¹³² 'Letters from the French sections express contempt for the Hins draft and say, for example, that according to this fine draft, France, Spain, Germany, Austria, Poland, Hungary – in a word, all those countries where the International is prevented by the governments from forming official federations, will be virtually excluded from the International 1) because it is intended to deprive them of their right to vote at Congresses, and 2) because, circumstances being what they are, the different sections in those countries would, without the General Council, lose all unified organisation and all reciprocal ties.' (Marx to Van Suetendael, 21 June 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 402–3). Corresponding letters from the French sections were never found.

¹³³ *Liberté*, 2 June 1872, p. 4.

¹³⁴ In a reprint of this article, the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* noted here: 'The *Liberté* forgets the Italian members of the International and the Jura Federation.' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 July 1872, p. 3).

recent times, the contrary tendency has wished to implant itself, and we ourselves have published, for the edification of the reader, communications relative to this new tendency; however, until now, the great majority of sections all seem to have decided to persevere in the old way. The International owes its organisation to this, and it is above all to this radical attitude that must be attributed the strong hold that socialism has taken in Europe, in opposition to the coalition of all the bourgeois parties. It is by abstaining from having anything to do with the programmes of all the political parties that socialism has succeeded in coming to awareness of its own destiny and its own interests.¹³⁵

As if to do justice to this description, the organ of the International in Barcelona, the *Federación*, printed the following statement by its editors on 30 June 1872:

Our aspirations culminate in this sublime revolutionary trinity:

COLLECTIVISM, ANARCHY, ATHEISM. [...]

Comrades:

Peace unto men, war unto the institutions, is our battle cry.

No more duties without rights, no more rights without duties, is our end. May the redemptive International Working Men's Association realise this aim.

Long live the International!¹³⁶

The leading article in this issue dealt with the Belgian rules project:

When we examine the Belgian project in the light of the principles that are actually being discussed, we see that the spirit of it is not to combat the existence of a General Council in principle, but rather the Anglo-German Council as it exists today. There are serious charges against this current Council for not limiting its activities (as it should) to that of a centre for mere correspondence and statistics and for adopting authoritarian functions harmonious with the tendencies of its [the Council's] men – tendencies that are detrimental to the anti-authoritarian spirit (the safeguard of our beloved Association). This is the General Council that, amid the persecution of the International in France, Italy, Austria, Germany and Spain and earlier because of the war, failed to convene an international congress in 1870 and 1871, using the time won to destroy the most fervent revolutionary men by discrediting and slandering them.¹³⁷

Another part of the article, which might have been based on a letter from Bakunin,¹³⁸ stated the following:

Some time ago the Jura Federation spoke with clarity, stating the conclusive truths of the question, which until now nobody has deigned to undertake and examine. This indifference cannot be legitimated by a fear of creating a split, for such cowardice may cost us face before the current machinations, which have been set in motion so that one of the conflicting tendencies or principles can prevail at the expense of the other.

¹³⁵ 'L'Espagne politique et socialiste', *Liberté*, 30 June 1872, p. 2.

¹³⁶ *Federación*, 30 June 1872, p. 1.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Although there is no hard proof that Bakunin was the author, Max Nettlau attributed the article to Bakunin because of its content (Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 588, +284). See also Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 28. On the other hand, Arthur Lehning doubted that Bakunin was the author (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. xxvi) as the article spoke of Pan-Germanism's dominance in the International. Bakunin opposed addressing this subject matter in public. It seems possible that Bakunin wrote a letter to Alerini in Barcelona without intending for it to be published. On the 17 June 1872, for example, he made the following note in his diary: 'Sent collective letter to allies against circular – to Alerini' (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 22). Passages from this letter (which has not survived) by Bakunin about the *Fictitious Splits* might have been used in the article.

We all share a responsibility for this indifference and imprudent fear. Because we have such similar doctrines and identical anti-authoritarian principles we should do our best to repair the fault and reach out to the radicals from the Jura. They have the honour of being the first to alert to the danger that threatens us all.

This danger is the crushing of the anarchist spirit and the triumph of authority in the International Working Men's Association. This danger is none other than the dominance of Pan-Germanism in our Association, which tends towards the construction of a vast authoritarian communist state. It is in opposition to the true and good tendency to unite humanity – through the destruction of all states and the annihilation of authority – in the vast and free association of free producers.¹³⁹

The reprint of this article in the *Liberté* noted here: 'on this last point we are completely in agreement with the *Federación*'.¹⁴⁰ On the opening day of the extraordinary congress of the Belgian Federation convened to vote on the rules project on 14 July 1872, the *Liberté* published a leading article titled 'Progressive Organisation of the International' ('Organisation progressive de l'Internationale'), which included the following:

The publication of a draft revision of the General Rules by the Belgian [Federal] Council and the discussions following it, together with other recent events, have revealed, in the bosom of the International, not two tendencies, two divergent goals, but two different ways to consider socialist action in the present circumstances. Some, struck with the increasingly hostile attitude of the European bourgeoisie, think it good to centralise the forces of the proletariat all the more, as the guarantee of its approaching emancipation seems increasingly precarious; others, whom we find to be in the right, react against any centralisation, on the contrary, and believe that resistance will be more effective to the extent that groups are more independent, without fear of causing the dissolution of the International Association. [...] too much passion and acrimony has been poured into this debate; this dissent over ways and means, which may, it is true, lead to formidable deviations, was taken by many for a fundamental difference in principles; it was no great leap from thence to predict a split in the International, and if one factors in the diversity of races, national temperaments and traditions, the imagination quickly tears asunder this great Association which shall be the wonder of history and the glory of our age, to substitute a dualism, Latino-Germanic or of some other sort, reproducing in a new form the eternal antagonism between authority and freedom. One even went so far as to see in the important personalities of the International the incarnation of the spirits of good and evil; Bakunin well nigh became the Judas Iscariot of our Association, the Alliance that he founded merely a secret agent of dissolution, and for some, too, Karl Marx well nigh became the dogmatic and intolerant St. Paul of a new Christianity. [...] The Belgian Council showed itself to be in the true spirit of the Revolution – and here is the essence of its work – in opposing the national federations to the General Council which it considered authoritarian; it recalled that the solidarity of groups can suffice for the existence of the International [...] How, then, could the *Emancipación* of Madrid have believed that the very abolition of the General Council could be the signal for the dissolution

¹³⁹ *Federación*, 30 June 1872, p. 1. For more about the accusation of Pan-Germanism, see below, pp. 232–33.

¹⁴⁰ *Liberté*, 28 July 1872, p. 2. In addition, the article was lauded because it 'poses the problem of organisation not as it presents itself today, but as it may present itself tomorrow, such as *it must not present itself* if we have any care for the destiny of the proletariat' (*ibid.*). The article was also praised by the editors of the *Condenado*, 8 July 1872, pp. 3–4, and the Spanish Federal Council, who included entire passages of the article in its 'Private Circular' on 7 July 1872; see below, p. 272.

of the International? [...] In denying that the unity of the International depended upon an authority external to the autonomous groups, that it should be anything other than the principle of solidarity itself, therefore, the Belgian Council was completely in the right. [...] But it is not for that reason that the International, regardless of its indestructible moral bond, must cease to express its unity through a permanent institution such as the General Council; reflecting on the matter impartially, we find that the General Council has as much of a reason to exist as do the Federal and Local Councils, and this reason is the utility, even the necessity of permanent delegations responsible for implementing the decisions of groups of various orders and taking such interim measures as are not within the inalienable powers of the groups themselves. Here, the only danger to be feared from the General Council is, above all, the usurpation of authority.¹⁴¹

In view of the importance of the question to the entire International and the big international response in the run-up, the Belgian federal congress was assured the public's attention. At the opening, an official address from the Barcelona Local Federation dated 10 July 1872 was read:

Brothers:

We would not believe that we are doing our duty if in the presence of such a grave question (that you are calling upon to resolve) we remained silent.

We are genuinely satisfied with the rules project, that you will discuss. It shows how truly revolutionary the spirit that animates our Belgian brothers is. We can only sincerely hope that you can resolve this transcendental question in a manner that converges with the interests of the proletariat.

What pleases us most about your rules project is that the dominant tendency of it is to destroy all authority and every tyranny.

We are with you and we believe we are not wrong in saying that so are all of our brothers in this region.¹⁴²

'The reading of this thoroughly revolutionary address', the minutes of the Brussels Congress state, 'was greeted with warm applause.'¹⁴³ As all 13 delegates had imperative mandates which obligated them to vote according to their section's orders, the vote on the main point of rules project was held without any discussion:

By a vote of 10 in favour to 3 against, the congress decided to maintain the institution of the General Council. Delegates called upon to justify the opinions of the sections briefly took turns speaking. All of the opinions in favour of maintaining the Council can be summarized in three points which were fully explained by the delegate from the Brussels section.

The abolition of the General Council is 1st neither necessary, 2nd nor useful, 3rd nor timely. It is not necessary because all the accusations against the Council, even admitting that they have foundation, apply to the current composition of this body and would be dispelled either by changing its composition or changing assignments to the Council. This abolition is not useful, because in effectuating it, we would lose a centre of action which, if it has yet to render all the services expected of it, is destined, thanks to a wise reorganisation, to become of the utmost importance. Finally and most importantly, the abolition is untimely, for certainly, at a moment when all the

¹⁴¹ 'Organisation progressive de l'Internationale', *Liberté*, 14 July 1872, p. 1.

¹⁴² 'Al Congreso regional belga de la Asociación Internacional de los Trabajadores reunido en Bruselas', *Federación*, 14 July 1872, p. 3.

¹⁴³ 'Congrès ouvrier belge du 14 juillet', *Internationale*, 21 July 1872, p. 1. A reply in the name of the Belgian federal congress appeared in the *Federación* on 11 August 1872; see below, p. 518, n. 148.

governments are banding together against us, we should not help them by decapitating our own powerful Association.¹⁴⁴

Afterward, the delegates dealt with the remaining provisions of the rules project and adopted – in agreement with the suggestion of *changing its composition or changing assignments* to the General Council – a series of revisions to the Rules which substantially reduced the General Council's authority. The following resolutions were particularly important:¹⁴⁵

- Every country was to nominate their own three members of the General Council.
- The General Council can only temporarily suspend a member; only the country which nominated the respective member has the right to relieve them of their duty.
- The General Council members do not have the right to vote on administrative questions at the International's congresses.

Furthermore, the following resolution did away with two of the main Basel administrative resolutions:

Contrary to the vote that took place in Basel, conferring upon the General Council the right to suspend a section, we demand that the Council not interfere in internal affairs. Sections can only be suspended by the national council, which is obliged to explain its reasons to the very next congress, which shall decide in the last instance.¹⁴⁶

Finally, the delegates decided to publish the resolutions so that the members of all sections could debate them and add further revisions to the Rules.¹⁴⁷

The *Liberté* commented on the federal congress's outcome as follows:

The Belgian Congress has reached the opinion that the General Council should not be entirely abolished but reduced in its appointed powers such that it would retain only administrative functions. It is good that it should be the visible link between the federations, but it is to the federations themselves that independence and full self-possession belong, just as in the federation the section must remain the autonomous group upon which no direct and permanent power can be exercised. What remains to be developed within the present organisation is the more complete and intimate international union of similar trades and industries. With this double federation, both territorial and corporative, the International shall be indestructible.¹⁴⁸

Just like in December 1871, the Belgian federal congress presented constructive alternatives by reflecting upon and further developing opposing viewpoints that were expressed internationally. The discussion had now arrived at a preliminary result and the debate quieted. The *Federación*

¹⁴⁴ 'Congrès ouvrier belge du 14 juillet', p. 2. For more about the voting behaviour of the delegates, who were not mentioned by name in the minutes, see the (albeit in part unreliable) data in Glaser de Willebrord to Engels, 19 July 1872, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 416.

¹⁴⁵ 'Congrès ouvrier belge du 14 juillet', p. 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁸ *Liberté*, 21 July 1872, p. 1. On 1 August 1872, P. Desguin answered in the name of the federal congress to the Barcelona Local Federation's official address dated 10 July 1872 (see above, p. 517, n. 142): 'Although the project to modify the Rules of the International Association was not adopted as it was presented to us by the Federal Council, you were not mistaken in attributing to us the intention of abolishing the authoritarian tendencies (that many of our brothers reproach in the current Rules) by way of the new Rules that the Congress of The Hague will be called to vote upon' (*Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 2). See also below, p. 331.

limited itself to countering the aforementioned argument that the abolition of the General Council would be ‘untimely, for certainly, at a moment when all the governments are banding together against us, we should not help them by decapitating our own powerful Association’.¹⁴⁹ The *Federación* wrote the following with regards to this argument and the Belgian resolutions in general:

It is not our intention to present conclusions or our opinions on the big questions that are circulating. Moreover, they will be dealt with and resolved at successive meetings of the Barcelona [Local] Federation, and their own opinion will be made known. However, we could do no less than observe how wrong the delegated comrade was who posited that to abolish the General Council would be akin to beheading our Association.

The head, the heart and the whole life of the International Working Men’s Association is not found in the General Council, or, let’s say, in any council or representation of any sort, but rather in the individuals and the trade sections which represent the fundamental and essential collectives. They are the base of the organisation of work and justice in the new society.¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, the SDAP’s *Volksstaat* was resentful:

The biannual congress of the Belgian International held here on 16 (14) July declared by a vote of 10 to 3 that the institution of the General Council should be maintained but that its authority should be diminished. The General Council shall, for example, from now on no longer have the right to suspend individual sections until the yearly congress is held. The doors were thereby also opened wide for the Bakuninistic machinations, that aim to dissolve the International into so many atoms.¹⁵¹

Cafiero’s reckoning with Engels (12–19 June 1872)

Engels had lost his closest ally in Italy when Theodor Cuno was deported.¹⁵² And Cafiero’s political reliability seemed questionable to Engels by now: ‘They are *all* Bakunists in Naples,’ he complained to Lafargue, ‘and there is only one among them, Cafiero, who at least means well, with him I correspond’.¹⁵³ ‘Naples harbours the worst Bakuninists in the whole of Italy’, he repeated to Laura Lafargue. ‘Cafiero is a good chap, a born intermediary and, as such, naturally weak. If he doesn’t improve soon, I shall give him up too.’¹⁵⁴

However, Cafiero was still working with the interest of the General Council in mind; for example, in his conflict with Luigi Stefanoni, who published the freethinking newspaper *Liberio Pensiero. Giornale dei Razionalisti* in Florence. Cafiero clashed with Stefanoni in the press between January and May 1872, because he had attacked the General Council and the International. Stefanoni ridiculed Cafiero’s defence of the General Council as follows: ‘Mr Cafiero [...] is by now alone in all Italy in supporting the desperate cause of the *Marxids* [*marxidi*]. And this solitude in which he finds himself may well be enough to pardon the foolishness as well as the intemperances with which he indulges himself out of spite.’¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ See above, p. 221.

¹⁵⁰ *Federación*, 28 July 1872, p. 2.

¹⁵¹ *Volksstaat*, 24 July 1872, p. 2.

¹⁵² See above, p. 145.

¹⁵³ Engels to Paul Lafargue, 11 March 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 337.

¹⁵⁴ Engels to Laura Lafargue, 11 March 1872, *ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁵⁵ *Gazzettino Rosa*, 9 May 1872, p. 3.

Torn between his loyalty to the General Council and his correspondent Engels on the one hand and his Neapolitan friends' criticism of the General Council on the other, Cafiero's opinion began to sway – Carmelo Palladino claimed that he himself was chiefly responsible for this: 'when upon approaching him openly, I set about refuting his principles. He was in good faith, and we soon came to an understanding'.¹⁵⁶ As they did not think much of Cafiero's relationship with the General Council, Palladino and Malatesta convinced Cafiero to visit Bakunin in Locarno, where Cafiero could make up his own mind about the allegations made against Bakunin in Engels' letters to Cafiero.¹⁵⁷

Cafiero was still backing the General Council in public in face of Stefanoni's attacks on 16 May 1872.¹⁵⁸ But a short time later he left for Locarno and arrived at Bakunin's on 20 May together with Fanelli.¹⁵⁹ Already on the next day, Bakunin noted in his diary: 'All day with Fanelli and Cafiero – alliance accomplished'.¹⁶⁰ Apparently the two bonded quickly. Cafiero later wrote: 'After just a few minutes of conversation we both realized that there was the most complete agreement on principles'.¹⁶¹ And Bakunin later remembered: 'Since our first meeting in Spring 1872, he has shown me an unbounded, almost filial affection'.¹⁶² Cafiero and Bakunin continued their discussion after Fanelli's departure on 22 May 1872.¹⁶³ Bakunin's diary notes that an organisation plan was drafted on 24 May. During his visit, Cafiero also got to know famous Communards and activists in the International in Switzerland and visited the most important sections.¹⁶⁴ Bakunin also let him look at his correspondences from the last twelve months.¹⁶⁵

Cafiero was so thoroughly enlightened about the conflict in the International during his trip to Switzerland that he already began moving against the General Council at the end of May 1872 by composing a letter to Engels – he read a first part of it to Bakunin on 31 May and the rest on 3 June.¹⁶⁶ In reckoning with Engels, he tried to get to the roots of the conflict in the International and reflected on the politics of the General Council and the concept of the conquest of political power, which in his eyes permeated Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* and resolution no. 9 of the London Conference:

Illuminated by the *Manifesto of the German Communist Party*,¹⁶⁷ I now understand perfectly the whole import of resolution [no.] 9 of the London Conference [...]. Holding capital to be

¹⁵⁶ Palladino to his 'dearest comrades', 7 September 1881, in *Grido del Popolo*, 18 September 1881, p. 3.

¹⁵⁷ Messages from Malatesta (December 1903) and Guillaume to Max Nettlau, see M. Nettlau, 'Nachträge' [supplements to Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*], 4 vols., IISG, Nettlau Papers, nos. 1697–1700, n. 4519.

¹⁵⁸ C. Cafiero, 'Stefanoni e l'Internazionale', [dated: Napoli, 16 maggio], *Gazzettino Rosa*, 27 May 1872, p. 3.

¹⁵⁹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 18.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Cafiero to Engels, 12/19 June 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 221.

¹⁶² 'Mémoire justificatif', p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁶³ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 18.

¹⁶⁴ A police report dated 8 June 1872 stated Cafiero 'writes that he has seen Bakunin and the best-known internationalists in Switzerland, whose main sections he has visited, and says that *he has gained strength from it in order to persevere along the course that has been laid out against all the constituted powers*. He states that he has also conferred with the more influential French Communards who have taken refuge in that country. [...] In any event he writes from Locarno that he will be in Naples for the 15th inst.' (Romano, *Storia del movimento*, vol. 2, p. 329).

¹⁶⁵ Cafiero to Engels, 12/19 June 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 221.

¹⁶⁶ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 19–20. Cafiero added a postscript to his letter on 19 June (Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 225).

¹⁶⁷ The first edition appeared without stating the authors' names under the title *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* (London: Gedruckt in der Office der 'Bildungs-Gesellschaft für Arbeiter' von J. E. Burghard, 1848). With the phrase 'Manifesto of the German [!] Communist Party', Cafiero was referring to the English version of the manifesto

the source of all privilege, oppression, imposition, etc., etc., and agreeing on the need to return *capital* to the commonality, the question then arises on the way to effect this change [...]. This is the point where the various opinions, the various systems are determined; and this is the point on which the London Conference was so wrong in wishing to proclaim an official system. The authors of the *German communist programme* tell us, on this point, that they will reach the goal through the *conquest of political power by the proletariat*; that is to say, through the constitution of a new state [...]. So then, my dear friend, permit me to speak frankly to you. The positive part of your *communist programme* is, as far as I am concerned, a gross, reactionary absurdity. I hold the state and, equally, the Church in horror, as institutions founded in privilege, created by people who wanted to ensure for themselves the exclusive enjoyment of *capital*. *Capital* is there, surrounded by the state, by the Church and by the whole *magna caterva* [great crowd] of the lesser institutions, that proceed from these principal ones, destined to ensure the privileged its exclusive enjoyment. We all want to win, or rather, claim *capital* for the commonality and two different ways are proposed to do this. – Some counsel a rapid strike against the principal stronghold – the state – whose fall into our hands will open to everyone the doors to *capital*; while others advise that all of us *together break down* every obstacle and *take possession collectively, effectively*, of that *capital* that we seek to ensure for ever as common property. I stand with the latter, my dear man, since thanks to your *Communist Manifesto* I have been fully able to understand the position. And you, good materialist that you are? How can you stand with the former?¹⁶⁸

Cafiero took a position on many issues at dispute in the International and held out the prospect that the Italian sections could join Belgium, Spain, and Jura as a Federation critical of the General Council. On 18 June, Cafiero left Locarno after a four-week stay in Switzerland;¹⁶⁹ the letter was finally sent to London from Milan on 19 June along with a postscript written the same day where Cafiero first referred to the *Fictitious Splits*:

Nothing of what is said therein is new to me. I know by now all the facts in all their worth. *Consummatum est!* [*It is finished!*], your work is complete! ... It is not I who says so, but the Belgian Congress with the proposal to reform our General Rules; and the Jura mountains and Spain repeat it: *Consummatum est!* And Italy? Italy will gladly welcome the news of the death of the General Council [...].¹⁷⁰

Bakunin seems to have had more or less detailed information about Engels' previous letters to Cafiero before his visit.¹⁷¹ The abuse contained in the letters must have shocked Bakunin and his political friends, and made them even more angry than they already were because of Marx's 'Confidential Communication' – which became general knowledge during the high treason trial

released in December 1871: 'German Communism – Manifesto of the German Communist Party', *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, 30 December 1871, pp. 3–6. See also Masini, *Cafiero*, p. 68.

¹⁶⁸ Cafiero to Engels, 12/19 June 1872, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, pp. 219–20.

¹⁶⁹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 22.

¹⁷⁰ Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 225 ['our work' instead of the correct 'your work' (*vostra opera*); corrected according to the original manuscript, see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 305, 629].

¹⁷¹ See Bakunin's vague references to messages from Milan and Naples: Bakunin to Ceretti, 13–27 March 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 255. See also below, n. 174.

in Leipzig (16 March 1872)¹⁷² – and Lafargue’s malicious report in the *Liberté* (5 May 1872).¹⁷³ Guillaume wrote about this in the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin* on 10 May 1872:

This correspondence [from Lafargue in the *Liberté*], the author of which is very close to Mr Marx, is for us but one more proof that the men who scheme against us in Switzerland are doing the same work in other countries. The Bebel-Liebkecht trial has shown us this scandalous fact, that since 1870, the General Council has issued defamatory letters against us in Germany under the title of *confidential communications*. – We have received word of letters written last autumn to the Italian comrades by Mr Engels, corresponding secretary for Italy in the General Council; in these letters, Mr Engels gives himself over to the most odious of slanders against honourable citizens belonging to the Jura Federation and against the spirit of our federation in general.¹⁷⁴

In addition to personal attacks, a letter from Engels (which has not survived) written from 29 February to 9 March 1872 appears to have contained controversial political statements regarding, for example, the need for a *very strong government* in order to civilize Italy (alphabetisation, education, and the fight against brigandage and the Camorra) as well as Bismarck and the Italian King Victor Emanuel II, who according to Engels had both done a great deal for the social revolution by calling for political centralisation.¹⁷⁵ The very idea that his opinion would become public must have made Engels queasy.¹⁷⁶ Infuriated, he wrote the following letter on 10 June 1872:

Cafiero in Naples and someone else in Turin whom I don’t yet know turned letters of mine over to the Jurassians; that doesn’t matter to me in itself, but the very fact of their perfidy is unpleasant. The Italians will still have to pass through a school of experience to realise that a

¹⁷² See above, pp. 208–10.

¹⁷³ See above, pp. 186–90.

¹⁷⁴ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 10 May 1872, pp. 3–4. Guillaume thus knew about Engels’ letters to Cafiero before he visited Bakunin (20 May 1872). Fanelli may have brought the letters with him when he visited Bakunin from 15 to 19 April 1872 (Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 14; see also Nettlau, *Bakunin e l’Internazionale in Italia*, p. 331) or Bakunin found out about them through correspondences from Milan and Naples (see above, n. 171). Guillaume later explained that Bakunin had given him the letters from Engels with Cafiero’s permission; see Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 286. On 11 June 1872, Bakunin noted in his diary that he had sent Guillaume another letter from Engels to Cafiero (Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 21).

¹⁷⁵ Engels’ letter from 29 February to 9 March 1872 has not survived. The subject matter mentioned is reconstructed according to statements by Bakunin and Cafiero. Engels himself wrote on 11 March 1872 about his letter: ‘Only yesterday I had to send to Naples a complete pamphlet of twelve closely written pages in refutation of their absurdities.’ (Engels to Paul Lafargue, 11 March 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 337). Marx and Engels were convinced that economic and political centralisation would make the conquest of the state by the working class and the transition to socialism easier. Engels expressed this idea as follows in a letter to Marx on 15 August 1870: ‘In the first place, now, as in 1866 [Austro-Prussian War], Bismarck is doing a bit of our work, in *his own* way and without meaning to, but all the same he is doing it.’ (*ibid.*, p. 47).

¹⁷⁶ Engels was very careful when it came to enquiries in the ensuing period: After Carl Boruttau sent several critical questions to the editors of the *Volksstaat* in the first half of 1872 (as he had in the previous year, see above, p. 118), the editor Adolf Hepner asked Engels for help in a letter dated 29 June 1872: ‘Enclosed is a letter from Boruttau to me; since he is tireless in his claims I should prefer to be able to give exhaustive answers to his questions regarding Bakunin’ (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 356). Engels replied on 2 July 1872: ‘If you read the Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne, you will see that precisely now, before the Congress, these gentlemen are doing all they can to obtain private letters and so forth from us and to discover what material damaging to them we have in our possession. Apart from that the Boruttau letter is of no significance’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 404). There is only evidence that Boruttau and Bakunin contacted each other *after* these letters (see notes in Bakunin’s diary on 17 and 18 July 1872, see Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 27).

peasant people as backward as they are merely makes itself ridiculous when it tries to prescribe to the workers of big industrial nations the road they should take for their emancipation.¹⁷⁷

Engels had the following words for Cafiero:

In any case, I have not written to anyone in Italy other than you, and it must be these letters of mine to you that Schwitzguébel's paper [the *Bulletin* of the Jura Federation] is referring to. [...] My letters have nothing to fear from publication, but it is a question of honour *for you* to inform me whether they were sent to my enemies with your consent or not. If it was done with your consent, I can only come to one conclusion: that you have allowed yourself to be persuaded to join the *Bakuninist secret society, the Alliance* which, preaching to the profane – behind the mask of autonomy, anarchy and anti-authoritarianism – the breaking up of the International's organisation, practises towards its initiates an absolute authoritarianism, with the aim of taking over the leadership of the Association. It is a society which treats the working masses as a flock of sheep, led by a few initiates whom they follow blindly, and which imitates, within the International, the role of the Jesuits in the Catholic Church.¹⁷⁸

Engels' grim remarks did not help him in Italy. On the same day, he was forced to summarise the situation as follows: 'In Milan, Ferrara, Naples, everywhere there are friends of Bakunin.'¹⁷⁹ He never answered Cafiero's letter from 12 to 19 June 1872.

¹⁷⁷ Engels to Cuno, 10 June 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 393.

¹⁷⁸ Engels to Cafiero, 14 June 1872 (draft), *ibid.*, p. 397.

¹⁷⁹ Engels to the 'Emancipation of the Proletarian' Society, 14 June 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 168.

CHAPTER 13. Convening the Congress of The Hague

JUST LIKE THEY HAD IN THE run-up to the London Conference, Marx and Engels laid the groundwork for the general congress of 1872 well in advance, so things would go their way. This included selecting a *favourable* location for the congress, which Marx and Engels had been discussing with their confidants since the beginning of 1872. Engels sent Liebknecht a written request ‘to find a form that will make it possible for you to be represented at the next congress’.¹ Liebknecht responded on 5 January 1872:

Everything necessary will be done concerning the congress. Will it take place at the usual time, or earlier for once? And where? The latter is a vital question. [...] In any case, you need to make sure that if the congress does not take place in Germany, it is somewhere close to the German border. Then, the German element will definitely be strongly represented and will obviously take our side.²

After the first protests against the General Council’s leadership grab, Liebknecht wrote again: ‘Just make sure that the next congress is within reach for us and we will soon defeat this federalism – it doesn’t seem dangerous to me.’³ On the other hand, Lafargue suggested to Engels on 17 May 1872:

The next Congress must be held in England; the Bakunists would be done for there before they ever appeared. You could use as the pretext the persecutions and the need to be in touch with the *trade-unions* to make them join the International. You could circulate a note to the federations asking for their views beforehand. Manchester would be the best place, the French being less numerous there [than in London].⁴

The Local Committee (*Comité Cantonal*) of the International’s Geneva sections, where Johann Philipp Becker was a member, suggested Geneva as the congress location in a letter to the General Council dated 9 April 1872.⁵ After the letter was mentioned at the General Council meeting on 4 May 1872, the Communard and General Council member Frédéric Cournet suggested that the congress be convened as soon as possible, ‘so as to stop the complaints that were made relative to the non-holding of the Congresses (1870/1871)’ – no decision was made, though.⁶ Engels replied

¹ Engels to Liebknecht, 2 January 1872, Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 288.

² W. Opitz (ed.), ‘Unveröffentlichte Briefe aus der Entstehungsperiode der Schrift von Friedrich Engels ‘Zur Wohnungsfrage’’, *Marx-Engels-Jahrbuch* 4 (1981), p. 397.

³ Liebknecht to Engels, 16 January 1872, *ibid.*, p. 398. Engels responded on 18 January 1872: ‘Up to now we intend to convene the congress at the regular time. It is still early to decide on the place, but it almost certainly will not be Switzerland, or Germany for that matter’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 296–97). Liebknecht then replied: ‘If the congress is not possible in Germany, then at least convene it in a place within reach for us.’ (Liebknecht to Engels, 24 January 1872, in Opitz [ed.], ‘Unveröffentlichte Briefe’, p. 399).

⁴ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 443.

⁵ The Geneva Local Council to the General Council, 9 April 1872, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 565.

⁶ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 177–78. After the Committee of the Romance Federation supported the suggestion of the Geneva Local Committee in a letter in a letter dated 5 May 1872 (RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo

to Becker in Geneva on 9 May 1872 that the congress location had not yet been chosen, and continued: 'In the meantime, we must know, if we are to be able to make a final decision, what the situation is like there [in Geneva] and whether it will be possible for you *to be assured* of a compact and reliable majority of the Swiss delegates.'⁷ Becker wrote an enthusiastic reply to London on 20 May 1872:

I entirely agree that the Congress must be held in a place where we are sure of a large majority. But I believe, so far as I can judge of the circumstances, that this will nowhere be more the case than in Geneva, since we are sure in advance of the 30 sections here, and consequently of just as many delegates. In the rest of Romance Switzerland we can get together at least as many representatives as the so-called Jura Federation. It is true that the latter, if it has enough money, might conceivably invent sections, Italy could send exclusively opponents, Spain and France also partly, but at any rate only in very limited numbers. If we reckon 10 Jurassians, 10 Frenchmen, 6 Italians and 4 Spaniards as opponents, that will be all; if it comes to the worst the Belgians will hold the balance and the English should all be on our side. Then with Germany we can thus be sure of an imposing majority if, besides those directly delegated, we get as large a number of societies as possible to send me mandates for Germans living here and elsewhere in Switzerland, omitting the names, which I could fill in as required.⁸

Despite these tempting prospects, the General Council passed Marx's motion on 11 June 1872 to convene the congress in Holland on the first Monday of September. A week later, the General Council selected The Hague as the location of the congress and put the revision of the Rules on the agenda as the sole item.⁹ It is easy to see why Marx suggested The Hague as the location. England was disqualified because of tactical reasons, Engels explained two and a half weeks later:

It would be inexpedient to convene it in England from the very start, for although it would be quite safe from police interference here, it would nevertheless be subjected to attacks by our enemies. The General Council, they would say, is convening the Congress in England because only there does it possess an artificial majority.¹⁰

In Switzerland, where almost all of the International's congresses had taken place, the General Council would have been – as Becker put it – 'sure of an imposing majority'. However, it would also have been easier to reach than The Hague for the opposition's delegates from Southern Europe. On the other hand, to get to The Hague 21 General Council members only had to cross the Channel. The Hague is 'easily reached', Engels cynically argued to the General Council, 'and he thought that was a great advantage'.¹¹ What's more, as difficult as it would be to send delegates from the International's southern federations to The Hague, Bakunin's participation there was virtually impossible, because to get to Holland he would have to travel through France or Germany, where there were warrants out for him.

328/5), the General Council merely reiterated on 11 May 1872 'that the place of the meeting of the next Congress had not yet been fixed by the Council'. (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 188).

⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 372.

⁸ Becker to Engels, 20 May 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 333–34. For more about Engels' reply on 14 June 1872, see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 395–96. Perret also supported hosting the congress in Geneva because 'we would be sure of a splendid majority' (Perret to Jung, 7 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 364).

⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 221, 230, 232.

¹⁰ Engels to Cuno, 5 July 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 408.

¹¹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 230.

The critics and supporters of the General Council in Switzerland still assumed in June 1872 that the congress would take place in Geneva or somewhere else in Switzerland. The Geneva Local Committee reaffirmed their offer to host the congress to the General Council on 19 May 1872.¹² In the Jura, the congress was eagerly awaited as it was expected to solve many problems. In view of the continuing conflict in Switzerland, the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* wished the following on 1 May 1872: 'Ah, just let the day of the General Congress come! And when we meet one another there face to face, all shall see the light, and the liars shall be put on the spot.'¹³

According to the Rules, only those who had paid their membership dues could take part in the congress. As the Jura Federation had not paid since its inception in November 1871, it made up for its arrears in a letter dated 1 June 1872: for 1871 dues were paid for 140 members (seven sections) and for 1872 for 294 members (eleven sections).¹⁴ The General Council was at first unsure as to how to deal with the fact that their opponents in Jura had paid their dues in such an exemplary fashion:

Citizen *Engels* said he was in favour of accepting the contribution for 1871 but of rejecting the contribution for 1872. He proposed that that should be done.

Citizen *Marx* said there was only one section that had not been acknowledged, that was [the Geneva Communards' section of propaganda]. The Jurassian section was dissentient but it was a section – it had not been excluded.

Citizen *Serraillier* said he would accept the money but reject the men.

Citizen *Marx* said the Council could not accept the money for one year and refuse it for the other. The way would be to accept all but that of the one section.¹⁵

This motion was passed unanimously. Jung, the corresponding secretary for Switzerland in the General Council, noted this resolution on the Jura Federation's letter ('the sum of 37.20 fr. has been received, 6.20 fr. in contributions refused from the Propaganda and Revolutionary Action Section in Geneva') and asked Marx the next day whether the Federal Committee of the Jura Federation should be informed – along with the confirmation of payment – that the congress would be convened in Holland: 'While acknowledging the receipt of the money should I do well to inform Schwitzguébel of our decision concerning the Congress or would it be better to say nothing to him about it.'¹⁶ Marx must have advised against informing Schwitzguébel as Jung only told the Swiss sections about the decision weeks later.¹⁷

Even the General Council's supporters were shocked when The Hague was finally announced as the location of the congress: Perret, secretary of the Romance Federation's Committee in

¹² The Geneva Local Council to the General Council, 19 May 1872, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 566.

¹³ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 May 1872, p. 3.

¹⁴ The Committee of the Jura Federation to the General Council, 1 June 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 394/2.

¹⁵ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 220 (meeting on 11 June 1872).

¹⁶ Jung to Marx, 12 June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 340.

¹⁷ See *Tagwacht*, 6 July 1872, p. 1; and *Égalité*, 7 July 1872, p. 1. The Jura Federation was only informed on 10 July 1872; see the General Council to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 10 July 1872, in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 27 July 1872, Supplément, p. 1.

Geneva, wrote a resentful letter to Jung.¹⁸ But the General Council's subcommittee merely confirmed the *status quo* after Perret's letter of complaint was mentioned:

Citizen *Engels* took a count of delegates who wanted to be at the Congress. The outcome of the count, which was bound to be approximate, made him conclude in favour of The Hague.

Citizen *Serraillier* was in agreement with Citizen *Engels*; he took up the idea that at The Hague the success of the General Council would be general and not local, as people would inevitably have said if the Council had chosen Switzerland for the gathering. Here [in The Hague] the war was international and not national.

Citizen *Marx* nonetheless sounded the dangers that The Hague presented.

Citizen *Engels* proposed that, things being as they were, the *status quo* had to be accepted.¹⁹

Theodor Remy in Zurich also voiced his criticism in a letter to Jung:

Why, it has been asked, should we not be convened in London, or at Inverness, or at John O'Groat's?²⁰ The Federal Council [General Council] had the right. But why, in the present circumstances, select The Hague? Do you know what they will say? They will say that in view of the great distance and the enormous expense it would be very difficult for the enemies of the General Council to be represented in sufficient numbers, whereas the General Council would probably be there *en masse*, with its supporters from German Switzerland, from Geneva, etc., and could arrange everything in its own way, almost in family.²¹

The protest from the Jura Federation's Federal Committee, signed by its corresponding secretary Schwitzguébel, was tame by comparison:

It being in the interests of every federation and of the Association as a whole to see as many delegates as possible taking part in the Congress, common sense indicates that the place of the Congress should be as far as possible a central point, within reach of all the federations, or at least of the majority of them.

But The Hague does not fulfil these conditions. It is on the contrary far from central, and the choice of this city would make it impossible for some of the federations to send delegates in view of the enormous expenses they would have to bear.

The country which appeared to us naturally indicated as the seat of the Congress is Switzerland, by its central situation as by the relative freedom enjoyed there. We are therefore asking you, in the most formal manner and with the assurance that after a further examination of the question

¹⁸ 'you are laying yourselves open to criticism from your enemies and from your friends' (Perret to Jung, 7 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 364). The Romance Federal Committee to the General Council, 7 July 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 362–63. Perret turned to the Spanish Federal Council for support, and they backed his demand; see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 201 (meeting on 30 July 1872). The secretary of the Federal Council, Francisco Tomás, addressed a letter to the General Council on 1 August 1872: 'We are convinced of the great necessity to hold the next International Congress in an active centre of our Association and at a central point so that the different regional federations and groups of the International may be represented [...]. In the belief that it thus expresses faithfully the desires not only of the Spanish Regional Federation, but also of most groups of our beloved Association, we adhere to the just demand of the Romance Federal Committee' (The Spanish Federal Council to the General Council, 1 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 409–10).

¹⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 485. Because the General Council was busy preparing itself for the congress, it delegated the task of dealing with incoming mail to the subcommittee on 18 June 1872 (*ibid.*, p. 230). For more about the subcommittee, see above, p. 36, and p. 457, n. 11.

²⁰ Legendary octagonal house in the town of John o' Groats at the northern tip of Scotland. The town is named after the Dutchman Jan de Groot, who built the house in the 15th century after being granted the licence to run the ferry to Orkney – a group of islands to the north.

²¹ Remy to Jung, 12 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 438.

you will be unable to do otherwise than to share our opinion, to come back on your decision and to choose some town in Switzerland as the seat of the Congress.

We appeal to your feeling of equity; it cannot be your intention to close, indirectly, the doors of the Congress to the delegates of certain federations; you will not wish the General Congress, at which so many grave questions must find their solution, to see its moral authority weakened by this fact; you will wish, on the contrary, to give public proof of the loyalty with which you accept debate by satisfying our claim, the more so as it comes from a federation which disagrees with you on several points.²²

Of course, Marx and Engels weren't about to change their mind – 'you should have read Schwitzguébel's hypocritical letter', an amused Engels wrote about the aforementioned letter: 'If nothing else had shown me that we were pursuing the right tactics, this would.'²³ After Schwitzguébel's letter was mentioned in the General Council's subcommittee, Marx said 'that three Congresses had already been held in Switzerland, that Holland had already been proposed by the Belgians in 1870,²⁴ that Holland was the centre for England, Belgium, Germany and the North of France and that there was no need to come round to the first decision of the Council'.²⁵ In his reply to the Jura Federation, Jung wrote that the General Council's decision to stick with The Hague

was reached after due consideration of all the arguments contained in your letter, and that this choice was dictated by the following considerations:

The Congress could not be held in Switzerland, since that is the place of origin and focal point of the disputes; the Congress is always influenced to some extent by the place in which it is held; in order to add more weight to its decisions and enhance the wisdoms of its debates, the local character must be avoided, for which it was necessary to choose a place remote from the main centre of disputes.

You can scarcely be ignorant of the fact that three of the last four congresses were held in Switzerland, and that at Basle the Belgian delegates were most insistent that the next Congress should be held either at Verviers or in Holland.²⁶

In spite of the relative freedom which she enjoys, Switzerland can hardly claim the right to monopolise congresses.²⁷

In a riposte in the *Bulletin*, Guillaume explained:

Citizen Jung said, in his own words, that 'the Congress is always influenced to some extent by the place in which it is held'. So it shall be subject to the influence of the milieu, whatever it may

²² The Committee of the Jura Federation to the General Council, 15 July 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 377–78.

²³ Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, 5 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 419.

²⁴ A corresponding letter was read at the General Council meeting on 2 August 1870: 'Cit. *Serrailier* read a letter from Belgium in which Amsterdam was proposed as the seat of the Congress.' ('Minutes of the General Council September 21, 1869 to March 14, 1871', p. 814).

²⁵ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 488 (meeting on 27 July 1872).

²⁶ The suggestion to hold the general congress in Verviers in 1870 was made at the last meeting of the Basel Congress on 11 September 1869 by Hubert Bastin, the delegate of the Local Federation of the Vesdre Valley, which had its headquarters in Verviers, Belgium (*Report of the Fourth Annual Congress*, p. 36). Holland was first suggested in the summer of 1870; see above, n. 24.

²⁷ The General Council to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 28 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 407.

be, in which it meets. And this time, what is this milieu? Precisely the most unfortunate of all, the one that should have been avoided with the greatest care: a *Germanic* milieu.²⁸

Let none take this as an opportunity to repeat the ridiculous accusation against us that we preach ethnic hatred [*la haine des races*]. On the contrary, it is in order to prevent this ethnic hatred, which would inevitably occur in the International *if one ethnic group wished to try to dominate the others*, that we believe it necessary to speak frankly about this issue. – Of what does the London General Council stand accused, among the Spaniards, the Italians, and the French? *Pan-Germanic* tendencies, which means, in other words, the tendency to wish to impose the German spirit, the authority of German theories, upon the whole International. Yet there are facts which unfortunately give great likelihood to this accusation.

First fact: the General Council has an official doctrine, found in all its manifestos and the official doctrine is that which was published twenty years ago in the ‘Manifesto of the *German Communist Party*’²⁹ (Manifest der *deutschen Kommunisten-partei*). The signatories of the ‘*German Communist Manifesto*’ are Mr Marx and Mr Engels, who both serve on the General Council. It is Mr Marx who generally writes all the important documents published by the General Council:³⁰ thus, it is not surprising that they bear the imprint of a *German communist* doctrine.³¹

Furthermore, Guillaume submitted that the socialist press in the Romance languages were generally opposed to the General Council’s leadership grab and in favour of the autonomy of the sections and federations in the International, noting, ‘we do not include the *Égalité* of Geneva, which serves as a mouthpiece for Marx’s agents in Romance Switzerland, nor the *Emancipación* of Madrid, which serves as a mouthpiece for Marx’s agents in Spain, neither of which expresses the thought of the country’. He continued:

However, all of the German-language newspapers support the General Council’s course of action: these are the *Vorbote* of Geneva, the *Tagwacht* of Zurich, the *Volksstaat* of Leipzig, the *Volkswille* of Vienna. – It must be admitted that this division of the international press into two camps, one in which French, Italian and Spanish are spoken, while in the other German is spoken exclusively, is likely to make people wonder.

We could yet draw attention to other facts, but we deem it unnecessary to lengthen this list. As we have said, in France, Italy, and Spain, they speak, rightly or wrongly, of the *Pan-German* tendencies of the General Council, and we think that it ought to have taken care to clear its name of this accusation. To do this, it would have to convene the congress in Switzerland, for Switzerland is a *neutral* terrain, belonging exclusively to neither one nor the other of the two parties into which the International is divided, and because the federations would all be roughly equidistant from the venue of the Congress and could therefore represent themselves in equal proportions. Instead, the General Council is choosing The Hague [...]. And Jung claims that

²⁸ Guillaume later added: ‘One can see that we really didn’t know Holland very well at the moment, since we called it “a Germanic milieu”. We hardly expected to see the delegates of the Dutch Federation vote with us in The Hague against the General Council.’ (Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 302, see also p. 321).

²⁹ For more about the reference to the ‘Manifesto of the *German Communist Party*’, which came from an American edition printed at the time, see above, p. 518, n. 167. Guillaume later commented on his choice of title: ‘I had heard it spoken of as a Manifesto of the *German Communist Party*, and I repeated this confidently’ (Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 303).

³⁰ The General Council itself admitted this in a statement on 21 June 1871: ‘The address [*The Civil War in France*], like many previous publications of the Council, was drawn up by the Corresponding Secretary for Germany, Dr. Karl Marx’ (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 4, p. 219).

³¹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 [to 8] August 1872, p. 1.

this 'add more weight to its decisions and enhance the wisdoms of its debates'. But this is really a bad joke! The only result that the General Council will have obtained is that it will be said, and rightly so, that The Hague was chosen so that the Germanic element would dominate the Congress [...].³²

As mentioned, Liebknecht really did promise at the beginning of the year that if the congress were to take place close to the German border 'the German element will definitely be strongly represented and will obviously take our side'.³³ Guillaume concluded his riposte as follows:

Finally, the fact that three congresses have already been held in Switzerland is not an argument against sticking to it for a fourth. This does not constitute a monopoly in favour of Switzerland; it is simply the result of its geographical position and its relatively liberal institutions. If one demands that the congress be convened in Switzerland, this is not in the interest of Switzerland; it is in the interest of the federations of other countries. Would one ever say that if the lamp was set in the middle of the table three nights in a row, this act constitutes a privilege for the spot on which it was set, and that therefore, in the spirit of equality, it must be set at one end of the table on the fourth night? Would readers who have need for lamp-light at the other end not complain at this alleged act of justice, and would they not rightly say that true justice would be to leave the lamp in the middle of the table for all to enjoy its light equally?

The General Congress ought to restore unity in the International: it ought to be the tribunal before which all the serious disagreements that separate and paralyze us would be considered. Held in The Hague, however, the congress will not be an instrument of unification; as a tribunal, it probably shall not provide the necessary guarantees of impartiality, and we greatly fear that instead of the peace for which we wholeheartedly appeal, the Congress of The Hague shall give us war. Whatever the case may be, it is the General Council that would have it so; let the responsibility for this fall upon it alone.³⁴

Boycott or participation?

Bakunin probably first heard that the general congress would be held in The Hague on 6 July 1872 and apparently informed Guillaume immediately.³⁵ During their correspondence between 8 and 9 July, they appear to have agreed to meet in Neuchâtel, where Bakunin travelled on 13 July.³⁶ On the following day, Bakunin met with his political allies in Jura (Guillaume, Auguste Spichiger and Schwitzguébel) for a lengthy discussion, which must have resulted in a concrete plan of action: 'all well – / Projects fixed', Bakunin noted in his diary on 14 July 1872.³⁷ In the days that followed, Bakunin informed various people by mail about what was agreed upon. On 16 July, he wrote Gambuzzi in Naples:

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ See above, p. 227. This issue had already been addressed in Marx and Engels' correspondence during the planning stage of the general congress of 1870: Becker argued frankly in a letter to Marx on 7 August 1870 that the congress 'should only be held if we can be sure that the German and Swiss element will be strongly represented' (see above, p. 466, n. 100).

³⁴ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 [to 8] August 1872, p. 3.

³⁵ The General Council's resolution convening the Congress of The Hague was first printed in Switzerland in the Zurich paper the *Tagwacht*, 6 July 1872, p. 1. Bakunin was in Zurich at the time and noted in his diary that he sent a letter to Guillaume; see Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 25.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

As for myself, I am in the process of organising our struggle against London. – You have already received our mammoth *Bulletin*³⁸ containing our initial responses to the infamous circular. Now London has struck a powerful new blow. It has designated The Hague in Holland as the meeting place for the next Congress. The obvious purpose is to prevent delegates from Italy, Spain, southern France and the Jura to come in large numbers (the journey of each delegate from Switzerland alone costs 300 fr., and for those from Italy, it cannot be less than 500 fr.) and to obtain, therefore, a Marxist majority, mostly Germans, who would crush us if we were foolish enough to go. Therefore, the Federal Committee³⁹ of the Jura Federation has decided to send *a protest*⁴⁰ to the General Council, quite moderate in form, quite strong in content, which will try to impress upon the General Council that given the extreme importance of the issues which this Congress will address, it is in the interest of the International that the General Council should designate a central location, preferably in Switzerland, to which delegates from all countries could travel with equal ease, and therefore invites the General Council to choose another site in Switzerland. At the same time, the Jur[assian] Fed[eral] C[ommittee] shall invite the friendly federations of Italy and Spain to join its protest and petition. If London refuses after that, we will invite the Italians and Spaniards to do what the Jura will do, that is to say, not to send any delegates to the Congress, but instead to send them to the Conference of free and dissenting sections in Switzerland, in order to assert and to maintain their independence and to organise their own inner Federation, the Federation of autonomous federations and sections within the International. Let all your friends know, and help us on your side by your energetic activity. We have just received letters from Spain, including one from the regional (national) council of Spain – the latter an official letter⁴¹ – which tell us that all the Spanish sections and federations will declare for us against London and move against it in solidarity with us, demanding, as we do so today, the abolition of the General Council. This is the current state of affairs.⁴²

It's unclear whether all of the plans Bakunin presented here were agreed upon in Neuchâtel. It seems indisputable that they planned to protest against the General Council convening a congress in The Hague – a protest which others in the International would be invited to join. But Guillaume later denied wanting to call for a boycott of the congress if The Hague was kept as the location: 'This must be B.'s personal idea', Guillaume wrote about Bakunin's aforementioned letter to Gambuzzi, 'or if we had thought about it even for an instant, we would have quickly changed our mind.'⁴³ In fact, there is evidence that Bakunin soon changed his mind and abandoned the idea of boycotting the Congress of The Hague.⁴⁴ He must have mentioned this

³⁸ A reference to the special edition of the *Bulletin* on 15 June 1872 where responses by various authors to the *Fictitious Splits* were published, see above, pp. 210–13.

³⁹ Erroneously 'Conseil fédéral' (Federal Council) in the manuscript.

⁴⁰ Dated 15 July 1872, see above, pp. 230–31.

⁴¹ The original of this letter has not survived. The minutes of the Spanish Federal Council's meeting on 27 June 1872 merely referred to this matter as follows: 'A letter addressed to the Federal Council of Jura, Switzerland, responding to one that was received and saying that we are willing to maintain with said Council (as with all others) fraternal and supportive relations, was approved.' (Seco Serrano [ed.], *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 162).

⁴² Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 133–34. Date of the letter is assumed because of the note 'Letter to Gambuzzi' in Bakunin's diary on 16 July 1872 (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 27; see also Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 267). During this time (15–18 July 1872), Bakunin also wrote Pezza, Ceretti, Nabruzzi, Cafiero and Alerini (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 26–27). However, these letters have not survived.

⁴³ Written comment added personally by Guillaume in Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4500.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Bakunin's contribution to the Jura Federation's Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds (see below, pp. 238, 288) and his letter to Gambuzzi on 31 August 1872 (see below, p. 241).

reversal in his various letters to Italy.⁴⁵ But unfortunately for Bakunin, the militant members of the International in Italy had already taken a liking to the idea of boycotting the congress. The Italians didn't think highly of the General Council and its manoeuvres in Italy as can be seen by the fact that most groups ignored Bakunin's earlier appeal to comply with all of the formalities involving membership in the International:⁴⁶ despite the fact that the International had made great inroads in Italy, hardly any of the sections were properly registered with the General Council. They did not want to have anything to do with the authoritarians, who they had long ago rejected politically. For instance, a text written by Pezza or Cafiero on 20 July 1872 complained:

The authoritarian communism that predominates in the [General] Council is opposed by the revolutionary tendency of the southern sections, who are instead for the destruction of all authority and want, in place of the state, a free federation of free associations of producers. [...] But the Council is not content with that; it has planned a true coup d'état, and in order to succeed in its ambitious goals, it has fixed the location for the General Congress in The Hague (in Holland), where as a result of the excessive distance and the too great expense, both Spain and France, Italy and Switzerland would only find themselves represented in tiny proportions, and the Council would thus be assured an Anglo-Germanic majority which would defer to its every wish.⁴⁷

The General Council and the Congress of The Hague were also central issues when delegates from 21 Italian sections (including Cafiero [president], Nabruzzi [vice president], Costa [secretary], Fanelli, Friscia and Ceretti) met in Rimini on 4 August 1872 to form an Italian Federation of the International.⁴⁸ They had a copy of the Jura Federation Federal Committee's letter of protest regarding the selection of The Hague as the location of the congress.⁴⁹ Furthermore they received an official address from Spain, which appealed to them 'to hold high the banner of Anarchy and Collectivism and to send many delegates to the Congress of The Hague'.⁵⁰ However, they did not accede to the appeal – at the fifth meeting of the Rimini Conference on 6 August 1872, the delegates discussed the following:

there was a long discussion on German authoritarian communism, which there had been an obvious attempt to infuse the International with through resolution no. 9 of the London Con-

⁴⁵ Bakunin noted in his diary that he wrote Cafiero (23 July and 2 August), Nabruzzi (29 July and 1 August) and Gambuzzi (1 August); see Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 28–29. A letter to Ceretti (Bakunin to Celso Ceretti, 23 July 1872, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*) dealt with other issues. All of the other letters are lost.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Bakunin to Rubicone [Nabruzzi] and friends, 23–26 January 1872, in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 207–28.

⁴⁷ 'Risposta di alcuni internazionali', Introduzione, p. 396.

⁴⁸ For more about the lead up to the Conference of Rimini, see P. C. Masini, 'La preparazione della conferenza di Rimini (1871–1872)', in L. Faenza (ed.), *Anarchismo e socialismo in Italia 1872–1892. Atti del Convegno di studi 'Marxisti e "riministi"', Rimini 19–21 ottobre 1972* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1973), pp. 3–26.

⁴⁹ Ludovico Nabruzzi to the *Fascio operaio*, 22 July 1872: 'I should tell you that I have received a protest from the Jura Federation against the London Council because the latter has chosen The Hague, an outlying point, as the location for the coming congress. Our Swiss friends invite us too to protest, as will the brothers in Spain, Austria [France?], etc. And I have now replied to them that we shall deal with it at the conference of 4 August.' (*ibid.*, p. 17).

⁵⁰ P. C. Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana dell'Associazione Internazionale dei Lavoratori. Atti ufficiali 1871–1880. (Atti congressuali; indirizzi, proclami, manifesti)* (Milano: Edizioni Avanti, 1964), p. 31. The recommendation to send as many delegates as possible to the Congress of The Hague was already made by the Saragossa Congress in April 1872 (*Estratto de las actas del segundo congreso*, p. 112). A response to the official address was sent to the *Federación* via telegram on 5 August 1872; see Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 35.

ference; it was said that such a system was the negation of the revolutionary sentiment of the Italian proletariat; that the General Council had used shameful means to support such a system, means which were clearly manifest in the latest *private circular* [the *Fictitious Splits*] [...]. Having heard the reasons for which the Congress was called in The Hague, and having heard several speeches in which delegates all spoke against the Grand Council [General Council], a motion from the floor was unanimously approved and published separately, whereby the Italian Federation breaks off all solidarity with the Grand Council and proposes to hold a General Congress in *Neuchâtel*, Switzerland, on 2 September next [...].⁵¹

They justified their decision in the corresponding resolution:

Considering:

that the London Conference (September 1871) sought through resolution no. 9 to impose on the whole International Working Men's Association a particular authoritarian doctrine, to wit that of the *German communist party*;

that the General Council was the promoter and supporter of this deed;

that the said doctrine of the *authoritarian communists* is the negation of the revolutionary sentiment of the Italian proletariat;

that the General Council has used the most shameful means, such as slander and falsification, with the sole aim of bringing the whole International Association into line with its particular *authoritarian communist* doctrine;

that the General Council exceeded the limit of its unworthiness with its *private circular*⁵² dated London, 5 March 1872, in which, continuing with its work of slander and falsification, it reveals all the villainy of authority [...]

that the reaction of the General Council caused enormous resentment among the Belgian, French, Spanish, Slavic, and Italian revolutionaries and in part of the Swiss, leading to the proposal to abolish the Council and the reform of the General Rules;

that the General Council has, not coincidentally, convened the General Congress in The Hague, a place that is as far as possible from these revolutionary countries;

for these reasons,

the Conference solemnly declares before every working man in the world, that the Italian Federation of the International Working Men's Association henceforth breaks off all solidarity with the London General Council, while continuing to assert its economic solidarity with all working men, and proposes that all those sections which do not share the authoritarian principles of the General Council send their delegates on 2 September 1872 not to The Hague but to Neuchâtel in Switzerland to open an anti-authoritarian General Congress on the same day.⁵³

The surprising call for a boycott of the Congress of The Hague was telegraphed to the *Federación* in Barcelona.⁵⁴ An editorial there made a connection between the boycott call and the location the General Council had selected for the congress:

In view of the serious implications of what has been disclosed in this news – that Italy, after a delegates' meeting [in Rimini], has decided not to attend the Congress of The Hague – we do not know which attitude the federations in our region will adopt.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁵² *Fictitious Splits* is meant.

⁵³ Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, pp. 36–37.

⁵⁴ Andrea Costa to the editors of the *Federación*, 7 August 1872, in *Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 3.

At any rate, we can only record our profound disgust at what we see as the authoritarian and inconvenient actions of the General Council which, it seems, persists with the idea of holding the universal congress in the far regions of Holland, in spite of all the observations that have been made. [...]

From the moment we first saw this location selected we understood the serious consequences that could come of it. For that is not the way to serve the cause of the proletariat – obliging the vast majority to make scarcely possible sacrifices resulting in insignificant representation [at the congress].

The General Council has fixed the location of the Congress in a place where it seems sure they will have the majority in their favour.

This is in essence the action of a government.⁵⁵

The general meeting of the Barcelona Local Federation on 18 August 1872 decided to send a last appeal to Italy by telegram, ‘that they do send representatives to the Congress of The Hague so as to hold our banner high. Even though at first glance it would seem that all efforts are useless in the face of a congress so cleverly prepared by the General Council for their own purposes’.⁵⁶ Morago’s newspaper, the *Condenado*, noted:

we wholeheartedly ask that our Italian brothers revoke their resolution and attend the Congress of The Hague. Otherwise, instead of contributing to the defence of the Association and saving it from the danger it encounters you are contributing (although in good faith) to the plans of the General Council. Snakes should not be disregarded, they should be crushed.⁵⁷

The Italian sections’ boycott call was criticised in the *Bulletin* as well, which added that this issue would be addressed at the Jura Federation’s upcoming congress:

On Sunday, the Jura Congress will have to make a decision about the proposal of the Italian Federation. We do not wish to prejudge its decision; however, if we may be permitted to express the entirely personal opinion of the editorial board of the *Bulletin*, we shall say that in our opinion, our abstention will be slandered, if we do not go to the Congress of The Hague. The Jura Federation was the first to demand a congress, a public discussion; they offer us one, at last, – under the most disadvantageous conditions, it is true, – yet they are offering it to us; we cannot be seen to reverse ourselves.⁵⁸

Like the Spanish Federation, the Jura Federation stood by its decision to send delegates to the Congress of The Hague at its extraordinary congress – held on 18 August 1872 in La Chaux-de-Fonds.⁵⁹ Guillaume and Schwitzguébel were elected delegates and given the following imperative mandate:

The delegates of the Jura Federation are given an imperative mandate to present to the Congress of The Hague the following principles as the basis of the organisation of the International. [...] The federative principle being the basis of the organisation of the International, the sections federate freely among themselves and the federations federate freely among themselves

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ ‘Las Asambleas Generales de la Federación Barcelonesa de la Internacional’, *ibid.*, 25 August 1872, p. 1. See also Costa to Ceretti, 21 August 1872, excerpts in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 612; Favilla, 25 August 1872, p. 2. For the reply, see Costa to the editors of the *Federación*, 25 August 1872, in *Federación*, 7 September 1872, pp. 1–2. See also Costa to Ceretti, 27 August 1872, excerpts in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 612.

⁵⁷ *Condenado*, 22 August 1872, p. 4.

⁵⁸ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 August to 1 September 1872, p. 6. This statement had already been written and typeset before 18 August 1872 according to an editorial note.

⁵⁹ The minutes were published in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 August to 1 September 1872, pp. 1–2.

with full autonomy, setting up according to their needs all the organs of correspondence, statistics bureaus, etc., which they judge to be suitable.

The Jura Federation sees as a consequence of the above-mentioned principles the abolition of the General Council and the suppression of all authority in the International.

The Jura delegates must act in complete solidarity with the Spanish, Italian and French delegates and all those who protest frankly and broadly against the authoritarian principle. Consequently, refusal to admit a delegate of these federations must lead to the immediate withdrawal of the Jura delegates.

Similarly, if the Congress does not accept the organisational bases of the International set forth above, the delegates will have to withdraw in agreement with the delegates of the anti-authoritarian federations.⁶⁰

A 'Special Instruction' held out the prospect of an alternative congress: the delegates critical of the General Council, the confidential additional resolution stated, would 'organise amongst themselves the calling of a congress wherever they deem best'.⁶¹

On the other hand, the boycott call by the Italian sections was rejected:

The Congress decides, as a natural corollary to the above decisions, not to accept the proposal from the Italian Federation to hold a Congress on 2 September in Neuchâtel, and it charges the Federal Committee to write the Italian Federation immediately to urgently advise it to reverse its decision and to send representatives to The Hague.⁶²

The Jura Federation's Federal Committee then sent a message to the Italian Federation calling on them 'to send their delegates to The Hague so that they could take part there in the great struggle between authority and federalism that would decide the future of the International'.⁶³ Furthermore, they reiterated that 'an anti-authoritarian congress in Switzerland' would be convened if the delegates withdrew from the Congress of The Hague.⁶⁴ Andrea Costa, who had been elected secretary of the Correspondence Commission (*Commissione di corrispondenza*) of the Italian Federation in Rimini, replied to the Jura Federation's Federal Committee as follows:

In order to affirm and maintain solemnly the autonomy of the International societies, the Italian federation unanimously voted at its conference in Rimini a resolution calling a congress in Neuchâtel, Switzerland and breaking off all links with the General Council. That decision was so solemn and the delegates who passed it felt such a need for it, that we could not now reverse it without negating our sentiments.

However, though we cannot be with our brothers from Switzerland and Spain in order to support the struggle of the revolution against authority at the coming congress, we shall follow them nonetheless with our hearts, and hope at the same time that we can come to agreement with them and shake their hands soon in Switzerland, as we believe that their free proposals will not be welcomed by the representatives of authority at The Hague.

⁶⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 324–25.

⁶¹ Favilla, 27 August 1872, p. 2 (missing in the *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 August to 1 September 1872, p. 2). Nettlau: 'again an indifference with regards to formalities on the part of the young Italian International; because if the additional resolution was meant to be published, then the *Bulletin* would certainly have done so.' (Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 612).

⁶² *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 August to 1 September 1872, p. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ Summarised in letters from Costa to Ceretti from 23 to 27 August 1872: excerpts in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 612.

We wanted to ward off once and for all those dangers to which you called our attention by means of the circular last November:⁶⁵ you began it and we believe we have finished it.

It is not therefore for vain pride, brothers, that we shall not revoke our proposal, nor send [delegates] to The Hague, but because we believe we would betray the end which we are vowed to. [...]

Lastly, the Grand Council is not the International; and while we broke with it, we also affirmed once again our economic solidarity with all working men in the world. And let that be enough for us. When the revolution meets the Bastille along its path, it will fell it by popular acclaim.⁶⁶

After a further exchange of letters between Italy and Jura,⁶⁷ an alternative congress *following the Congress of The Hague* was finally agreed upon. Thus, the Italian Federation was able to stick with its boycott of the Congress of The Hague and the alternative congress planned for 2 September 1872 (the opening day of the Congress of The Hague) was postponed until a later date.⁶⁸

The General Council naturally took a dim view of the vocal criticism from the opposition forming in Italy, and again avoided the contentious issues in their reaction. Because of the Italian sections' lax attitude toward formalities, the General Council had an easy time of dismissing the Italian Federation's boycott call. A letter signed by Hermann Jung responded to the Zurich section's enquiry to the General Council regarding the events in Italy:

the associations represented in Rimini are unknown to the General Council and do not belong to the International Working Men's Association. As according to II. (the General Council) points four and five of the general Administrative Regulations (resolutions of the Basel Congress 1869) *every section has to apply to the General Council for membership*, the General Council is *completely authorised by the Rules* to make the above statement.

Moreover, we are forced to declare:

1) According to art. 4 of the General Rules each congress appoints the time and place for the next congress. The General Council may, in emergencies, change the place of the meeting.

2) At its meeting on 18 June, the General Council *made use of the rights imparted on it by the Rules* to convene the congress in *The Hague* (Holland) [...]

3) According to art. 12 of the General Rules, these may be revised by each congress, provided that two thirds of the delegates present are in favour.

4) The *recognition* of the General Rules and the Administrative Regulations is the *first prerequisite* for membership in the International Working Men's Association.

Therefore

while each section has the right to *request* changes it deems necessary, it is obliged, *as long as the general congress has not ratified the changes*, to follow the existing Rules.

⁶⁵ A reference to the *Sonvillier Circular*.

⁶⁶ The Italian Correspondence Commission to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 24 August 1872, in Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, pp. 44–46. This letter also repudiated a telegram by Ceretti to the *Favilla*, which defied the Rimini Conference's call to boycott of the Congress of The Hague and announced that Italian delegates would be sent to Holland; see details in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 612–13. P. C. Masini (ed.), 'La Prima Internazionale in Italia nelle carte dei fratelli Ceretti', *Movimento operaio e socialista* 11 (1965), pp. 54–55.

⁶⁷ See Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 318.

⁶⁸ *Favilla*, 27 August 1872, p. 2.

Even *if* all of the said 21 Italian ‘sections’ *had been* part of the International *beforehand*, because of their continued violation of the Rules, they would put *themselves* outside of the Rules and thereby outside of the International Working Men’s Association.⁶⁹

Engels could not resist delving into the formalities of the issue, either. He wrote the following in the General Council’s name for Italian newspapers on 23 August 1872:

It should be pointed out that of the 21 sections whose delegates have signed this resolution, there is *only one* (Naples) which belongs to the International. None of the other 20 sections has ever fulfilled any of the conditions prescribed by our General Rules and Regulations for the admission of new sections. An Italian federation of the Working Men’s Association therefore does not exist. Those who want to found it, form their own international outside the great Working Men’s Association.⁷⁰

Possibly provoked by the conference’s address to Bakunin,⁷¹ Engels used a letter to concoct a conspiracy theory about the Rimini Conference’s boycott call of the Congress of The Hague: ‘Bakunin, whose style is detectable throughout the document, realising that the game was up, has beaten a retreat all along the line and, with his followers, is leaving the International.’⁷² According to Guillaume, Bakunin was really ‘just as surprised and dissatisfied as ourselves when he read the Rimini resolution’.⁷³ Bakunin wrote Gambuzzi in Naples on 31 August 1872:

We all deplore one of these resolutions [of the Rimini Conference], just one, that which decided not to send delegates to the Congress of The Hague. The Italians would have had to act in concert with the Spanish and the Jurassians, both having decided to send their [delegates] to The Hague, but with clearly determined imperative [mandates] commanding them to withdraw from the Congress in a concerted fashion as soon as the [majority] declared itself in favour of the Marxian direction on whatever question might be. The presence of the Italian delegates would have added

⁶⁹ *Tagwacht*, 31 August 1872, p. 1. Judging from the style, it can be assumed that Engels was the author of this message.

⁷⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 217.

⁷¹ ‘To Mikhail Bakunin

Rimini, 8 August 1872

Dearest comrade,

The delegates of the Italian Societies of the International meeting at their first Conference in Rimini have entrusted us with sending you, the indomitable champion of the social revolution, their affectionate greetings.

We thus salute you, brother, *who have been so greatly wronged in the International*.

For the Conference

Chairman: Carlo Cafiero

Secretary: Andrea Costa’

(Masini [ed.], *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 42). The last sentence is a reference to the following passage in Bakunin’s text *The Political Theology of Mazzini and the International*: ‘Like the Fraticelli of Bohemia in the 14th century, the revolutionary socialists of our time know one another by these words: *In the name of the wronged one, hail*’ (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 44; the devil is meant). The Rimini Conference also sent Garibaldi an official address (for the text, see Masini [ed.], *La Federazione Italiana*, pp. 34–35).

⁷² Engels to Glaser de Willebrord, 19 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 424.

⁷³ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 319. The economist Tullio Martello (1841–1918; professor at the University of Bologna since 1884) claimed in his book about the First International that the draft of the resolution ‘was written by Bakunin himself in French; translated then into bad Italian, it was sent to deputy Fanelli for it to be communicated to and approved by the Rimini meeting. [...] This was what we were led to believe’ (T. Martello, *Storia della Internazionale dalla sua origine al Congresso dell’Aja*, [Padua, Naples: Fratelli Salmin, Giuseppe Marghieri, 1873], p. 477). On the other hand, Nabruzzi, a delegate at Rimini, later confirmed that the resolution expressed the general mood of the delegates and was not written by Bakunin (Nabruzzi to Max Nettlau, personal interview (1899), see Nettlau, *Bakunin e l’Internazionale in Italia*, p. 364).

a great power to this collective [protest], while their absence gives our adversaries one more argument against us. But in the end, what's done is done; what has been so solemnly resolved by the federation of a great country cannot be rescinded or altered without drawing immense ridicule. – Thus it remains to you to accept the *fait accompli*, trying to take advantage of it if possible while striving to contain its disastrous effects.⁷⁴

Costa reinforced the decision made in Rimini in a statement dated 16 August 1872 and printed in the *Plebe*, the only newspaper in Italy which still supported the General Council. He wrote that the resolutions of Rimini had expressed a mood that

was one of absolute independence and full autonomy. And to those who accuse us of running after foreign theories let this be a guarantee, that we, though we do not follow the old traditions of our land where they negate the modern sentiment of the peoples, neither do we allow ourselves to become slaves to the first arrival from beyond the Alps.

The *International* (and our adversaries should know this once and for all) is not Karl Marx or Mikhail Bakunin; it has no idols of any sort to whom we doff our hats; it is not a sect and does not have any dogmas, but follows the progressive development of human thought and, where individuals halt, it walks on because the great soul of the century agitates and moves it [...]. It cultivates great men with love, it admires them, it venerates them; but if any kindness towards one of these should cost it a single line of its programme, it would not do it.⁷⁵

Engels had first scoffed that Naples was the only section present in Rimini that was officially recognised as a member: 'The three other sections which maintain relations with the General Council – Milan, Turin and Ferrara – did not send delegates to Rimini.'⁷⁶ But this did not help Engels long-term: the sections in Milan and Ferrara formally approved the resolutions of Rimini and joined the Italian Federation. About three months later, the section of the International in Turin also broke with the General Council.⁷⁷ Costa said the following regarding membership in the International:

And let the Grand Council take note, that we would be lying to our sentiments if we were to give any consideration to its blustering against 'les Riministes' [the Riminists], who by virtue alone of having accepted the programme of the International are part of that great society [...].⁷⁸

And 'Ateo', the Turin correspondent for the newspaper the *Favilla*, wrote the following about Engels' overbearing tone in his aforementioned letter dated 23 August 1872:

But who are these gentlemen who seek to set themselves up as monarchs of the proletariat? Your names are well-known by now – you have nothing in common with us – it was to be expected after the resolutions in Rimini – this is the death rattle of the dying man. They still have hopes for the Congress of The Hague! They know full well that they have a majority, thanks to their intrigues.

Is the Grand Council perhaps the personification of all the proletarians of the world? No. It is now the union of a pack of ambitious bourgeois disguised as proletarians. Hail, federation of

⁷⁴ Bakunin to Carlo Gambuzzi, 31 August 1872, pp. 2–3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁷⁵ *Plebe*, 17 August 1872, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Engels to Glaser de Willebrord, 19 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 424.

⁷⁷ Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia*, p. 366 (according to letters from Costa to Ceretti on 21 August 1872 and 5 September 1872). Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 611.

⁷⁸ The Italian Correspondence Commission to Paride Suzzara Verdi, 31 August 1872, in *Favilla*, 4 September 1872, p. 2.

the Bernese Jura, the first to unmask them. Hail, once again! The service you rendered humanity should go down in history. Do we perhaps need to be recognised [by the General Council]?⁷⁹

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 3 September 1872, p. 2.

CHAPTER 14. The factional divide in the Spanish International

AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, BAKUNIN ONLY HAD sporadic contact with the Spanish sections of the International until March 1872.¹ In the months that followed, Bakunin was never really abreast of the situation in Spain despite intensifying his correspondence with the French refugee Alerini in Barcelona: Bakunin followed the recommendation of a badly informed Alerini and wrote a letter to Francisco Mora in April 1872, which was unfortunate, since Mora was involved in the *Emancipación*'s controversial attempt to contact the Republican Party in March of that year, which resulted in staunch criticism of Lafargue and Mesa's group.² In April/May 1872, a message from Alerini led Bakunin to send a series of urgent questions to Lorenzo; however, events made Lorenzo's reply on 24 August 1872 redundant.³ On 22 April 1872, Bakunin noted in his diary that he had received another letter from Alerini⁴ in which he must have discovered that Alianza groups were disbanding. This was yet another event to which he could only react.

What exactly motivated the Alianza to disband in April 1872 remains unclear to this day. Those involved explained: 'on the basis of reasons that are foreign to its principle, it [the Alianza] dissolved itself last April'.⁵ In reality, the Saragossa Congress (4–11 April 1872) may have played a role: a delegate wrote in July 1872 that the Alianza had been disbanded 'in compliance with the resolution of Saragossa brought about by the present members of the Alianza on the grounds that *Alianza had completed the task it was created for*'.⁶ At the Congress of The Hague, the delegate Marselau provided the following account:

at the Saragossa Congress, the [Alianza's] members – he was honoured to belong to them – decided to disband for the following reasons: on the one hand, the local federations were already firmly established by then, and on the other the change in the political regime meant that the International could operate in broad daylight.⁷

The following two factors may have also played a role: the attempt by the Madrid Federal Council to bring the Alianza under its control by forming the rival organisation Defenders of the International (*Defensores de la Internacional*)⁸ and the membership in the Alianza of the divisive

¹ See above, pp. 192–93.

² See above, pp. 182–83.

³ See above, p. 196.

⁴ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 15.

⁵ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 353.

⁶ Albajés to Lafargue, 27 July 1872, in *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 3.

⁷ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 680–81 (minutes by Joukovsky). According to other minutes: the Alianza 'was dissolved at the Saragossa Congress when it had accomplished its propaganda work' (F. Sorge, 'Minutes of the Fifth General Congress of the International Working Men's Association at the Hague, September 1872', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 128).

⁸ More information about this affair can be found in the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' by Engels/Lafargue (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 489) and in *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 4.

editors of the *Emancipación* and Federal Council members Mesa, Mora, etc.⁹ Both reasons may have caused the idea of provisionally disbanding the Alianza, at least in Madrid.

Bakunin, who apparently still only had vague notions about the political and personal conflicts in Madrid, started writing a 'Letter to the Spanish Allies' ('Écrit aux Alliés d'Espagne') on 27 April 1872.¹⁰ He began by referring to Fanelli and introducing himself to the Alianza members, whom he did not know for the most part, and proceeded to try to convince them not to disband.

Brothers –

I am an old and intimate friend, I might say the brother, of Christophe [Fanelli], the friend and brother whom certainly many of you have not forgotten. Along with him, I was one of the first founders of the A[lliance]. And it is under this double title that I address these words to you, brothers of the A[lianza].

Unhappy dissensions produced by egoistic strife between brothers who seem to have sacrificed our great goal, the triumph of the universal social revolution, to their personal vanities and ambitions, ended up resulting in the dissolution of the A[lianza] of Madrid. [...]

The A[lianza] is neither an academy nor a workshop; it is fundamentally a militant organisation whose purpose is the organisation of the power of the masses for the destruction of all states and all of the religious, political, judicial, social, and economic institutions currently existing, for the absolute emancipation of the subjugated and exploited labourers of the whole world. The purpose of our organisation is to push the masses to make a clean sweep, so that agricultural and industrial populations can reorganise and federate themselves according to the principles of justice, equality, freedom and solidarity, from the bottom up, spontaneously, freely, apart from any official tutelage, whether of the reactionary or even the so-called revolutionary kind.

To those who ask us what good the existence of the Alliance serves when the International exists, we reply: the International is of course a wonderful institution; it is unquestionably the most beautiful, the most useful, the most beneficent creation of the century. It has established the basis for the solidarity of workers around the world. It has begun to organise across the borders of all states, outside the world of the exploiters and the privileged. It has done more: already today, it contains the first seeds of the organisation of the future unity, and at the same time it has given the proletariat of the world a sense of its own power. Certainly these are immense services that it has rendered to the great cause of the universal social revolution. But it is not at all sufficient, as an institution, to organise and to lead this revolution.

All the serious revolutionaries who took an active part of the International in any country whatsoever, since 1864, the year of its founding, must be convinced of this. The International prepares elements of the revolutionary organisation, but it does not accomplish it. It prepares by organising public and legal struggle for the unified workers of all countries against the exploiters of labour, the capitalists, entrepreneurs, and owners of industry, but it never goes beyond this.

⁹ The internal conflict with the editors of the *Emancipación* and Lafargue played an obvious role. Aside from the Alianza group that the editors of the *Emancipación* belonged to, Lafargue for example spoke about the formation of a second Alianza group in Madrid, 'a counter-Alliance, with Morago at its head' (Lafargue to Engels, 27 April 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 436). However, Albajés denied this in his aforementioned (p. 506, n. 60) open letter to Lafargue. At the finally meeting of the Congress of The Hague on 7 September 1872, Alerini explained that the Alianza 'has ceased to exist because traitors have foully denounced it' (Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 101); similarly, a circular by the Barcelona Local Federation published in March 1873 stated that the Alianza 'dissolved itself over questions that arose in its midst' (Consejo Local de la Federación Barcelonesa, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales y Secciones de la región española* [Barcelona: Imp. de Manero, (1873)], p. 20).

¹⁰ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 15.

The only thing it does outside of this work, already so useful, is the theoretical propaganda of socialist ideas among the working masses, which is also very useful work, quite necessary for the preparation of the revolution of the masses, but which is still far from the revolutionary organisation of the masses.

The International, in short, is an enormous milieu favourable to and necessary for that organisation, but it is not yet the organisation itself. [...] Take the largest, most advanced and best organised section of the International. – Is it ready for combat? You know that it is not. Out of a thousand workers, you would be lucky to muster one or at most two hundred on the day of the battle. This is because, in order to organise a force, it is not enough to unite interests, feelings, thoughts ... We must unite wills and characters. Our enemies organise their forces through the power of money and the authority of the state. We can only organise our own through conviction, through passion.

We cannot and do not have any army other than the people, the mass. But for this mass to rise up simultaneously as a whole – and it is only on this condition that it can triumph – how can this be achieved? Above all, how can we ensure that the masses, even when they are electrified and whipped up, do not contradict themselves, paralysing themselves by their opposed movements? [...]

Obviously this cannot be the work of one man; only many men in association can initiate such a difficult undertaking and lead it to a successful conclusion. But for this to happen, it is necessary first of all that they agree with each other and that they join hands for the shared task. But since this task has a practical, revolutionary goal, the mutual understanding which is the necessary condition for it cannot be made publicly; if conducted in public, it would draw official and unofficial persecution against the initiators from all sides, and they would be crushed before they could accomplish the least thing.

Thus, this agreement and the association that must result from it can only be made in secret; this means that a conspiracy must be established, a formal secret society.

This is the thought and goal of the Alliance. It is a secret society formed within the International in order to give it a revolutionary organisation, to transform it, and all the masses of people that lie outside of it, into a power sufficiently organised to destroy the politico-clerical-bourgeois reaction, to destroy all the economic, legal, religious and political institutions of the states.¹¹

Perhaps provoked by Lafargue's continued 'denunciation' of the Alianza and in spite of Bakunin's appeal, the Alianza didn't only disband in Madrid but in Barcelona, as well.¹² After his scandal-plagued report in the *Liberté*,¹³ Lafargue got involved in another attack against the Alianza: the Madrilenian Alianza's public statement of dissolution – which contained even more 'revelations' – penned by Mesa and Mora's group and the other editors of the *Emancipación* on

¹¹ Bakounine, 'Écrit aux Alliés d'Espagne', pp. 1–3, 10–12.

¹² Only four weeks later, Bakunin already complained to Morago: 'A rather sad piece of news has come to us: the Alliance is dissolving, and has already partially dissolved, in Madrid and Barcelona.' (Bakunin to Tomás Gonzalez Morago, 21 May 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*). Barcelona's Alianza members themselves declared on 1 August 1872 that 'the Barcelona Alianza was actually dissolved before the celebration of the Congress of Saragossa and it was effected formally the following week' (*Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 1). Lorenzo wrote in his memoirs that he joined the Alianza right away after learning of its continued existence in Barcelona in 1874; see Lorenzo, *El proletariado militante*, p. 349 – it was apparently revived after the Congress of The Hague (see below, p. 355).

¹³ See above, pp. 186–90.

2 June 1872.¹⁴ However, their statement was only released after the other Alianza groups had already disbanded: Gabriel Albajés from Barcelona, a delegate at the Saragossa Congress, wrote in an open letter to Lafargue 'that the Alianza from Madrid were very late in executing the dissolution of the Alianza groups because on the day they effected the dissolution the Alianza in the rest of Spain had already ceased to exist a month and a half earlier'.¹⁵

Lafargue tried to churn up more antagonism in the Madrid sections of the International. As the article 'Revolutionary Information' in *La Emancipación* on 1 June 1872 led to the second expulsion of its editors from the Madrid Section of Various Trades,¹⁶ Lafargue made plans to settle the score at the general meeting of the Madrid Local Federation. He wrote Engels on 5 June 1872:

The powder-magazine has been set alight here, the Allies no longer know which way to turn. [...] there is a demand for the expulsion of all its editors [i.e. the editors of *La Emancipación*], on the grounds that, in the last issue, they proposed that an investigation should be made into the private fortunes of politicians, which is tantamount to entering into politics, that is, being reactionary, inimical to the proletariat, etc. Following that, my turn came and a jury was appointed to try and sentence me. I am told that Morago himself was on it. There is no end to the dirty work. The bomb will go off next Monday. I shall declare at the meeting that I do not accept the jury; but I shall make all the revelations I can concerning the Alliance [...].¹⁷

Indeed, the Madrid Local Federation debated all of the accusations in detail once again during a six-hour-long general meeting on the evening of 9 June 1872. The editors of the *Emancipación* Mesa, Mora, Iglesias, Pauly and Pagés for their part again 'denounced' the Alianza – in Lafargue's own words¹⁸ – to no avail: at the end of the meeting, the decision by the Section of Various Trades to throw them out of the International was confirmed. Felipe Martín, who attended the meeting, described how the editors of the *Emancipación* contributed to the discussion:

Slanders (that they could not defend when obliged to), insults towards the federated members and the Federation, threats to dissolve it, foolish provocations, and all the bile they wanted to spill on the assembly – these were the only reasons in defence of their conduct that fell from their lips from nine in the evening until three in the morning when the president drew the session to a close.¹⁹

Lafargue on the other hand reported enthusiastically about the meeting's events to Engels:

Monday's meeting was more sublime than I had anticipated. There was no need for me to speak; the members of the Alliance took it upon themselves to reveal their secrets. [...] The

¹⁴ Their justification included the following: 'The A... [Alianza] has strayed from the path which we believed it would follow when it was first established in our region; it has perverted the idea for which we brought it into being and, instead of becoming an integral part of our great Association, of being an active element giving an impetus to the various organisations of the *International*, assisting them and encouraging their development, it has on the whole parted company with the rest of the Association to become a separate and, so to speak, superior organisation, with domineering tendencies, thus sowing distrust, discord and disunity in our midst' (The Madrid section of the A... to the Seville section of the A..., 2 June 1872, in Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 21). Lafargue told Engels about the Alianza's upcoming statement of dissolution in letters on 27 April and 29 May 1872 (Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 436, 445).

¹⁵ Albajés to Lafargue, 27 July 1872, in *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 3.

¹⁶ See above, p. 191.

¹⁷ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 456–57.

¹⁸ Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 3.

meeting went on until half-past three in the morning. It was then that I moved the following resolution:

I request the assembly to appoint a commission for the purpose of investigating the existence of a secret society known as the *Alliance of Socialist Democracy*, whose centre is in Switzerland, whence membership cards, orders and secret instructions emanate. This society, certain members of which belong to the International, and others to the bourgeoisie and its political parties, presumes to impose its ideas upon the International, to dictate its aims and to lead the working class under concealment and towards an unknown goal. [...]

I do not know whether this investigation will be carried out; but whether or not, the fact that has been established is that the existence of the Alliance, its plans and the names of those who belonged to it have been denounced in open assembly in Madrid. If you think it would be useful to publish these facts in *L'Égalité* before the general Congress, you may do so.²⁰

Lafargue went on to announce that his political allies 'intend to form a new Federation'.²¹ By establishing a rival organisation, Lafargue had succeeded in creating a factional divide within the Spanish Federation of the International – as called for in Engels' master plan according to which Lafargue was to establish a base in Spain in case of a split.²²

Three former members of the Federal Council (Angel Mora, Inocente Calleja, and Valentin Saenz) expressed their solidarity with the five expelled editors of the *Emancipación* (Mesa, Mora, Iglesias, Pauly, and Pagés). This eight-man group filed a complaint with the Spanish Federal Council on 15 June 1872 and called for the expulsion of the Madrid Local Federation from the Spanish Federation. After asking for a statement from the Madrid Local Federation, the Federal Council denied this request.²³ Together with Lafargue, the eight-man group then formed the New Madrid Federation (*Nueva federación madrileña*) with Lafargue on 8 July 1872 and applied for membership in the Spanish Federation in a letter of the same day. The Federal Council also denied their request by pointing out that only *one local federation was allowed per location* according to the rules.²⁴

In light of the Spanish International's 15,000 members, the *Condenado* made the following pun on the new group's name: why is it called the New [*nueva*] Madrid Federation? Because it 'consisted of only NINE [*NUEVE*] members'.²⁵ The Jura Federation's *Bulletin* didn't take the new federation all too seriously, either. Calling to mind the General Council's decision on 28 June 1870 to deny the Jura sections the right to call themselves the Romance Federation despite their majority at the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds,²⁶ the *Bulletin* prophesied:

Nothing more would be lacking, for the comedy to be complete, than to see the London General Council, siding with Lafargue and his nine followers against the Spanish Federation, pronounce

²⁰ Lafargue to Engels, 13 June 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 459, 461–62. The results of the investigation Lafargue had called for were announced on 20 September 1872; see below p. 255.

²¹ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 462.

²² See above, p. 173.

²³ See the resolution dated 9 July 1872 which includes a detailed justification, in Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 177–78.

²⁴ Resolution of 16 July 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 185–86.

²⁵ *Condenado*, 22 July 1872, p. 4; meant are Mesa, Francisco Mora, Iglesias, Pauly, Pagés, Angel Mora, Calleja, Saenz and Lafargue. The membership application that the New Madrid Federation sent to the General Council spoke of 18 members (The New Madrid Federation to the General Council, 5 August 1872, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 866) – who were never named. For more about the Spanish Federation's membership figures in August 1872, see below, p. 279.

²⁶ See above, p. 62.

a verdict of the same kind that it rendered in the conflict between the majority and the minority of the Romance Federation in 1870. We shall not have long to wait before Marx decides that, whereas the Spanish workers are only a pretend majority, and whereas the real majority is composed of nine right-thinking individuals, his son-in-law's nine acolytes shall in the future bear the title of the Spanish Federation, and that the latter will have to look for some other name, say, the Federation of the Pyrenees or something like that.²⁷

The Madrid Local Federation on the other hand openly scolded the New Madrid Federation:

the individuals on the editorial board of a paper published under the title *Emancipación* (the same ones who were declared TRAITORS to the programme that they signed with their signatures by the regular general assembly of the Section of Various Trades) have, in their inexcusable blindness, come to believe themselves worthy enough to constitute another local federation in opposition to the one that considered them unworthy of belonging to it [...]. We ask all of our comrades to keep in mind the names of these unworthy workers which we are obliged to publish in order to put a stop to their harmful intrigues that are forged under the cover of their paper in their editorial office:

PAUL LAFARGUE, JOSÉ MESA Y LEOMPART, FRANCISCO MORA, VICTOR PAGÉS AND INOCENTE CALLEJA.²⁸

The Alianza fracas

As the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* had anticipated, the secretary of the New Madrid Federation, Victor Pagés, turned to the General Council for help.²⁹ Unsurprisingly, Engels hurried to have the new federation recognised by the Subcommittee of the General Council – without consulting the Spanish Federation as stipulated by the Rules. In a letter to the New Madrid Federation dated 15 August 1872, he explained:

in view of the Spanish regional Federal Council's resolution of July 16, refusing to admit the said federation;

considering that, formally, it would be absurd to share in this matter the attitude of a regional Federal Council, the majority of which are members of a secret society hostile to the International, and which the General Council will charge at the Congress;

considering that, essentially, the founders of the New Madrid Federation are the very people who were the first in Spain to dare disassociate themselves from this secret society called the *Alliance of Socialist Democracy*, and disclose and thwart its schemes.

For these reasons,

the Executive Committee, on behalf of the General Council, has resolved to recognise the New Madrid Federation [...].³⁰

²⁷ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 27 July 1872, Supplément, p. 4.

²⁸ The Madrid Local Council to all local federations in Spain, 20 July 1872, *Condenado*, 22 July 1872, p. 3.

²⁹ The New Madrid Federation to the General Council, 5 August 1872, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 866.

³⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 215 (here erroneously 'intends opposing' instead of 'will charge' [*va a acusar*]; corrected according to the original wording in *Emancipación*, 24 August 1872, p. 1). See also Engels' 'Report on Spain' dated 31 October 1872 (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 291). According to art. 5 of the Basel administrative resolutions (see above, p. 147), the General Council should have consulted with the Spanish Federal Council before deciding on the New Madrid Federation's membership bid.

‘The General Council’, the *Federación* commented concerning this manoeuvre, ‘has lost its mind as a consequence of the governmental fever that dominates it’.³¹ Of course, the Spanish Federal Council protested against the General Council’s decision:

This new fact once again shows up the General Council as a violator of the Rules, an enemy of the autonomy of the sections and regional federations as well as an arrogant dictator that attempts to impose itself upon the International Working Men’s Association.

The General Council, swept along by a dictatorial fury that has for some time guided all its actions, can only see in the so-called *New Madrid Federation* the *son-in-law* of Karl Marx and his eight Carlists,³² and not *nine* individuals the majority of whom were considered unworthy of belonging to the Section of Various Trades of the Madrid Federation of the International Working Men’s Association.

It is a trick – which only shows the bad faith that guides the acts of the General Council – to use a pretext to not consult with this [Spanish Federal] Council, ‘the majority of which are members of a secret society hostile to the International’. Said assertion is not only ridiculous but moreover slanderous. And coming as it does from the General Council it shows us that they continue their project of mystification and slander [...].³³

According to Engels’ dispatch, the compelling reason behind the General Council’s decision on the membership bid was the Alianza, who also became the obsession of the New Madrid Federation and its organ, the *Emancipación* – Guillaume diagnosed them with an acute case of *Alliançophobia*.³⁴ Already in their first circular published in issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación* on 27 July 1872, the New Madrid Federation claimed that the departure of its members from the Spanish Federation was the

only way left to them to practice in its purity the organisation of the International which has been distorted and obscured by the old Federation who – under the harmful influence of a secret society called the Alianza and having blindly followed its mandates – have shown themselves more than *authoritarian, tyrannical and inquisitorial*, infringing upon the Rules, trampling on the regulations, falsifying the truth and mocking justice. [...] Because of their cautious and active manner, the Alianza, like all mysterious powers, exerts more influence than you can imagine on all the resolutions of the general assemblies, the assemblies of the sections, those of the federations and even in the councils. Organised hierarchically (like freemasonry) this society is composed of various societies stacked above and below one another, the inferiors being directed by the superiors without it being noticed, like the workers in the International who fail to see that they are directed and managed by the members of the Alianza. That is why the majority of the members of the Alianza in Spain do not know that they themselves are subjected to other mysterious powers. So when they want to make some resolution against an order that comes

³¹ *Federación*, 1 September 1872, p. 1.

³² Carlists: Followers of Don Carlos (1788–1855; brother of the Spanish King Ferdinand VII) and his descendants who laid claim to the Spanish throne. Used ironically here to describe Karl Marx’s followers.

³³ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, ‘Protesta. Al quinto Congreso internacional reunido en La Haya’, *Federación*, 14 September 1872, p. 1. The Council of the Madrid Local Federation also protested against the General Council’s decision (see *Condenado*, 5 September 1872, p. 1) as did the editors of the *Condenado* on 29 August 1872, who said that the General Council ‘was making in this *ukase* a cynical show of their dictatorial behaviour and destroying liberty’ (*ibid.*, 29 August 1872, p. 1).

³⁴ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 20 November 1872, p. 4.

from Switzerland or when they want to be free and rebel against the tyranny that oppresses them, they are attacked mercilessly and abandoned by all of their associates, as has happened to us.³⁵

Lafargue had already claimed that the Alianza was being controlled from Switzerland.³⁶ However, no one ever bothered to provide proof for such claims – which wasn't surprising because surviving documents show that Bakunin had little contact with Spain.

In the same circular in issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación*, the New Madrid Federation had a new accusation on tap – this time with regard to the upcoming election of delegates for the Congress of The Hague:

Comrades, we must not be fooled. We the workers should know where we are going and know who guides us. The Alianza must be judged and this bourgeois element should disappear from the International Working Men's Association for it is destined to kill it. [...] the federations should immediately take a decision declaring that no individual that belongs to or has previously belonged to the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista in Spain can be elected [as a delegate to The Hague]. [...] we will tell you the names of the individuals that we know as having belonged to the Alianza in Spain [...].³⁷

The circular then identified the members of the Alianza in Madrid, Valencia, Barcelona, Málaga, Seville, Cádiz, Palma, and Córdoba, and advised against electing them delegates to the Congress of The Hague. Satisfied with his coup, Mesa wrote a letter to Engels in which he expressed the hope that 'we shall not go to the Congress, but the men of the Alliance will not go there either. [...] We shall try also to obtain the adherence of most of the Spanish federations.'³⁸

In reality, the New Madrid Federation's first circular provoked an uproar of unprecedented proportions: 13 members of the Alianza in Barcelona released a statement on 1 August 1872 in reaction to the bizarre vilification of the Alianza as an *hierarchical organisation, destined to kill the International, controlled from abroad*, etc.:

At the proposal and initiative of two individuals that belonged to the Alianza, we the undersigned met to decide on the contents of issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación*. We decided unanimously to publish this and to secure the resources necessary for the printing of a pamphlet that takes what has been said and what has not been said about the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista and puts in its place the truth [...]. We conclude by stating that we will always remember our membership in the Alianza with satisfaction and pride and by pleading that all the local federations where it has existed start an enquiry about it, whether in general assemblies, by jury, by commissions appointed for such a purpose, or as they so desire. Then we will see who is despicable.³⁹

As promised, the memorandum was released under the title *The Question of the Alianza* (*Cuestión de la Alianza*) at the end of 1872. It included numerous reports and statements on the Alianza's activities that were printed in newspapers and sent to the Federal Council because

³⁵ *Emancipación*, 27 July 1872, pp. 3–4. A circular by the Spanish Federal Council dated 30 July 1872 commented that the editors of the *Emancipación* 'know better than us who obeys instructions, tricks and cabals all made in the royal Marxist cabinet. This is without any doubt the only pastime consecrated by the great pontiff and his subjects and it's of course more pleasant and bearable than the situation that those who are the subject of their slanders find themselves in.' (Consejo Federal, 'Circular', 30 July 1872, p. 4).

³⁶ See above, p. 191.

³⁷ *Emancipación*, 27 July 1872, p. 4.

³⁸ Mesa to Engels, 28 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 406.

³⁹ *Federación*, 4 August 1872, p. 2.

of this appeal and in reaction to the New Madrid Federation's circular in issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación*. For instance, Morago wrote the following from Madrid:

Accused of being a member of the Alianza, I reply with the firm declaration that I am honoured to have been considered a member [...]. It was well known that the Alianza, which built the foundations for the International in Spain, gave itself the special mission of working for its triumph, its radicalism and the purity of its principles. In the end it was known that wherever a member of it arrived, a new local federation sprang up whose core constituted a small but active and revolutionary group.

It was known that wherever this group existed, the formation of the federations that it brought about were solid, because even if the federations suffer one or more setbacks, the constituting core will always survive, from which a new federation will spring soon.⁴⁰

Francisco Coll, Miguel Salas, Francisco Cañellas and Guillermo Arbós wrote from Palma de Mallorca:

It was with indignation that we witnessed the attacks and slanders directed against the Federal Council and individual members in issue no. 59 of the newspaper entitled the *Emancipación*. – As the comrade Tomás, acting general secretary and secretary of the eastern *comarca*,⁴¹ was a member of this Palma Federation, we want to declare and to issue the following testimonial to the individuals of the Federal Council and the rest of the members of the International in Spain and beyond, so that they can inform themselves about his behaviour in our federation.

We are completely satisfied with our comrade Tomás's conduct during the time he belonged to our federation. We are completely grateful to him for having promptly carried out the tasks entrusted to him by this Palma Local Council and for having ignored every kind of danger, working with faith and energy to organise and enhance our federation and giving us an understanding in the different assemblies of collectivist, anarchist and atheist ideas by which we completely abide.

We also inform you that as a member of the dissolved section of the Alianza, neither shall his impeccable and esteemed conduct be challenged in any way, nor shall that of the comrades G. Arbós (shoemaker), Juan Vidal (shoemaker), Juan Frau (shoemaker), Antonio García (mason), Bartolomé Alorda (shoemaker), Bartelomé Guarros (shoemaker), Francisco Cañellas (mason), Juan Sánchez (carpenter), Pedro Gayá (shoemaker) and Martín Rullau (shoemaker), all members from the same [group of the Alianza]. Even less so was it noticed *that they wanted to disrupt and destroy the International*, as libelled in the *Emancipación*. On the contrary, their active and tireless propaganda and efforts have been the reason that our federation in Palma has remained highly organised despite the lies of politicians and the unbridled persecution that we have been the victims of.⁴²

A statement from Seville (Marselau) told the story of the Alianza and the transformation of some members in Madrid from supporters to enemies of the same organisation at the hands of Lafargue:

Some time after hearing of the International, I got to know the programme and aspirations of the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista. I studied said document and *it fulfilled my desires*: it was the beautiful ideal of my aspirations. How could one not subscribe to that programme? How could one not propagate it? Together with various friends we studied it and we worked along

⁴⁰ Morago, 'A los individuos', p. 3.

⁴¹ According to the organisational plan for the Spanish regional federations, which was adopted at the Valencia Conference in September 1871, Spain was divided into five regions (*comarcas*).

⁴² Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 221–22 (meeting on 16 August 1872).

the lines it prescribed and from this small nucleus the federation in Seville was born. Could one not say that the International in Spain came out of the Alianza? Let its detractors of today and its staunch defenders of yesterday respond sincerely. When I consider the conversations and discussions of the members of the Alianza who attended the Valencia Conference and I compare their seemingly truly revolutionary projects with the revelation made today to Paul Lafargue, with his denunciation in the *Liberté* from Brussels, and with the letter advising the dissolution of the Alianza by those who shortly before had reorganised it and promised to work with greater activity, then I cannot but believe in a pernicious and criminal influence in the very midst of the International, the watchword of which is to divide in order to destroy. [...]

I, as one who loves the International Association and, moreover, believes it is the only life-line for workers and for humanity, have formed an opinion from which I will not back away for anything. I believe our main objective should be PROPAGANDA AND ORGANISATION. Regarding propaganda, I will continue with the programme of the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista, because I think it derives from the words which form the basis of our General Rules: TRUTH, JUSTICE and MORALITY; no duties without rights; NO RIGHTS WITHOUT DUTIES.⁴³ Regarding the organisation, I believe that our Rules require revision and reform in the general and regional congresses. Also, I agree with those that want to abolish the authoritative power of the General Council. I believe it would matter little to me or to the International if a General Council was in this nation or another as it should always be a statistics bureau and a centre for correspondence. [...]

Workers: we despise poverty and we will move towards our objective without hesitation: in every way our enemies must succumb. We hope that those responsible for these divisions are filled with shame when they see our indifference to their machinations.⁴⁴

[...] with our head held high and with a dignity that gives us a pure and simple conscience, we reject what has been said in this circular [of the *Emancipación*] about the tendencies of the Alianza and its objective. We have always believed that the Alianza would synthesise the aims and objectives of the International.

We have seen nothing in it [the Alianza] that is not pure and revolutionary; its members have been the most active propagandists of collectivism in the International – at least *for our part we have experienced this, and nobody can accuse us of being traitors* [...].

And now I ask you, the signatories of the circular: if the Alliance is a ‘secret society with harmful influence, more than authoritarian, tyrannical and inquisitorial’; if you ‘*knew* of the existence of the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista, a secret society that has for *some time* struggled to covertly dominate the International and to *which you BELONGED*’ – then why have you been so complicit in such an evil?⁴⁵

Felípe Martín, himself not a member of the Alianza, wrote from Madrid that for those who signed the circular

it is very easy to direct accusations onto everyone and adopt a new school using the pretext of the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista, a secret society, of which they themselves were members in Spain before it dissolved itself, and which they organised and promoted, although they claim it has ideas contrary to those of the Association. However, I have not seen anyone propagate

⁴³ From the preamble to the General Rules of the International (*Rules of the International*, p. 4).

⁴⁴ N. A. Marselau, ‘¡Ay de los culpantes!’ *Razón*, 27 July 1872, p. 2.

⁴⁵ *Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 2.

such ideas and all of those that are accused of being in the Alianza in Spain are exactly those who have sacrificed the most for the international cause [...].⁴⁶

A commission was elected in Cádiz to investigate the Alianza's activities; after they read their report to the International's general meeting in Cádiz on 17 November 1872, the meeting passed the following resolution:

That the individuals that constituted said society have not done anything that may be contrary to the International Working Men's Association. Quite the opposite, they have constantly worked for the propagation of its doctrines and for its development in this locality and in others around the province. Likewise their conduct within this federation is blameless. In view of this, the assembly agreed that the Alianza members were following the proper course, and congratulated them on the success born of their devoted work. This will be made public by way of the International's newspapers so that it may come to the attention of all associated workers.⁴⁷

At the Valencia Federation's general meeting on 14 September 1872, an investigative commission also read its report on the Alianza. Afterward the meeting declared 'that it approves of the conduct of its members within the Valencia Federation'.⁴⁸

In Córdoba, the International's general meeting passed the following resolution after the New Madrid Federation's circular was read:

Of the five individuals belonging to the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista in Córdoba, *none have exerted pressure or any sort of influence on this federation*. As workers, honest workers, we do not want and we do not allow anyone to believe us to be puppets or vessels of a secret association, because neither are we willing to play that role, nor were the individuals that have belonged to the Alianza mistaken about their mission as members of the International so much that they allegedly tried to act in a way that was lamented in such a cynical manner by these nine individuals *who pompously call themselves the New Madrid Federation*. This assertion is an infamous slander.⁴⁹

The investigation Lafargue had called for in Madrid⁵⁰ came to the following conclusion on 20 September 1872:

the commission began by examining the background and behaviour, not only of Morago, but of all those accused and betrayed by their former accomplices and bosses, and it was seen that all of the most revolutionary and the most intelligent amongst the members of the Association have been accused of being in the Alianza, and logic has led this committee to reason thus:

If the comrades who are the most active, propagandistic, energetic and dedicated are classified by their informers as members of the Alianza and therefore as enemies of the International, and if no evidence (which we can presume does not exist) of this is presented by them other than infinite claims, then how can the Alianza have been acting contrary to the International Working Men's Association?⁵¹

⁴⁶ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 3.

⁴⁷ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 351 (meeting on 22 November 1872).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 262 (meeting on 20 September 1872).

⁴⁹ The Córdoba Local Federation to the editors of the *Federación*, 1 August 1872, *Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 2.

⁵⁰ Lafargue called for the investigation at the end of the Madrid Local Federation's general meeting in the wee hours of 10 June 1872; see above, p. 247.

⁵¹ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 5. The Madrid Local Federation reconfirmed this decision at their general meeting on 20 November 1872: 'it was declared there is nothing to accuse the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista of as they agreed with the revolutionary ideas that it propagated when it existed.' (*Condenado*, 21 November 1872, p. 4).

The memorandum *The Question of the Alianza* also retold the Alianza's story and reached the following conclusion:⁵² the members of the Alianza 'who founded the first and most important local federations, were the most persecuted in a critical epoch and designed the organisation that exists in Spain'⁵³ – it served as a backbone for the International; in many ways a role similar to that of the FAI decades later.⁵⁴

Francisco Mora, formerly one of the most active Alianza members, wrote the following to the Alianza group in Valencia on 10 August 1871: 'It is desirable that members of the A[lianza] develop closer relationships among themselves as much in order to come to agreement about pending matters as to found new sections [of the Alianza] in the local federations that do not yet have one.'⁵⁵ Thus it must have been very irritating to see Mora – who should have known better – sign the New Madrid Federation's vicious attack against the Alianza in issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación*. 'Yes, editors of the *Emancipación*, accuse us of being *members of the Alianza*', the Federal Council replied in a circular dated 30 July 1872, 'you, who were hitherto recommending the organisation of this very same Alianza'.⁵⁶ From Barcelona, José García Viñas addressed the circular's signatories but especially Mora:

You must surely be very blind in the mind, or the most degraded man one could imagine, to dare to sign that pack of nonsense that you published in no. 59 of the Marxist newspaper. You, who should know me as well as all the others described there as ambitious, foolish and as the bourgeoisie disguised as revolutionaries. How can you lift your head with the shame? Did your hand not tremble when you signed such villainy? [...]

I understand that what Karl Marx's son-in-law did, because his mission is to proselytize for his messiah. Or to destroy the International, which does not want to follow him. Therefore, although this is unworthy, your behaviour [as a group] is even less worthy and especially your personal behaviour – turning traitors to become puppets and perfectly filling the role of the police.

The General Council (which Lorenzo, on his return from the London Conference, so aptly named the court of Karl Marx) must reward your services. Although what is more probable is that you will receive the prize of all traitors – the contempt of those who you have betrayed and those that have used you.

Given your behaviour, one can only think of all that you have lost – dignity, judgement and pride. In what way have you been fooled? Where are these hierarchies of which you speak? I know no others than the ones that you tried to build, thus constituting yourself as the centre of the Alianza. I know no other instructions or orders than the ones that you have issued, believing yourselves superior to the rest, without consulting or inquiring beyond your omnipotent will. [...] I end, because, to continue, would fill many sheets in vain because you know the truth as well as I do [...].⁵⁷

Mora tried to defend himself by repeating familiar accusations, which Lafargue had probably made up:

⁵² See above, pp. 157–58.

⁵³ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 5. The commission report of the Córdoba Congress came to the same conclusion; see below, p. 367.

⁵⁴ See also J. Gómez Casas, *Anarchist Organization: The History of the F.A.I.* (Montréal, Buffalo: Black Rose Books, 1986), p. 18.

⁵⁵ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 4.

⁵⁶ Consejo Federal, 'Circular', 30 July 1872, p. 4.

⁵⁷ José García Viñas to Francisco Mora, 3 August 1872, in *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 2.

It is not the programme of the Alianza that we have fought, or its conduct in Spain until just before we split from it. What we did fight is its subsequent behaviour and its hierarchical organisation that certain details which came to our attention have convinced us exists. The acts of the Alliance in Switzerland, Italy, England⁵⁸ and other countries all demonstrate clearly that the Alliance intends, with the arrogance of all sects, that the International surrender itself, or else they will divide and kill the International.⁵⁹

The accusations and especially the vague reference to *certain details*, which were supposedly the only proof, disgusted the authors of the memorandum *The Question of the Alianza*:

What are these details that prove to you that the Alianza was a hierarchical society? Imposters! With all that you have said, you still have the wisdom or the impertinence to invent something. Well, if you had some details, would you not publish them? But you can't have any, because it is as false as everything that you have said, because you know that the Alianza was completely democratic; there was not even a regional committee, but all sections communicated and consulted with each other. This you know from experience and you have the impertinence to say otherwise.

You claim it was the acts of the Alliance in Switzerland, Italy, England and other countries that you have fought. Imposters! One hundred thousand times imposters! Present proof, conclusive proof. Not inventions as hitherto, not saying 'You see what has happened? This is the work of the mysterious Alianza.' Speaking like that does nothing more than prove your degradation, your debasement and your infamy. You must present conclusive proof. Moreover you know that the secret Alianza was founded in Spain without anyone coming to found it, that they made the programme and its rules here, and you also know that this society didn't have sections beyond Spain and Lisbon, and that its action was confined to this circle, whatever efforts we have undertaken to extend it. So you know perfectly well that even if a secret society called the Alliance may have existed in other places (which we do not know) we had nothing to do with it.

They got to saying that the Alianza was receiving orders from a centre, which they said exists in Switzerland. And to be abominable to the Jura Federation, they said that this centre was the Federal Council of this federation. They know this is a lie since the Alianza never received orders, but if they claim this they may present evidence of it. But how can they present it when they know full well that such a thing is false. They know the opposite is true, that the Alianza has always discussed at length all its resolutions and that without consultation between the sections and the vote of the majority nothing apart from the common good has been put into practice. And we can present correspondence between the sections to prove it. If they know this, how can they cover themselves in such absurdity and infamy by saying that the Alianza did nothing more than receive and follow orders?⁶⁰

Repeated calls for actual proof remained unanswered. It quickly became clear that the only point of reference for the New Madrid Federation's attacks was Lafargue's Marxian conjecture, 'which sufficed for denunciations and disloyal polemic'.⁶¹ Lafargue apparently never planned

⁵⁸ The Alliance was in no way active in England.

⁵⁹ Francisco Mora to the editors of the *Emancipación*, 17 August 1872, in *Emancipación*, 24 August 1872, p. 3. See also Mora, *Historia del socialismo obrero español*, p. 127; and Nettlau, *Miguel Bakunin, la Internacional y la Alianza*, p. 117.

⁶⁰ *Cuestión de la Alianza*, p. 5.

⁶¹ M. Nettlau, 'Bakunin und die Internationale in Spanien 1868–1873', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* 4 (1914), p. 244. See also below, p. 280.

to submit ‘conclusive proof’. By merely mentioning the name Alianza, Lafargue was able to get London’s attention as Marx and Engels went hopping mad upon hearing it. The Alianza in Spain *could not* be a network of militant members of the International; it *had to be* Bakunin’s tool: ‘What will break the old scoundrel’s neck is the continued existence of the “Alliance” – at least in Spain – as a *secret society*’, Engels posited, for instance.⁶² It didn’t occur to Marx and Engels that the Alianza in no way had continued the International Alliance of 1868 and that their speculation about the Alianza was baseless. The Alianza caused a knee-jerk reaction in them laden with conspiracy theories and resentment against Bakunin. Despite the fact that Bakunin did not have significant influence in Spain and there could be no question of a conspiracy against the International, Engels continued to make up bizarre stories about the Alianza, for example that it was directed *against the International* and even *against the workers* as well as *under the leadership of Bakunin*, etc.⁶³ Information about the Alianza’s real function fell by the wayside.

This state of affairs meant that all of the aforementioned attempts at clarification by the members of the Alianza – about its autonomous development and inner workings, for example – and all of the appeals for a more balanced point of view were futile. Lafargue was able to push the Spanish International into constantly making new statements regarding the Alianza, which he was then able to latch onto, etc. And so they argued about the Alianza for many months, talking at cross purposes: the one side never tired of stressing the Alianza’s constructive role during the International’s development in Spain, the other side kept finding new evidence of a long-standing and far-reaching Bakunist conspiracy with each mention of the name Alianza. An author who claimed to be impartial observed in the *Federación* that the Alianza’s programme still embodied the ideas and feelings of the entire proletariat, ‘with the exception of some individuals – the London [General] Council – who think the opposite, or rather, who do not know how to think at all’.⁶⁴ Thus both parties debated about the Alianza, although their conception and intentions couldn’t be more different. This incongruence in the discussion often led to bizarre situations: Lafargue and Engels were overjoyed after the Barcelona Alianza members published their former programme and rules in order to provide authentic information regarding their group⁶⁵ – an act which actually cut the ground from under the *Emancipación*’s vicious attacks and accusations. ‘We have forced the Alliancists themselves to publish the Rules of the “eminently secret” Alliance’, a satisfied Engels wrote;⁶⁶ apparently he speculated that this gave him leverage *against* the Alianza. Lafargue and Engels evidently did not intend to understand the situation in Spain or learn about the inner workings of the Alianza. At the Congress of The Hague, Alerini accused Engels of being ignorant ‘about the sentiment of the Spanish Internationals’. Engels – a true

⁶² Engels to Cuno, 5 July 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 408.

⁶³ For example, see above, pp. 187, 192.

⁶⁴ *Federación*, 28 September 1872, p. 2. Accusation made by the *Emancipación* regarding his identity were dismissed by the anonymous author, who said that he had never been an editor of the *Federación* nor a member of the Alianza; see *Condenado*, 17 October 1872, pp. 3–4.

⁶⁵ ‘Alianza de la Democracia Socialista’, p. 2. On 11 August 1872, a week after publication, the general meeting of the Seville Local Federation declared that it was ‘in agreement with the programme and statutes of the former Alianza de la Democracia Socialista and approves of them in all their parts’ (*Condenado*, 22 August 1872, p. 4). The editors of the *Condenado* commented on this declaration: ‘It won’t take too long to see the pope in London anathemising and excommunicating the Sevillians.’ (*ibid.*)

⁶⁶ Engels to Glaser de Willebrord, 19 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 424.

conspiracy theorist – countered ‘that he knew more about things in Spain than these gentlemen would have liked’.⁶⁷

The Alianza’s decisive role in the development of the Spanish International was of course not due to a conspiracy against the International or ‘secret instructions’ from Bakunin as Lafargue and Engels would have liked people to believe. On the contrary, it was due to an event at International’s inception in Spain: Fanelli’s simultaneous propaganda for the International and the programme of the Genevan International Alliance formed in 1868. Fanelli propagated this problematic mix of organisations because the Alliance initially considered itself an *independent* international organisation on the one hand and an *integral* part of the International on the other, and Fanelli thought that being a member of the Alliance made him part of the International.⁶⁸ Bakunin considered the results of Fanelli’s propaganda trip fatal. Bakunin wrote a letter to Alerini – partly in code – in Barcelona at the beginning of May 1872, suggesting that when Fanelli had laid the groundwork in Spain for this mix composing the International and Alliance, he had

committed an organisational mistake of which you are now feeling the effects. He confounded the International with the Alliance and thereby led his friends 3521 [in Madrid] to found the International with the programme of the Alliance. This may have seemed a great triumph at first; in reality, this became a cause of confusion and disorganisation for both.⁶⁹

Bakunin had good arguments to back his claim that blending the Alliance and International’s programmes would lead to confusion and be detrimental to the organisation. As he had already explained in his letters to Italy,⁷⁰ Bakunin wrote to Spain that the International *could not have a programme that was mandatory for all* – regardless of whether it was from Marx or the Alliance:

The International welcomes, without any consideration of differences in political and religious belief, all honest workers, on the sole condition that they accept, with all that it entails, the solidarity of workers’ struggle against bourgeois capital, the exploiter of labour. This is a positive condition, sufficient to separate the world of the workers from the world of the privileged, but insufficient to impart a revolutionary direction to the former. Its programme is so broad that even monarchists and Catholics can enter. And this breadth of the programme is absolutely necessary for the International to be able to include hundreds of thousands of workers, and it is only by counting hundreds of thousands of members that it can become a real power.⁷¹

He continued in a letter to Alerini:

The great merit of the founders of the International and of the Geneva Congress (September 1866) consisted in having understood this and having made it the basis of the entire programme of our great Association. If we had introduced atheism and materialism into this programme, we would certainly have expelled from the International millions of very serious workers, i.e. greatly oppressed and very poor ones. [...] impose the programme of the Alliance upon the In-

⁶⁷ Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 88. See also J. G. Eccarius, ‘Reports sent to *The Times*’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 95–96. In a letter to Engels dated 12/19 June 1872, Cafiero also noted the following: ‘At times, you like to cherish ideas you find congenial, but end up constructing in your mind something that does not exist at all in reality, and thus Terzaghi, Bakunin, Stefanoni, the Jura, the Bakuninists, Malon, the Alliance, etc., etc., are all part of some fantastic phalanx against which you [are] fighting’ (Del Bo [ed.], *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 223).

⁶⁸ See above, pp. 154–55.

⁶⁹ Bakunin to Alerini, [3–6 May 1872], pp. 1–2, published as Bakunin to Morago, 21 May 1872, pp. 7–8, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*; see also above, p. 513, n. 55.

⁷⁰ See above, pp. 149–50.

⁷¹ Bakounine, ‘Écrit aux Alliés d’Espagne’, p. 3.

ternational, and the International will no longer count more than two or three thousand members throughout Europe. These will, indeed, be valuable members, the most developed, the strongest and most sincere revolutionary socialists of Europe – but what are three thousand men before the combined power of the rich classes and the state, of all the states? – Absolutely powerless. This formidable coalition of the reaction and the exploiters can only be broken by the organised power of the masses of all the millions of workers – and certainly those millions today will not accept the socialist philosophical programme of the Alliance. –

Neither will they accept the Marxian program, which, in addition to its scientific and abstract character, also entails the terrible disadvantage of tending to the founding of new *popular states*, i.e. new prisons and new guards for the people, all the more oppressive in that they oppress in the name of the sovereign will of the people. –

[...] How to proceed, then? Should there be two Internationals? One Germanic, the other Latino-Slavic? It would be a great misfortune – and a certain triumph for the bourgeois of all nationalities and all lands. It would be the disruption of the proletariat, the introduction of civil war in its midst, all to the profit of the bourgeoisie. – Is there an opportunity to reconcile the Marxian programme with ours? No, because they are mutually exclusive. – This reconciliation is impossible. In the end, must one of these programmes be sacrificed to the other, for the sake of peace and to save the unity of the International – and as it is the Germans who tend to dominate, not Latins nor Slavs, should the latter submit to the yoke of Germanic ideas – a yoke that could have no other result than the deprivation and enslavement of Latin and Slavic nationalities, or even a terrible ethnic war? It is enough to ask this question for us all to answer it firmly in the negative.

So neither conciliation, because it is impossible, nor submission, because it is disgusting and deadly, nor division, because it is necessary to save the unity of the International, the supreme condition for the triumph of the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie. So what is to be done? – We must seek for this unity where it is, not where it cannot be found. It must be sought not in either political or philosophical theories, but in the solidary aspirations of the proletariat of all countries to material or economic emancipation – *on the terrain of the economic struggle, in the everyday practice of labour exploited by capital*.

I will never cease to repeat it. That is the goal, the only purpose of the organisation, and the sole programme of the International. [...] Such is the serious, positive side of the International, the only really required of it; everything else, all these questions of the social and political organisation of the future being discussed at our congresses, such as that of all-round education, of the abolition of states or the emancipation of the proletariat by the state, of women's emancipation, of common property, of the abolition of inheritance rights, of atheism, materialism or deism – all of these are undoubtedly very interesting questions, and discussion of them is very useful to the intellectual and moral development of the proletariat – but no congress has the ability or authority to resolve them in an absolute manner, nor to impose its resolutions as articles of a mandatory programme for the sections, or for its individual members; they cannot, they do not want to, because by so doing they would proclaim absolute truths, a nonsense, and they would impose, by the artificial vote of a necessarily factitious and fluctuating majority, an *official truth*

– a monstrosity. [...] On such a broad terrain, every idea, every doctrine must be fully free to unfold – the authoritarian theories of Marx, as well as our own anarchic theories [...].⁷²

As long as ‘none of them is proclaimed as the official theory’, Bakunin added in the aforementioned ‘Letter to the Spanish Allies’,

these doctrinal differences and the peaceful struggles that result from them within the International are far from being an evil; they are, in my opinion, a great good, in that they help to develop the thinking and the spontaneous labour of the intelligence of each [...]. The workers of the Jura Federation, for example, who abhor any authoritarian organisation and who have adopted the programme of the abolition of the state, are deeply separated in this view from the workers of Germany, a large majority of whom, it seems, agree with Marx’s authoritarian theories, and yet if a strike broke out in Germany, the workers of the Jura would be the first to support it by all means. I am not sure of it, but I hope that the workers of Germany would do likewise. So here is the true and only form of solidarity that the International creates. It is entirely practical, and it persists, it remains strong in spite of all the theoretical disagreements that may arise between different groups of workers.

However, this can only be maintained on the sole condition that no political, socialist or philosophical theory can ever become the binding, official theory of the International. First of all, any official theory is nonsense. To have the courage and the excuse to impose itself, it must proclaim itself absolute, and the time for absolutes is past, at least in the camp of the revolution – for men of freedom and humanity, the absolute is the absurd. Then, since it will be forever impossible that any particular theory should actually be the product of the individual thought of each; since there has never been an example of such in history; since all theories, inasmuch as they are explicit and finite theories, have been and always will be developed by a small number of individuals, therefore, a theory which is called absolute will not represent anything in reality other than the despotism exercised by the thought of some over the thoughts of all – a theoretical despotism that will never fail to turn into despotism and exploitation in practice.

This is precisely what we see happening today within the International itself. The Marxist clique, all-powerful in the General Council, [...] obviously strives to impose the political and socialist doctrine of Marx, that of the emancipation of the working classes by the power of the large centralised state, as the official doctrine of the International. In tandem with this goal and as its necessary consequence, it pursues another goal: that of transforming the General Council, always led by Marx himself, into the government, the official director, the dictator of the International – And it labours, it schemes mightily even now, vigorously spreading slanders, to prepare a congress that, once it has proclaimed the doctrine and dictatorship of Marx (masked, naturally) as mandatory for all sections of the International, will declare heretics all those who do not wish to accept this doctrine, and traitors all those who will not bow their heads before this dictatorship. –

Such is the fatal effect of official doctrines.

Lest it betray its mission, the International must accept none of this.⁷³

⁷² Bakunin to Alerini, [3–6 May 1872], pp. 7–12, published as Bakunin to Morago, 21 May 1872, pp. 9–14, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*; see also above, p. 513, n. 55.

⁷³ Bakounine, ‘Écrit aux Alliés d’Espagne’, pp. 4–7.

Engels' attacks against the Alianza (July–August 1872)

After reading Lafargue's first 'denunciation' of the Alianza, Engels hurried to add it at the last minute to the controversial pamphlet *Fictitious Splits*. As the General Council had approved the comprehensive pamphlet at its meeting on 5 March 1872 without knowing what it was about,⁷⁴ Marx and Engels didn't have any qualms about adding a reference to Lafargue's report to the text in April 1872. As the *Fictitious Splits* was already being typeset, they were only able to add the following threat against Bakunin and his political allies as a footnote:

these absolute proponents of clamour and publicity organised within the International, in contempt of our Rules, a real secret society directed against the International itself with the aim of bringing its sections, unbeknown to them, under the sacerdotal direction of Bakunin. The General Council intends to demand at the next Congress an investigation of this secret organisation and its promoters in certain countries, such as Spain, for example.⁷⁵

Engels was only able to fully exploit Lafargue's denunciation of the Alianza after the *Fictitious Splits* was printed. At the meeting of the General Council's subcommittee on 5 July 1872, he presented Bakunin's reply to the *Fictitious Splits*,⁷⁶ Lafargue's scandalous report in the *Liberté* and the objection against it from three Spanish Federal Council and Alianza members.⁷⁷ The subcommittee passed the following resolution according to the minutes:

After having heard the reading of documents reporting on Spain, the Sub-Committee resolved the following:

1. That it would not reply to Bakunin's letter.
2. Citizen Engels was to write to Valencia, to the Federal Council, to ask it to account for its relations with the *Alliance*, since the Council had at least three of its members belonging to this society.
3. The Sub-Committee was to request the General Council to propose the expulsion of Bakunin and the members of the Alliance at the next Congress. Citizens Marx and Engels were charged with compiling the points to be presented to the General Council.⁷⁸

The second point, the idea of sending a threatening letter to the Spanish Federal Council in Valencia, may have been based on an idea by Lafargue who suggested the following to Engels on 1 July 1872:

You should write officially to Valencia, in the name of the G[eneral] C[ouncil] asking them what attitude should be adopted towards the Al[liance] and telling them that you learn from

⁷⁴ See above, pp. 201–2.

⁷⁵ Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 115. After receiving a copy of the *Fictitious Splits*, an enthusiastic Lafargue wrote Engels: 'your circular, which we shall translate at once, will do a good deal of harm' (Lafargue to Engels, 29 May 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 444). A Spanish translation of the *Fictitious Splits* was not published at the time.

⁷⁶ See above, pp. 212–13.

⁷⁷ For more about Lafargue's report in the *Liberté*, see above, pp. 186–90. The protest of the Federal Council members was probably published in issue no. 64 of the *Razón* on 8 June 1872; see Lafargue to Engels, 13 June 1872, in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 462. The only known surviving copies of the *Razón* belong to the IISG; unfortunately issue no. 64 is not among them.

⁷⁸ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 481–82.

La Razón that at least three members of the Federal C[ouncil] belong to the Al[liance]. Send a registered letter and try to compromise them in relation to yourselves. In any case, according to Mesa and Mora, the Fed[eral] C[ouncil] will not dare to do anything for the Al[liance], which is in process of disbanding.⁷⁹

Lafargue mentions this again in his follow-up letter:

Mesa thinks that the G[eneral] Council should act energetically and even provoke a split before the Congress; but first he has to write to the Fed[eral] C[ouncil] telling them that he is aware of all their tricks, demanding to know the names of all the members of the All[iance] in Spain and asking them to institute a public enquiry into the All[iance] for the purpose of furnishing the General Congress with these documents; also that they should reply to you by return of post and that if they fail to satisfy your wishes, you will openly denounce them in Spain as having violated the statutes and being members of the All[iance].⁸⁰

'The Federal Council will not pronounce in favour of the Alianza, I am almost sure of it',⁸¹ Mesa promised in a letter to Engels. Spurred by Lafargue and Mesa, Engels sent the following declaration of war to Spain on 24 July 1872:

TO THE SPANISH FEDERAL COUNCIL

Citizens,

We hold proof that within the International, and particularly in Spain, there exists a secret society called the *Alliance of Socialist Democracy*. This society, whose centre is in Switzerland, considers it its special mission to guide our great Association in keeping with its own particular tendencies and lead it towards goals unknown to the vast majority of International members. Moreover, we know from the Seville *Razon* that at least three members of your Council belong to the Alliance. [...] The International knows but one type of members, all with equal rights and duties; the Alliance divides them into two classes, the initiated and the uninitiated, the latter doomed to be led by the former by means of an organisation of whose very existence they are unaware. The International demands that its adherents should acknowledge Truth, Justice and Morality as the basis of their conduct; the Alliance obliges its supporters to hide from the uninitiated members of the International the existence of the secret organisation, the motives and the aim of their words and deeds.⁸² The General Council had already announced in its private circular [the *Fictitious Splits*] that at the coming Congress it would demand an inquiry into this Alliance, which is a veritable conspiracy against the International. The General Council is also aware of the measures taken by the Spanish Federal Council on the insistence of the men of the Alliance in the interests of their society, and is determined to put an end to this underhand dealing. With this end in view, it requests from you for the report it will be presenting at the Hague Congress:

1) a list of all the members of the Alliance in Spain, with indication of the functions they fulfil in the International;

⁷⁹ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 463–64.

⁸⁰ Lafargue to Engels, [mid-July 1872], *ibid.*, pp. 469–70 (here erroneously 'furnishing the General Council' instead of 'furnishing the General Congress' [*au Congrès général*]; corrected according to the original wording in Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondance*, vol. 3, p. 489).

⁸¹ Mesa to Engels, 4 July 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3263.

⁸² Despite pretending to be indignant about the conspirational Alianza, Engels and Marx had no qualms about working with the equally conspirational Blanquists (see above, pp. 101, 478–79, n. 1, and below, p. 284). Marx and Engels' own conspirational activities in the 1840s and '50s are well documented. As opposed to Engels, Marx at least displayed a more nuanced view on this matter at the Congress of The Hague; see below, p. 311.

2) information about the nature and activities of the Alliance, and also about its organisation and ramifications outside Spain;

3) a copy of your private circular of July 7;⁸³

4) an explanation of how you reconcile your duties towards the International with the presence in your Council of at least three notorious members of the Alliance.

Unless it receives *a categoric and exhaustive answer by return*, the General Council will be obliged to denounce you publicly in Spain and abroad for having violated the spirit and the letter of the General Rules, and having betrayed the International in the interests of a secret society that is not only alien but hostile to it.

Greetings and fraternity.

On behalf of the General Council

Secretary for Spain,

*Frederick Engels*⁸⁴

In the tense weeks before the Congress of The Hague, if anything lent credence to the claims that the General Council was authoritarian, it was this threatening letter by Engels. The *Federación* commented:

With this letter the General Council gives fresh proof of the authoritarian spirit that dominates it. By overreaching its powers, with undue threats and displaying a fury that it cannot master, it requests things of the Spanish Federal Council that any government would request of its interior ministers or its police.

What gives the General Council the right to declare the Spanish Federal Council traitors? It carries out its duties with zeal and to the satisfaction of those it represents – the only ones who can call it to account for its actions. What powers has the General Council to declare the esteemed brothers [in the Federal Council], whom we have entrusted with the mission to serve as our mediums of communication, traitors for the *grand* and solitary *crime* of not replying by return post? One cannot ask for a more dictatorial rage.⁸⁵

Morago's periodical, the *Condenado*, printed Engels' letter under the title 'The arrogance of the gods' ('La soberbia de los dioses'), and the editors included the following foreword:

Driven by arrogance and enraged by the setbacks that his Mephistophelian plan has suffered in this country, the authoritarian Karl Marx has directed an unfair and unspeakable decree, an order or something like that to our Federal Council. [...] Read it, comrades, and you will appreciate the autocratic arrogance of Marx and likewise you will deduce how grand must have been the setbacks that brought about the fiasco of his son-in-law Paul Lafargue in this country.⁸⁶

Engels' letter also caused indignation internationally. Andrea Costa, secretary of the Italian Federation's correspondence commission, explained: 'That the General Council is and believes it is endowed with authority is proved by many facts, not the least of which is the dictatorial letter that Friedrich Engels writes to the Spanish Federal Council on the orders and in the name of the

⁸³ See below, pp. 272–73.

⁸⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 211–12. The letter, dated 24 July 1872, arrived in Valencia on 28 July; see *Federación*, 18 August 1872, p. 3; at the meeting of the subcommittee on 27 July 1872, the letter was read by Engels who remarked that he intended to send it to the Valencia Federal Council (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 488).

⁸⁵ *Federación*, 18 August 1872, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *Condenado*, 22 August 1872, p. 2.

same, for which the members of the General Council don the garb of police officers.’⁸⁷ And the Communard Aristide Claris wrote:

the most guilty party in all this is Karl Marx, whose overriding influence led the entire General Council down a deplorable path. Once it had embarked on this path, there was little reason to depart from it. A burning fever for authority gripped the men of London, who fell to issuing excommunications and decrees that could have made Mastai himself [Pope Pius IX] jealous. One must read the documents emanating from the General Council to form an idea of the ravages that the thirst for power can wreak on some minds. – And so that we shall not be charged with exaggeration, let us here give the principal passages from the circular sent to the Federal Council of the Spanish sections, who had committed the sin of declaring themselves in solidarity with their brothers of the Jura and not sharing Karl Marx’s views; it is a masterpiece of audacity and vanity.⁸⁸

‘A dictator could not have said it better’, Claris concluded concerning Engels’ demands.⁸⁹ And Engels followed through on his threat: as he expected a reply from Valencia *by return post*, he called for the suspension of the Spanish Federal Council in the General Council’s subcommittee exactly *four days* after sending his letter.⁹⁰ Hermann Jung, the corresponding secretary for Switzerland and a member of the subcommittee, later explained:

Four days after the despatch of his letter he proposed the suspension as (= in the name of the) sub-committee. It takes two days for a letter to reach Spain, and two days more for an answer to come back, and there was no time to reply. I asked him how he got the information he acted on, he said he had it from Lafargue, Marx’s son-in-law, who was not a secretary of a section or an official of any kind. My opposition had the effect of bringing the matter before the Council, and the policy was counteracted, but the Federation was lost.⁹¹

There was really no stopping the General Council’s loss of authority in Spain. The Spanish Federal Council reacted quite differently than Mesa had supposed – they categorically dismissed the accusations in their response on 3 August and resolved on 9 August to publish the correspondence.⁹²

To the General Council based in London:

The [Spanish Federal] Council is also aware of the existence of the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista in Spain, because it is already general knowledge. And to be honest, it’s precisely in view of the knowledge we have of it that we do not agree with the General Council.

It seems that the [General] Council has not paid much attention to formulating the charges it has made against us.

⁸⁷ The Italian Correspondence Commission to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 24 August 1872, in Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 45.

⁸⁸ Claris, *La proscription française*, pp. 94–95.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁹⁰ In reality, the mail delivery time was four days *in each direction*; see above, p. 528, n. 84 (24–28 July 1872 from London to Valencia), and Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 213 (1–5 August 1872 from Valencia to London).

⁹¹ Statement by Jung at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation of the International Working Men’s Association. From the Eastern Post, February 1st & 8th, 1873*, [London 1873], p. 3.

⁹² Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 212. In a letter dated 1 August 1872 (see above, pp. 520–21, n. 18), the Federal Council first reported that the response to Engels’ letter of 24 July 1872 would be delayed due to the translator’s absence (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 409).

The General Council should know that this Federal Council has never taken, does not take nor will in the future take any steps that are not in the interests of the International Working Men's Association and therefore the General Council is very badly informed.

We are always willing to account for our actions to those we represent, and nobody else, because only they have the right to demand it and because it is only they who will appreciate if we have carried out their mandate or not. Therefore your threat to denounce us as traitors if we do not reply by return post is of very little concern to us. We have the assuredness that we fulfil our duties.

In your position, we would have added your proposed request for information about the Alianza to the agenda of the next congress. In order to get such information in as comprehensive and as just a manner as possible, we would have duly requested all the sections or local federations for their contribution, if they had relevant data.

We would have designated a city in Central Europe as the location of the congress. Our intentions would have been two-fold: that a proportional contingent from every countries could come easily to the congress and also that as many representatives as possible from Italy, Switzerland and Spain participate – countries where the Alianza exists (according to your private circular)⁹³ and where it must be known best. Thus, this question could be resolved with better understanding and impartiality and with the severity and magnitude that the great cause of the proletariat requires.

That the [General] Council hasn't paid much attention to formulating this request, is quite clear.

You demand from us by return post:

First. 'A list of all the members of the Alliance in Spain, with indication of the functions they fulfil in the International.'

Several reasons prevent us from fulfilling this request, reasons that ought to have prevented you from making the request. One reason is dignity, because in our opinion you ask us in the same manner that a head of state would ask the police department.

We lack the data you request for the simple reason that the [Spanish Federal] Council has no obligation to know the number and names of individuals in our Association who take part in another, or the functions that they fulfil in ours, which is up to those who appointed them, because to appoint them they must have confidence in them. [...]

The General Council also asks us for:

Fourth. 'An explanation of how you reconcile your duties towards the International with the presence in your Council of at least three notorious members of the Alliance.'

The explanation is beyond simplistic: none of the members composing the [Federal] Council have either opposed or neglected any of the obligations that we have accepted as the Spanish Federal Council of the International Working Men's Association.

Therefore, if within the [Federal] Council there are individuals who have belonged to the dissolved Alianza de la Democracia Socialista in Spain, they have proven that their stay amongst us was in no way contrary to the ends of the International, and from this we can infer that you are mistaken in asserting that this society conspires against the International.

⁹³ The *Fictitious Splits* is meant. For more about the claim that the Alliance existed in Italy, Switzerland and Spain, see, for example, Marx/Engels, 'Fictitious Splits', p. 85.

We can also tell you what was said in our circular dated 30 July – that no member of the Federal Council belongs to an organisation other than the one the Spanish Regional Federation had adopted⁹⁴ and we have the right to call those who claim the opposite miserable slanderers.

Instead of presumptuously describing (like the General Council does) the purposes of a society, presenting it as being malicious and making much fuss about it, before coming to the conclusion that the principles they support are bad – would it not be better and more worthy to discuss them [the principles] and see if they are acceptable or not and to welcome or reject them according to the knowledge you gain?

Members of the General Council, isn't it true that this would be the honourable procedure, and that to slander, condemn and excommunicate an individual or community to combat their principles is the procedure of the Jesuitical and liberal bourgeoisie?

For us, who deeply despise vanities and the vain, it can only be deeply painful that the International endures such a sad crisis on account of the devotion of some and the intemperance of yourselves.

Greetings and Social Liquidation, Collectivism and Anarchy.

Valencia, 3 August 1872.

By name and by agreement of the Federal Council, acting general secretary, *Francisco Tomás*, mason.⁹⁵

Naturally Engels was not deterred and continued to collect supposedly incriminating evidence – in accordance with the subcommittee's mandate to compile 'the points to be presented to the General Council' – into a draft resolution for the General Council. Therein, he only made negligible changes to his established line of reasoning, which asserted that the debate on internal organisation and pluralism in Switzerland, Belgium, Italy and Spain was really being controlled by the Alliance, which was conspiring to take over the International, etc.:

Citizens,

The General Council finds itself under the necessity of publicly denouncing to you the existence, within the International, of intrigues which, although in full work for several years past, have never been even suspected by the majority among you.

In our private circular dated 5th March 1872 on 'the pretended divisions within the International' [the *Fictitious Splits*], we were compelled to call your attention to the manoeuvres of the so-called 'Alliance of Socialist Democracy', manoeuvres aiming at the creation of discord in our ranks, and at the handing over, in an underhand manner, of the supreme direction of our Association to a small clique directed by Michael Bakounine. [...] we are put in possession of documents which prove irrefragably that this same Alliance of Socialist Democracy, in spite of its formal promise, has continued and does continue to exist as an international body within the International, and that in the shape of a secret society; that it is still directed by M. Bakounine; that its ends are still the same, and that all the attacks which for the last twelve months have been directed apparently against the London Conference and the General Council, but in reality against the whole of our organisation, have had their source in this Alliance. [...]

The nucleus of the Alliance is in the federation of the Jura. From it the watchword is issued which is taken up and repeated immediately by the other sections and by the newspapers belong-

⁹⁴ See Consejo Federal, 'Circular', 30 July 1872, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *Condenado*, 22 August 1872, p. 3. There are various mistakes in the first printing in the *Federación*, 18 August 1872, p. 3.

ing to the secret organisation. In Italy, a certain number of societies are controlled by it. These societies call themselves International sections, but have never either demanded their admission, or paid any contributions, or fulfilled any of the other conditions prescribed by our Regulations. In Belgium, the Alliance has a few influential agents. In the South of France, it has several correspondents, among them pluralists, who couple their functions of correspondents to the Alliance with the office of clerk to the inspector of police. But the country where the Alliance is organised most effectively, and where it has the most extended ramifications is Spain. Having managed to slip itself quietly and from the commencement into the ranks of the Spanish Internationals, it has managed to control, most of the time, the successive Federal Councils and Congresses. [...] Thus the sections and local federations of Spain, so proud of their autonomy, are led like a flock of sheep, without even suspecting it, by secret orders sent from Switzerland, which the Federal Council has to carry out without a murmur, under penalty of being outlawed by the Alliance. [...]

For these reasons, the General Council will call upon the Congress of The Hague to expel from the International all and every member of the Alliance and to give the Council such powers as shall enable it effectually to prevent the recurrence of similar conspiracies.⁹⁶

In letters written around the same time, Engels boasted that his draft resolution had deciphered Bakunin's plans: 'a secret society within the International to gain control of the latter. Fortunately, the plan has now come to light and just in time. This business will break Bakunin's neck. The General Council will issue an Address devoted to it on Tuesday'.⁹⁷ He was even more overt in another letter:

Incidentally, we shall be launching a bombshell tomorrow evening which will cause no small panic among the Bakuninists. It is a public statement about the continued existence of the *Alliance de la démocratie socialiste* as a *secret society*. We have at long last received the necessary material and the proof of this from Spain [...]. Those swine imagined that with their secret organisation they could direct the entire International from Locarno.⁹⁸

In reality, Engels' 'bombshell' didn't include any proof whatsoever of his monstrous allegations. And he was criticised for this after he presented his bizarre document to the General Council on 6 August 1872. The minutes relay Engels' presentation as follows: 'Citizen *Engels* spoke of the Alliance as intended to fetter and destroy our Association. Bakunin was the chief organiser of this Alliance; he had given us a great deal of trouble before, but we had our duty to do and that was to expose this scheme; he submitted that the report be received.'⁹⁹ Two opinions in favour and against Engels' motion had already been shared in the ensuing debate when the English General Council member Charles Murray spoke:

Citizen *Murray* said that, taking the present state of Spain into consideration, that secret society might to some extent be justified; the report modified might be accepted.

Citizen *Barry* said our duty was to unmask our enemies and cut them down in detail; he approved the report of the Sub-Committee.

Citizen *Vaillant* said that the Council should consider most that part of the report relating to Spain.

⁹⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 205–8, 210.

⁹⁷ Engels to Cuno, 4 August 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 44, p. 417. See also Engels to Hepner, 4 August 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 414–15.

⁹⁸ Engels to Becker, 5 August 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 419–20.

⁹⁹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 270.

Citizen *Hales* doubted the statements of the [Sub-]Committee; he could not vote without proof, he looked on the whole affair as an election dodge, he demanded the facts, he looked on the whole affair as an intrigue on the part of one secret society to build itself up by the destruction of another.¹⁰⁰

Naturally Engels couldn't provide Hales with any proof – a flaw which set the tone for the rest of the debate:

Citizen *Johannard* demanded that the proofs be added to the report as there was nothing [in] it to explain the attacks on Bakunin.

Citizen *Vaillant* would oppose the vote unless the proofs were added to the report.

Amidst loud cries of Vote, the *Chairman* proposed that the report of the Sub-Committee as read [by] Citizen Engels be accepted, which was declared to be carried by twelve votes for and eight votes against.¹⁰¹

The vote, however, had no consequences and Engels' text was never published in his lifetime.¹⁰² Evidently the opposition was loud enough for Engels to get the message and his plans to suspend the Spanish Federal Council were quickly abandoned.

The resistance against Engels – Marx didn't say a word throughout the entire debate – was apparently also the result of the tense atmosphere in the General Council, which got successively worse as 1872 wore on. On 23 January 1872, the French General Council member Cournot complained: '[at] every sitting two or three hours were lost in personal quarrels'.¹⁰³ Three weeks later a judicial committee was even formed 'to which all personal questions and matters relating thereto should be referred'.¹⁰⁴ However, this did not calm matters: 'whatever fraternal feeling the members possessed', Hales, the secretary of the General Council, said with resignation on 9 July 1872, 'the Council possessed none'.¹⁰⁵ Engels' authoritarian tone often aggravated the situation: Engels himself recalled someone in the General Council saying that 'If you want to have a row make Mr. Engels chairman'.¹⁰⁶ A son of Marx's son-in-law Charles Longuet later said that Engels' increased involvement had already led to a rude tone around the time of the *Fictitious Splits*:

The curt and rigid tone that characterised it, rather different from most of the preceding circulars written by Marx, reveals the considerable part played in its authorship by Friedrich Engels, who [...] exercised upon Marx an influence of which faithful friends of the great socialist such as Eccarius, Lessner, and Jung deplored the exclusivity. When it came to political struggle, Engels [...] lacked tact, and in practical or doctrinal controversies, he could display a rather Prussian rudeness.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 270–71.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 271–72.

¹⁰² He also abandoned plans to make a German translation for the *Volksstaat* (see Engels to Hepner, 4 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 415). Two days after the General Council meeting on 6 August 1872, the subcommittee decided to at least publish Engels' letter to the Spanish Federal Council dated 24 July 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 23, pp. 211–13.

¹⁰³ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 88.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108 (meeting on 13 February 1872).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

¹⁰⁶ E. B[ernstein], 'Friedrich Engels. Ein Gedenkblatt', *Der wahre Jakob*, 21 September 1895, p. 2025.

¹⁰⁷ J. Longuet, *La politique internationale du marxisme: Karl Marx et la France* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1918), p. 175.

And so the mood was at times quite sour in the General Council: ‘Never heard a speech with more virus than that of Citizen Engels’, the General Council member Thomas Mottershead complained on 7 May 1872¹⁰⁸ after Engels attacked Marx’s former confidant Eccarius. Hermann Jung, who along with Eccarius belonged to the General Council since its inception, later remembered:

You are all aware that I have for a long time been intimate with Marx. Formerly he used to consult his friends about what was to be done, when any question of importance turned up, and we always agreed before things were brought on in the open Council meetings. After Engels came to London [September 1870] that was no longer done, and hence it often happened that we were divided in the open meetings, and by this Marx gradually lost the confidence of his old friends. [...] The last meeting before the [Hague] Congress I wrote a resolution in several languages, proposing the removal of the General Council from London. Marx and Engels were dead against it. [...] I could see that no new Council could be formed in London.¹⁰⁹

Eccarius later wrote:

The reasons urged in favour of the removal were that the General Council had remained too long in the same hands and place, which had bred suspicion in many quarters, a suspicion that could only be cured by the removal and that the dissensions in the Association had reached the General Council itself, which was but a committee of mutual distrust and suspicion.¹¹⁰

And so, unbeknownst to the public, the General Council was increasingly falling apart. At the General Council’s last meeting at the end of August 1872 (the minutes are not dated), Jung proposed that the next General Council have its seat on the Continent – more or less a voluntarily capitulation on the part of the General Council. His motion was only narrowly rejected.¹¹¹ The vote was accompanied by tumultuous scenes: ‘the last meeting’, Eccarius later remember, ‘had ended in a “bear garden”’.¹¹²

The Spanish delegate elections and the New Madrid Federation before the Congress of The Hague

In a letter dated 15 June 1872 (while the debate over the Belgian rules project was at its peak), the Spanish Federal Council called on the General Council to put the revision of the Rules on the agenda of the Congress of The Hague.¹¹³ In a ‘Private Circular’ (‘Circular reservada’) dated 7 July 1872, the Federal Council disclosed its own position regarding the revision of the Rules based on the resolutions of the Spanish International, which had already spoken out in favour of autonomy at its founding congress in Barcelona (June 1870). The Valencia Conference of September 1871, the ‘Private Circular’ continued,

¹⁰⁸ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 186.

¹⁰⁹ Statement by Jung at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, pp. 2–3.

¹¹⁰ Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 88.

¹¹¹ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 283–84. The minutes erroneously state that Jung’s motion called for ‘the next Congress’ to have its seat on the continent. The motion received 12 yes votes, 14 no votes and 1 abstention.

¹¹² [J. G. Eccarius], ‘The Sixth International Working-Men’s Congress. (From an occasional correspondent.)’, *The Times*, 10 September 1873, p. 10.

¹¹³ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 152 (meeting on 14 June 1872). The Spanish Federal Council to the General Council, 15 June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 343–44 (an incorrect date is given: 19 June 1872); the letter was already read by Engels at the General Council meeting on 18 June 1872 (see *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 225–26).

concludes this statement by declaring themselves in favour of common property, anarchy, economic federation, and accepts as a formula the FREE WORLDWIDE FEDERATION OF FREE AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL WORKER'S ASSOCIATIONS.¹¹⁴

And the Federal Congress held in Saragossa accepts the Belgian Congress resolutions that declare 'that the International is only and has always been a group of completely autonomous federations',¹¹⁵ being resolutions that were also adopted by the Jura Federation in Switzerland.¹¹⁶

Although the radical and revolutionary ideas of the Spanish Federation are set down, we are obliged – in compliance with art. 13 of the rules of our federation¹¹⁷ – to declare that the ideas proclaimed in the congresses of Barcelona, Saragossa and the conference of Valencia are in grave danger. [...]

The danger that threatens us¹¹⁸ is none other than the repeal of our anarchist anti-authoritarian principle by the pre-dominance of authoritarian tendencies in the International Working Men's Association. These tendencies want to convert the group of autonomous federations into a vast authoritarian communist state. It is in opposition to the grand formula adopted by the Valencia Conference to unite humanity in a FREE WORLDWIDE FEDERATION OF FREE AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL WORKER'S ASSOCIATIONS, abolishing all states to wipe out the authoritarian principle. [...]

In our opinion this question is none other than the authoritarian principle applied to socialism as well as to the principle of autonomy and federalism, which are at stake here not only in view of the upcoming reorganisation of the proletariat but also the future. And in light of this question we say that it is necessary to dedicate to such an important question the attention it deserves so that it is clear in everybody's mind and so that they can stand up for the principles and resolutions which are the most appropriate to restore peace within our Association and resolve the crisis that it faces.

Considering the above, the members of the International in Spain will easily understand the need to take a stance on such an important question which is being discussed within the International so that their delegates [to the Congress of The Hague] are faithful interpreters of their ideas and aspirations.¹¹⁹

As the delegates for the Congress of The Hague had not yet been elected, the 'Private Circular' suggested that the delegate elections begin in the local federations, the delegates' travel expenses be covered by a special payment and drafts of the imperative mandate for the delegates be sent to the Federal Council. The results of the delegate elections were printed by the Federal Council six weeks later in another circular.¹²⁰ The following candidates received the most votes:

¹¹⁴ For more about the formula of Valencia, see above, p. 166.

¹¹⁵ See above, p. 113. For more about the Saragossa Congress's vote, see above, p. 185.

¹¹⁶ See above, p. 179.

¹¹⁷ In art. 13 of the Federal Rules, the Federal Council's role was defined as a constant bond between the local federations; see *Organización social de las Secciones obreras de la Federación Regional Española, adoptada por el Congreso obrero de Barcelona en Junio de 1870, y reformada por la Conferencia regional de Valencia celebrada en Setiembre de 1871* (Barcelona: Imp. de Ñ. Ramirez y Comp.a, (1871)), p. 40.

¹¹⁸ This paragraph borrows various expressions from the leading article in the *Federación* on 30 June 1872, which may have included statements made by Bakunin in a letter; see above, p. 218.

¹¹⁹ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Circular Reservada', 7 July 1872, IISG, L 2/35.

¹²⁰ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Circular', 22 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 6759. With regards to the votes in the Seville Local Federation and the Section of Various Trades in Madrid, the circular only included preliminary results. The Federal Council's enquiries regarding the final results were only answered after

- Nicolás Alonso Marselau: 3,882 votes
- Tomás Gonzalez Morago: 3,707 votes

The Barcelonans decided to take a different route: a resolution was passed after the general meetings of their local federation on 31 July, 7 and 8 August

that the Barcelona Local Federation will appoint its delegates to the Congress of The Hague by itself [...] recognising that the mandate the Barcelona Local Federation gives to its delegates is associated with the mandate given by the other local federations, so that the delegates of the Spanish Regional Federation follow its collective mandate.¹²¹

During the delegate elections between 15 and 17 August in Barcelona, the following candidates received the most of the 3,306 votes:¹²²

- Rafael Farga Pellicer: 1,083 votes
- Charles Alerini: 587 votes

The wording of the imperative mandate led to the following debate in Barcelona:

The question of the relationship between the working class and politics has almost completely occupied the discussions – to the point that some defended the idea that to achieve emancipation faster the working class should *help* the most advanced party of the middle class. Others maintained that it [the working class] should concern itself with politics, but for itself and without mixing at all with the bourgeois parties. The majority upheld the resolutions from the Barcelona Congress and the Valencia Conference on this point, where it is emphatically stated that the policy of the working class must be nothing other than the organisation of work, completely separated from the political government of all states and with the most radical and revolutionary propaganda. [...]

The abolition of the political, judicial and authoritarian states, the complete social liquidation, the economic transformation of society – this is what the International carries in its heart, in its very organisation. No party is as strong, as revolutionary or as generous as the workers inside the International who *directly* (without attempting a governmental farce) move towards the destruction of all authoritarian powers, the consolidation of anarchy in society, the implementation of the free federation of free agricultural and industrial worker's associations.

After approving the mandate as a whole, its parts were discussed and approved.

The document principally contained the following:

It expresses a profound displeasure that The Hague was chosen as the location for the congress without paying heed to the convenience of the majority of the federated, or to fairness, or to justice.

the circular was printed; see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 240 (meeting on 30 August 1872), p. 257 (meeting on 17 September 1872). For the total number of votes, on which the following numbers are based, see The Spanish Federal Council to the Badalona Local Council, 12 October 1872, in C. Seco Serrano and M. T. Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares del III Consejo Federal* [from vol. 3 onward: *de la Comisión Federal*] *de la Región Española* [September 1872 to April 1874], 7 vols. (Barcelona: Publicaciones de la Cátedra de Historia General de España, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Barcelona [vols. 1–2], Publicaciones del Departamento de Historia Contemporánea, Facultad de Geografía e Historia, Universidad de Barcelona [vol. 3], Edicions Universitat de Barcelona [vols. 4–7], 1972–1987), vol. 1, pp. 242–43.

¹²¹ *Federación*, 11 August 1872, p. 4.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 1 September 1872, p. 2.

That the General Council as it stands today, should be abolished. It will be composed of two representatives per region, and will be a simple centre for correspondence and workers' statistics.

That the vote of the delegates be counted according to the numbers represented by each of them.

That the vote of the majority is not obligatory nor are resolutions regarding questions of principle. Resolutions can only be binding when they are freely accepted and when administrative matters are concerned or workers' solidarity in the economic struggle against the exploiters.

That the delegates, in all matters not provided for in the mandate, must align their conduct using the anarchic and decentralised criteria of collectivism, as expressed by the congresses and conference in Spain.

After the various articles or conditions of the imperative mandate were approved – some unanimously, others with very few dissenting votes – a discussion started about another draft of an imperative mandate containing (among other things) the proposal that those that had belonged to the Alianza de la Democracia Socialista be declared traitors and that the working class was to occupy itself with politics. It was rejected unanimously.¹²³

A report from another meeting on 18 August 1872 states:

the speakers agreed with the virtue of socialist principles based on collectivism and anarchy, which is why there was nobody defending the General Council. Just a few limited themselves to asking for information and evidence concerning the repeated accusations that were made against it, which was given in its entirety. On the other hand, there was no shortage of comrades who upheld the idea of completely abolishing the General Council. The assembly agreed that as a centre or bureau for reports, correspondence and statistics it could be of service to the organisation of the International.¹²⁴

The report also described the discussion about the decision 'that the vote of the majority is not obligatory nor are resolutions regarding questions of principle':

the congresses of the International do not have or should not have anything in common with the conclaves and councils of the obscurantists where decisions are imposed as articles of faith. Similarly they should not be anything like the parliaments of the middle class or the congresses of states, whose decisions are imposed by the *persuasive* force of the police and bayonets. Therefore questions of principle cannot be mandatory because no one can declare (for all that progress and constant study) which ideas really have the honour of representing justice.

History and reason show us that what was considered true yesterday, is false today. What represented revolution yesterday, is among the ideas and aspirations of the reactionary today. Justice is determined and studied. Humanity will always study to more fully determine it, define it and practice it.

For this reason, an official and exclusive programme – an *official* priority of one or another theory – would be the height of absurdity and the most fatal and tyrannical of impositions. The International cannot and should never stray from this fundamental principle which is set down in its rules – it must endeavour for the unity and solidarity of the proletariat, without distinction of colour, *creed*, or nationality.

¹²³ 'Las Asambleas Generales', 18 August 1872, p. 1. The resolutions of the Rimini Congress – which had only recently become known – were dealt with in another passage whose final version was incorporated in the imperative mandate (see below, p. 278, no. 7); see also 'Las Asambleas Generales', 25 August 1872, p. 1.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

The comrades who defended the participation of the working class in the most advanced politics of the middle class relied on resolution no. 9 of the London Conference, which seems to be the *holy book* of those who love politics.¹²⁵

The Madrid Local Federation submitted the following draft of an imperative mandate for the delegates:

1. That the General Council shall be composed of three delegates per region.
2. That the faculties of the Council shall solely correspond with those of a centre for statistics and correspondence.
3. That the term of the Council shall be one year, and outgoing members cannot be re-elected until the following congress.
4. That the Council shall reside in Belgium until the congress of 1873.
5. That the delegates should procure by every means possible a copy of the minutes of the congress sessions and pass them upon their return onto the Federal Council which will in turn pass them to the local federations.
6. That the delegates bring a copy of the list of subscriptions made to the General Council by all regions and especially those of our delegate to the London Conference, with a detailed report of its receipts and expenses from the Basel Congress until that date.¹²⁶

The Valencia Local Federation approved the following draft of an imperative mandate for the delegates on 14 and 15 August 1872:

1. That [the delegates] shall establish a pact of solidarity for the practice of economic solidarity among all the regional federations.
2. That they shall vote for the complete abolishment of the General Council.
3. That the aspiration of the International must be to unite humanity in a free worldwide federation of free agricultural and industrial worker's associations and that its organisation must match that in every way possible.
4. That the delegates shall not be authorised to vote on questions of principles and when the Congress would do so they have to withdraw and go to Neuchâtel.¹²⁷
5. That the delegates should procure a copy of the minutes of the Congress of *The Hague*, as well as those from Neuchâtel, so that all the local federations may acquaint themselves with them.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 222–23 (meeting on 16 August 1872). A first draft (with points 1 to 4) was already approved by the general meeting of the Madrid Local Federation on 29 July 1872 (published in the *Condenado*, 5 August 1872, p. 3). The Córdoba Local Federation also adopted this draft; see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 220 (meeting on 16 August 1872). The debate in the Madrid Local Federation apparently concluded on 9 August 1872; see the announcement in the *Condenado*, 5 August 1872, p. 4.

¹²⁷ According to the resolution of the Italian Federation's founding congress in Rimini, the delegates critical of the General Council were to meet in Neuchâtel and not The Hague; see above, pp. 236–37.

6. That the delegates bring a copy of the list of subscriptions made to the General Council by all regions, especially those delivered by the Spanish Federation with a report of expenses and receipts from the Basel Congress until that date.¹²⁸

The Federal Council pieced together the following definitive imperative mandate for the four Spanish delegates based on the discussion and the suggestions it had received:

1) We have seen with profound bitterness that the General Council has named the place of assembly of the Congress without consulting the different regional federations;

We have seen with regret that it has named The Hague for the assembly of the Congress, because it is thus impossible for various regions to send the number of representatives they would have been able to send had a more central place been named;

And because tendencies opposed to the General Council have been manifested in the southern regions of Europe, it appears there has been a deliberate intention of causing these regions to have the smallest possible number of representatives at this Congress;

Because of all this the delegates must demonstrate to the Congress that the General Council has violated the principles of justice.

2) Not considering as equitable the principle observed up to the present International Congress of voting according to the number of delegates, we request: that the votes be counted according to the number of those represented by the delegates holding an imperative mandate, which must show the number of individuals who are represented; that the votes of those represented by delegates not provided with an imperative mandate will not count until the sections or federations which they represent have discussed and voted on the questions debated at the Congress.

In order to ensure the implementation of the said principle and that the resolutions of the Congress shall be the true expression of the will of the International Working Men's Association, these resolutions shall not enter into force before two months have elapsed, in which time the sections or federations which have not provided their delegates with an imperative mandate on the questions discussed and also those which have not been able to send delegates will express their vote by publishing it in the newspapers of the International and by taking part in the Regional Council which will be entrusted with this mission.

In the event of the Congress persisting in the traditional system of voting, our delegates will take part in the discussion, but will abstain from voting.

The Belgian Federal Council will be entrusted with counting the votes of the different sections or federations which, because they have not empowered a delegate or have not provided him with an imperative mandate on the questions debated, have to express their opinion.

3) Only the administrative resolutions of the Congresses, sanctioned by the vote of the sections or federations, will be obliging for all members of the International. There will be voting on questions of principle only to show which opinion is so far most accepted; but resolutions on these questions will not be binding.

4) The General Council has no authority whatsoever over the sections and federations. As it is today it should be abolished; its functions shall be those of an intermediary between the different regional federations; for which its activity shall be limited to that of a mere correspondence and statistics centre, leaving it full freedom of initiative to propose to the different regions or to the Congress the solutions which it finds most suitable by reason of the data acquired through correspondence and statistics.

¹²⁸ *Federación*, 25 August 1872, p. 3.

5) The General Council should be located in Brussels until the next Congress. The Belgian Federal Council will be charged with:

Counting the votes of the different sections and federations which, because they have not sent delegates or because they have not provided them with an imperative mandate on the questions debated, have to express their opinion.

Installing in its functions, after two months have elapsed since the Congress, the General Council which will be elected.

6) The General Council will be composed of two members for each regional federation, who will be nominated directly by the respective federations and can be recalled only by them.

7) The responsibility for our Italian brothers' break with the General Council rests with the latter exclusively; if the Italian members of the International despite this send their delegates to the Congress of The Hague we declare that our delegates will always be on their side so long as they support the banner of revolution as at present.

In the event of the Italians persisting in holding the Congress which they have convened in Neuchâtel either at the same time as, or after the termination of, the Congress of The Hague, our delegates, once they have ended their mission at the Congress, will pass through Neuchâtel in order to take part in the said Congress or to obtain all the necessary data to render an account on their return of all that can be of interest to us concerning this grand and transcendental question.

8) Our delegates shall by all possible means accessible to them secure the unity of the International; but without renouncing in any way any one of the revolutionary principles proclaimed by our Conference and regional congresses.

For this purpose our delegates must come to an agreement with the delegates of the Italian and Jura regions to defend in common the principles which inspire both the regions, inasmuch as they are identical, inasmuch as they are the same.

9) The delegates of the Spanish Federation will procure a copy of the minutes of the sittings of the Congress of The Hague, as also of that of Neuchâtel, so that all the local federations may acquaint themselves with them.

10) They will also procure a copy of the list of subscriptions made to the General Council by all the regional federations, and especially those made by the Spanish Federation, showing all the data and the growth from the time of the Basle Congress until today.

11) Our delegates will bear in mind the following:

It would be desirable to concretise the agenda of the Congress on the different points which are to be debated; because the subject of the *revision of the General Rules and Regulations* can contain so many and so complicated questions, we point out to them that on all points not foreseen, for the reason already given, in this mandate they must keep in the discussion to the collectivistic, decentralising, anarchistic and anti-authoritarian criterion, which is the standard for members of the International in our Region, expressed by the congresses of Barcelona and Saragossa and the Conference of Valencia. They must bear in mind the formula adopted by the Conference of uniting Humanity in a *free world federation of free associations of agricultural and industrial workers*.

12) The delegates of the Spanish Region will observe this mandate in everything and on their return will render an exact account of what they have done, the first two [Marselau and Morago] to this Federal Council so that it can in turn pass it on to all the local federations, and the two nominated directly by the Barcelona Federation [Alerini and Farga Pellicer] at the general meet-

ing of the same which will be convened for the purpose, without neglecting to give a written account of their conduct to this Federal Council.

13) The activists of the Federation who have paid their subscription in the course of this month number more than *fifteen thousand* members of the International.¹²⁹

The Spanish delegates were also given an extensive report for the Congress of The Hague dated 20 August 1872, which stated that the Spanish Federation comprised: individual members in 11 locations; 495 sections in 65 established local federations and 139 local federations in the process of formation; and 10 unions with at least 353 local sections. It was by far the biggest federation in the International. The report was also said to include the following:

There is a chapter of charges against the General Council demonstrating its pernicious influence and arrogant dictatorship, which it attempts to impose on the Association. [...] [The report] calls the attention of the congress to the General Council's letter dated 24 July, which shows that they believe themselves to be a dictatorial government and the Federal Councils to be their police departments. [...] As was promised it dedicates a chapter to the opinion of different local federations towards the dissolved Alianza de la Democracia Socialista, as well as to the conduct observed by the editors of *La Emancipación* [...].¹³⁰

In their first circular in issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación*, the New Madrid Federation described the Federal Council's 'Private Circular' of 7 July 1872 – which proposed decentralised delegate elections and special payments for the travel expenses, and called on local federations to submit drafts of the imperative mandate for the delegates¹³¹ – as 'Machiavellian intrigue' and 'very pronounced *authoritarianism*'. They claimed that the objective was 'to send to the international congress delegates from the Alianza with money from local federations'.¹³²

However, the delegate election proved that those branded as members of the ominous Alianza – Marselau, Morago, Farga Pellicer, Alerini, and others – enjoyed the trust of thousands of voters, while Lafargue's political allies José Mesa and Victor Pagés received 104 and only 5 votes respectively.¹³³ Mesa had presaged 'we shall abandon the field only as vanquished or victors'.¹³⁴

To top things off, the New Madrid Federation had to do without Lafargue in the conflict-ridden weeks before the Congress of The Hague. After provoking a showdown, Lafargue left Spain forever with his wife at the end of July 1872.¹³⁵ Despite Engels' repeated demands for conclusive evidence, Lafargue failed to deliver any proof to substantiate his claims. In a letter dated 29 May 1872, Lafargue only told Engels that Mesa and Mora's group were preparing a statement of dissolution for the Madrid Alianza (2 June 1872) and that there were rumours regarding a letter from Bakunin to Morago, who supposedly showed the letter to Mesa in a café.¹³⁶ Lafargue still

¹²⁹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 325–29; the words 'in the discussion' missing in point no. 11 were added according to the original version in Consejo Federal, 'Circular', 22 August 1872.

¹³⁰ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Extracto de la Memoria remitida al 5.º Congreso internacional reunido en La Haya', *Condenado*, 3 October 1872, p. 3. The complete report has been lost.

¹³¹ See above, p. 273.

¹³² *Emancipación*, 27 July 1872, p. 3.

¹³³ Consejo Federal, 'Circular', 22 August 1872.

¹³⁴ Mesa to Engels, 28 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 406.

¹³⁵ Lafargue also didn't pay heed to Mesa's appeal to return to Spain – 'the only means of saving everything' (Mesa to Engels, 19 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 536).

¹³⁶ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 445–47, 466. Lafargue to Engels, 27 April 1872, *ibid.*, p. 436. See also Engels' remark at the meeting of the General Council's subcommittee on 4 August 1872 (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 316).

had not provided any evidence by the time he left Spain; however, he was still trying to soothe Engels' nerves in mid-July 1872: 'Have no fear, you will be sent further ammunition against the Al[liance]'.¹³⁷ In Lisbon on 8 August 1872, Lafargue also reported hearing about a letter from Bakunin to Mora – 'but I do not know whether he will wish to let you see it' – and a letter from Bakunin to Portugal, 'which I have not read wherein he applies himself to attacking the G[eneral] C[ouncil]. I shall do what I can to have it sent to you in London'.¹³⁸ Four days later, Lafargue still had not made any progress on this issue: 'I shall try to take from here the letter from Bakunin', he wrote Marx from Lisbon, 'so as to have at least one proof'.¹³⁹ This letter never turned up, either.¹⁴⁰

Thus Lafargue left the thankless job of gathering proof to his political allies in Madrid. Their report to the General Council on 23 August 1872, which included eleven original documents, contained all of the evidence they considered incriminating.¹⁴¹ What it did not include was a single document in support of their theories regarding the Alianza – i.e. it was hierarchically organised, against the International, controlled from abroad. On the contrary, the fourth attachment to the report, the letter from Alerini dated 14 November 1871,¹⁴² illustrated clearly that the Alianza was independent and dispelled any notions that it was controlled from abroad, for example. The report also admitted that the new theories that it contained regarding the Alianza were also unfounded – for instance, the assertion that the Alianza was still active: 'we do not have material proof of what we are affirming'.¹⁴³

Of all of Bakunin's letters that Lafargue had mentioned, Mesa was only able to get his hands on one: Bakunin's unfortunate letter to Francisco Mora dated 5 April 1872.¹⁴⁴ But this letter only showed how little Bakunin knew about the situation in Spain and that his correspondence did not involve any 'secret instructions' as Lafargue had claimed. 'I fought for a long time to get this letter', Mesa nevertheless proudly announced. With this letter in hand, he no longer felt the need to make a public statement regarding the aforementioned letter from Bakunin to Morago, which he claimed he had seen in a café. He added that such a statement would not be worth much because 'that blackguard would deny everything'.¹⁴⁵ With little else to go on, Engels nonetheless pushed Mesa into sending a corresponding statement claiming that Morago had shown him a letter from Bakunin at the end of January 1872 'in which was developed a whole

¹³⁷ Engels/Lafargue, *Correspondence*, vol. 3, p. 470.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 472. A report for the *Emancipación*, apparently penned by Lafargue, already spoke with certainty of 'one of these large secret notes that are only concerned with attacking the General Council' (*Emancipación*, 10 August 1872, p. 4).

¹³⁹ Lafargue to Marx, 12 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 435–36.

¹⁴⁰ It may have been a letter to the socialist José Fontana which has not survived; Bakunin mentioned writing a letter to him on 7 June 1872. See Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 21. In the name of the Lisbon sections of the International, José Correia Nobre França also confirmed receiving a letter from Bakunin; see Nobre França to the New Madrid Federation, 13 January 1873, in *Emancipación*, 1 February 1873, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ The New Madrid Federation to the General Council [with attachments], 23 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, listy 26–31 and 211–27. For more about the attachments, see above, p. 498, n. 33; p. 501, n. 87; p. 503, n. 124, n. 126, n. 128, n. 129. The report was sent along with the letter dated 25 August 1872; see below, n. 145.

¹⁴² See above, pp. 168–69.

¹⁴³ The New Madrid Federation to the General Council, 23 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, list 28.

¹⁴⁴ See above, p. 193.

¹⁴⁵ Mesa to Engels, 25 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 480–81.

Machiavellian plan', etc.¹⁴⁶ According to Bakunin's diary, he only ever wrote Morago two letters: one from 18 to 19 May and another one from 2 to 7 June 1872. A surviving draft of a letter dated 21 May 1872 proves that he wrote Morago for the first time at this point in time.¹⁴⁷

After the fiasco regarding his resolution in the General Council, Engels was forced to piece together a report for the Congress of The Hague using various *publications* because the only confidential material he had was useless. His 'Report on the Alliance of Socialist Democracy Presented in the Name of the General Council to the Congress at The Hague' ('Rapport fait au Congrès de La Haye, au nom du Conseil général, sur l'Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste')¹⁴⁸ included the following 'pieces of documentary evidence' (*pièces justificatives*) from Spain:

- Issue no. 61 of the *Emancipación* of 10 August 1872 in which Mesa and Mora describe themselves as the former 'central committee' of the Alianza in Spain. Engels considered this publication proof 'that the Alliance has not, in fact, been dissolved'.¹⁴⁹
- Issue no. 59 of the *Emancipación* of 27 July 1872, which included the New Madrid Federation's first circular¹⁵⁰ and the statement of dissolution of the Madrid Alianza dated 2 June 1872 by Mesa and Mora's group.¹⁵¹
- The Spanish Federal Council's 'Private Circular' dated 7 July 1872, which Engels claimed revealed a secret plan to elect 'Alliance men to attend the Congress [of The Hague] on funds provided by members of the International'.¹⁵²
- Issue no. 155 of the *Federación* of 4 August 1872, which included the programme and rules of the Alianza.¹⁵³ Engels boasted that this put the Alianza's existence 'beyond question'.¹⁵⁴
- The published minutes of the Saragossa Congress from 4 to 11 April 1872, which show that Morago's organisational plan was rejected. Engels did not mention that the Alianza member Tomás's suggestion was accepted (the organisational status remained unchanged).¹⁵⁵
- A copy of the rules of the Madrid Section of Various Trades, which Engels claimed included various points from the rules of Geneva section of the Alliance.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁶ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 361–62. Sent with a letter from Mesa to Engels, 2 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 508.

¹⁴⁷ Bakunin to Morago, 21 May 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 18, 20–21.

¹⁴⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 228–38.

¹⁴⁹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 684; see also Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, pp. 155, 753. Engels' copy of the *Emancipación* of 10 August 1872 can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3312. For more about the claim by Mesa and Mora's group that they were the 'centre of the Alianza', see above, p. 256.

¹⁵⁰ See above, pp. 250–51.

¹⁵¹ See above, p. 246. A replica of Engels' copy of circular printed in the *Emancipación* on 27 Juli 1872 can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3285 (attachment in Mesa to Engels, 28 July 1872).

¹⁵² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 237. The New Madrid Federation had already claimed this; see above, p. 279. As to Engels' copy of the 'Private Circular', see above, p. 530, n. 119.

¹⁵³ 'Alianza de la Democracia Socialista', p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 230. Engels' copy of the *Federación* of 4 August 1872 can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3313.

¹⁵⁵ See above, p. 185. Engels' copy of the *Estracto de las actas del segundo congreso* can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3192.

¹⁵⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 230. Engels' copy of the rules of the Section of Various Trades can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, listy 4–24.

- Issue no. 157 of the *Federación* of 18 August 1872, which included Engels' letter dated 24 July 1872 and the Spanish Federal Council's reply dated 3 August 1872 – which took Engels so thoroughly to task that he should have been ashamed of it.¹⁵⁷

After presenting this rather paltry evidence, Engels suggested the following resolution 'in the Name of the General Council' – who had never laid eyes on any of it:

Considering:

1) That the Alliance (the main organ of which is the Central Committee of the Jura Federation), founded and led by M. Bakunin, is a society hostile to the International, insofar as it aims at dominating or disorganising the latter;

2) That as a consequence of the foregoing the International and the Alliance are incompatible;

The Congress resolves:

1) That M. Bakunin and all the present members of the Alliance of Socialist Democracy be expelled from the International Working Men's Association and be granted readmission to it only after a public renunciation of all connections with this secret society;

2) That the Jura Federation be expelled as such from the International.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Engels' copy of the *Federación* of 18 August 1872 can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3316.

¹⁵⁸ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 238.

CHAPTER 15. The eve of the Congress of The Hague

AS WILL BE SEEN BELOW, MARX and Engels had *three goals* in mind for the Congress of The Hague:

- Enshrining their political views in the International's General Rules.
- Banishing the General Council's critics and especially Bakunin.
- Putting the General Council out of reach of the growing opposition.

Marx and Engels pursued the *first goal* – writing their political views into the Rules, i.e. eliminating the current pluralism – by borrowing from their opposition's approach and proposing a *revision of the Rules*. Marx looked like he was giving in to the criticisms of the General Council launched by the Belgian rules project when he suggested on 18 June 1872 that the revision of the Rules be the only item on the agenda at the Congress of The Hague.¹ However, Marx in no way planned on letting the General Council's critics table their revision of the Rules at the congress. Already in July 1872, a text either by Pezza or Cafiero pointed out that the General Council's supporters and critics were pursuing different goals when it came to the revision of the Rules, and commented on this fact as follows:

Now, since a revision of the General Rules was being spoken about on all sides, the General Council intended itself to place the *revision of the General Rules* at the top of the agenda for the next congress; but while the dissident federations want the revision in order to limit the Council's powers and allow the sections greater freedom, it is seeking the revision in order to *restrict* the organisation of the International and make it a more manageable body in its hands.²

First and foremost Marx and Engels wanted to enshrine the London Conference's watershed decisions into the General Rules – above all resolution no. 9 which affirmed their position regarding the 'political action of the working class', i.e. their constitution into a political party and the conquest of political power. In order to carry out their plan, Marx and Engels could above all rely on the support of the following groups:

- The German social democrats – whose political activities had long been oriented around party politics, i.e. the formation of parties, running for elections, participation in parliamentarianism – and their supporters (especially German immigrants in the United States).
- Adherents of Blanquism, who like Vaillant had already said at the London Conference that the workers *must combine their forces on the terrain of politics*.³ During the General

¹ See above, p. 228.

² 'Risposta di alcuni internazionali', Introduzione, p. 396.

³ See above, p. 95.

Council meeting on 23 July 1872, Vaillant – with the support of Marx and Engels – moved that resolution no. 9 be added to the General Rules of the International at the Congress of The Hague.⁴ Vaillant and his political allies tabled a corresponding motion at the tenth meeting of the Congress of The Hague.⁵

- The members of the Romance Federation and their Federal Committee in Geneva, whose political-parliamentary line was affirmed by resolution no. 9 of the London Conference and whose conflict with the Jura Federation had its roots in the ‘position of the International regarding governments’.⁶ The Genevan delegate Théodore Duval submitted a written declaration at the twelfth meeting of the Congress of The Hague that stated that his mandate required him ‘to defend *energetically* Article [resolution no.] IX. (political action of the working class) and its inclusion in the Rules’.⁷

Lafargue and Engels had already tried to lay the groundwork for Marx and Engels’ *second goal* – banishing the General Council’s critics and especially Bakunin – with their ‘denunciation’ of the Alianza. As they only had rather paltry evidence to put Bakunin and the Jura Federation on trial with at The Hague, Marx and Engels apparently turned to the longtime anti-Bakunist Utin at the beginning of August 1872. Marx had already asked Utin for information on Bakunin in early 1870, at which time Utin even held out the prospect of an anti-Bakunin brochure⁸ – which he failed to deliver. Utin’s services were also enlisted against Bakunin at the London Conference and during the printing of the *Fictitious Splits*. He now received another request to deliver material against Bakunin, this time from Marx’s youngest daughter, Eleanor. Utin replied to Eleanor Marx in mid-August 1872:

here is what I propose to do: I shall make a *report* in *writing* to the General Council both on the split [of the International] (its causes, its effects) and above all on the principal chief and motive force behind this split – Bakunin [...] I shall append to my report some documents on the Nechayev affair, Bakunin’s role of initiator in it, and the close *connections* between the Russian affair, the Alliance and the present intrigues. Oh, if I had had the time I would have made an interesting pamphlet out of it! I shall see again how the best use can be made of the documents which I have in my possession: one of my friends has just communicated to me the most valuable documents: they are the programme and the *secret* rules of the *secret Alliance* organised by Bakunin in October 1869 [actually 1868]; in this programme one can see clearly all the stupidity and the villainy of this *Herostratus*⁹ of the social revolution and how he has decided to seize control of our International Association; I have no doubt that the documents will carry *great, decisive weight* in the struggle at the Congress; I am having them copied now and perhaps

⁴ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 262–63.

⁵ ‘to include in the Rules the resolution [no. 9] of the London Conference on political action of the working class as an article of the General Rules’ (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 187, see also pp. 188, 190; and Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 71). In their brochure ‘International and Revolution. Written on the Occasion of the Hague Congress by Communard Emigrés, formerly Members of the International’s General Council’ (November 1872), possibly penned by Vaillant, they declared: ‘This resolution moreover asserted the truth, [...] that the conquest of political power by the proletariat was the true means for its emancipation.’ (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 178).

⁶ See above, p. 54.

⁷ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 194.

⁸ See above, p. 48.

⁹ Herostratus: someone who attempts to achieve fame at any cost (the Greek Herostratus set fire to the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus in 356 BC in order to become famous).

I shall send you the copy as early as *tomorrow*. But I demand the greatest discretion, that is to say, that you *will not breathe a word about them to anybody*; you will hand them to your father and it is to him and to Engels personally that I trust the secret that these documents come from *me*; later we shall see how we shall arrange this; meanwhile they can read them out to the General Council at a secret sitting and vouch *on their honour* that part of these rules was written by *Bakunin* with his *own* hand, another part by his wife, a third by Mme Obolenskaya, and a fourth under Bakunin's dictation by one of my friends.¹⁰

On 22 August 1872, Utin sent the first pages of the alleged '*secret* rules of the *secret Alliance*' – in reality a draft plan for the 'Organisation of the Alliance of the International Brethren' written in the autumn of 1868 – to Eleanor Marx who forwarded them to Marx in The Hague.¹¹ Utin also asked for an address in The Hague 'to send my long and, I presume to say, interesting *report* on Bakunin'.¹² Utin was able to send part of his report – a lengthy diatribe with numerous appendices totalling 180 pages – before and during the Congress of The Hague;¹³ however, it was only really read by Engels two months after the congress when Utin finally sent the rest of the report to Marx on 1 November 1872.¹⁴ Thus, the only ammunition Marx and Engels had at their disposal during the Congress of The Hague with which to damage Bakunin's reputation was

- the draft plan for an organisation sent by Utin and written in the autumn of 1868,
- material regarding Bakunin's unfinished translation of *Capital*¹⁵ and
- Engels' collection of documents regarding the Alianza.

Marx and Engels must have soon realised that they could only succeed with their *third goal* – i.e. putting the General Council out of reach of their opposition after imposing their political line and banishing their critics – by manipulating the majority of the International, and that such a victory would be short-lived. While feigning self-confidence, Marx and Engels had to admit in the spring and summer of 1872 that neither the decisions reached at the London Conference nor the defamation of their opponents in the *Fictitious Splits* had borne any fruits, but had instead caused waves of protest and a never-ending discussion about the General Council's right to exist.

¹⁰ Utin to Eleanor Marx, 14–19 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 443–44.

¹¹ Eleanor Marx to Karl Marx, 1 September 1872, *ibid.*, p. 504. Utin sent the remaining pages on 4 September; see below, p. 533, n. 13. The 15-page set of documents can be found in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3311, listy 54–68. It is made up of several drafts of statutes and programmes for secret societies with various names: 'Organisation de l'Alliance des Frères Internationaux', 'Programme et objet de l'organisation révolutionnaire des frères internationaux', 'I Programme secret de l'Alliance Internationale Socialiste' and 'II Organisation secrète de l'Alliance Internationale de la Démocratie socialiste'. For evidence that these texts were only *drafts*, see below, pp. 317–19.

¹² Utin to Eleanor Marx, 22 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 471.

¹³ Utin, 'To the Fifth Congress', was sent in instalments to Duval, the delegate for the Committee of the Romance Federation to the Congress of The Hague, who was to pass it on to Marx: a first instalment was sent on 27 August to Geneva (Utin to Duval, 27 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 485) and a second via poste restante to The Hague – a replica of the envelope with the postmarks 'Bern 4. Sept. 72', 'Basel-Olten 5 IX 72' and 's-Gravenhage 6 Sep 72' can be found in *Gaagskii Kongress Pervogo Internatsionala, 2–7 sentyabrya 1872 g.*, 2 vols. (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1970 and 1972), vol. 1, p. 397.

¹⁴ Utin to Marx, 1 November 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 579–86. F. Engels, 'I. Alliance of Socialist Democracy', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 676–81.

¹⁵ See details below, pp. 323–30.

After the debate about the internal organisation and pluralism within the International could no longer be ignored and the Belgium rules project in May 1872 put the abolition of the General Council up for discussion, Marx and Engels logically settled on an exit strategy.

Already on 9 November 1871 after the first critical reaction to the London Conference resolutions in the Geneva Communards' newspaper, the *Révolution Sociale*, Marx suddenly started complaining at length that 'the affairs of the International take too much of my time and interrupt my theoretical work'.¹⁶ 'Certainly', Marx added in a letter written on the same day, 'I shall one fine morning put a stop to all this but there are circumstances where you are in duty bound to occupy yourselves with things much less attractive than theoretical study and research'.¹⁷ After further protest, an upset Marx explained on 24 November 1871: 'I have often asked myself if the time has not come to resign from the General Council. The more the society develops, the more my time is taken up'.¹⁸

No such complaints can be found in the months that followed while Marx and Engels were busy with the *Fictitious Splits*. They apparently hoped that the growing opposition could still be defeated with this pamphlet. Only after the text was finished in March 1872 did they start whining about the time spent on the International again.¹⁹ A look at what little work Marx produced during the last decade of his life from 1872 onward (other than a few articles, notes, prefaces and epilogues, he edited the French translation of *Capital*) could lead one to believe that these complaints were a mere pretext. Marx and Engels seem to have made their final decision to resign from the General Council on 28 May 1872, a time when the criticism of the General Council reached its peak because of the Belgian rules project. On this day Engels wrote Liebknecht:

The Belgians have debated a revision of the Rules but have not reached any conclusions. Hins has tabled a draft proposing [the] abolition of the General council. I would be quite contented with that personally; Marx and I will not re-enter it anyway and as matters stand at present we have scarcely any time to work and that is something that has to stop.²⁰

On the same day, Marx made the following rather conspiratorial statement: 'I am so over-worked, and in fact so much interfered with in my theoretical studies, that, after September, I shall *withdraw* from the *commercial concern*'.²¹ Marx confided in De Paepe on 28 May 1872, as well: 'I can hardly wait for the next Congress. It will be the end of my slavery. After that I shall become a free man again; I shall accept no administrative functions any more, either for the General Council or for the British Federal Council'.²² Thus, their planned resignation was to take

¹⁶ Marx to Sorge, 9 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 242. Marx mentioned the criticism in the *Révolution Sociale* (see above, p. 104) in the same letter.

¹⁷ Marx to Daniel'son, 9 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 238. See also Engels to Lavrov, 29 November 1871: 'it need hardly be said that neither Johnson [Marx] nor I have had any time for work.' (*ibid.*, p. 276).

¹⁸ Marx to De Paepe, 24 November 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 263.

¹⁹ For example, Marx to Lafargue, 21 March 1872: 'Indeed, the International impinges too greatly on my time and, were it not my conviction that my presence on the Council is still necessary at this period of strife, I should have withdrawn long since' (*ibid.*, p. 347). Marx apparently also informed Glaser de Willebrord of his imminent resignation from the General Council; see Glaser de Willebrord to Marx, 30 April 1872, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 381.

²⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 384.

²¹ Marx to Daniel'son, 28 May 1872, *ibid.*, p. 386. Daniel'son understood the message: he wrote Marx on 4 June (23 May) 1872 that he regretted 'that you intend to give up all non-theoretical work' (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 337).

²² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 387.

place at the next congress, which had to be convened: at that evening's General Council meeting, Marx took the offensive just as he had at a similarly decisive General Council meeting on 25 July 1871 when the London Conference was convened. With reference to the debate sparked by the Belgian rules project regarding the General Council's abolition, Marx declared that 'He had no motion to make on the matter, but he would point out that the time had come to decide upon the holding of a Congress. It was clear that reconstruction of some kind would be proposed and the Council ought to discuss the matter.'²³

As Marx and Engels wanted to resign without losing face and safeguard their political line, the General Council had to be kept away from the opposition – i.e. it was to be put in safe hands in a far-off land. Marx and Engels must have realised that their three-fold strategy of imposing their political line, banishing their critics and keeping the growing opposition away from the General Council would put the International's very existence in jeopardy. They were very obviously willing to take that risk: 'they have not feared to sacrifice the Association for the sake of having their proposals adopted', their General Council colleague Jules Johannard wrote indignantly from The Hague.²⁴ On 29 July 1872, Marx tried to justify his plans: at the Congress of The Hague 'it will be a matter of life or death for the International; and, before I resign, I want at least to protect it from disintegrating elements'.²⁵ Marx went even further in another discussion: 'I would not have gone to this extreme if I had not seen the Belgians, the Dutch and the Spanish being won over by the Jurassians, Mikhail Bakunin's men.'²⁶

The opposition

The General Council's critics didn't have a unified course of action and instead followed numerous different strategies. At one end of the spectrum, the Belgian sections wanted to keep the General Council as an institution: 'I shall merely tell you', De Paepe wrote to Jung on 22 August 1872, 'that I personally (and the majority of the Belgians with me) am by no means with the Jura, but certainly with the General Council'.²⁷ Nevertheless, the powers of the General Council were to be reduced: 'All the Belgians', Engels' confidant in Brussels reported, 'will ask that the powers of the General Council should be purely administrative and that it should in no case be allowed to intervene in differences which could arise between sections or between federations in the same country. To put it briefly, they wish to reduce the role of the Council to that of a post-box.'²⁸

The Geneva Communards were more radical. Their section of propaganda issued their delegate Joukovsky an imperative mandate on 30 August 1872 that included the following:

considering that the General Council, which was initially useful, has become not only useless, but harmful, the delegate of the Section will have to demand:

²³ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 210–11 (meeting on 28 May 1872).

²⁴ See below, p. 342.

²⁵ Marx to Kugelmann, 29 July 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 413.

²⁶ Spy's report dated 9 September 1872, APP, Ba 434.

²⁷ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 470.

²⁸ Glaser de Willebrord to Engels, 27 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 486. En route to the Congress of The Hague, the Ukrainian student Sergei Podolinskii had a similar impression after talking to the Belgian delegate Brismée on 30 August 1872. Brismée signalled that 'measures of decentralisation' would be taken at the congress, including proposals to lower the union dues and change the method of voting to the benefit of the federations; see Podolinskii to Lavrov, 1 September 1872, *ibid.*, p. 506.

1. The abolition of the said General Council;
2. The organisation of a central correspondence and statistics bureau, appointed no longer by the congress, but by the regional federations on the basis of from one to three members of each federation. [...]

The delegate of the Section shall protest:

1. Against the General Council's choice of the place of assembly of the present Congress.
2. Against the private circular [the *Fictitious Splits*] which the said General Council permitted itself to publish whereas no International congress has given it the right to launch manifestos. [...]

the delegate shall [...] support all proposals tending to give the Association institutions sanctioning the most complete autonomy of groups by excluding all power and authoritarian dispositions.²⁹

The Spanish delegates' imperative mandate also called for the General Council to be abolished in its present form and re-established as a 'mere correspondence and statistics centre' whose members would be chosen by the federations.³⁰ However, the position of the Spanish delegates was undermined from the very start by another clause in their mandate whereby they could only take part in votes if the voting procedure was changed (i.e. each delegate had votes according to the number of members they represent) – a pointless venture which prevented the Spanish delegates from voting during the entire congress. The Spanish mandate also called on its delegates to visit an alternative congress in Switzerland after the Congress of The Hague, which the imperative mandate of the Jura Federation's delegates also stipulated.³¹ The Jura Federation's delegates were even expected to withdraw immediately from the congress if one of the 'Spanish, Italian and French delegates and all those who protest frankly and broadly against the authoritarian principle' was not admitted to the congress or if the principles of autonomy and the right to federate freely among sections and federations were eliminated.

The Italians were at the other end of the spectrum of federations critical of the General Council. They implemented the common demands of all General Council critics, i.e.

- federal internal organisation of the International and
- limiting the power of the General Council,

so completely that they declared their autonomy from the General Council and broke with it at the Congress of Rimini.³²

Two weeks before the Congress of The Hague, an extraordinary congress took place in Jura,³³ which Bakunin attended. He noted in his diary on the date of the congress: 'Chaux de Fonds –

²⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 309–10.

³⁰ See above, p. 277.

³¹ See above, p. 238.

³² See above, p. 236.

³³ See above, pp. 237–38.

Congress – Total victory’.³⁴ According to Guillaume, Bakunin helped formulate the imperative mandate for the Jura Federation’s delegates to the congress.³⁵ In the following week, Bakunin travelled between Sonvillier, Le Locle, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Neuchâtel and Zurich and was constantly in touch with Guillaume, Cafiero, and other political allies.³⁶ On 26 August 1872, he travelled to a Russian woman in Baden (Canton of Aargau) to pick up 800 francs, which his friend Vladimir Ozerov had arranged for the delegates’ travel expenses to The Hague.³⁷ Bakunin also used the opportunity to borrow 200 francs to send to the Spanish delegates for their travel expenses.³⁸

Both Jura delegates, Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, took the train toward The Hague on 30 August 1872 and met Cafiero in Basel, who accompanied them to the congress and helped pay the travel expenses.³⁹ On the following day Bakunin sent a letter to Gambuzzi in Naples:

Armando [Cafiero] went to The Hague, [...] not as [a delegate], but as an advisor to our Jurasian and Spanish friends, the latter especially being in a rather delicate position vis-à-vis their own sections, not demoralized, it is true, but troubled by the intrigues of Marx and his son-in-law, Mr Lafargue. He went to give them all necessary information and explanations about the Italian Fede[ration] and sections, of which the General Council, more brazen than ever and reduced to absurdity, simply denies the [existence].⁴⁰ He will add a powerful element to the courage, the [revolutionary] resolution of our Jurassian and Spanish friends. We anticipate that the great battle, the decisive battle, will be joined at the second session of the Congress and that the Spanish and Jurassians will then withdraw from the [Congress], protesting strongly in the name of the autonomy and [freedom] of their respective [federations] against all subsequent decisions of the [Congress], but at the same [time] proclaiming, solemnly affirming the solidarity of each of those [federations] with the International, with the [proletariat] of all the world.

After this all will come to St. Imier (Bernese Jura), near Neuchâtel between 10 and 12 September to hold the Congress of the free Fed[erations] and to constitute a closer alliance of these [federations], not outside but *within* the Int[ernational].

This is the plan. For now, we await letters and dispatches from The Hague, and once we have important news, I will hasten to communicate them to you.⁴¹

When Guillaume read this letter for the first time at the beginning of the 20th century, he made the following note about Bakunin’s speculation that the Jura and Spanish delegates would withdraw from the Congress of The Hague during the second meeting: ‘B. had *very poorly foreseen* what would take place.’⁴² In reality, Bakunin and Guillaume’s different expectations were probably based on different notions about how the conflict would be carried out in The Hague. Bakunin seems to have favoured the confrontational line of the Italian sections, who professed to being anarchists and broke with the General Council. Thus he must have hoped that the Span-

³⁴ Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 32.

³⁵ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 317.

³⁶ Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 31 August 1872, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

³⁹ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 318. Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 33. Nettlau, ‘Nachträge’, n. 4519. In order to cover the travel expenses, a special payment was initially levied on the Jura Federation’s sections; see *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 August to 1 September 1872, p. 1; 10 November 1872, p. 5.

⁴⁰ See above, p. 240.

⁴¹ Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 31 August 1872, pp. 3–4, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁴² Written comment added personally by Guillaume in Nettlau, ‘Nachträge’, n. 4501.

ish and Jurassic delegates would break quickly with the General Council and withdraw from the congress. Guillaume on the other hand tried to negotiate an agreement among the majority of the International based on autonomy: 'I would not wish for the Spanish and the Jurassians to be alone in their withdrawal; I would also like to carry the Belgians, the Dutch, the English. And for that I must negotiate up to the last day of the Congress'.⁴³ Cafiero seems to have been cast as the radical who was to counterbalance Guillaume's willingness to compromise. 'He will add a powerful element to the courage, the [revolutionary] resolution of our Jurassian and Spanish friends', Bakunin wrote of him to Gambuzzi.

Another one of Bakunin's friends, Arman Ross, also considered a quick split likely:

In this situation one can positively speak of the emergence of two internationals. The party of revolutionary anarchists recognises no other programme than their own without worrying about a majority. They also don't want to impose their programme on any of their adversaries, not even if the majority were on their side. The discussions on political issues show clearly two currents in the International: the anarchist and the statist. Unity and solidarity are only possible *in economics* – the anarchists understand things that way too. [...] It seems clear that unity can be maintained on that basis only. All the rest is futile fancy, and you will see, if they don't realise that properly, *the unity is finished*.⁴⁴

It is quite conspicuous that the critics and supporters of the General Council organised themselves in a manner corresponding to their theoretical positions: while Marx and Engels tried to steer the congress by keeping their supporters on a tight leash, the General Council's federally organised critics from Italy to Belgium each took their own route.

Delegate mandates from the United States and Germany

There were always irregularities at the congresses of the International – delegates were sent by groups, associations and sections that had scarcely any contact with the International beforehand and that often could not prove that they had been admitted as sections. In the run-up to the Basel Congress (September 1869), Bakunin also proposed *improvising* a section from Italy in order to issue mandates.

we absolutely must [try] to get me nominated by one of your workers' sections. How many do you have? Only one? – The smallest [section] can send a [delegate], even if this [section] is composed of only 10 or 20 members. – We could improvise one if necessary: any workers' association, even one formed [previously], provided that it declares its adherence to the General Rules of the Int[ernational] and sends 10 centimes for each of [its members], is a [legitimate section] of the Int[ernational].⁴⁵

However, there were never any *improvised* sections in Italy. But there were always grey areas during the verification of mandates at the International's congresses as many delegates already found it difficult to prove that their sections had paid their dues.

Compared to the irregularities at earlier congresses, though, the manipulations at the Congress of The Hague reached unprecedented proportions. On 21 June 1872, Marx sent the following order to his confidant in New York, Friedrich Sorge:

⁴³ Written comment added personally by Guillaume *ibid*.

⁴⁴ Ross to Lavrov, 1 August 1872, in Sapir (ed.), '*Vpered!*' 1873–1877, vol. 2, p. 59.

⁴⁵ Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 20 July 1869, pp. 1–2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

The next Congress will be held on the first Monday in September 1872 in The Hague (Holland) – the official notification will be sent to New York next week. It simply will not do for you to fob us off with a memorandum.⁴⁶ *At this Congress the life or death of the International will be at stake. You yourself and at least one other, if not two, must attend.* As for the sections which do not send delegates directly, they can send *mandates* (mandates for delegates).

The Germans for me, F. Engels, Lochner, Karl Pfänder, Lessner.⁴⁷

The French for G. Ranvier, Auguste Serrailier, Le Moussu, Ed. Vaillant, F. Cournet, Ant. Arnaud.⁴⁸

The Irish for MacDonnel, who is doing very well, or if they prefer, for one of the above-named Germans or French.⁴⁹

At a congress of the American sections in New York from 6 to 8 July 1872 organised by Sorge's Tenth Ward Hotel Council, Sorge apparently pointed to this letter when he called for blank mandates. Hermann Jung, who was one of Marx's closest friends in the General Council, commented on this:

At the New York Congress Sorge and Dereure were elected as delegates for the Hague and then Sorge demanded blank credentials to take with him, and when objected to Sorge showed a letter from Marx. I received the news of this, and went to Marx and he said if Sorge has done that he is a (*ein dummer Esel*) a stupid ass. Barry had one of these blank credentials filled in.⁵⁰

In his reply to Marx dated 15 July 1872, Sorge confirmed that he and Simon Dereure were elected delegates, and added: 'Besides, a few more mandates are to be sent.'⁵¹ In a letter to Marx dated 5 August 1872, Carl Speyer – Sorge's colleague in the Tenth Ward Hotel Council and co-signer on the mandates for the congress – gave his impression of the mood surrounding the issuing of the mandates and admitted to having a bad conscience:

I have fulfilled my duty as regards making out a mandate for you and as regards the three mandates from Chicago, but I admit to you that I did it only by way of precaution; at the bottom of my heart I cannot believe that Bakunin's clique will be in a position to play the trick we fear on us.⁵² I was and am still today in favour of making out these mandates because I know by experience that the enormous sacrifices a Congress costs can only bear fruit if the German element is sufficiently represented [...].⁵³

⁴⁶ Marx meant that delegates had to be sent and not a written report; Sorge sent a memorandum to the London Conference (see 'Memorandum of the North American Central Committee to the Conference at London, Septbr. 1871', in Molnár, *Le déclin de la Première Internationale*, pp. 204–7).

⁴⁷ All five were members of the General Council and former members of the Communist League.

⁴⁸ All six were members of the General Council.

⁴⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 398.

⁵⁰ Statement by Jung at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 3. Officially, the New York Congress only resolved to call on the individual sections to 'send mandates to reliable party comrades in Europe' ('Der erste Kongreß der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation in Amerika', *Volksstaat*, 7 September 1872, p. 3). At the Congress of The Hague, the American delegate Sauva stated that Sorge 'had been empowered by the American Congress to choose 5 members of the General Council and give them mandates'. (Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 118).

⁵¹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 378.

⁵² This appears to be the story that Marx had spread in New York. In a letter dated 30 July 1872 with instructions for Marx as delegate of New York's section no. 1, Speyer cockily called on Marx to position himself 'against the machinations of Bakunin, Guillaume and their associates, who intend to decentralise the International Working Men's Association in order to gain more elbow room for their personal intrigues and to cripple our movement'. (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 316).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 418–19.

The story behind the ‘three mandates from Chicago’ is explained in a letter from Sorge to Marx dated 6 August 1872: ‘I shall bring mandates with me for you and Pfänder and 3 blank ones *in case of need*’.⁵⁴ Maltman Barry, a Scottish journalist and colleague of Marx in the General Council, received one of the blank mandates from Chicago.⁵⁵ ‘Credentials received – many thanks’, Barry wrote to Marx,⁵⁶ who had apparently furnished him with the mandate. The English delegate Mottershead wondered during the congress, ‘why exactly Barry was elected of all things by a German foreign section while at home in England he didn’t belong to the leaders and didn’t account for anything?’ Marx replied nervously: ‘who the section elects is none of your business. By the way, it does honour to Barry that he doesn’t belong to the so-called leaders of the English workers as these are all more or less bought by the bourgeoisie and government.’⁵⁷ ‘Your man is sold too’,⁵⁸ one of the English participants at the congress shouted as Barry was suspected of having relations with the Conservative party and wrote for their press.⁵⁹

Marx and Engels were especially busy at churning out French and German mandates for The Hague. Bebel, Liebknecht, and other leading German social democrats – who could be regarded as model students of political-parliamentary socialism when it came to party politics – were qualified as *secure* delegates as they were the main supporters of Marx and Engels’ political line. However, the German social democrats’ fixation on party politics had the effect that they had not shown much more than a polite disinterest in the International for a long time. In its founding programme (Eisenach, 1869), the Social-Democratic Workers’ Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeit-*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 421. Pfänder did not attend the Congress of The Hague. The English delegate Hales also confirmed the existence of blank mandates from the United States: ‘From America blank credentials were brought to be filled up here.’ (Statement by Hales at the British federal congress on 26 January, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 2).

⁵⁵ See (also in the following) the relevant delegates lists of the Congress of The Hague: (1) ‘Report of the Mandate Commission’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 295–300; (2) ‘Nominal List of Delegates to the Fifth World Congress held at The Hague (Holland), September 2–7, 1872’, *ibid.*, pp. 330–33; (3) Delegates list in *Liberté*, 15 September 1872, p. 2; (4) Delegates list in Sorge’s minutes (Sorge, ‘Minutes’, pp. 113–15). All four delegates lists contain errors.

⁵⁶ Barry to Marx, 27 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 487.

⁵⁷ F. Sorge, ‘Protokoll des 5ten allgemeinen Kongresses der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association im Haag, September 1872’, in H. Gerth (ed.), *The First International: Minutes of the Hague Congress of 1872 with related Documents* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1958), pp. 26–27. See also Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 37; and Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 75. According to Barry’s report, Marx replied cynically: ‘The question of fitness [of the delegate] was one for the section making the appointment’ (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 41) – which wasn’t possible as the mandates were blank.

⁵⁸ Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 75.

⁵⁹ ‘I don’t know that’, Marx said in his defence. To which someone replied: ‘You ought to know, and you do know’ (*ibid.*). In an address by the British federal congress dated 26 January 1872, Barry was described as a ‘Tory agent’ and an ‘individual who was well known to be connected with the *Standard* newspaper, and whom Citizen Karl Marx had said he believed to be a spy, not a month previously’ (British Federal Council, *Address to the Branches, Sections, Affiliated Societies, and Members of the Federation* [London 1873], p. 2). Johannard reported to Jung on 4 September 1872 from the Congress of The Hague: ‘Barry was defended by Marx to the bitter end and [his mandate] was naturally recognised. This is very strange coming from men who were accusing Barry to everybody’s hearing only a fortnight ago’ (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 511–12). See also *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 102 (meeting on 6 February 1872) and p. 134 (meeting on 19 March 1872). Barry published reports on the Congress of The Hague in the conservative newspaper the *Standard* in September 1872, which were released as a brochure the following year (the text can be found in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 36–67). A bibliographic sketch of Barry by Rohan McWilliam is included in J. O. Baylen and N. J. Gossman (eds.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals*, 3 vols. (Hassocks, New Jersey: Harvester Press and Humanities Press [vol. 1]; Brighton, New Hampshire: Harvester Press and Salem House [vol. 2]; New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Tokyo: Harvester Wheatsheaf [vol. 3]; 1979–1988), vol. 3, pp. 72–78.

erpartei; SDAP) only called itself a branch of the International ‘in as much as the laws regarding associations allow’.⁶⁰ Few party members could be won over for the alternative, being a party member *and* a member of the International, whether because of financial reasons (two membership fees) or because of the organisational reasons (avoiding an inefficient double structure). ‘Don’t count on *a lot* of individual memberships in Germany, and *entre nous* [between us], I also don’t think it’s necessary’, Lieb knecht admitted.⁶¹ Faced with such brutal honesty, Engels could only make the following angry appeal:

Your view that the German Internationalists do not need to pay dues, and that, in general, it is a matter of complete indifference whether the International has few members in Germany or many, is the exact opposite of ours. If you have not asked for the contributions of 1 silver groschen per person per annum, or if you have used them up yourselves, you will have to come up with your own justification. How you can imagine that the other nations would bear your share of the costs, so that you might come amongst them ‘*in the Spirit*’, like Jesus Christ, while saving your flesh and your money, – is something I quite fail to comprehend. At all events, this Platonic relationship has got to stop [...]. If you personally treat the matter as being of no importance, we shall have to turn to others, but we shall clear the business up one way or the other, on that you may rely.⁶²

Despite his grim words, Engels still depended on Lieb knecht and was forced to come to terms with his low level of commitment toward the International. Upon receiving a letter from the Spanish Federal Council that was to be forwarded ‘to the Comrades of the Federal Council of Germany’,⁶³ Engels – the corresponding secretary for Spain in the General Council – decided to lose the letter among his papers.⁶⁴

In May 1872, Engels once again brought up this tiresome subject in a letter to Lieb knecht:

We must now try and clear up the situation there as quickly as possible so that Germany can be properly represented at the Congress. I must ask you straight out to tell us frankly how the International stands with you.

1. Roughly how many stamps have been distributed to how many places, and *which places* are involved? The 208 counted by Fink are surely not all there are?⁶⁵

⁶⁰ ‘Programm und Statuten der sozial-demokratischen Arbeiter-Partei’, *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*, 14 August 1869, p. 374.

⁶¹ Lieb knecht to Engels, 8 December 1871, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2663.

⁶² Engels to Lieb knecht, 15 December 1871, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 282. Lieb knecht countered on 18 December 1871: ‘it does not occur to me to put the existence of our organisation at risk because of this question’ (RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 2676). The financial report tabled at the last day of meetings at the Congress of The Hague stated, ‘that only Spain, France and America have completely met their obligations’. (Sorge, ‘Protokoll’, p. 98. ‘Summary of the General Council’s Financial Administration in 1871/72’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 220–23. See also Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, pp. 96–98).

⁶³ The Spanish Federal Council to the Federal Council of Germany, 13 March 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3165. Mora asked for greetings per telegram for the Saragossa Congress.

⁶⁴ Engels explained in a reply to the Spanish Federal Council dated 27 March 1872 (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 129) that the International was in a state of disrepair in Germany at the moment and that they should not expect a reply, but that he had forwarded the letter. However, he apparently kept the letter among his papers where Max Nettlau found it in the 1920s; see M. Nettlau, *Documentos inéditos sobre la Internacional y la Alianza en España* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Protesta, 1930), p. 76.

⁶⁵ An undated receipt from the *Volksstaat* shipping clerk Wilhelm Fink for 13 talers and 26 groschens records the sale of 208 copies of the Rules as well as membership stamps (RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 5627); the receipt was

2. Does the Social-Democratic Workers' Party intend to be represented at the Congress and if so how does it propose to place itself to arrange matters with the General Council in advance so that its mandates cannot be queried at the Congress? This would mean a) that it would have to declare itself to be the German Federation of the International in reality and not merely *figuratively* and b) that *as such* it would pay its dues before the Congress. The matter is becoming serious and we have to know where we are, or else you will force us to act on our own initiative and to consider the Social-Democratic Workers' Party as an alien body for whom the International has no significance. We cannot allow the representation of the German workers at the Congress to be fumbled or forfeited for reasons unknown to us, but which cannot be other than petty. We should like to ask for a clear statement about this quickly.⁶⁶

Engels complained two weeks later that Liebknecht had ignored his letter: 'there is still no answer to my question about how your Party intends to put its relations with the General Council on a clear footing, without which it will be absolutely impossible for it to be represented at the Congress.'⁶⁷ In his reply, Liebknecht reiterated that the German social democrats could not officially join the International, but promised that they would get more involved:

An *official* relationship of our Committee to the General Council is not possible; the only way which seems practicable to me is that *everywhere some of our members* (the more the better, though *all* cannot be expected to do so) buy membership cards of the International Working Men's Association and stamps with the Rules, and then for the Internationals of one locality to get together and elect a delegate or else issue a mandate.⁶⁸

On that note, the *Volksstaat* printed the following appeal on 15 June 1872:

It is extremely important that the German social democracy be represented at the next *Congress of the International Working Men's Association* (in September of this year) in a dignified fashion.

As no delegate will be admitted to the Congress without presenting a proper mandate and the German laws of associations prohibit the formation of sections, party members need to buy a membership stamp (for one groschen) that they must stick on their copy of the Rules in order to become *individual members*, which is not prohibited by any German law. The members of one or several locations should then in due time elect a delegate or issue a mandate.⁶⁹

In the issue of the *Volksstaat* that announced that the Congress of The Hague had been convened, the editors once again printed the appeal for delegates to be elected and mandates to be issued.⁷⁰ The same appeal appeared for a third time in the *Volksstaat* on 7 August along with a model form for the mandates, which was meant to help the German party members unfamiliar with the International fill out the mandates properly – 'in order to avoid irregularities and

included in a letter by Liebknecht and Hepner to Engels dated 15 May 1872 (Opitz [ed.], 'Unveröffentlichte Briefe', pp. 400–1).

⁶⁶ Engels to Liebknecht, 15–22 May 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 376.

⁶⁷ Engels to Liebknecht, 5–6 June 1872, *ibid.*, p. 390.

⁶⁸ Liebknecht to Engels, [about 8 June 1872], in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 339.

⁶⁹ *Volksstaat*, 15 June 1872, p. 3.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 3 July 1872, pp. 1, 2.

unpleasantness', as Liebknecht put it.⁷¹ The paper also stated that the editors of the *Volksstaat* 'declare themselves ready to organise mandates for delegates planning to attend'.⁷²

And so Adolf Hepner (1846–1923), editor-in-chief of the *Volksstaat* since Liebknecht began serving his sentence on 15 June 1872 after being convicted at the Leipzig high treason trial,⁷³ acted as a switch board to 'organise mandates' for the congress. Hepner was already quite confident in a letter to Engels dated 29 June: 'We shall probably get a sufficient number of mandates together.'⁷⁴ On 29 July 1872, Marx told his friend Kugelmann to 'write to Hepner that I ask him to get you a delegate's mandate' after Kugelmann signalled his intent to go to The Hague.⁷⁵ 'Hepner wrote me that he would send me a mandate in time', Kugelmann soon confirmed.⁷⁶ 'Concerning the mandate', the German delegate Joseph Dietzgen explained, 'I applied to Hepner, who has also promised to see about it'.⁷⁷ 'When mandates are sent out it is absolutely essential to include one for Cuno, who is now in Belgium', Engels wrote Hepner in another request for a mandate.⁷⁸

Indeed, Hepner organised mandates for Dietzgen from Dresden, for Kugelmann from Celle, for Cuno from Stuttgart, and for Heinrich Scheu from Königsberg and Eßlingen.⁷⁹ On 21 August 1872, Hepner sent Engels a mandate: 'enclosed a mandate from Breslau for you'.⁸⁰ Five days later Hepner wrote that a mandate for Marx was being sent from Leipzig. As Engels apparently urged Hepner to send additional blank mandates, he felt the need to justify his refusal in the same letter: 'It is impossible for me to get blank mandates because when you suggest to people to make them out, they consider the International as a "swindle"'.⁸¹

Even without blank mandates, the process of issuing mandates in Germany was not altogether free of manipulation. The frantic attempts to present the social democrats (or at least their individual members) as an authentic organisation within the International were made difficult by the fact that the International was practically irrelevant in Germany – which Liebknecht made no secret of. The Berlin social democrat Fritz Milke also let Marx know in a letter dated 4 July 1872 that he could 'as yet not report about any direct activity by members of the International as a whole' and that the SDAP 'as such should be seen as the International itself'.⁸²

⁷¹ Liebknecht to Engels, 29 June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 356. Liebknecht repeated his request on 20 July 1872: 'Only see to it that a *model form* is published in time, if possible giving all the formalities to be observed.' (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 388).

⁷² *Volksstaat*, 7 August 1872, p. 2. Nettlau commented: 'someone "planning to attend" is already a "delegate", for whom the editors quickly "organise" a mandate!' (Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 139).

⁷³ See above, p. 514, n. 84.

⁷⁴ Hepner to Engels, 29 June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 356. See also Liebknecht to Engels, 20 July 1872: 'there should be no lack of mandates.' (*ibid.*, pp. 387–88)

⁷⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 413.

⁷⁶ Kugelmann to Marx, 11 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 434.

⁷⁷ Dietzgen to Marx, 19 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 457.

⁷⁸ Engels to Hepner, 2 July 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 403. Cuno later remembered: 'Engels had procured for me a mandate from the Stuttgart Section' (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 610).

⁷⁹ See Hepner to Engels, 26 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 484.

⁸⁰ Hepner to Engels, 21 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 466.

⁸¹ Hepner to Engels, 26 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 484.

⁸² IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 3433. A petition by the Hamburg social-democrat August Geib 'to the police authorities here concerning permission to become a member of the International' was turned down; thus, he declared public activities for the International 'impossible' (Geib to Marx, 2 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 411). In an article on the Berlin section of the International, the historian Boris Nicolaevsky came to the conclusion that there was 'no way to find out what the activities of the Berlin "Eisenacher" [social democrats] as a section

And so the *Volksstaat*'s membership drive for the International didn't have any long-term effect – all related activities only aimed at issuing mandates for the Congress of The Hague for Marx had said that Germany must have 'as many representatives as possible'.⁸³ After the congress, the International once again sank into oblivion in Germany.

The one-off activities included the formation of ad hoc sections in order to issue mandates, such as in Düsseldorf where a section was formed on 26 August 1872 a few days before the congress began. The first (and apparently only) act of this section was to furnish Cuno with a mandate.⁸⁴ There were further meetings held in order to issue mandates in Berlin on 21 August 1872 for Fritz Milke,⁸⁵ Brunswick on 9 August 1872 for Bernhard Becker⁸⁶ and Cologne on 21 July 1872 for the publicist Moritz Rittinghausen. The *Volksstaat* reported on the meeting in Cologne:

[Rittinghausen] called attention to the fact that we were not meeting as an association or section here, but that an open meeting of individual members of the International was taking place. After Rittinghausen briefly explained the International's aims by summarising that the purpose was the study of social sciences and unification of the workers to accomplish the obtained results, the speaker read the resolution of the General Council regarding this year's congress (*Volksstaat* no. 53). He then illuminated the organisational endeavours of various sections and showed that the main aim of *one* direction was apparently to dissolve the International into incoherent national groups. [...] The chairman Heinrichs pleaded that the current organisation be kept [...].⁸⁷

This characterisation of the conflict within the International, while completely misguided, was not uncommon in Germany: as they were so fixated on their party, the German social democrats had long ago become completely isolated from the contemporary developments of European socialism and were surrounded by a veritable 'Great Wall of China'.⁸⁸ Social-revolutionary socialist concepts were not up for debate in Germany unlike in other countries in Europe and the German social democrats were only given a one-sided, distorted account of the conflict in the International by their corresponding secretary in the General Council, Karl Marx.⁸⁹ As such it isn't very surprising that the Cologne social democrats in their plea 'that the current organisation be kept' unwittingly took the side of the General Council's critics. At the same time they were convinced that the conflict within the International was not about internal organisation and pluralism but about preventing the *break up into incoherent national groups*. Ironically this description was especially fitting for the German social democrats' role in the International.

of the International actually entailed'. (B. Nikolajewsky, 'Karl Marx und die Berliner Sektion der I. Internationale. Unveröffentlichte Briefe von Karl Marx', *Die Gesellschaft* 1 (1933), p. 257).

⁸³ Marx to Kugelmann, 29 July 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 413. Engels added: 'if Switzerland and Germany exert themselves just a little bit so that the Alliance people do not get a majority after all *through the negligence of our friends*, then the whole bubble will burst and we shall have peace and quiet at last.' (Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, 5 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 420).

⁸⁴ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 312.

⁸⁵ *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 27 August 1872, p. 3.

⁸⁶ 'After the assembly's conclusion, the members of the SDAP met at Schellbach's where they resolved to send someone to the Congress of the International Working Men's Association in The Hague. All sides agreed to designate Mr Bernhard Becker as delegate' (*Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 10 August 1872, p. 3). It is not known whether any actual members of the International were present at this meeting.

⁸⁷ *Volksstaat*, 31 July 1872, p. 3. Although Rittinghausen was elected delegate, he did not attend the Congress of The Hague; see below, p. 309.

⁸⁸ Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 3, p. 129.

⁸⁹ See, for example, above, pp. 40–44, regarding the 'Confidential Communication' from March 1870.

A prevalent opinion among German social democrats was that the debate within the International had nothing to do with different concepts of socialism but involved warding off certain scheming troublemakers. ‘This time’, the German delegate Dietzgen confidently wrote Marx before the Congress of The Hague, ‘the quarrellers will be defeated’.⁹⁰ And Wilhelm Bracke, member of the committee of the SDAP from 1869 to 1870, expressed the hope on 3 August 1872 that ‘Bakunin will be sent packing’.⁹¹ A series of articles published with Engels’ assistance were of a similar vein: titled ‘The Alleged Social Theories and the True Political Aims of Mr Bakunin’ (‘Die angeblichen sozialen Theorien und die wirklichen politischen Bestrebungen des Herrn Bakunin’),⁹² the articles appeared in the *Volksstaat* from the beginning of August to the beginning of September 1872 and were to be sent to the Congress of The Hague as an offprint.⁹³ The anonymous author, Carl Hirsch, stated that the articles aimed to prove

1. that Mr Bakunin wrongly claims to advocate a revolutionary theory or idea but instead advocates, according to his needs, one opinion today and tomorrow the opposite, of which one is not any more revolutionary than the other;
2. that all of his publications have nothing in common with theoretical but rather with practical, political endeavours, which he attempts to adorn with revolutionary phrases;
3. that these political endeavours coincide with those of the Russian government.⁹⁴

With such ideological whoppers being doled out, it’s no wonder that the Düsseldorf party members gave their delegate Cuno the mandate ‘to oppose the intrigues of the *Alliance of socialist Democracy* led by *Bakunin*’.⁹⁵ Cuno proudly referred to his mandate as his ‘Düsseldorf credential instructing me to vote against Bakunin’.⁹⁶

The French and General Council delegate mandates

The delegates from France were a special case: as the International was largely incapacitated because of the persecution that followed the fall of the Paris Commune and the ‘Dufaure Law’

⁹⁰ Dietzgen to Marx, 19 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 458 (here erroneously ‘splitters’ instead of ‘quarrellers’ [*Krakeelmacher*]; corrected according to the original wording in J. Dietzgen, *Schriften*, 3 vols. [Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961–1965], vol. 3, p. 425).

⁹¹ Bracke to Kugelmann, 3 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 413.

⁹² *Volksstaat*, 7 August 1872, supplement, pp. 1–2; 17 August 1872, p. 1; 24 August 1872, pp. 1–2; 28 August 1872, pp. 1–2; 7 September 1872, p. 1. Offprint in October, see below, n. 94. Engels suggested an article on the *Fictitious Splits* in a letter to Hepner on 2 July 1872 (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 405) and so may have inspired the series of articles. On 23 July 1872, Hepner wrote Engels: ‘I have now received the article on Bakunin from Carl Hirsch. So you only have to perhaps correct or add to it when it is published’ (E. Kundel [ed.], ‘Die ‘Volksstaat’-Redaktion in den Wochen vor dem Haager Kongreß. Unveröffentlichte Briefe von Adolf Hepner und Wilhelm Liebknecht an Friedrich Engels’, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 15 (1973), p. 302). Via a letter to Hepner on 4 August 1872, Engels had references passed on to the author Carl Hirsch; see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 415–16. For more about Hirsch’s authorship, see Carl Hirsch to Wilhelm Liebknecht, 13 September 1872, in Liebknecht, *Briefwechsel mit deutschen Sozialdemokraten*, vol. 1, p. 436.

⁹³ See Hepner to Engels, 15 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 450.

⁹⁴ [C. Hirsch], *Die angeblichen sozialen Theorien und die wirklichen politischen Bestrebungen des Herrn Bakunin* (Leipzig: Druck von Fr. Thiele, (1872)), pp. 3–4.

⁹⁵ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 312.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

of 14 March 1872 made membership a punishable offence, sections of the International could not exist officially in France. In this situation, mandates for the Congress of The Hague could only be issued if precautionary measures had been taken, both by the section electing the delegates and the delegates themselves. Marx and Engels took advantage of the discretion required for the French mandates to furnish their confidants with delegate mandates. A few days before the opening of the congress, the matter caused the following scene at a meeting of the Subcommittee of the General Council on 28 August 1872:

Cournet asked whether Citizen *Serrailier* had received blank mandates from France, so that he could hand them over to Council members who had been provided with mandates.

Serrailier replied that he had received a mandate for Citizen *Ranvier*, one for *Longuet*, one for *Johannard*, one had been given to *Vilmart* [*Wilmart*] in Manchester.⁹⁷ Two delegates would come from France to The Hague. [...]

A discussion ensued on who was to be given the blank mandate that had been sent.

Serrailier proposed *Combault*.

Frankel, *Vaillant*, *Cournet* seconded.

Marx [proposed] *Arnaud*.

Frankel said that in the event of *Vaillant* receiving a mandate, as was being said to the General Council, he would then wish it to go to *Combault* because he knew all the affairs concerning *Malon*.

Marx said that the letter which *Sorge*, delegated by the American Congress, possessed and which affirmed that the San Francisco section had nominated him as delegate to the Congress, would suffice for *Vaillant* to be admitted even in the event of the mandate not arriving.

After *Marx*'s declaration *Frankel* rescinded his proposition.

A vote was passed to accept *Combault* as recipient of a mandate.⁹⁸

Marx organised mandates from elsewhere for the French Blanquists *Antoine Arnaud* and *Édouard Vaillant* who had gone empty-handed: *Henri Perret*, secretary of the Committee of the Romance Federation in Geneva, had given *Johann Philipp Becker* a mandate in his name as well as a blank one. *Perret* sent them to *Becker* on 30 August 1872 along with the following note: 'I am sending a mandate for you from the Federal Committee [...]. Besides I am enclosing a mandate from the Section of Carouge, the space for the name being left blank. If you meet a citizen devoted to our ideas you will trust him with the mandate, adding his name.'⁹⁹ The blank mandate belonging to the Carouge section was used by *Arnaud*.

Apparently the question of *Vaillant*'s mandate was taken care of in a similar manner. At first he was to profit from *Hepner*'s roaring trade in mandates with one from Leipzig: 'I shall get a Leipzig mandate for *Vaillant*', *Hepner* promised.¹⁰⁰ But *Vaillant* turned down the mandate from Germany in a letter dated 30 August 1872 and – only three days before the congress's opening – was sad to say that there was currently no delegate mandate available for him.¹⁰¹ At the last

⁹⁷ The General Council members *Ranvier*, *Longuet* and *Johannard* all attended the Congress of The Hague as delegates with French mandates. *Ranvier*'s mandate was arranged by *Van Heddeghem*; see below, p. 541, n. 38. For more about *Wilmart*'s mandate (from Bordeaux), see below, p. 308.

⁹⁸ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 491–93. *Combault* didn't attend the Congress of The Hague.

⁹⁹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 498.

¹⁰⁰ *Hepner* to *Engels*, 15 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 449.

¹⁰¹ 'At present I have no mandate, and if I am not given any by tomorrow I shall not go to The Hague.' (*Vaillant* to *Liebnecht* and *Bebel*, 30 August 1872, *ibid.*, p. 496).

minute, though, Vaillant was able to procure three mandates: a clandestine mandate from France ('after intriguing everywhere to get a mandate from France', his General Council colleague Jules Johannard wrote¹⁰²) as well as a mandate sent from San Francisco ('for Vaillant, they say, though the letter was addressed to Dupont', Johannard wrote¹⁰³) and a blank mandate possibly arranged by Becker from the section of La Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland. Guillaume wrote about this in his report on the congress:

We saw this with our own eyes in the case of Citizen Vaillant who had a mandate from the Section of Chaux-de-Fonds [...]. This mandate did not contain any instructions, but said simply: 'The section delegates to the Congress Citizen ... (a blank space for the name) with powers to represent it,' and then another hand had inserted the name of Vaillant.¹⁰⁴

Guillaume also addressed this at the congress: 'Guillaume opposes Vaillant's mandate because Vaillant's name has been inserted on the mandate in another hand and at a different time.' However, this didn't prevent the mandate from being declared valid.¹⁰⁵

Last but not least, the election of the General Council's own delegates at the end of August 1872 caused heated debate. The discussion was recorded in the minutes as follows:

In the commencement of the proceedings great diversity of opinion was shown as to the method of electing the delegates to represent the General Council at the ensuing Congress. [...] Several propositions were put as to the number of delegates and were afterwards withdrawn in favour of the proposition of *Vaillant*, seconded by *Frankel*, that 6 be the number of delegates to represent the General Council at the Congress, which, being put from the chair, was carried. As to the method of taking the votes for the delegates, great difference of opinion [was] shown at first but finally it was agreed to and put from the chair: that only those who had an absolute majority of votes could be considered elected.¹⁰⁶

Of the delegates elected 'to represent the General Council' (Marx, Dupont, Serrailier, Wróblewski, Cournet, and George Sexton),¹⁰⁷ four already had mandates – only Dupont and Sexton did not represent a section. After it became clear that there was not enough money to cover the travel expenses of all those elected, Engels came to the rescue: 'Citizen *Engels* said that

¹⁰² Johannard to Jung, 4 September 1872, *ibid.*, p. 510.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 511.

¹⁰⁴ [J. Guillaume], 'The Congress of The Hague', *ibid.*, p. 220. Vaillant agreed to show his mandate to Schwitzguébel and Guillaume when they asked to see it ([Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 266). Hepner railed against Guillaume's account: 'Untrue: the Chaux-de-Fonds mandate was sent, completely *filled in* with Vaillant's name, to the corresponding secretary for Switzerland, Jung' ([A. Hepner] 'The Hague Congress of the International. Article IV (concluding article. Against the Bakuninist)', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 126). Hepner never gave any evidence to back his opinion – he was not particularly well versed with the work of the mandate commission; see Hepner to Engels, 8/9 October 1872, in Opitz (ed.), 'Unveröffentlichte Briefe', p. 403. The account possibly stems from Engels – Hepner also made the following curt statement elsewhere in his article: 'The General Council states that it did *not* fill in *any* mandate forms; this must be believed at least until the accusers provide *proof* of their assertions.' The suggestion that the mandates be returned and destroyed (see below, pp. 306–7) was an attempt to prevent precisely this.

¹⁰⁵ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 118. Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 30. The *Emancipación*, friendly to the General Council, glossed over the blank mandate issue as follows: 'if one or two sections gave blank mandates [to Vaillant], it was because of the difficulty they had finding out who among those known in the section, *could* go to the Congress. As for the rest, no mandate was sent to the General Council, and those that were blank were sent to certain known people commissioned to go personally or to send someone they trusted. Given this apparent irregularity, of which *only one case* was proven, it was therefore the effect of the difficulty to send delegates directly.' (*Emancipación*, 19 October 1872, p. 2).

¹⁰⁶ *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 280 (the minutes are merely dated 'August, 1872').

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 282–83.

money would be advanced to the Council to meet its obligations.’¹⁰⁸ He likely did this because Marx and Engels were counting on the support of Dupont, Serrailier, Wróblewski, and Cournet at the congress. When Martin James Boon asked his General Council colleague Engels ‘where the money was to come from he was told it was a secret. He must not be inquisitive.’¹⁰⁹

Engels also urged Hermann Jung to take on a delegate’s mandate as he had taken part in all of the congresses and conferences of the International (except for the Lausanne Congress, 1867) and was well respected. However, the recent developments in the General Council led Jung to distance himself from Marx and Engels. Jung later explained:

Engels was for getting a majority to smash the opposition, I was for arguing the question, and to smash the opponents by argument. Engels reckoned upon the sections, and the delegates they were likely to send for the purpose of outnumbering the opposition. I opposed it, which widened the breach between me and Marx. I have always given opponents more time to speak than my own side. If they are wrong no smash will convince them, if right they are sure to triumph in the long run. [...] At all the former Congresses I and Eccarius had been the exponents of Marx’s doctrine, but I could not vote for his new policy, and rather than vote against him I resolved to stay away. A few days before the Congress some news had arrived which made it doubtful whether the Council would have the majority. Marx and Engels came to me to urge me to go. I refused giving as my reason that I had sacrificed too much already. The next day they came and said, I must go, it might depend on one vote, I replied, you can easily get that. They offered to pay the costs, whatever they might be, if I would go. Engels said you are the only one who can save the Association. I replied I can only go if you and Marx stop away.¹¹⁰

By way of contrast, Engels likely paid for the travel expenses of the corresponding secretary for Ireland in the General Council, Marx’s confidant Joseph Patrick McDonnell, after he asked for assistance in a letter to Engels on 29 August 1872: ‘As to the Congress I regret that I cannot command sufficient ready cash to go. [...] If I could get the loan of £ 10 I think we could manage for another delegate besides myself. If you would act as security *for me* I would no doubt be able to get the money by Saturday.’¹¹¹ Hepner was also helped financially after he wrote Engels from Leipzig on 15 August 1872: ‘Whether *I* come to The Hague or not depends on whether the *Frankfurter Zeitung* accepts a report from me on the Congress [...]; otherwise I have not got the fare.’¹¹² After Hepner returned from the Congress of The Hague, the *Volksstaat*’s shipping clerk Wilhelm Fink sent Engels the following message:

With reference to your letter addressed to Hepner in August in which you guaranteed him compensation for part of the travelling expenses to The Hague and requested him on this basis to obtain an advance, we advanced Hepner the sum necessary for the journey from the cash-office of the *Volksstaat*. According to the account presented to us now by Hepner for the Hague-Mainz journey, we have taken the liberty – after the above-named cash-office and Hepner had taken

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹⁰⁹ Statement by Hales at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Statement by Jung at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 491.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 449–50

over two-thirds of the expenses to their account – to charge the remainder of the twenty talers to your account.¹¹³

Johann Philipp Becker was also promised 100 francs (possibly from Engels) for travel expenses by Sorge on 29 August 1872 on the following condition: ‘set out immediately on your journey to The Hague’.¹¹⁴ Duval’s travel expenses likely came from the same source, seeing as the Geneva sections had almost unanimously refused to send a delegate because of the financial reasons. ‘On the opening day of the Congress of The Hague’, a flabbergasted Candaux – a member of the Local Council of the Geneva sections – wrote, ‘we learn that the Romance Federal Committee has delegated one of its members with money furnished by an anonymous person, a gift!??’¹¹⁵ According to Candaux, Duval was thus only the ‘so-called delegate of the Romance Federation, but one who has usurped this title, for he was officially only the delegate of the Romance Federal Committee and not of the Federation; he was the delegate of three or four individuals, no more than that!’¹¹⁶

Marx appears to have also subsidised the travel expenses of various French delegates, such as his General Council colleagues Serrailier and Dupont. As a trip to Amsterdam was planned for after the Congress of The Hague, Dupont asked Marx: ‘If we are to go to Amsterdam I would ask you to tell me whether you can add a little money to the sum you have already given to Serrailier’.¹¹⁷ And on 15 March 1873, Émile Dentraygues – the General Council’s proxy in Toulouse – testified in court that ‘lacking funds’ he was at first unsure whether he could travel to The Hague as delegate for Toulouse and the Hérault region. Ultimately he was given 472 francs for the journey to The Hague: ‘Larroque and Karl Marx have sent me the money.’¹¹⁸ Marx also had to pay for his return trip: ‘At the Hague, Karl Marx (*the great leader of the International*) had to give me a fat sum so that I could get to Bordeaux.’¹¹⁹

At any rate, Marx and Engels managed to bring together a large number of delegates and apparently even had surplus mandates. On the opening day of the Congress of The Hague, Marx

¹¹³ Fink to Engels, 14 October 1872, *ibid.*, pp. 568–69. After Engels signalled his agreement, he was sent a bill for 20 talers ‘For Hepner’s trip’; see Fink to Engels, 19 October 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 3067.

¹¹⁴ Sorge, Victor Schily and Henri Bachruch to Becker, 29 August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 492. Sorge made a short stop in Paris before going to the Congress of The Hague; see S. Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council of the International Workingmen’s Association New York: 1872–1876’, *Annali [dell’] Istituto Giangiacomo Feltrinelli* 4 (1961), pp. 473–74.

¹¹⁵ Candaux, *L’Internationale et les intrigants*, p. 3, see also p. 2. ‘For us, to truly be a free association’, Candaux went on to criticise, ‘we should not have these little masks, these advances that everyone knows that we are not able to pay, which creates for us a collective debt of gratitude, which places us in a position of total dependence upon the person who allows his identity to be easily guessed, all due to the clique, which does not see the danger of playing this game.’ (Candaux, *A Monsieur le Président*, p. 3). Perret asserted in a reply: ‘it is not one anonymous person who has helped to provide the necessary funds but several members of our sections, along with, at the last minute, the Treasury of the Federal Committee’ (H. Perret, *Mémoire adressé aux Sections de la Fédération Genevoise de l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, [Geneva 1873], p. 5).

¹¹⁶ Candaux, *L’Internationale et les intrigants*, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ Dupont to Marx, 7 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 519.

¹¹⁸ *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 19 March 1873, p. 269. Charles Larroque was the secretary of the Bordeaux section; according to his account, Dentraygues also received money from Lafargue, Wilmart, and Engels (see Larroque to Engels, 25 March 1873, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 5, delo 3208).

¹¹⁹ *Procès de l’Internationale. Compte-rendu des débats devant la chambre de police correctionnelle de Toulouse*. 38 *prévenus*, Paris, Toulouse: E. Dentu, F. Massip, 1873, p. 33.

is said to have told his contact person in The Hague, who had rented the assembly hall, 'that he would have to leave the room but if he liked to remain Marx would give him credentials'.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Statement by Jung at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873, see *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 3. Charles Rodenback (pseudonym of Charles Antoine Monterossi) may have been the one referred to; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 555.

CHAPTER 16. The Congress of The Hague: the mandate commission and the commission to investigate the Alliance

EN ROUTE TO THE CONGRESS OF The Hague, Guillaume, Schwitzguébel and Cafiero arrived in Brussels on the morning of 31 August 1872 and met with Brismée, Verrijcken, and other Belgian activists of the International.¹ Guillaume later remembered that he had to

clear up many prejudices that had accumulated over the last three years [since the last general congress]: that it was not a question of forcing anarchy upon the International but of each federation proceeding in the way it sees fit. G[uillaume] saw it as a major success that he was able to clarify this matter for Désiré Brismée.²

On the following day, the remaining Belgian delegates (Nicolas Eberhard, Roch Spingard, Herman, Coenen, and Henri Van Den Abeele) and the newly arrived Spanish delegates (Farga Pellicer, Alerini, Marselau, and Morago) joined the others in Brussels and Antwerp for the trip to The Hague.³ When Guillaume, Schwitzguébel and Cafiero arrived at their hotel in The Hague on the afternoon of 1 September 1872, they were surprised in the dining hall by the delegates Eccarius, Hales, Sexton, Mottershead, John Roach, and W.-Edwell Harcourt, who had arrived from England, and some of whom were staying in the same hotel.⁴ Guillaume and friends were even more surprised to hear about the bad blood within the General Council and Marx's alienation of various long-standing members.⁵ They had chosen these accommodations, they explained to Guillaume,

in order to be as far away as possible from the hotel where Marx and his clique had taken up residence; that sparks were flying in the General Council, and that although Roach, Sexton, Mottershead, John Hales and Eccarius were members of that Council, they would be openly at war with those who formed the majority. 'But,' we said to them, 'how is it that you have signed the famous private circular [the *Fictitious Splits*] printed four months ago, at the bottom of which your names fraternised with those of Engels, Serrailier, Marx and Longuet?' They replied that their signatures had been placed there without their having been informed as to the contents of this document.⁶

The Irish delegate McDonnell, who was staying in the same hotel and travelling on Engels' tab, alarmed him about the situation:

6 o'clock

Private

¹ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 320.

² Personal interview with Guillaume by Max Nettlau, see Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4573 B.

³ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 320.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁵ See above, pp. 270–71.

⁶ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 321.

Dear Engels,

There is a plotting going on. Mr. Guillaume and his *confrères* are at work. They have a meeting just while I am writing this and our beautiful English members are with them, *Sexton, Roach, Mottershead* etc. They are securing the addresses of the disaffected and have even – in a mild way – essayed to catch me. I fear they will work harm to us in The Hague. Mr. Eccarius is a leader. He says the most shameful things of Dr. Marx.⁷

At 7 p.m. the delegates arrived for a pre-congress meeting in the Concordia hall in Lange Lombardstraat 109, which had been rented for the congress. A Dutch observer described the location:

A simple brick building in a small alley carries the name Concordia and is alternately devoted to song and dance. A small corridor leads to a pretty small hall which resembles a warehouse and can be called the epitome of the worn out and dilapidated. During the day, this holy hall is illuminated by a sparse light that filters through two large windows whose panes are partially dirty and partially broken so that only after waiting a while did it allow us to get an overview of all the clutter within. Garden benches with high backrests painted green a half century ago separated the honourable house in two uneven parts [...]. In front of the benches the delegates sat enthroned on a horseshoe-shaped table made up of a cobbled-together bunch of painted and unpainted small tables [...]. An old, round play table was set up for the chairman with his office; an even older one was used by the keepers of the minutes.⁸

A further surprise awaited the Jura delegates upon entering the hall: ‘the presence of the General Council almost in full strength; its members alone made up one-third of the Congress, and with the addition of a certain number of more or less serious delegates they constituted a ready-made majority which was bound to make all discussion illusive’, Guillaume wrote in his report on the congress.⁹

Sixty-five delegates in total were admitted to the congress, including 21 members of the General Council.¹⁰ Forty of those delegates can be considered General Council supporters (including 16 General Council members):

⁷ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 505. For more about the delegates, congress observers and journalist who travelled to the Congress of The Hague and their respective accommodations, see the list compiled by the Dutch police, which includes 79 names: RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 3, delo 276.

⁸ A. Domela, *Der Congreß der Internationale im Haag vom 2.–7. September 1872. Geschildert von einem holländischen Augenzeugen* (Berlin: Leonhard Simion, 1873), p. 6. See also T. Cuno, ‘An Agitator’s Reminiscences’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 626–27.

⁹ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, p. 219. Hepner’s criticism of Guillaume’s account was unintentionally funny: (a) The General Council is made up of 45 members. (b) The members of the General Council present at the congress never voted in unison. (c) ‘The twenty-one General Council members are not to blame for making up almost one-third of the Congress; why were there no more than sixty-seven delegates *present*?’ [Because The Hague was the location of the congress.] (d) ‘It was a vote of *confidence* in them that so many General Council members were *given* mandates by the Sections.’ [And that’s why the mandates were blank.] (e) ‘Even if all forty-five of the General Council members had received mandates and attended the Congress, there could have been no objection to that.’ (f) ‘The “certain number of more or less serious delegates” is a base and unfounded suspicion.’ ([Hepner], ‘The Hague Congress’, p. 125).

¹⁰ Arnaud, Barry, Cournot, Dupont, Eccarius, Engels, Frankel, Hales, Johannard, Le Moussu, Lessner, Longuet, McDonnell, Marx, Mottershead, Ranvier, Roach, Serrailier, Sexton, Vaillant and Wróblewski. The Belgian Alfred Herman is not included because he left England after the General Council meeting on 24 October 1871 and didn’t take part in any more meetings; he attended the Congress of The Hague as a Belgian delegate.

- Marx and his sons-in-law Lafargue and Longuet¹¹ as well as Engels – four delegates.
- The General Council members with blank mandates and/or clandestine mandates from France: Arnaud, Frankel, Johannard, Gabriel Ranvier, Serrailier (also a General Council delegate), and Vaillant – six delegates.
- Further General Council members who supported Marx and Engels: Cournet, Dupont, Le Moussu, McDonnell, and Wróblewski – five delegates.
- The General Council's proxy in Hungary: Károly Farkas.
- Representatives of the Danish (Pihl), Romance (Duval), and American (the Tenth Ward Hotel Council; Dereure and Sorge) Federations, all friendly to the General Council – four delegates.
- An English delegate with a blank mandate: Barry.
- French delegates with clandestine mandates: Eugène Faillet [pseudonym: Dumon(t)], Frédéric Potel [pseudonym: Lucain], Émile Dentraygues [pseudonym: Swarm], Paul Vichard, Lucien Van Heddeghem [pseudonym: Walter], and Raimond Wilmart [pseudonym: Wilmot] – six delegates.
- The social democrats from Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland: Bernhard Becker, Johann Philipp Becker, Cuno, Dietzgen, Hugo Friedländer, Hepner, Kugelmann, Friedrich Lessner, Gustav Ludwig,¹² Milke, Heinrich Oberwinder [pseudonym: Heim], Heinrich Scheu, and Georg Schumacher –¹³ delegates.

This *majority* of 40 delegates supporting the General Council, the Belgian delegate Brismée complained, 'was formed essentially from two countries in which *the International cannot exist regularly*, France and Germany'.¹³ On the other hand, this delighted Engels: 'It was gratifying to see the French and the Germans always voting in agreement at The Hague [...]. It was this union of the French and the Germans that led to all the resolutions without exception being adopted.'¹⁴ Eccarius, however, pointed out the following in his report for the *Times* on 4 September 1872: 'The opposition will have it that it is a packed Congress, and that bogus delegations have been manufactured to sustain the London Council against its enemies. I must say that the charge

¹¹ Longuet and Jenny Marx married on 10 October 1872.

¹² Gustav Ludwig apparently arrived late in The Hague and thus does not appear in delegates lists (1) to (3) (see above, p. 534, n. 55). According to the minutes of the congress, he was present on 6 and 7 September 1872 and authorised to vote as a delegate (Le Moussu, 'Minutes', pp. 76, 90; Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 176).

¹³ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 222 (here erroneously '*normally*' instead of '*regularly*' [*régulièrement*, i.e. according to the Rules]; corrected according to the original wording in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 September to 1 October 1872, p. 2). This situation was very problematic in that art. 8 of the Basel administrative resolutions did not grant voting rights to delegates from countries in which the International could not exist legally; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 2, p. 130.

¹⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 283. Engels made a similar statement in the *Volksstaat*: 'The core of the majority was formed by the Germans and the French, who held together' (*ibid.*, p. 262). The Belgians, on the other hand, observed that the French and German delegates 'vote like Prussian soldiers'; see Podolinskii to Lavrov, 5 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 517.

looks very suspiciously true.’¹⁵ ‘Everything goes well’, Engels chirped to the delegate Cuno upon welcoming him to the opening meeting, ‘we have a big majority’.¹⁶

The *minority* at the congress was made up of the following 20 delegates (no General Council members):

- Four delegates from Spain with an imperative mandate: Alerini, Farga Pellicer, Marselau, and Morago.
- Two delegates from Jura with an imperative mandate: Guillaume and Schwitzguébel.
- Four delegates from Holland: Victor Dave, Hendrik Gerhard, J. H. Gilkens, and Isaac Salomon van der Hout.
- Seven delegates from Belgium: Brismée, Coenen, Eberhard, Fluse, Herman, Splingard, and Van Den Abeele.
- The Communard Cyrille (delegate for the Brussels Communards), Arsène Sauva (delegate for three American sections), and W.-Edwell Harcourt (delegate of an Australian section).

A third group, which was also unhappy with Marx and Engels’ methods but voted with the *majority* most of the time, was made up of the five English delegates and General Council members Eccarius, Hales, Mottershead (all three of whom had mandates from London sections), Roach (delegate for the British Federal Council), and Sexton (delegate for the General Council).

The verification of the mandates

In light of the many problematic mandates among the *majority*, and in line with Engels’ view that ‘this time everything depends’ on the verification of the mandates,¹⁷ the questions that would tip the scales of power at the Congress of The Hague already arose at the pre-congress meeting on the eve of the official opening:

Frankel demands that the mandate commission be nominated immediately and that the delegates should not be obliged to reveal the seat of their sections, since this would create a danger for members coming from countries where the International Working Men’s Association is banned and we are surrounded by spies. *Sorge* claims for such delegates the right to adopt other names. Both these proposals are adopted as a matter of course.¹⁸

At the opening meeting on 2 September 1872, Vaillant even suggested that the mandate commission ‘had to destroy the mandates from countries where the IWA is banned’.¹⁹

The first divisive issue of the congress was the question of the seven-person mandate commission’s makeup: Sauva and Guillaume, delegates of the *minority*, suggested that *each of the*

¹⁵ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 74.

¹⁶ Cuno, ‘An Agitator’s Reminiscences’, p. 627.

¹⁷ Engels to Johann Philipp Becker, 5 August 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 418.

¹⁸ *Sorge*, ‘Minutes’, pp. 109–10.

¹⁹ *Sorge*, ‘Protokoll’, p. 6.

federations present at the congress elect a member of the commission;²⁰ ‘no occasion must be provided for suspicion’, Sauva explained, ‘that only supporters of the General Council are sitting on the commission, and therefore a member from each federation should be elected to the commission’.²¹ Longuet countered, ‘The French mandates cannot be made public, the verification commission must keep them secret and its members must be elected by all of the delegates’ – i.e. by the *majority*. In view of this deceptive manoeuvre, Brismée jokes that ‘all mandates that do not suit the General Council are to be ripped up’.²² The *majority* nevertheless voted against composing the mandate commission according to federations and elected the General Council members Marx, Ranvier, McDonnell, Frankel and Roach as well as Dereure and Gerhard into the commission. Of these, Roach (‘speaking only English’²³) and Gerhard (‘a very quiet, diffident young man’²⁴) belonged to the *minority* – whether because of their lack of assertiveness or language skills, they did not effectively oppose the *majority* in the commission.

Because of the resolution that the section name and even the delegate name on the clandestine French mandates be kept secret, the mandate commission was able to decide on the right to vote of numerous delegates without being accountable to anyone. Accordingly they told the delegates that they could ‘take back their mandates’ right away.²⁵ Alerini’s request that ‘all the mandates to be handed over to a member of the commission so that everybody will be able to examine them’ was objected to by Barry, who had a blank mandate from Chicago: ‘what in that case was the purpose of appointing the commission’.²⁶ In this manner, most of the delegates were kept in the dark about important details regarding the mandates – i.e. whether the respective sections actually existed, whether the section members had paid their dues, whether the delegates had an imperative mandate, etc. ‘Thus we had to accept with our eyes closed any delegate’, Guillaume complained in his report on the congress,

who said he had been sent by a French section; we were forbidden any investigation concerning them [...]. In this way we found ourselves in the presence of citizens whose mandates we could not check and whose personal identity we could not even establish. As these citizens voted with the General Council, the latter made no remark and found that everything was perfectly in order.²⁷

²⁰ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, pp. 111–12. According to Joukovsky’s minutes, the Spanish and Belgian delegates also called for a vote according to federations see *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 202. Eccarius commented on this question in his report on the congress for the *Times*: ‘The difference was very explicitly stated to be that taking the members of the Committee without any distinction of nationality presupposed that the Association was a unity directed by a central organ, while the system of electing according to sections and federations vindicated the sovereignty of the federations which co-operated in the common work of the Congress.’ (Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 71).

²¹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 111.

²² Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 710 (minutes by Joukovsky).

²³ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 275.

²⁴ This is how he was described by Barry in his report on the congress; see *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 48. Eccarius described him in his report for the *Times* as ‘rather inexperienced, never having attended a Congress himself’ (Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 69).

²⁵ ‘Report of the Mandate Commission’, p. 300. Thus only a few mandates have survived: of the French mandates, only Potel’s mandate issued by a group of French refugees in Brussels (see above, p. 510, n. 22) and Alerini’s mandate from Marseilles (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 301), which he retrieved on 3 September 1872. For more about the memorandum of the Rouen Local Federation, which served as Faillet’s mandate, see below, pp. 307–8.

²⁶ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 116.

²⁷ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, pp. 220–21. Hepner criticised Guillaume’s account by saying that Gerhard, who had made an inept impression on other delegates (see above, p. 307), could have raised objections in the mandate commission ([Hepner], ‘The Hague Congress’, p. 127).

Six delegates from France and six General Council members (Frankel, Johannard, Longuet, Ranvier, Serrailier, and Vaillant) had clandestine French mandates, and the mandate commission didn't allow anybody to look at their mandates. Just how trustworthy the clandestine French delegates were only became clear after the congress:

- Eugène Faillet, who used the pseudonym Dumon(t) at the congress and represented the Rouen Local Federation and a Paris section,²⁸ was able to legitimise his presence by showing a memorandum of the Rouen Federation that referred to him as 'our representative' who would defend their interests.²⁹ In reference to the internal organisation of the International, the memorandum included the demand 'that the principle of authority should be eliminated more and more from its midst'.³⁰ Faillet nevertheless voted for the General Council's oversight capacity.³¹ When this emerged, the corresponding secretary of the Rouen Local Federation issued a press release: 'We declare the vote cast in our name null and void.'³²
- Raimond Wilmart, who took part at the congress under the pseudonym Wilmot, was listed as a delegate of an unspecified French section – his mandate came from Bordeaux.³³ At the congress Wilmart voted for the insertion of a new article (based on resolution no. 9 of the London Conference) regarding the *constitution of the proletariat into a political party and conquest of political power* to the General Rules of the International.³⁴ When this emerged, Paul Dubiau – a member of the Bordeaux Local Federation's council – protested against Wilmart's vote and explained

that the mandate sent by the Bordeaux Federation to its delegate, citizen Wilmart, imposed on him the obligation not only to fight against the authoritarian tendencies of the General Council, but also to seek the repeal of the powers conferred upon this Council by the secret conference in London in 1871; this mandate issued in addition to the formal vow to return to the General

²⁸ For unknown reasons, Faillet/Dumon(t) only appears on the delegates lists (2) and (3) (see above, p. 534, n. 55). According to the minutes of the congress, 'Dumont' attended the congress from 4 September 1872 to the end and was authorised to vote as a delegate; see Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 52, 106. Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 52, 174, 177.

²⁹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 250, 256. The memorandum (*ibid.*, pp. 249–56) was written by Émile Aubry and signed 'H.R.' (Henry Ricard; Aubry's pseudonym); in an apparent bid to conceal their identity, the Rouen Local Federation was referred to as the 'normandy federation' in the text. For more about the Rouen Local Federation, see M. Boivin, *Le Mouvement ouvrier dans la région de Rouen, 1851–1876*, 2 vols. (Rouen: Publications de l'université de Rouen, 1989).

³⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 255.

³¹ See 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague from the 2nd to the 7th September, 1872', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 284. For more about these revisions to the Rules voted for by the majority at the congress, see below, pp. 334–37.

³² 'Protestation de la Fédération rouennaise contre les votes du Congrès de La Haye, relatifs à l'accroissement d'autorité donné au Conseil général et à la transformation de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs en société politique militante', *Internationale*, 27 October 1872, p. 1. The Jura Federation's *Bulletin* added: 'Rouen is not the only section to complain. Others, which prudence forbids us to name here, but of which most of our readers know, have also protested against the shameful abuse which has been made of their names' (*Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 10 November 1872, p. 4).

³³ 'I have just received a letter from Bordeaux, where they suggest that I should represent the Section at the Congress.' (Wilmart to Marx, 24 July 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 396).

³⁴ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 94. 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', pp. 282–83. See also below, pp. 339–42.

Rules approved at the Lausanne Congress, which the Bordeaux group considered a masterpiece and which it did not wish to see changed by the Congress of The Hague.³⁵

- Émile Dentravgues, who used the pseudonym Swarm at the congress and was a delegate for Toulouse and the Hérault region, was arrested on 23 December 1872 and put on trial two and a half months later along with 37 others. Dentravgues provided the police with evidence and testimony about numerous French sections. He also denounced many activists during the trial in Toulouse. In court, his co-defendants and their lawyers openly accused him of working for the police and called him an ‘informer’, ‘snitch’ and ‘*agent provocateur*’, as well as ‘the linchpin of the prosecution, the pivot on which it turns’ and ‘the drawer they open in which they find all the letters of those whom he has betrayed or duped, all the information they want, and we come to this painful conclusion: Dentravgues is the prosecutors’ confederate’.³⁶ After he was fined and sentenced to two years, he applied for clemency with the French president Mac Mahon by calling to mind his ‘sincere and accurate testimony [...] on the emergence of the International’: his sentence was reduced by six months. He offered his services to the Bordeaux police after he was freed.³⁷
- Lucien Van Heddeghem, who used the pseudonym Walter at the congress and sent a mandate from Paris to the General Council member Ranvier,³⁸ was arrested in December 1872 because of Dentravgues’ denunciations. He was suspected of being a police spy and during his trial in Paris in March 1873 made statements like ‘he has but one fixed idea: to destroy the International’.³⁹

The French delegates all voted together with the *majority*; Marx later admitted that ‘The few Frenchmen (I mean of those who still stuck to us in The Hague) later turned out for the most part to be rascals’.⁴⁰ And Engels was especially peeved ‘that Walter (Heddeghem) comes out as a downright spy. He is said to have been a Bonapartist mouchard [informer]. At Toulouse, Swarm (Dentravgues) has not behaved much better [...]’.⁴¹ Regardless of this, Engels emphasised

³⁵ Paul Dubiau to the editors of the *Liberté*, no date, in *Liberté*, 27 April 1873, p. 4. Regarding the Lausanne Congress and its resolutions: the first congress of the International in Geneva (1866) already adopted the definitive wording of the Rules. At the following congress in Lausanne (2–8 September 1867) additional ‘regulatory provisions’ were adopted; however, the Rules were not changed in order to save printing costs: Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 1, pp. 132, 189. In the minutes of a meeting of several sections in Bordeaux in August 1872 convened in order to formulate instructions for their delegate to the congress, the ‘founding pact of 1866’ was mentioned in connection with a call for unity within the International: ‘The delegate must demonstrate the danger that the schism introduces into the Association and remind the congress that the attitude of the current General Council and its authoritarian encroachments have up to a certain point lent justification to the dissident federations.’ The delegate was also instructed to denounce Bakunin, who was falsely accused of trying to form a new organisation which ‘is less concerned with the workers and more with politics’. (C. Pennetier [ed.], *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier français. Le Maitron*, CD-ROM [Paris: Les Éditions de l’Atelier, 1997], article ‘Wilmart Raymond, dit Wilmot’.)

³⁶ *Procès de l’Internationale*, pp. 29, 48, 63.

³⁷ Pennetier (ed.), *Dictionnaire biographique*, article ‘Dentravgues Émile, Jean, Philippe’.

³⁸ ‘On the third day of this month, I sent the mandate of the Ferré Section to citizen Ranvier. I think that they will have arrived safe and sound, and I will be obliged to get confirmation of receipt as promptly as possible.’ (Van Heddeghem to Serrailier, 6 August 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 5631).

³⁹ *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 5 March 1873, p. 219.

⁴⁰ Marx to Sorge, 4 August 1874, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 45, p. 29.

⁴¹ Engels to the General Council in New York, 15 April 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 162.

that both delegates had mandates ‘and thus *had* to be admitted to the Congress, so long as no charge was brought against them, which did not occur to any member of the minority’.⁴² Engels did not explain how the *minority* was to object to delegates who used pseudonyms, represented unknown sections and only had to reveal themselves to the mandate commission.

The lack of transparency within the mandate commission also proved problematic in other matters: the German delegate Gustav Ludwig (see above) arrived late claiming to have a mandate from Mainz.⁴³ The mandate commission then allowed Ludwig to take part in the congress although they had already accepted Marx as the delegate for Mainz.⁴⁴ According to the Administrative Regulations of the International, a section could only send two delegates if each represented 500 members.⁴⁵ Bearing the small number of members of the International in Germany in mind, this was highly unlikely. Another absurd act on the part of the mandate commission related to Rittinghausen, who was elected the delegate for Cologne⁴⁶ but never travelled to The Hague – ‘because he was scared’, according to the Brunswick delegate Bernhard Becker.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the mandate commission was given a mandate for Rittinghausen from Munich, *which they validated*⁴⁸ even though Rittinghausen never arrived in The Hague. How this mandate got to The Hague remains a mystery.

All of these inconsistencies were shrouded in the secrecy which enveloped the mandate commission. ‘The mandates were verified *en famille*’, the *Mémoire* of the Jura Federation charged, calling the commission ‘the (Marxist) bureau of the Congress’.⁴⁹ In the report that they tabled on the evening of 2 September, the commission predictably approved all of the questionable French or German mandates and focused instead on various mandates belonging to the *minority*.⁵⁰ The commission’s reporting secretary, Ranvier, even cynically called for a ‘vote of confidence in the mandate commission’.⁵¹

⁴² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 439–40.

⁴³ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 113. See also his message to the congress president on 7 September 1872 (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 193).

⁴⁴ ‘Report of the Mandate Commission’, p. 296.

⁴⁵ ‘Every branch, or group, consisting of more than 500 members may send a delegate for every additional full 500 members’ (*Rules of the International*, p. 7).

⁴⁶ See above, p. 295.

⁴⁷ B. Becker: ‘Von der Internationale’, *Braunschweiger Volksfreund*, 7 September 1872, p. 1. The report on the congress in the *Liberté* also noted that Rittinghausen, ‘although identified as a delegate from a Munich section, has not appeared in The Hague’ (*Liberté*, 15 September 1872, p. 2).

⁴⁸ ‘Report of the Mandate Commission’, p. 299. Because of this, Rittinghausen’s name was also included in the delegates lists (2) and (3). In the minutes of the congress, he is either not mentioned at all (Sorge, ‘Minutes’) or only listed as absent (Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, pp. 52, 69, 72).

⁴⁹ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, pp. 272, 275.

⁵⁰ According to their report (‘Report of the Mandate Commission’, pp. 299–300) the mandate commission called the mandates of various delegates into question with the following result: Fluse and Dave’s mandates were only accepted after ‘explanations given by various Belgian delegates’. Sauva had mandates from three sections in the United States of which the commission only accepted two; the congress approved the second and third mandate on 3 September 1872. Of Alerini’s two mandates, the mandate commission asked the corresponding secretary for France in the General Council for his opinion regarding the mandate from Marseilles; the secretary was against it and Alerini withdrew the mandate on 3 September. The mandate belonging to William West – the delegate for New York’s section no. 12, which refused to accept the General Council’s decision regarding the split of the United States sections (see above, p. 180) – was not approved or supported by any delegates and thus annulled by the congress on 4 September. See Sorge, ‘Minutes’, pp. 115, 121, 124–26, 138. Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, pp. 33, 37–39, 51–52. For more about the objections to mandates belonging to Joukovsky and the Spanish delegates, see below, p. 311–13.

⁵¹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 115. *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 204 (minutes by Joukovsky).

After the mandates concerning which the commission had expressed doubt were announced, the mandates to which they did not object were read out so the delegates had a chance to challenge them. The Belgian delegate Brismée criticised the General Council's six mandates: 'The General Council could make do with one delegate and [should] "not come here *en masse* to vote for their own rights"; they are "judge and plaintiff at the same time"'.⁵² In response, Marx called attention to the General Council members with mandates from sections and argued that the General Rules did not expressly forbid this practice – a weak argument, especially because Marx carefully failed to mention the delegates who represented the General Council and no section (Dupont and Sexton). Guillaume's call that the General Council mandates be rejected was drowned out by the *majority* who voted for their approval 'amidst an explosion of applause'.⁵³

Alerini protested in the name of the Spanish Federal Council against Lafargue's mandate from the New Madrid Federation because the General Council had violated the Rules in admitting them 'and entered into correspondence with them without beforehand consulting the Regional [Federal] Council'.⁵⁴ Morago emphasised, 'The Spanish Federation is the most militant of all the Federations, and all the strife and discord in Spain appeared only after the arrival and interference of this one individual [Lafargue]. They [i.e. the Spanish members of the International] stand on the positions of the Rules, which the General Council has no right to violate'.⁵⁵ Engels responded by repeating his conspiracy theory:

The General Council, indeed, transgressed against the Rules, but consciously and with the intention of thus saving the International Working Men's Association in Spain. The Alliance is working in Spain with the money of the I.W.A. and the Spanish Federal Council has among its 8 members 5 'brothers of the Alliance'. The General Council was quite conscious of what it was doing but had to do it.⁵⁶

'That clique [the Alianza] must be driven out of the International',⁵⁷ Engels raved, according to other minutes. As the rules of order passed by the *majority* only provided for two speakers for and two against a contentious mandate, the debate was ended at this point and a motion to allow the Spanish delegates to respond to Engels' attacks was rejected. Lafargue's mandate was instead put to a vote and approved by the *majority*.⁵⁸ As the Alliance had already been mentioned in the debate, Marx went on the offensive at the end of the meeting: 'Marx moves the expulsion of the Alliance from the I.W.A. and demands the appointment of a commission to investigate the documents and the whole matter'.⁵⁹

But first the debate about the mandates continued. Joukovsky's mandate as delegate for the Geneva Communards' section of propaganda was on the agenda at the afternoon meeting of 3 September 1872. The mandate commission argued that the section was not recognised by the London General Council or the Committee of the Romance Federation in Geneva. In reality,

⁵² Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 710 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁵³ P. Fluse, 'Account of the work and resolutions of the Hague Congress', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 262. See also *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 204 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁵⁴ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 33. See above, pp. 248–49.

⁵⁵ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 122.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 122–23. 'All commentary is useless for such an authoritarian declaration', the Spanish delegates explained in their report on the congress; see 'Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles', p. 9. See also below, p. 543, n. 81.

⁵⁷ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 711 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁵⁸ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 123. Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 36.

⁵⁹ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 123.

the section of propaganda had sent three membership applications to the General Council – the London Conference resolutions revealed that the General Council did not reply to the letters because they were harbouring resentments.⁶⁰ Joukovsky thus appealed to the congress ‘that the General Council motivate its rejection’.⁶¹ Without being prompted the Geneva delegate Duval, a member of the Committee of the Romance Federation, attacked the section of propaganda and accused them of being the successors of the Geneva section of the Alliance. Duval himself had been a founding member of the International Alliance, its Geneva committee and even its Provisional Central Office (*Bureau central provisoire*), and had belonged to the Geneva section of the Alliance until 1870.⁶² The section of propaganda, Duval railed, ‘has not been recognised by the Federal Council and the General Council and cannot be recognised by the Congress because it does not belong to the international movement’.⁶³ This resulted in the following exchange:

Brismée does not find these reasons sufficient. – If this group has principles opposed to ours, it can be refused admission; but he first asks the General Council to supply explanations.

Marx replies that the Alliance had been recognised in Geneva, because it was not known to be a secret society – this will be dealt with later. At the time of the [London] Conference it became known; the Alliance declared itself dissolved. The Conference took note of this; but the Revolutionary Society [the Communards] was the successor of the Alliance.⁶⁴

‘I am not speaking against secret societies as such – for I myself have belonged to such societies – but against secret societies which are hostile and harmful to the I.W.A.’, *Marx* clarified.⁶⁵

Joukovsky explained why the section of propaganda did not apply for membership to the Committee of the Romance Federation:

As they, however, did not want to make propaganda in the Canton of Geneva but in France, they formed this section, which definitely did not have anything in common with the Alliance which almost none of the members belonged to before. He himself had indeed been a member, but only of the section of the I.W.A., without knowing about the secret society. The members of his section always refuse to get involved in the Alliance’s business and now request admission as a section of the IWA.⁶⁶

Ranvier, the reporting secretary of the mandate commission, then cleverly suggested that the vote on Joukovsky’s mandate ‘be deferred until *Marx*’s motion against the Alliance is dealt with’.⁶⁷ This suggestion was accepted by the *majority*, which effectively neutralised Joukovsky as the congress never got back to the question of his mandate.

Ranvier then tried to use the same trick on the four Spanish delegates. Of all the delegates at the Congress of The Hague, the Spaniards probably had the most genuine mandates as Morago and Marselau were elected delegates through a national and Farga Pellicer and Alerini through a regional election. More members voted in the Spanish delegate elections than all of the other sections represented at the congress had together. Regardless of this, Ranvier complained that the Spaniards had not paid their dues and moved

⁶⁰ See above, pp. 103–4.

⁶¹ *Sorge*, ‘Minutes’, p. 126.

⁶² See *Andréas/Molnár* (eds.), ‘L’Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux’, pp. 147, 193, 206 and Annexe C (List of members), p. 248.

⁶³ *Le Moussu*, ‘Minutes’, p. 39. See also *Nettlau*, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. +273 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁶⁴ *Le Moussu*, ‘Minutes’, p. 39.

⁶⁵ *Sorge*, ‘Protokoll’, p. 30. See also *Le Moussu*, ‘Minutes’, p. 39.

⁶⁶ *Sorge*, ‘Protokoll’, pp. 31–32.

⁶⁷ *Sorge*, ‘Minutes’, p. 127.

that the decision about it [the accreditation of the Spanish delegates] be postponed until the decision regarding the Alliance.

Farga Pellicer said that their sections were a bit in arrears because some of them were very poor, which we should all understand. They thus request a deferral of the dues for last three months because they themselves had not yet received them. He was surprised at Ranvier's motion to postpone the decision until the Alliance question is resolved as there had only been a complaint about the non-payment [of dues]. The Spanish sections were very involved in the fight against capital, which they felt they may soon destroy. – Engels finds it very odd that the Spaniards keep the money in their pockets instead of handing it over with their mandates as has always occurred and should occur at the conferences and congresses. The Spanish delegates wonder why the Alliance is brought up, and they had today themselves admitted their membership. (Marselau and the others say that they are no longer in it but had belonged to it.) Engels believes that they are still in it, only under another name. When they call to mind the flourishing of the IWA in Spain, one should remember that the former Federal Council (those expelled in Madrid) had brought about this growth.⁶⁸

Marselau replies that the facts advanced are not exact. – The money was in Spanish currency and had to be changed. Those who held it never had the intention of taking it back and they reject Engels' suspicions. – The Spanish delegates are surprised at the new objection raised against their mandate. – They feel honoured to belong to the Alliance because it is by it and not by the General Council that the International was founded in Spain.⁶⁹ The members of the Alliance are reliable Party members and genuine soldiers of the revolution. He will not complain if he is thrown out, he knows that this question has been decided in advance. 'I speak the truth and do not fear death for it. Our dissensions [in Spain] date only to the time of the arrival of one single individual [Lafargue]. We members of the Alliance have done and suffered more for the cause than all the members of the General Council and those who want to excommunicate us. Tell us frankly, that we are to be thrown out and we shall go and leave you the money which belongs to you. [...] *Ranvier* points out that the question of the Alliance appears everywhere and therefore must first be settled before the Spaniards' case can be pronounced upon. He said in confidence yesterday to the Spaniards that they should pay in order at least to remove that obstacle. He insists on the question of the Alliance being dealt with.⁷⁰

Coenen regrets that the question of the Alliance has been raised. – If the delegates pay their subscriptions they must be admitted immediately, in the event of the contrary his imperative mandate would command him to leave the Congress. *Guillaume* makes a similar statement.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Sorge, 'Protokoll', pp. 32–33. There is no edited final version of the minutes of the Congress of The Hague, but two unedited versions made independently of each other (by Sorge and Le Moussu) and partial minutes exist. The following accounts of the discussions at the congress meetings are based on all of the available minutes. When necessary, extracts of these minutes are displayed one after another in the block quotations. The origins of each extract can be deduced through the references.

⁶⁹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 41. See also Joukovsky's partial minutes: 'in response to Engels, Marselau explained that the Alliance, which Engels allows himself to treat like a clique, established the International in Spain' (Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 680).

⁷⁰ Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 128–29.

⁷¹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 42.

Ranvier protests against the threat made by *Splingard*, *Guillaume* and others to leave the hall, which only proves that it is *they* and not we who have pronounced *in advance* on the question under discussion; he wishes all the police agents in the world would thus take their departure.⁷²

Morago believes there is a wish to throw them out.⁷³ It was the Alliance that founded, raised and spread the I.W.A. [in Spain], all our electors knew that we belonged to the Alliance (for it was reported to the police).⁷⁴ You have only to investigate whether our mandates are in order, nothing else. We are representatives of the Spanish Federation and the intention here is to expel us from the I.W.A. at any cost; but your rights extend only to checking the stamp, the payment of subscriptions, etc.

Lafargue defends himself against the assertion that he is in touch with the Spanish police because he attacked the Alliance; the Alliance has nothing to fear from denunciation to the police since its rules say that it shall not engage in *any politics* [*crossed out*: its purpose is only the destruction of the International Working Men's Association] and the police wants nothing better.

Marselau says that *Lafargue* founded *La Emancipación* solely for the purpose of making his denunciations and that he has only now thought up the sophisms just heard [...].

Splingard thought we had to deal only with the mandates, not with the Alliance, but in any case we owe the Alliance gratitude for its energetic propaganda in Spain.

Interruptions on all sides because the discussion is lasting too long.

Ranvier objects to the vote being taken before the Spaniards have paid their subscriptions and the question of the Alliance has been settled.⁷⁵

Farga Pellicer finally rises and hands to the Chairman the treasury accounts and the subscriptions from the Spanish Federation except for the last quarter.

Ranvier is now for the admission of the Spaniards.

The voting shows all in favour of the Spaniards' admission with one abstention.⁷⁶

The voting procedure and the commission to investigate the Alliance

It has been argued that the majority at the Congress of The Hague was a sham because the countries where the International really functioned (to varying degrees) and that had a lively organisation – i.e. Belgium, Holland, Spain, Italy, England, the United States, and Switzerland – were in the minority due to the presence of 'a certain number of more or less serious delegates'.⁷⁷

⁷² Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 129.

⁷³ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 42.

⁷⁴ A reference to the first circular of the New Madrid Federation, see above, pp. 250–51.

⁷⁵ Different in Le Moussu's minutes: '*Ranvier* moves that the question of the Alliance be dealt with after the validation [of the Spanish mandate]; but he objects to validation as long as the Spaniards have not paid their subscriptions to the General Council.' (Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 43).

⁷⁶ Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 129–30. See also the report on the congress of the Spanish delegates ('Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles', pp. 7–8). The delegate *Johannard* reported to London: 'Spanish mandates declared valid after a terrible discussion. The Spanish delegates are truly intelligent and skilful' (*Johannard* to *Jung*, 4 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 511). *Vaillant* explained his abstention by saying, the Spanish delegates 'have not declared their recognition of Article [no.] IX of the London Conference Resolutions and their intention to abide by it'. (Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 130).

⁷⁷ See above, pp. 304–5. For example, *Nettlau* summarised, 'If ever the sentiments of a congress had been falsified by flooding it with phony delegates, then at the Congress of The Hague.' (*Nettlau*, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 142).

However, the federations critical of the General Council were also an obstacle to themselves: for example, the *majority* at the congress benefited from the Italian Federation's boycott.⁷⁸ And a provision in the Spanish delegates' imperative mandate also weakened the *minority*: as described above, it stipulated that their delegates had to abstain unless the voting procedure was changed – i.e. voting according to the number of members represented and not the number of delegates.⁷⁹ This was already discussed at the first meeting:

The *Spaniards* explain that according to their imperative mandate they must first move that the *voting procedures* be changed: *according to the number represented*, not representatives.

Brismée suggested voting *according to federations*.⁸⁰

Marx (supported by all the Blanquists and all the Germans) says that such a manner of voting is contrary to the Rules of the Association; every section, he says, has the right to be represented, and its delegate has the right to vote.⁸¹

Morago defended the idea of voting according to the number of members represented:

It is the only correct, the only fair manner of voting, he says. Five comrades representing 30 members could always in spite of everything get the better of the one who represents 5,000 working people organised in a union and paying their subscription. The Spanish region demands that the Congress discuss this question before any other, for its delegates have an imperative mandate to abstain as long as the old manner of voting is maintained by the Congress.⁸²

At the fifth and sixth congress meetings, the Spanish delegates again put forward this motion.⁸³ Morago explained, 'the Spanish region thinks that the present manner of voting is not democratic; it is not fair that the mandate of a large number should not have more weight than that of a small one'.⁸⁴ Engels crowed that it is 'not our fault that the Spanish delegates found themselves in such a sad situation (where they could not vote)', and the *majority* rejected the Spanish motion.⁸⁵

Guillaume complained about this in his report on the congress: 'This so legitimate request was rejected by the majority, who saw themselves lost if the vote was not by individuals.'⁸⁶ The Spanish delegates later explained:

The majority could not accept the change [voting according to the number of members represented or according to federations] proposed by the Spanish or the Belgians because both of

⁷⁸ See above, p. 236.

⁷⁹ See above, pp. 276–77.

⁸⁰ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 710 (minutes by Joukovsky). The Belgian delegates also tabled this motion in writing at the sixth meeting of the congress (see text in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 181).

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 202 (minutes by Joukovsky). Marx's line of reasoning was often affected by practical considerations. He used the same argument as the Spaniards, for example, more than two years earlier with regards to the split in the Romance Federation: with regard to the Congress of La Chaux-de-Fonds, Marx gave more weight to the votes of the Genevan sections' delegates who were in the minority but claimed to represent more members than the votes of the majority of delegates (see above, pp. 60–63). Marx and Engels were just as arbitrary when it came to 'independent' sections. According to art. 5 of the Basel administrative resolutions, the relevant regional federal councils or committees had to be consulted before they could be granted membership (see above, p. 147). This article was only ever put to practice against the Geneva Communards who were critics of the General Council. Marx and Engels consciously skirted the authority of the Belgian and Spanish Federal Councils when they granted membership to the Communard section in Brussels, which was friendly to the General Council, and to the New Madrid Federation; see above, pp. 103–4, 199–200, 248–49, 310.

⁸² *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 203 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁸³ See text *ibid.*, pp. 178, 180.

⁸⁴ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', pp. 56–57.

⁸⁵ Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 56. See also Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 57.

⁸⁶ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 225.

these reforms would present a danger to the triumph of their plans. This *majority of delegates* was aware that they did not represent the majority of the members of our Association. This moves us to insist upon the necessity to replace the voting method with another which ensures that the decisions of the congresses are the genuine expression of the majority will of the represented members of the International. Continuing the system adopted until today, on the other hand, only means that those who are closest to the location of the congress or have more means of being represented can therefore send the most delegates, attaining by this way a majority, which believes itself entitled to impose its resolutions despite the fact that it is a fictitious majority, as has happened in The Hague.⁸⁷

All the same, a change to the voting procedures would have meant changing the Administrative Regulations,⁸⁸ which sensibly would only have applied for the next congress. Thus, the Spanish mandate's call for an immediate change to the voting procedure was unfounded and the four Spanish delegates' lengthy battle to have their mandates recognised was for nought as – in accordance with their mandates – they could not vote. Between the regimented *majority* who mostly voted en bloc and the powerless Spaniards, the congress increasingly took on a bizarre aspect; the Amsterdam delegate van der Hout complained about 'the two opposite tendencies that are manifested' by the 'majority which votes for on all questions. He is surprised above all that [the Spanish] citizens have come here tied by an imperative mandate which imposes abstention on them'.⁸⁹

The Spanish delegates also did not take part in the vote to set up a commission to investigate the Alliance – Marx had already called for such a commission on the second day of the congress, but the decision had been postponed until the remaining contentious mandates were dealt with.⁹⁰ Immediately after the question of the mandates was settled – two and a half days had already passed and the congress had not yet started with its agenda – on 4 September 1872, Engels tabled the following motion:

Considering the loss of time caused by the checking of the mandates and the personal questions hindering all useful discussion,

Considering the importance of the order of the day,

We demand that the question of the Alliance be submitted to a commission nominated by the Congress and discussed in a closed sitting and that the order of the day be immediately proceeded with.

Ranvier, Alfred Herman, A. Sauva, J. Van der Hout, Roch Splingard, D. Brismée, Dupont, H. Gerhard, P. de Fluse, Ph. Coenen, J. Johannard, Victor Dave

The opponents of the motion also stated their position on the same sheet of paper:

I sign, protesting against investigation of a secret society by the congress. *J. Guillaume.*

*Farga Pellicer, Marselau, T. Gonzalez Morago, N. Eberhard, H. Van den Abeele, J. George Eccarius, Dumont [pseudonym of Faillet], Th. Mottershead, Cuno.*⁹¹

⁸⁷ 'Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles', p. 14.

⁸⁸ 'Each delegate has but one vote in the Congress' (*Rules of the International*, p. 7).

⁸⁹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 73. On Friday, 6 September 1872, Marselau complained that other delegates laughed at the Spaniards' persistent abstentions: 'this is not fraternal.' (*ibid.*, p. 80). Ranvier explained that he 'has no objection to these delegates themselves, but only to their mandate, which places them in this peculiar situation. Alerini explains that they accepted the mandate of their own free will and that they entirely approve of it.' (Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 158).

⁹⁰ See above, p. 310.

⁹¹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 178–79.

Quite unexpectedly a number of delegates supported or opposed the motion with their signatures: strong exponents of the *minority* like Brismée and Dave supported Engels' proposal, while Cuno – a staunch supporter of the *majority* and trusty follower of Marx and Engels – signed Guillaume's protest. Obviously many delegates had not yet been clued in about the context and aim of the proposal, which was initiated by Marx and Engels but not signed by these for tactical reasons.

The debate over the motion only began the next day (5 September 1872), the fourth day of the congress. Marx explained rather insipidly 'that it is a matter of investigating not individuals but the Alliance and that all friends of truth will be impartial in this investigation'.⁹² The following candidates for the commission received the most votes: Cuno (33 votes and thus commission president); Splingard (31 votes), who had the support of the *minority*; Walter (29 votes), the suspected police agent Van Heddeghem; Lucain (24 votes), pseudonym of Potel; and Vichard (20 votes).⁹³ Thus, the clandestine and mysterious Walter and Lucain were to judge the mysterious and clandestine Alliance.

Directly following the election of the commission members, Alerini and Guillaume proposed the formation of a

commission of five members to judge certain acts of the General Council and the underground intrigues of some of its members.

Sorge asks whether Eccarius is among the members of the Council alluded to; in that case he will have a lot to say.

Marx moves that the accusers themselves should appoint their commission.

Alerini and Guillaume propose that the commission which is to investigate the Alliance should also investigate the General Council.

Cuno says let those who are childish enough to accuse the General Council appoint their own commission.

The commission entrusted to investigate the Alliance will check the accusations of Alerini and Guillaume.⁹⁴

Surprisingly, a large number of the delegates also seemed uninformed about this question: this motion was also passed in a vote with 14 in favour and 4 against⁹⁵ – a large number of delegates abstained.

The commission to investigate the Alliance thus met that same evening and was even given permission to miss the next day's congress meetings in order to carry out their work.⁹⁶ The commission first heard Engels, who presented his 'Report on the Alliance'.⁹⁷ As can be seen in the minutes, Engels was unable to impress the commission (most of which was on his side) with his paltry evidence:

⁹² Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 60. Guillaume contradicted him by saying that 'names have [already] been given' (*ibid.*).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 60–61 ('underhand intrigues' replaced with 'underground intrigues' [*menées souterraines*] according to the original wording in B. Le Moussu, 'Procès-verbaux', in *Le Congrès de La Haye de la Première Internationale, 2–7 septembre 1872. Procès-verbaux et documents* [Moscow: Editions du Progrès, 1972], p. 42). The formulation 'underground intrigues' is obviously meant as a reference to the documents that came to light at the high treason trial in Leipzig; see above, p. 208.

⁹⁵ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 145.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 150

⁹⁷ See above, pp. 281–82.

Reading of the rules of the Alliance which was dissolved [as an international organisation] in 1869; in the main these rules coincide with those of the Alliance [Alianza in Spain] dissolved in 1872 (*La Federacion* No. 155) but they contain an article saying: No means not leading *directly* to the triumph of the working-class cause may be used in our struggle. [...] It is noted that there are differences between the rules of the Alliance in Spain (secret) and those in Switzerland, for instance on atheism and on the right of inheritance.⁹⁸

The letter by Bakunin to Mora⁹⁹ was said to note

the presence of members of the Alliance in Italy, Spain and Switzerland. In Italy Cafiero, the editors of the *Campana*, the *Gazzettino Rosa*, and *Martello*, in Switzerland *Guillaume*, Neuchâtel, 5, rue de la Place d'Armes, *Adhémar Schwitzguébel*, engraver. *Engels* observes that hence in any case either Guillaume's statement that he is not a member of the Alliance is a lie or Bakunin's letter is not true.¹⁰⁰

There seems to have been some confusion during the hearing: for example, Cafiero was not mentioned in Bakunin's letter to Mora and the editors of the Italian newspapers were not necessarily Alliance members just because Bakunin mentioned their papers – otherwise the commission president Cuno himself would have to be considered an Alliance member since he used to work for the Milanese newspaper the *Martello*. About four and a half months earlier, Cuno wrote Engels a letter about his Alliance conspiracy theories. Cuno wrote that the letters from Locarno and Barcelona that he had read in Milan did not speak of 'an actual organisation' and that Engels was 'taking a dark view on things' with his theories.¹⁰¹ In The Hague, Cuno asked 'what relation exists between the Spaniards and the Italians', and Engels responded 'that he does not know for certain, but that he was told by somebody whom he cannot name that this had been said'.¹⁰²

As he was unable to make an impression with his evidence, Engels tabled what was meant to be conclusive evidence at the end of the commission's first meeting: Bakunin's organisational plan from autumn 1868 that Utin had sent.¹⁰³ Engels also deluded himself as to the worth of this document.

The countless secret societies planned by Bakunin continue to cause all sorts of speculation to this day. Despite the existence of numerous drafts of programmes and statutes, it is difficult to find cogent evidence regarding the inner workings or even the existence of such groups.¹⁰⁴ Bakunin appears to have had a weakness for preparing detailed organisational plans for large-scale secret societies even though his network of allies was for the most part quite small. At the very least the theoretical revolutionary reflections Bakunin developed while drafting *programmes* played a significant role in the development of his political ideas.¹⁰⁵ However, the se-

⁹⁸ T. Cuno, 'Commission to investigate the Alliance', in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 337–38.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 193. For more about how Engels got his hands on this letter, see above, p. 280.

¹⁰⁰ Cuno, 'Commission', p. 339.

¹⁰¹ See above, p. 187.

¹⁰² Cuno, 'Commission', p. 338.

¹⁰³ See above, p. 285.

¹⁰⁴ The historian Edward Hallett Carr described the problem as follows: Bakunin's secret societies 'had no list of members, no agreed rules or program (since Bakunin's numerous drafts were all made on his own responsibility), no officers, no subscriptions, and no regular meetings. A political association having none of these attributes was a myth' (E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* [London: Macmillan and Co., 1937], p. 422). For more about the first phase of Bakunin's secret societies around the mid 1860s, see above, pp. 497–98, n. 26.

¹⁰⁵ Arthur Lehning also reasoned that 'These societies express rather the evolution of his ideas than the functioning of an organisation' (A. Lehning, 'Bakunin's Conceptions of Revolutionary Organisations and Their Role: A Study

cret revolutionary societies (with strict vertical organisational structures that had various ranks of membership) that he invented in his *drafts of statutes* only ever existed on paper. ‘Essentially, it was a group of like-minded people who worked on the same cause’, Arman Ross later wrote concerning their close cooperation; there were ‘no “oaths on daggers”, no statutes, no admission ceremonies or other things belonging to secret societies’.¹⁰⁶ The groups only ever consisted of Bakunin’s friends – Elisée Reclus, James Guillaume, Arman Ross, etc. – who relied on their personal rapport and not on a secret hierarchy to maintain their internal cohesion. As soon as the former was gone, Bakunin’s groups quickly fell apart: for example, the secret society¹⁰⁷ that was to exist alongside the newly established International Alliance (autumn 1868) fell apart after a few months because of personal conflicts. Various drafts of programmes and rules written around this time have survived, but none of them went beyond the planning stage. One of these manuscripts was the alleged ‘*secret rules of the secret Alliance*’ that Utin sent.¹⁰⁸

There is a lot of evidence which shows that these texts were drafts: Johann Philipp Becker, whose estate includes plans for organisations similar to the one Utin sent, described these in explanatory notes merely as *projects* (‘M. Bakunin’s organisational project’ and ‘Project by Bakunin’);¹⁰⁹ Bakunin’s friend Charles Perron called them ‘those far-fetched secret committees of the Alliance’;¹¹⁰ Guillaume later described Bakunin’s drafts in a letter to the Bakunin expert Max Nettlau as a ‘sketch for an organisation which only existed theoretically in Bakunin’s mind, in the state of a pleasant daydream, a chimera formed in the clouds of his cigarette smoke’.¹¹¹ In view of surviving evidence, such plans for organisation ‘did not prove to be practically applicable’.¹¹² Bakunin himself described corresponding texts merely as a ‘first draft’ – he wrote Albert Richard in December 1868: ‘So carefully reread our statutes, of which *Emilie* has sent you the first draft’.¹¹³ A rift already occurred within the group at the end of January 1869, and the fact that the definitive statutes *had not yet been compiled* was even one of the main reasons behind the conflict.¹¹⁴

Guillaume maintained that the network which remained active yet informal after the dissolution in early 1869 did not have a name or statutes: ‘it had to be called the secret organisation,

of His ‘Secret Societies’’, in C. Abramsky and B. J. Williams [eds.], *Essays in honour of E. H. Carr* [London, Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1974], p. 57).

¹⁰⁶ M. P. Sazhin (A. Ross), ‘Pervoe znakomstvo s M. A. Bakuninyim’, *Katorga i ssylka*, no. 26, 1926, pp. 14, 19.

¹⁰⁷ See above, pp. 2–3.

¹⁰⁸ See above, p. 285.

¹⁰⁹ Rjasanoff [Ryazanov], ‘Bakuniana’, p. 195. ‘Programme et règlement de l’Alliance internationale de la Démocratie Socialiste. Règlement’, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹¹⁰ A. François, ‘Michel Bakounine et la Philosophie de l’Anarchie’, *Revue de l’Université de Bruxelles*, 5 (1899–1900), p. 687.

¹¹¹ Nettlau, ‘Bakunin und die Internationale in Spanien’, p. 289. According to Max Nettlau, Bakunin was ‘relentless in formulating his ideas and writing statutes into thin air, so to say, i.e. before any people or groups were around to fill in the wide framework’ (Nettlau, ‘Michael Bakunin’, vol. 3, p. 6).

¹¹² Z. Ralli, ‘Iz moikh vospominanii o M. A. Bakunine’, *O minuvshem*, 1909, p. 319. Ralli worked closely with Bakunin between 1872 and 1873.

¹¹³ Bakunin to Albert Richard, 4 December 1868, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹¹⁴ Bakunin to the members of the International Brotherhood, 26 January 1869, *ibid.* Reply: Malon, Viktor Bartenev, Walerian Mroczkowski, Joukovsky, Perron, and Anton Trusov to Bakunin, [end of January 1869], in Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 273–76. The formal statement of dissolution was released in March 1869: ‘Lettre ouverte du Bureau Central de la Fraternité’, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

secret agreement [*entente secrète*], or international friendship [*intimité internationale*]; in speaking of one of our own, we said: this is one of our intimates, or he is a brother, etc.’¹¹⁵

there was no question of an association in the traditional mold of the old secret societies, in which one had to obey orders from above: the organisation was nothing more than the free connection between men who united with one another for collective action, informally, without solemnity, without mysterious rites, simply because they trust one another and because the agreement seemed to them preferable to acting alone.¹¹⁶

Arthur Lehning pointed out that one could just as well describe the coordinated approach of Marx, Engels, and their supporters in different countries as a ‘Marxist Alliance’, as it was also based on a kind of network.¹¹⁷ While Marx kept his supporters on a tight leash and insisted that his instructions ‘should be followed to the letter’,¹¹⁸ the decision-making process in Bakunin’s network seems to have been open. A series of controversial questions which were not resolved as Bakunin would have wished – dissolution of the Geneva section of the Alliance,¹¹⁹ Guillaume not attending the London Conference,¹²⁰ concessions to the moderate national federations,¹²¹ the Italian sections’ indifference toward official membership in the International,¹²² etc. – show that Bakunin did not take on a leadership role as his critics asserted. Even though Engels always insisted that the Alianza was controlled from Switzerland, the difference between the statutes of the Alianza and Bakunin’s plan for an organisation from autumn 1868 proves otherwise, which again shows the autonomy of Bakunin’s political allies abroad. But Marx simply brushed this fact aside: ‘The secret rules [of the Alianza] which have been printed [in the *Federación*] are not the true rules.’¹²³

This situation, which remains confusing to this day, was apparently too difficult for the commission members to understand. In an eerily jovial atmosphere, they accepted that the plan for an organisation tabled by Engels was in fact the ‘*secret rules* of the *secret Alliance*’:

The whole affair seems to be so exalted and eccentric that the whole Commission is constantly rolling with mirth. This kind of mysticism is generally considered as insanity. The greatest absolutism is manifested in the whole organisation. The most reckless, most untimely nonsense is apparent in the whole business. The idea of the whole business is domination over the International. – *Russian Social-Democracy*. It is proposed to declare the writings of the organisation

¹¹⁵ Quoted according to M. Vuilleumier, ‘Les archives de James Guillaume’, *Le Mouvement social*, no. 48, July–September 1964, p. 104. Described as a letter from Guillaume to Fritz Brupbacher dated 21 June 1913. However, the original manuscript of this letter (IISG, Brupbacher Papers, no. 242) does not include the quoted passage.

¹¹⁶ Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 1, p. 130. For example, Guillaume said that clandestine cooperation in Jura worked ‘in an entirely friendly fashion, without any rules’ (*ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 270).

¹¹⁷ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. xix. Furthermore Jaap Kloosterman has drawn attention to the re-evaluation of the phenomenon of secret societies: ‘Now that the secret societies seem again to be within reach of a more or less normal status, perhaps the time has come to reconsider their role. There are obviously good reasons to place them in the context of the history of voluntary associations, as has already been done with Freemasonry.’ (J. Kloosterman, ‘Hidden Centres: The Rise and Fall of the Secret Societies’, paper presented at the international conference *Zentren und Peripherien der europäischen Wissensordnung vom 15. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, German Historical Institute, Moscow, 24–26 September 2009, p. 20. Available online at <http://www.iisg.nl/collections/secret-societies/secrsoc-moscow.pdf> [checked 14 January 2014].)

¹¹⁸ See above, p. 118.

¹¹⁹ See above, pp. 76–78.

¹²⁰ See above, p. 78.

¹²¹ See above, p. 290, and below, p. 354.

¹²² See above, p. 235.

¹²³ Cuno, ‘Commission’, p. 343.

of which Bakunin is recognised as the author, to be either insane or two centuries behind the times.¹²⁴

Cuno later reported having an informal talk with Guillaume ‘in the billiard room of the Hague Section premises’. He asked Guillaume bluntly:

‘What must one think of Bakunin, whom you consider so great a man, when one sees Rules for a secret society written by him with his own hand and full of madness and stupidity?’ Guillaume replied: ‘We know quite well that it is one of Bakunin’s weak points to be constantly making out programmes and rules, we have repeatedly reproached him for it but he just goes on doing so; that is why it is quite possible that rules of that sort out of his waste-paper basket have fallen into the hands of Marx and Co.’¹²⁵

However, such explanations were not taken into account, and the commission set itself the following puzzling agenda:

It therefore only remained to investigate two matters:

1. If the citizens who had belonged to this society at its inception and who had been simultaneously members of the Association, still belonged to it.
2. Who these citizens were, in order to inform all the members of the Association about their belonging to the two societies.¹²⁶

Thus the commission completely lost sight of the fact that they were not supposed to investigate the pros and cons of conspiratorial-revolutionary work. The Blanquist delegates at the congress, for example, were organised as a strict and tight conspiratorial group in accordance with their political ideals and tradition.¹²⁷ Vaillant, who could be considered the Blanquists’ leader in the General Council, once commented on the nature of his work in the International: ‘if it is difficult to impose a military organisation upon the International, there is something beyond it to be done in that way’.¹²⁸ However, it did not occur to anyone to indict the Blanquist members because of their choice of organisation. With the decision to keep the section and delegate names of the French mandates secret, the congress even acknowledged the necessity of conspiratorial work. ‘Everybody conspires’, Alerini observed at the final meeting of the Congress of The Hague.¹²⁹ Even Marx, as we have seen, differentiated between ‘secret societies as such – for I myself have belonged to such societies’ and ‘secret societies which are hostile and harmful to the IWA’.¹³⁰ However, *the commission never examined whether the Alliance was harmful or*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 339–40.

¹²⁵ Cuno to Marx, 8 January 1873, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 599.

¹²⁶ F. Potel, ‘Report of the Commission Nominated by the Delegates of the Hague Congress on the Proposal of the General Council of the International Working Men’s Association in order to Disclose the Activities of the Secret Society known as the Alliance’, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 496.

¹²⁷ The Blanquist exiles living in the United Kingdom were mostly organised in the strict conspiratorial group Commune révolutionnaire; see details in P. Martinez, ‘Amis éprouvés et sûrs: les réfugiés blanquistes en Angleterre’, in *Société d’histoire de la Révolution de 1848 et des révolutions du XIXe siècle* (ed.), *Blanqui et les Blanquistes* (Paris: SEDES, 1986), pp. 154–58.

¹²⁸ Vaillant to Becker, 23 February 1872, IISG, Becker Papers, D III 60.

¹²⁹ See below, p. 348.

¹³⁰ See above, p. 311.

beneficial. Johann Philipp Becker and Théodore Duval, founding members of the Alliance¹³¹ and delegates in The Hague siding with the *majority*, could have shared their experiences but were never asked. The majority of the commission was not interested in the statements of the Spanish delegates on this matter, either.

Lafargue on the other hand was given the opportunity to speak at the second meeting of the commission, on the evening of 6 September 1872:

Lafargue says that the founding of the Alliance in Madrid was inspired from Barcelona and he published its whole history in Madrid on June 27, 1872. His pamphlet was neither attacked nor refuted by the people of the Alliance.¹³² It is proved in this pamphlet that the Alliance did not found the International in Spain but that it appeared after the International. The Alliance has been established in eight places and has done much for the movement [!]. He maintains that it has never been dissolved in Spain. Mora and others demanded its dissolution, but the Saragossa Congress did not comply with this demand. The best proof of this is the Madrid circular of June 2, 1872 signed: Mesa, Pagés, Francisco Mora, Paulino Iglesias, Innocente Calleja, Valentin Saenz, Angel Mora, Luis Castillon, Hipolito Pauly. The *Cadiz* Section *alone* replied to that circular. As proof of this he quotes the statement published in *La Emancipacion* that the dissolution had not been accepted, a statement which nobody refuted. Lafargue, Mora and others were expelled from the Spanish Federation for denouncing members of the Alliance; and he [Lafargue] believes this because there was no other ground.¹³³

This testimony seems to have brought the confusion within the commission to a head. After Lafargue was finished, the commission wanted to ‘interrogate’ Guillaume and Schwitzguébel. A form with five questions was especially prepared for them, which Cuno would later admitted was meant

to convince the Jura gentlemen that Bakunin could lie and also that he was a quite incapable, stupid charlatan. [...] Our intention to use the signed questionnaire in the sense we had thought of was rendered completely illusive by *Guillaume’s* statement: The whole thing seemed to him like an Inquisition procedure in the Middle Ages and he would not answer any of our questions concerning Bakunin or a secret society.¹³⁴

Guillaume was especially irritated that the commission ‘at first strangely claimed the functions of examining magistrate: the interrogation of the witnesses was to be secret, then there were to be confrontations and efforts to catch the witnesses out. Some of those who were thus called refused.’¹³⁵ Schwitzguébel on the other hand filled out the questionnaire: with reference to Marx’s statement that the Alliance was only being attacked as it was allegedly ‘hostile and harmful’ to the International (see above), Schwitzguébel wanted to first ‘be shown how and in

¹³¹ For more about Becker’s enthusiasm for the Alliance, and his supposed membership in the secret society planned in autumn 1868, see Eckhardt, *Von der Dresdner Mairevolution*, pp. 151–55. For more about Duval’s membership in the Alliance’s central body, see above, p. 311.

¹³² Meant is the brochure Lafargue, *A los internacionales*. This brochure does not seem to have made as big an impact compared to the fierce debates surrounding Lafargue’s scandalous report in the *Liberté* (see above, pp. 186–90); the *Federación* said that those attacked in the brochure would respond, but that the author was not worthy of a reply (see above, p. 191).

¹³³ Cuno, ‘Commission’, p. 340. See also Potel, ‘Report’, pp. 496–97. Marselau corrected the last statement by saying that Lafargue and Mora ‘were expelled before the question of the Alliance arose, because of an article in *La Emancipación*’ (Cuno, ‘Commission’, p. 342). See also above, pp. 190–91.

¹³⁴ Cuno to Marx, 8 January 1873, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 598–99. See also Potel, ‘Report’, p. 500.

¹³⁵ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, p. 236.

what way I could have harmed the International'.¹³⁶ This question was never examined during or after the congress. Another one of the commission's questions asked, 'If Bakunin named you as belonging to the secret Alliance, would you accept his statement about you?' This was a reference to Bakunin's description of Schwitzguébel as an 'ally' (*allié*) in the letter to Mora.¹³⁷ Schwitzguébel replied,

My relations with Bakunin have been of a close nature, I do not hesitate to declare that these relations have contributed strongly to the development of my revolutionary-socialist views and to the action which must inevitably result from them. I do not know in what sense Bakunin has interpreted these relations. [...] I know that Bakunin has kept up the habit, in his correspondence, of using the term 'allié' [ally / member of the Alliance] when referring to men who have not rejected the Alliance programme.¹³⁸

And so the commission to investigate the Alliance came out of their second meeting more or less empty-handed. Cuno even began basing his case against Schwitzguébel on psychological observations: he later noted that Schwitzguébel only wrote down his answers to the commission's questions

after thinking for a terrible long time from which any intelligent man was bound to see *that* the connection with the secret society did exist and that some 'oath' or other hocus-pocus, if not the evil intentions of the Alliance towards the International, hindered the persons questioned from answering promptly and frankly. [...] there is no *material* proof of the existence of the Alliance, but [...] it is urged on us only by moral conviction [...].¹³⁹

On 7 September 1872, the last day of the congress, the third meeting of the commission began with the questioning of the Spanish delegate Marselau about the situation in Spain, which again only yielded marginal results: 'He recognised the Programme of the Alliance, and in that feels himself honoured.'¹⁴⁰ Splingard, who enjoyed the confidence of the *minority*, considered the lack of results from Marselau's hearing as a proof of the commission's ineffectiveness and said that he regretted 'that he had agreed to take part in the commission, since those who had nominated him had no confidence in him'.¹⁴¹ His commission colleague Cuno on the other hand gave air to his suspicion that Splingard himself belonged to the Alliance; whereupon, Splingard threatened to cuff him.¹⁴²

Things were not any more pleasant when Cafiero made his appearance before the commission as – like Guillaume – he refused to make any statements regarding secret societies. The fanciful statement by the Polish General Council member Wróblewski, who had always been on Marx and Engels' side, was also pointless. He explained to the commission that he did not know

who provided the General Council with evidence on the secret society of the Alliance. He is morally convinced that the Alliance exists and also that Bakunin is its leader. Bakunin is also a member of a '*Comité Rouge*' which has set itself the aim of revolutionising Europe. He has no proofs or evidence in his possession. He is convinced that the secret Alliance was founded after the Commune *everywhere*. He does not *wish* to reveal the moral and material proofs which he

¹³⁶ Potel, 'Report', p. 498.

¹³⁷ See above, p. 193.

¹³⁸ Potel, 'Report', p. 499.

¹³⁹ Cuno to Marx, 8 January 1873, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 599–600.

¹⁴⁰ Cuno, 'Commission', p. 342.

¹⁴¹ Potel, 'Report', p. 501.

¹⁴² Cuno to Marx, 8 January 1873, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 600.

has and will not do so. He does not know the rules of the Alliance. (*Splingard* does not regard this as moral proof.)¹⁴³

After these fruitless attempts to gather evidence, it's no wonder that the commission members Cuno, 'Lucain' (pseudonym of Potel) and Vichard would tell Guillaume on the last afternoon of the congress 'that, in spite of all the trouble they had taken, they had been unable to obtain any serious result and that the work of the commission of inquiry, when it came to submit its report to the Congress that evening, would be reminiscent of a mountain giving birth to a mouse'.¹⁴⁴ Splingard also complained, 'that the inquiry could not lead anywhere, that the accusers had produced no serious document, that the whole business was a mystification and that he had been made to waste his time by being appointed to such a commission'.¹⁴⁵

The story behind Bakunin's translation of *Capital*

Marx finally appeared before the commission to investigate the Alliance on the last evening of the congress. He answered evasively when Cuno asked whether the Alliance still existed: 'he was convinced that the secret Alliance was still active within the International, but in such cases written proof was always lacking and it was only by accumulating a mass of different evidence that one could arrive at an understanding of the truth.' Marx nevertheless pretended 'that he knew from a reliable source' that Morago was the highest ranking member of the Alianza,¹⁴⁶ and that Cafiero – who had still been a critic of the Alliance in Italy in 1871¹⁴⁷ – 'is morally a member of the Alliance'.¹⁴⁸

After he finished with his conjecture, Marx brought forth what he considered his strongest piece of evidence:

Citizen Marx then read from a letter, addressed to a Russian publisher, in which those belonging to a Russian secret society, of which Bakunin was a member, threatened this publisher that they would *give him serious attention* if he again demanded the return of a sum of 300 roubles which he had given to Citizen Bakunin in advance payment for a translation.¹⁴⁹

This letter was part of the affair surrounding Bakunin's unfinished translation of Marx's *Capital* into Russian, which came about as follows. In spring 1869, Mikhail Negreskul (ca. 1849–1871) – who was involved in the Petersburg student movement and revolutionary groups – was in Geneva. In May of that year, he met Bakunin's friend Charles Perron who informed him about Bakunin's dire financial situation. 'He told me', Negreskul recalled,

that Bakunin was literally dying of hunger and therefore asked me: shouldn't we give him some work and help him with money? To the first question I answered that I might succeed in getting a translation for him from some publisher and that, should I persuade him to give work,

¹⁴³ Cuno, 'Commission', pp. 342–43.

¹⁴⁴ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 237.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

¹⁴⁶ Potel, 'Report', p. 501.

¹⁴⁷ This may have referred to Cafiero's letter to Engels on 28 June 1871; see above, p. 122.

¹⁴⁸ Cuno, 'Commission', p. 343.

¹⁴⁹ Potel, 'Report', p. 502.

I may persuade him to pay part of the sum in advance. I approached two publishers about this matter and both promised me to give him a translation.¹⁵⁰

On his way back to Russia, Negreskul stopped in Berlin in the summer of 1869 and met his friend Nikolai Lyubavin (1845–1918) who was studying science at the university in Berlin. In the previous year, Lyubavin had already contacted Johann Philip Becker in Geneva who arranged for his membership in the International and sent him socialist newspapers.¹⁵¹ Upon receiving the specimen issue of the *Égalité* published on 19 December 1868 in which among others Bakunin announced his willingness to contribute, Lyubavin wrote Becker: ‘It was very nice to read in the *Égalité* that the Russian emigration has finally begun to take part in L’Assoc. Intern., too. I mean the letter from Bakunin.’¹⁵² And so Lyubavin must have been concerned when he heard Negreskul’s news from Geneva. Lyubavin later wrote that he had been told by Negreskul

that Bakunin was in great distress and needed help as soon as possible. At that time I still knew Bakunin only very little but considered him as one of the finest heroes of the liberation struggle, as many Russian students did or still do. I at once sent him 25 talers and at the same time addressed myself through a friend of mine in St. Petersburg [Daniel’son] to a publisher asking for work for Bakunin. It was decided to entrust him with the translation of your book [*Capital*]. He was promised 1,200 roubles for the translation. According to his wish he was sent through me a whole package of books which he needed to help with the translation, and he was paid, also according to his request, 300 roubles in advance. On September 28 (1869) I, meanwhile having moved to Heidelberg, sent him this 300 roubles at the address of Charles Perron in Geneva, and on October 2, I received a receipt from Bakunin.¹⁵³

Bakunin was very happy that he got this job: in August 1869, he wrote Gambuzzi: ‘Things are going well for me – I have gotten an order for the translation of a 20 sheet book at the price of 150 fr. per sheet’.¹⁵⁴ Bakunin euphorically promised the publisher Nikolai Poliakov (ca. 1841–1905) that he would ‘deliver a considerable part [of the translation] of the first volume [of *Capital*] by the autumn of 1869’.¹⁵⁵ On 23 November 1869, Bakunin wrote of his translation: ‘I’m working day and night’.¹⁵⁶

‘The whole of November went by’, Lyubavin later wrote by contrast,

and I did not receive a single sheet of translation from him. Then at the end of November, or more probably even at the beginning of December, I asked him, as a result of the letter from St. Petersburg, whether he wished to translate or not. [...] As far as I remember, my friend in St. Petersburg [Daniel’son], through whom I had communicated with the publisher [Polyakov], wrote to me that if Bakunin did not wish to translate, he should say so frankly instead of pro-

¹⁵⁰ Testimony by Negreskul to the public prosecutor of the Petersburg district court on 27 (15) January 1870, see B.P. Koz’mín (ed.), *Nechaev i Nechaevtsy. Sbornik materialov* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial’no-ekonomicheskoe Izdatel’stvo, 1931), p. 133. Negreskul also said that he never got to know Bakunin personally (*ibid.*, p. 132) – Utin claimed that he did (Utin, ‘To the Fifth Congress’, p. 428).

¹⁵¹ Lyubavin to Becker, 19 July 1868 and 27 August 1868, RGASPI, fond 185, opis’ 1, delo 77/1 and 77/2.

¹⁵² Lyubavin to Becker, 20 February 1869, *ibid.*, delo 77/5. *Égalité*, 16 [19] December 1868, pp. 2–3.

¹⁵³ Lyubavin to Marx, 20 (8) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 460. In December 1869, Bakunin said that the price for the complete translation would be 900 roubles; see below, p. 325.

¹⁵⁴ Bakunin to Carlo Gambuzzi, beginning [actually: end] of August 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁵⁵ Vladimir Baranov to Marx, 22 (10) June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 353.

¹⁵⁶ Bakunin to Joukovsky, 23 November 1869, p. 1, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

crastinating, and that as for the 300 roubles, they could reach an agreement on that. I wrote that to Bakunin [...].¹⁵⁷

On 16 December 1869, Bakunin replied indignantly, 'How could you imagine that once I had undertaken this work and even received 300 roubles for it in advance, I would give it up?'¹⁵⁸ Around the same time, he said that he had completed around ten sheets of the translation and that a (legible) transcription would have to be made.¹⁵⁹ And on 16 December 1869, he explained in another letter:

You know I've been commissioned to translate that awful book by Marx – *Capital* – 784 pages of small print – for 900 roubles, of which I've already received an advance of 300 roubles, which has allowed me to pay some debts, to leave Geneva and to settle here. The translation is dreadfully difficult. Initially I was not able to translate more than three pages a morning, at the moment I've gotten to five, I hope soon to get to ten. Then things will be all right. [...] I'm tirelessly translating Marx. [...] As my translation of Marx advances I send or, rather, will send bundles of ten sheets of translation to Lyubavin – as we have agreed – and I'll most likely succeed in translating in two months enough to have the right to ask for another advance of 300 roubles. [...] in four months I will be safe and in that time I'll undoubtedly succeed in finishing the whole translation.¹⁶⁰

On 19 December 1869, Bakunin sent the first sheets of his hand-written translation to Lyubavin, who replied ten days later: 'I received your translation, I liked it, though there are many slips of the pen – but that's not a disaster. I was not able to compare it with the original – according to your wish – because I don't have it at hand; but it seems it has been rendered correctly.'¹⁶¹

Bakunin also promised, 'From now on I shall send you every two or three days the translated and recopied sheets'.¹⁶² Indeed Lyubavin received further sheets of the translation on 31 December 1869.¹⁶³ Bakunin continued to work in January: 'I am translating Marx's economic metaphysics, brother', he wrote Alexander Herzen.¹⁶⁴ And on 7 January 1870 Bakunin wrote Ogarev: 'I'm now translating a great deal and quickly'.¹⁶⁵

This only changed when Nechaev returned to Switzerland; without knowing what Nechaev had been up to in Russia, Bakunin looked forward to rekindling the close collaboration they had begun a year earlier.¹⁶⁶ Bakunin wrote Herzen and Ogarev on 12 January 1870: 'For my part, I *simply must* see Boy [Nechaev]. But I certainly cannot come myself [...]. He should come – by whatever means – under a false name, a Polish one, for instance.'¹⁶⁷ When Nechaev arrived in Locarno a week later, Bakunin was again unable to resist his charisma and power of suggestion. In view of the considerable amount of time Bakunin was investing in the translation, Nechaev

¹⁵⁷ Lyubavin to Marx, 20 (8) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 461.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Bakunin to Ogarev, 17 December 1869, p. 3, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁶⁰ Bakunin to Ogarev, 16 December 1869, pp. 5–6, *ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Lyubavin to Bakunin, 29 December 1869, in S. V. Zhitomirskaya and N. M. Pirumova, 'Ogarev, Bakunin i N. A. Gertsen-Doch' v 'Nechaevskoi' istorii (1870 g.)', *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* 96 (1985), p. 462.

¹⁶² Quoted according to Lyubavin to Marx, 20 (8) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 461.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

¹⁶⁴ Bakunin to Herzen, 4 January 1870, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Herzen had already warily asked Ogarev on 23 September 1869: 'Is it true that Bakunin is exchanging friendly letters with Marx and is translating his book into Russian?' (Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 30, p. 199).

¹⁶⁵ Bakunin to Ogarev, 7 January 1870, p. 2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁶⁶ See above, p. 91.

¹⁶⁷ Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary*, p. 151. For more on this, see (also in the following) Zhitomirskaya/Pirumova, 'Ogarev, Bakunin i N. A. Gertsen', p. 420.

insisted 'that Bakunin had better spend his time on the revolutionary cause' and announced that he would find another translator, 'who would complete the translation for the remaining sum'.¹⁶⁸ Bakunin took Nechaev's word, dropped the translation and started working on revolutionary propaganda; 'our Boy has quite turned my head with his work', Bakunin confessed on 8 February 1870.¹⁶⁹

In his own special way Nechaev made good on his promise to relieve Bakunin of his translation duties. Instead of looking for a translator, Nechaev sent Lyubavin a nefarious letter on 25 February 1870, in which a fictive Committee of the revolutionary society The People's Judgment (*Narodnaya rasprava*) informed its Foreign Bureau that Lyubavin

recruited the well-known Bakunin to work on a translation of a book by Marx and, like a true bourgeois kulak, profiting by his desperate financial situation, paid him an advance and, on the strength of it, made him undertake not to abandon the work before it was finished. Thus, thanks to this young gentleman Lyubavin who uses others to show his zeal for Russian enlightenment, Bakunin is deprived of the possibility to take part in the genuine, urgent cause of the Russian people, his participation in which is indispensable [...] The *Committee* instructs the Foreign Bureau to declare to Lyubavin:

1) that if he and parasites like him consider a translation of Marx useful to Russia at the present time, let them devote their own precious efforts to it instead of studying chemistry and preparing for themselves a lucrative situation as professor at the public expense.

2) that he (Lyubavin) should immediately inform Bakunin that he frees him from all moral obligation to continue the translation in consequence of the Russian revolutionary Committee's demand.

Then follow points which we consider premature to inform you of, [the Foreign Bureau continued, turning to Lyubavin], relying in part on your perspicacity and prudence.

So, dear Sir, fully assured that you, understanding with whom you are dealing, will be so obliging as to free us from the regrettable necessity to address ourselves to you *a second time by less civilised means*.¹⁷⁰

As was foreseeable, this burlesque act failed to have the desired effect – Eduard Bernstein, who was the first to cast light on the matter decades later, wrote: 'It is actually difficult to even take this letter seriously. It reminds one more of a common college prank of yesteryear than real revolutionary terrorism.'¹⁷¹ Lyubavin didn't let himself be coerced by Nechaev's threatening letter, which he received on 3 March 1870: he sent Bakunin an appropriately rude reply.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ Personal interview with Joukovsky by Max Nettlau, 10 August 1893, see Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 383.

¹⁶⁹ Bakunin to Ogarev, 8 February 1870, in Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary*, p. 153. In anticipation of the revolutionary situation in Russia in autumn 1870, Bakunin explained in a letter dated 20 May 1872, 'I was called upon by the Bureau to refrain from all other occupations' (quoted according to Daniel's son to Marx, 21 (9) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 464).

¹⁷⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 363–64.

¹⁷¹ E. Bernstein, 'Karl Marx und Michael Bakunin. Unter Benutzung neuerer Veröffentlichungen', *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* 30 (1910), p. 28. Ogarev wasn't impressed either: 'Those are fake letters from the "Rasprava", I don't believe them – they have been fabricated somewhere here by other people.' (Ogarev to Alexander Herzen [son], 12 Juni (1870), in Nicolas Ogarev, *Lettres inédites à Alexandre Herzen fils*, ed. by M. Mervaud [Mont-Saint-Aignan, Paris: Université de Haute Normandie, Institut d'études slaves, 1978], p. 166).

¹⁷² See Lyubavin to Marx, 20 (8) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 462.

To top things off, Nechaev made another grotesque threat a few days later – this time in a letter to Herzen’s family, who were preparing to publish a collection of critical articles by Alexander Herzen¹⁷³ who had died on 21 January 1870. In this second threatening letter, Nechaev – who again rather obviously hid behind the mask of the Foreign Bureau of The People’s Judgment – demanded that the collection be published with different articles. ‘Telling Messrs publishers our opinion we are fully assured that knowing with whom they are dealing and understanding the situation of the Russian movement they will not force us into the regrettable necessity to act less delicately’, Nechaev explained.¹⁷⁴ Of course this letter did not achieve its intended goal either. Herzen’s son Alexander proposed a press release to Herzen’s companion, which included the following: ‘as we hate despotism as much as preventive censorship *from whichever side* – we don’t care about the demands of the society [The People’s Judgment] at all; [...] we hold every kind of threat in contempt’.¹⁷⁵ In spite of the letter, they published the controversial texts that year.¹⁷⁶

These embarrassing escapades finally helped Bakunin free himself from Nechaev’s influence – albeit too late. In a letter written from 2 to 9 June 1870, Bakunin vented his anger toward Nechaev and decried his ‘only too obvious guile and incredible stupidities – like your stern letters to Lyubavin and to Natalya Alekseevna [Herzen’s companion] [...]. All this proves an absence of common sense, an ignorance of people, relationships, and things.’¹⁷⁷ In addition to losing the trust of the Russian emigrant community, Bakunin was cut off from his only source of income because of this affair: ‘I am now reduced to the extremity of ruin and desperation’, Bakunin complained in a letter to Ogarev. ‘There are debts, and I haven’t a kopeck, I simply have nothing to live on. And what am I to do? It has become impossible for me to engage in any translations as a result of the unfortunate affair of L[yubavin]. I have no other Russian acquaintances.’¹⁷⁸ And he wrote Nechaev at the beginning of June 1870: ‘thanks to you my financial position is now very difficult. I have no means of existence, and my only source of income, translating Marx and the hope of other literary work connected with it, has now dried up.’¹⁷⁹ The Petersburg publisher Poliakov had no choice but to write off the advance.

Lyubavin’s friend, the Russian revolutionary German Lopatin (1845–1918), played a key role in finally bringing Bakunin and Nechaev’s relationship to an end. Lopatin travelled to Geneva in May 1870 with a copy of Nechaev’s threatening letter, which Lyubavin had given. Because of his good connections within revolutionary circles, Lopatin knew about the story behind the affair, so that he was able to convince Bakunin of Nechaev’s deceptive activities in Russia and Switzerland both in letters and during a meeting with Nechaev in Geneva. In summer Lopatin moved to London where he got to know Marx, to whom he also told the details of the Nechaev affair.¹⁸⁰ When Marx – who immediately thought of using the affair against Bakunin – wanted to see the corresponding documents, Lopatin refused:

¹⁷³ Herzen’s ‘Letters to an Old Comrade’ (Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 20, pp. 575–93) directed at Bakunin were probably the reason for the threat.

¹⁷⁴ B. Koz’min and S. Pereselenkov (eds.), ‘K istorii Nechaevshchiny’, *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo* 41–42 (1941), p. 163.

¹⁷⁵ Alexander Herzen (son) to Natalya Alekseevna Tuchkova-Ogareva, 12 March 1870, in M. Gershenzon and V. Polonskii (eds.), *Arkhiv N. A. i N. P. Ogarevykh* (Moscow, Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo, 1930), p. 79.

¹⁷⁶ A.I. Gertsen, *Sbornik posmertnykh statei* (Geneva: V tipografii L. Chernetskago, 1870).

¹⁷⁷ Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary*, pp. 276–77.

¹⁷⁸ Bakunin to Ogarev, 14 June 1870, *ibid.*, p. 288 (here erroneously ‘transactions’ instead of ‘translations’).

¹⁷⁹ Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary*, p. 275.

¹⁸⁰ Marx to Engels, 5 July 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, pp. 530–31.

Irrespective of my close friendship with Marx I refused flatly to give him the documents concerning this matter which I have in my possession saying: 'I don't agree with everything Bakunin does but I will never agree to help discredit a man in the eyes of the whole of Europe who has played such a role in our revolutionary movement'.¹⁸¹

Apparently Utin made a similar request to Lopatin, who wrote to Bakunin

that I was asked urgently for the letter of the Committee and documents relating to it for some purpose. I refused to hand these things to whomsoever without the permission of L[yubavin]. [...] I wrote to L[yubavin] that in no case he should agree with that [...] Believe me: I will never wish to soil my hands with mud just to have the dubious satisfaction to fling that mud on you.¹⁸²

'In a letter to me', Lopatin added, Lyubavin 'declared most categorically himself against publishing the documents sent to him'.¹⁸³

More than two years had passed since these events when Marx, on the search for ammunition against Bakunin, turned to Nikolai Daniel'son (1844–1918), who translated most of *Capital* into Russian after Bakunin stopped. Marx wrote Daniel'son on 15 August 1872:

Bakunin was once charged with the Russian translation of my book, received the money for it in advance, and instead of giving work, sent [!] or had sent to Lubanin (I think) [Lyubavin] who transacted for the publisher with him the affair, a most infamous and compromising letter. It would be of the highest utility for me, *if this letter was sent me* immediately. As this is a mere *commercial* affair and as in the use to be made of the letter no names will be used, I hope you will procure me that letter. But no time is to be lost. If it is sent, it ought to be sent at once as I shall leave London for the Haag Congress at the end of this month.¹⁸⁴

Although Lyubavin had refused to hand over the corresponding documents for personal-political ends two and a half years earlier, he now surprisingly relented and sent Marx Nechaev's threatening letter on 20 August 1872 on the premise that he was helping in a *commercial affair*. Lyubavin used the chance to take a fresh look at the affair and included in an accompanying letter

my present opinion about the letter I received in 1870 from the 'Bureau'. At the time Bakunin's participation seemed to me beyond doubt. I must say that when I now go through the whole affair with a cool head I see that Bakunin's participation in it is not at all proved; the letter could really have been sent by Nechayev quite independently of Bakunin. Only one thing is certain, that Bakunin showed complete unwillingness to go on with the work he had begun, although he had received money for it.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ G. Lopatin, 'K razskazam o P. L. Lavrove', *Golos minuvshago* 4 (1916), pp. 200–1. Lopatin did not want to hand over Nechaev's threatening letter in particular: 'Marx asked him to procure the document for him and translate it; but he, not wishing to have a hand in an affair of this kind, replied that he would not give [him] his copy' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 323 [according to a letter from Lopatin to Guillaume, 11 January 1909]).

¹⁸² Lopatin to Bakunin, 26 May 1870, in M. Confino (ed.), 'Autour de 'l'affaire Nechaev'. Lettres inédites de Michel Bakunin et de German Lopatin', *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 8 (1967), p. 474.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

¹⁸⁴ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 422. Marx first asked Baranov about details regarding Bakunin's translation of *Capital*; see Marx to Daniel'son, 28 May 1872, *ibid.*, p. 386. Baranov to Marx, 22 (10) June 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 353.

¹⁸⁵ Lyubavin to Marx, 20 (8) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 462.

Lyubavin concluded that evidences against Bakunin 'are not of such an obvious nature as you perhaps believed. It is true that they are to this person's discredit, but they are not sufficient for his condemnation.'¹⁸⁶

Lyubavin seemed sure that Marx was planning legal action as he had said this was 'a mere commercial affair'. As Lopatin was in jail in Irkutsk and was thus unable to explain Marx's true motive to Lyubavin as he had in 1870, Daniel'son saw fit to send Marx the following appeal: 'You have, I believe, received the letter you wanted with some explications. You will see that it is not at all of a commercial character only, and in the use to be made of it this ought not to be forgotten.'¹⁸⁷

Marx, however, ignored the calls for restraint and Lyubavin's nuanced view. He gave the following high-flown account of the events before the commission to investigate the Alliance on 7 September 1872:

Before the reading of the following document Marx says that Bakunin made Russian translations of *Capital*. This information was given to Marx personally and it is a matter of not allowing certain murders to become public. Bakunin sent only two sheets of translation. A letter, probably written by Nechaev, is read out. [...] The letter contains threats and is definitely a document of a secret society to which Bakunin personally belongs.¹⁸⁸

Bakunin had already prophesied to Nechaev in 1870 that his manoeuvre would have the effect 'that many people do in fact think that I stand at the head of a secret society about which, as you are aware, I know nothing'. Bakunin (futilely) pleaded with Nechaev: 'You must shield and clear me entirely in the Lyubavin affair by writing a collective letter [...] in which you will announce, as is indeed the truth, that I did not know anything about the [threatening] letter of the Committee and that it has been written without my knowledge and consent.'¹⁸⁹

In The Hague, as he knew the story behind the affair, Joukovsky appeared before the commission and made the following statement:

Asked by the Chairman to tell what he knew, Zhukovsky replied: Bakunin is not well off. A young man came to ask him to translate *Capital*. He had heard that the proposal had come from a publisher in St. Petersburg who had advanced Bakunin 300 roubles. Citizen Nechaev had come to visit Bakunin in Geneva and had told him that he would arrange the matter with the publisher, who was asking for the work as promised or the return of the money.

Moreover, Zhukovsky declared that he had heard this version from Citizen Bakunin and he had then offered to undertake the translation for the remainder of the sum promised.¹⁹⁰ He admitted that there were threats, but he said that they came from Nechaev.¹⁹¹

This should have settled the matter. The only charge that remained against Bakunin was that although he started the Russian translation of Marx's *Capital* as promised, he never finished it

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 459.

¹⁸⁷ Daniel'son to Marx, 21 (9) August 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 464.

¹⁸⁸ Cuno, 'Commission', p. 343 (here erroneously 'misdeeds' instead of 'murders' [*Mordthaten*]; corrected according to the manuscript in RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 51/2).

¹⁸⁹ Bakunin to Nechaev, 2–9 June 1870, in Confino (ed.), *Daughter of a Revolutionary*, pp. 248, 277–78.

¹⁹⁰ Joukovsky first suggested that Bakunin's friends should cooperate 'on the translation and Bakunin would do the final edit' (personal interview with Joukovsky by Max Nettlau, 10 August 1893, see Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 383), which Bakunin refused (see Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4371). Before the commission, Joukovsky explained that this plan soon had to be abandoned: 'the deal could not materialise because Nechaev threatened the translator [Lyubavin is meant]' (Cuno, 'Commission', p. 344).

¹⁹¹ Potel, 'Report', pp. 502–3.

and never paid back the 300 roubles he had received as an advance – not a serious offence. The historian Miklós Molnár pointed out that Bakunin ‘in his entire life, had not brought a single work to an end, not even his own’.¹⁹² In connection with a Russian newspaper report in 1870 that Bakunin was living on credit and allegedly had 6,000 roubles of debt, Engels wrote at the time that such accusations ‘are not worth much. [...] Borrowing money is such a normal Russian means of sustenance that no Russian should reproach another on the subject’.¹⁹³ With regards to the financial story behind the translation of *Capital*, however, Marx and Engels screamed blue murder.

¹⁹² M. Molnár, ‘Die Londoner Konferenz der Internationale 1871’, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 4 (1964), p. 308.

¹⁹³ Engels to Marx, 22 February 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 441. Borkheim had told Marx about the newspaper report (*Moskovskiya Vedomosti*, 6 January 1870, pp. 1–2. Borkheim to Marx, 19 February 1870, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 546. Marx to Engels, 19 February 1870, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 43, p. 436–37).

Chapter 17. The revisions to the Rules, the transfer of the General Council and the ‘Minority Declaration’

MEANWHILE ON THE EVENING OF 4 September 1872, after it took almost three days to check the mandates, the congress bureau (chairman, vice-chairman, and secretaries) was finally appointed and the agenda begun with. As time was running out and various delegates had already said that they would have to leave soon, a motion was put forward ‘that the General Council’s powers, its seat, the convening of the next Congress and the review of the Rules be discussed immediately’.¹ Brismée proposed that they begin with

the revision of the Rules, which could well lead to the suppression of the General Council, as has already been proposed by the Belgians at their congress, and has been deferred only on condition that the Council’s claws be trimmed and its fangs drawn. – If it were to be otherwise, the Belgians would separate from the rest of the International and ally themselves with the Swiss, Spanish and American dissidents.² *Let’s start with the revision of the statutes – that’s why we came here.*³

According to Hepner’s absurd reasoning, the General Council had to be discussed first: ‘Especially the critics should be even more in favour of this, so that they can submit their complaints against the General Council soon. They have grumbled the entire year and now we want to hear what they actually want.’⁴ Because it was late, the debate about the General Council was postponed to the next day’s public meeting (5 September 1872), where the different opinions met head on: in the name of the Belgian sections, Herman demanded ‘that the General Council should not be a political centre imposing any doctrine and claiming to direct the Association’.⁵ By contrast, Lafargue tried to show that the General Council was necessary because it was required in the working class’s struggle for emancipation.⁶ He concluded, ‘The General Council’s powers had to be maintained; it was through it that the International existed; if it was suppressed, the International would perish. He would say of the General Council what Voltaire said of God: if it did not exist it would have to be invented.’⁷

¹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 141.

² Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 56. According to Sorge’s minutes: ‘The Belgians want no extension for the General Council’s powers, on the contrary, they came here to take away from it the crown which it usurped. [...] what has happened in America, Spain and Italy has shown that the General Council has too much power and that in the future it must be prevented from interfering in the internal affairs of the federations and sections’ (Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 141). For more about the resolution of the Belgian federal congress, see above, pp. 221 and 518, n. 148.

³ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 713 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁴ Sorge, ‘Protokoll’, p. 55.

⁵ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, p. 227.

⁶ See Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 83.

⁷ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, pp. 227–28. For Voltaire’s quote, see the poem ‘À l’auteur du livre des ‘Trois Imposteurs’ in Voltaire, *Œuvre poétique*, ed. by H. Legrand (Paris: Bibliothèque Larousse, 1924), pp. 159–60.

Guillaume countered that there were actually

two great trends of ideas in the Association. Some considered it as the permanent creation of a central power, of a group of men in possession of a certain social doctrine the application of which was to emancipate labour; they were spreading their doctrine everywhere, preventing all propaganda opposed to it. It was thought that it was owing to this group, which maintained a sort of orthodoxy, and because of it, that the International existed. Others on the contrary believed that the International did not result from the action of any group of men, but from the economic conditions prevailing in each country. The similar situation of the workers in the various countries produced identity of sentiments, aspirations and interests which spontaneously gave birth to the International. The latter was not a conception of one brain, but the necessary result of economic facts.

The members of the Jura Federation had contributed at Basle to placing in the hands of the General Council the powers they were complaining of at present.⁸ This they readily admitted. It was because they had been taught by experience and had had to suffer from the General Council's abuse of power that they gradually came to examine whether the extent of those powers was not a danger. They acted as practical people, not as theorists.

The desire expressed about a year earlier by their federation to curtail the powers of the General Council had won the adherence of various federations. In Belgium it had even been suggested to suppress the Council. They did not go so far. But when that proposal came to their knowledge they sought to find out whether, in the actual situation of the International, the existence of the General Council was necessary. They had held discussions and had consulted the other federations: what was the result of that inquiry? The majority of the federations were in favour of preserving not a central authority, but a correspondence and statistics centre. It seemed to them that the federations could enter into relations with each other without that intermediary; nevertheless they adhered to the opinion of the majority on condition that the General council would be no more than a correspondence and statistics centre.

Those who wished to preserve the General Council with the powers it actually possessed objected that a strong power was needed to uphold our Association. The International pursued a struggle of two kinds: the economic struggle which was expressed by strikes, and the political struggle, which according to countries, was expressed by nominating workers as candidates, or by revolution. Those two struggles were inseparable: they had to be pursued simultaneously, there was no disagreement on that score. But on what grounds would the General Council be necessary to direct them in the one or the other of these struggles? Had it ever organised a strike? No. It had taken no action in those conflicts. When they arose it was only solidarity that determined them to act. It should be remembered, to speak of Switzerland alone, what protests the Geneva Federation addressed to the newspapers which claimed, at the time of the 1868–1869 strikes,⁹ that that federation had received an order from London and Paris. As for them they did not want the International to receive orders from London or from anywhere else.

Neither was the General Council necessary for the political struggle. It had never led the workers to revolution. Those grandiose manifestations were carried out spontaneously, without any need for guidance.

⁸ Referring to the Basel administrative resolutions, see above, p. 147.

⁹ See details in Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 1, pp. 63, 141–42.

Since that time they had contested the necessity of the General Council. However, they admitted it if its role was reduced to the simple functions of a correspondence and statistics bureau.¹⁰

Sorge replied:

If the General Council did not help during the strikes, then he refers him to the Parisian bronze workers, the English mechanics¹¹ and the New York sewing machine mechanics who quickly recognised the benefits of such an international coordination. The General Council may not be a general, but it should be a general staff which forms and organises the cadre. If Guillaume wants an IWA without a head, then he degrades us to the lowest form of animal organism. We don't only want a head but rather a head full of brains [...].¹²

'There are glances at Marx and laughter', Guillaume noted in his report on the congress.¹³ Morago responded to Sorge: 'The head has to be in the federations themselves. We want to destroy the tyranny of centralisation that characterises bourgeois rule – how can we then create a new centralisation in our midst?'¹⁴ Morago went on to explain that the delegates in the *majority*

wasted time occupying themselves with granting the General Council authority that it is unable to exercise. As the International is a free association, born out of the spontaneous organisation of the proletariat and containing within itself the most emphatic protest against authority (which is tyranny), they are proven naïve if they expected that the advocates of autonomy for workers' collectives were going to abdicate their feelings and ideas and support the tyranny that one wished the Council to exercise by hypocritically conferring power on it. [...] It could not be recognised as anyone's right to impinge upon the freedom of another; whoever wants authority and tyranny should vote *yes*. But the Spanish Federation was for freedom, and thus would not recognise the General Council as anything more than a correspondence and statistics centre; they would even vote for its disappearance.¹⁵

The Ukrainian student Sergei Podolinskii, an observer of the congress, summed up the first public meeting in letters written on the same day:

Herman, Morago and Guillaume all spoke very well against the Council, Guillaume in particular; so far, those speaking in favour of the Council were Sorge (an American, rather stupidly and inappropriately) and Lafargue (stupidly, although appropriately) [...].¹⁶ Guillaume's [speech], in particular, delivered in a somewhat naively sarcastic tone, was very good both from the point of view of oratory and that of restraint and dignity. Morago spoke passionately and with gestures but without any abuse or personalities. Justice demands that it be said that, with the exception of Sorge, the speakers of the Council namely Lafargue and Longuet, also behaved with great propriety.¹⁷

Although the anarchists (that is how I shall call this side for brevity's sake) all the same represent a minority, that minority is rather significant and for that reason the General Council has already considerably loosened the rein [...]. The anarchist minority is particularly significant considering that the Italians did not turn up, that the Spanish delegates have several thousand

¹⁰ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 228–29.

¹¹ Mottershead interjected: 'That is inaccurate; the Newcastle mechanics had no need of the General Council.' (*ibid.*, p. 230).

¹² Sorge, 'Protokoll', pp. 66–67.

¹³ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 230.

¹⁴ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 714 (minutes by Joukovsky).

¹⁵ 'Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles', pp. 17–18.

¹⁶ Podolinskii to Rozaliya Idel'son, 5 September 1872, in Sapir (ed.), 'Vpered!' 1873–1877, vol. 2, p. 416.

¹⁷ Podolinskii to Lavrov, 5 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 517.

votes each, that the Belgians, partly out of impartiality, sent no more than 5 or 6 delegates, and that, naturally, these delegates represent a far greater number of workers than the 12 members of the General Council. If the way of voting suggested by Brismée had been adopted, the Council would have been in the minority, particularly if the Italians had been present. To sum up one may say that the Council, despite all the more or less unseemly efforts, achieved a far from full success; [...] all the same a kind of general sympathy seems to begin to incline towards the anarchists, which, of course, is due in part to the good choice of delegates.¹⁸

On the whole, as you see, my sympathies are on the side of the anarchists, the more so as in this case they are all people really elected by workers' sections, as can clearly be shown, whereas on the side of the Council there are quite a few Jacobins and politically very dubious people. On the other hand they are politically well organised and all vote as instructed by Marx – like Prussian soldiers, as the Belgians say.¹⁹

On the following day (6 September), the *majority* suddenly declared the debate regarding the General Council over,²⁰ and the discussion of the various revisions of the Rules began.²¹ However, the *majority* didn't associate the discussion of the Rules with the demands of the General Council's critics but rather with various revisions that expanded the General Council's authority and that had been drafted between June and August 1872 by the General Council itself. These revisions included the following: the General Council was to ensure *that the principles of the International were strictly observed in every country* (revision of what was art. 1 of the Administrative Regulations);²² in addition to the authority given to the General Council in the Basel administrative resolutions to suspend sections until the next congress, it was to be allowed to *suspend entire federations and federal councils* (revision of art. 6 of the Basel administrative resolutions).²³

There was no word of revisions to the Rules aiming to *limit* the General Council's authority – one of the most talked about subjects in the International's press over the previous months. The Spanish delegates later complained: 'The efforts of the minority to win respect for the right that all of us have (because this is the most important question that could occupy the Congress)

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 516–17.

¹⁹ Podolinskii to Idel'son, 5 September 1872, in Sapir (ed.), *Vpered!* 1873–1877, vol. 2, p. 416.

²⁰ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', pp. 69–70. Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 150. 'Pico had found that discussion would not improve its position', Eccarius commented in his report on the congress for the *Times* (Eccarius, 'Reports', p. 86) in reference to the meeting place in The Hague of the delegates supporting the General Council (Hotel Pico, see below, p. 343). See also Fluse, 'Account', p. 254.

²¹ In the debate, this agenda item was referred to as revision of the Rules; in a strict sense, it dealt with the revision of articles 2 and 6 of the section 'II. The General Council' of the Administrative Regulations in the revised General Rules published by the General Council in November 1871. Both articles were based on provisions of the Administrative Regulations passed at the Geneva Congress in 1866 and the Basel administrative resolutions of 1869 (see the following two notes).

²² Previous version: 'The General Council is commissioned to carry the resolutions of the Congress into effect' (article 1 of the Administrative Regulations, see *Rules of the International*, p. 6). In the 'revised' General Rules published by the General Council in November 1871, this point was art. II 2 of the Administrative Regulations; see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 369. The revision was unanimously approved at the General Council meeting on 25 June 1872; see *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 236–37.

²³ Previous version: 'The General Council has also the right of suspending, till the meeting of next Congress, any section of the International' (art. 6 of the Basel administrative resolutions, see above, p. 147). In the 'revised' General Rules by the General Council this item was art. II 6 of the Administrative Regulations; see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 370. The revision was tabled at the General Council meetings on 25 June and 2 July 1872 by Marx and Engels and voted for by the majority (with four votes against). The majority rebuffed Hales's repeated calls that the suspension depend on corroborating evidence; see *The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, pp. 237–46.

to begin a formal revision of the Rules, were useless.²⁴ As it turned out, an article published in July 1872 either by Pezza or Caffero had correctly surmised that the General Council intended something quite different than the federations striving for more autonomy when it put the *revision of the Rules* on the agenda.²⁵ Eccarius came to the following realisation at the congress: ‘as there is both difference of opinion on, and opposition to the authority of Dr. Marx wielded in the Council, there is no other remedy but to strike opponents down and kick them out. To do this increased power is required for the General Council – the sword of Dr. Marx.’²⁶ The *Liberté* expressed its surprise in its report on the congress: although the different federations thought that the authority given to the General Council in the Basel administrative resolutions went too far, the Congress of The Hague is in the process of expanding this authority. ‘What impression will be given by this increase in the powers of the General Council over the federations [...]? We shall know soon enough; but it will obviously not [be] a favourable one.’²⁷

As the debate at the congress moved ever further away from the debate among the sections of the International, the delegates of the *minority* regarded the meeting as more and more of a ‘*mystification*’.²⁸ Some of the speeches in support of the revisions by the delegates belonging to the *majority*, such as Johann Philipp Becker’s speech, did not even add substance to the debate either:

properly speaking we should not need to speak any more about this, since we decided exactly the same thing earlier; we should feel pricks of conscience for not having decided or implemented anything by the 5th day [since the opening of the Congress]; even the so-called opposition cannot be blamed for opposing us for the pleasure of opposing. [...] We all feel the need to go home soon, our purse strongly reminds us of this.²⁹

After Vaillant said, ‘we must work and not merely make speeches’, delegates belonging to the *minority* voiced their displeasure with the farce unfolding before their eyes. Brismée said,

it is quite useless to discuss the powers of the General Council, the Belgians do not want the General Council to have any powers, therefore this is a question of principle on which all the Belgians are unanimous. The delegates of the Vesdre valley even demanded the complete abolition of the General Council, and we demand that the General Council should be only the clerk of the I.W.A. and should not interfere in the internal affairs of a country.³⁰

Guillaume made clear, ‘We have already set forth our views and will not discuss such proposals; I therefore propose an immediate vote; let the majority have the courage to come forward in full strength; he believes, by the way, that many delegates among the majority have not the backing of any electors’.³¹ The *majority* was also unimpressed by Morago’s plea: the General Council would interpret the principles it was to oversee in its own way and ‘what guarantee is provided against possible abuse of power by the General Council. The Spaniards hold that it would be dangerous to accept Article 2 and are against any granting of powers to the General

²⁴ ‘Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles’, p. 19. The organ of the Belgian Federation also thought that the congress’s main duty was to revise the Rules in order to limit the General Council’s authority; see *Internationale*, 18 August 1872, p. 1.

²⁵ See above, p. 283.

²⁶ Eccarius, ‘Reports’, p. 87.

²⁷ *Liberté*, 15 September 1872, p. 2.

²⁸ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, p. 223.

²⁹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 151.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

³¹ *Ibid.* See also Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 71.

Council, none of them want to be ruled.³² The *majority* then adopted the revision of art. 1 of the administrative resolutions (the General Council's oversight capacity) with 40 or 41 in favour³³ and 4 or 5 against³⁴ as well as 11 abstentions and various absent delegates.

In the debate that followed regarding the revision of art. 6 of the Basel administrative resolutions, Marx explained:

The International must grant its G[eneral] C[ouncil] certain powers [...] By making use of the right given to the General Council by the Basel Congress, and without expanding it, the General Council could suspend one section after the other and so suspend an entire federation. Is it not better to express one's self clearly by saying the G[eneral] C[ouncil] has the right to suspend a branch or a federation. 'If its choice should fall on a federation like that of the Jura which gives place to lies and slanders in its official publication,' which tries to destroy a neighbouring federation, then the G[eneral] C[ouncil] would be doing the Association a favour.³⁵ We would rather abolish the General Council than make it a letter-box according to Brismée's ideas; in such a case journalists, i.e., *non-workers*, would lay their hands on the leadership of the Association.³⁶

A surprising statement coming from the private scholar Karl Marx – a *non-worker* who had long ago *laid his hands on the leadership of the General Council*. In fact, most of the General Council members were *non-workers*: two days earlier the English delegate Roach had abstained from the vote on whether bourgeois sections should be allowed in the International. He explained that if the motion were passed 'half the members of the General Council would be turned out for not being working men'.³⁷

In his plea for the revision of the Rules, Marx also referred to the danger that imposters or police agents could form sections, which made a watchful General Council necessary. He tried to dispel any concerns by sanctimoniously promising that the General Council would use the right of suspension 'only in extreme cases'. This attempt at appeasement seems unlikely to have swayed anybody's opinion. At any rate, Eccarius rather bluntly summed up the revisions of the Rules in his report on the congress:

The General Council has to watch the Federations and sections that they do not diverge from the true, but very narrow path of proletarian orthodoxy, and whenever they overstep the line, and do not immediately repent in sackcloth and ashes, the General Council has the right and the power to suspend them.³⁸

The delegates of the *majority* weren't quite as impressed with this resolution despite Marx's attempts to make the General Council's new authority seem harmless: the revision of art. 6 of

³² Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 153.

³³ The voting results are often different in the various minutes of the congress. Le Moussu and Sorge's minutes both state that there were 40 votes in favour; however, when counting the names listed in Sorge's minutes, there are 41 names in favour (see Le Moussu, 'Minutes', pp. 72–73; Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 153, 176).

³⁴ Le Moussu and Sorge's minutes both state that there were five votes against; however, when counting the names listed in Le Moussu's minutes, there are four names against (see Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 72; Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 153, 176).

³⁵ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, pp. 715–16 (minutes by Joukovsky). Marx was obviously referring to the split in the Romance Federation (see above, chapter 5); Marx considered the position of his opponents in this conflict as *lies and slanders*. Guillaume repudiated Marx's claim; see Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 155.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

³⁷ Eccarius, 'Reports', p. 77. See also Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 139.

³⁸ Eccarius, 'Reports', p. 87.

the Basel administrative resolutions was adopted with only 36 votes in favour and 6 votes against with 15 or 16 abstentions.³⁹

The debate concerning the transfer of the General Council and resolution no. 9 of the London Conference

After setting the agenda for that evening's public meeting, Engels created a sensation at the end of the same meeting on 6 September 1872. He tabled the motion to *move the General Council to New York* – a suggestion which left most of the delegates flabbergasted: 'Consternation and discomfiture stood plainly written on the faces of the party of dissension as he uttered the last words', Barry wrote in his report on the congress. 'It was some time before any one rose to speak. It was a *coup d'état*, and each one looked to his neighbour to break the spell.'⁴⁰ Marx and Engels had for tactical reasons narrowly blocked Jung's motion to move the General Council to the Continent at the last meeting of the General Council.⁴¹ Now they did away with pretexts and proposed to move the General Council across the Atlantic and thus out of reach of the opposition. Engels hypocritically justified his proposal by using the line of reasoning of the General Council's critics: through the transfer 'a feared ossification' of the General Council would be avoided; the distance to New York would prove advantageous to the federations who were worried about their autonomy as the General Council would be less likely to interfere in their affairs from so far away; meanwhile, there were 'party dissensions' in London and most of the General Council members did not want to continue; finally, New York was just as safe as London and had a strong organisation and international membership.⁴²

The motion caused the *majority* – which had voted en bloc for the most part until now – to implode. The delegates had to quickly consider the ramifications of this proposal: for example, after supporting the increased authority of the General Council, its ambitious Blanquist members now feared that their influence within the International would be completely cut off with the move of the General Council from London to New York. For the first time they found themselves opposed to Marx, Engels, the German delegates (for whom the question of the transfer of the General Council was more of a theoretical nature), and Sorge, 'the New York Karl Marx',⁴³ who would in all probability control the General Council. Joukovsky noted 'that the French delegates are more than unhappy. They express the desire to continue the discussion, but the German party, who are sure of themselves, are pushing for *clôture* [an end to the debate] and are calling for a vote.'⁴⁴ Indeed, only Vaillant was able to speak out against the transfer of the General Council. He pointed out that there was also a conflict in the United States, that New York was far away from where events took place and finally that despite the unfortunate withdrawal of seasoned General Council members there were 'enough good Internationals in London' to form a new General Council – obviously alluding to himself and his Blanquist friends.⁴⁵ The American

³⁹ Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 155, 176–77 (15 abstentions). Le Moussu, 'Minutes', pp. 75–76 (16 abstentions).

⁴⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 60–61.

⁴¹ See above, p. 271.

⁴² Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 156–57.

⁴³ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 224.

⁴⁴ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 716 (minutes by Joukovsky).

⁴⁵ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 157. The Blanquists, Guillaume commented, 'wanted the General Council to remain in London, hoping thus to have it under their influence' (Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 234). Among other

delegate Sauva also gave a speech where, in allusion to his compatriot Sorge, he warned against putting the General Council in the hands of someone who 'represents authoritarianism just as much if not more than the previous General Council'.⁴⁶ A motion to end the debate was then put to a vote and passed with 25 in favour and 19 against, despite Johannard's protest: 'you cannot fool around with such important questions; no hasty decisions'.⁴⁷ A motion to move the General Council was voted on immediately afterward and passed with 26 in favour, 23 against and 9 abstentions.⁴⁸ This vote was quite astonishing in that the conflict line now cut clear across the previous blocs. What's more, because of the kerfuffle surrounding the motion, nobody seemed to notice that the vote was invalid: only 26 delegates voted in favour of the motion, which wasn't the absolute majority required to constitute a quorum.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, a debate about the new seat of the General Council ensued. As called for in their mandate, the Spanish delegates suggested that the General Council be moved to Brussels. However, the Belgians refused, saying 'that the General Council would not be in safety in Belgium and that besides the Belgian Federal Council is anti-authoritarian and would refuse to apply the principle of authority recognised by the Congress'.⁵⁰ The delegates then voted on the new seat of the General Council with the following result: 31 or 30 votes for New York, 14 for London and 11 or 13 abstentions.⁵¹ The chaotic voting behaviour resulted in curious coalitions. In addition to Marx and his supporters, hard-core members of the *minority* like the Belgian delegate Brismée voted to move the General Council to New York, thus tipping the balance. Brismée exclaimed, 'Too bad we could not move it even further away!'⁵²

The evening meeting on the same day (6 September 1872) was dedicated to the discussion of the *only question of principle at the Congress of The Hague*. Even before the congress, Marx publicly solicited support for his goal of enshrining the watershed decisions of the London Conference

reasons, Marx and Engels justified the necessity to relocate the General Council by pointing to the ambitions of the Blanquists, who had been their allies until that point; see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 265, 284. Hepner to Liebknecht, [after 8 September 1872], in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 527. 'I managed to get the resolution for the transfer to New York in order to prevent them from achieving their ends', Marx explained in a conversation (report by a spy dated 9 September 1872, APP, Ba 434).

⁴⁶ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 157. Sauva was apparently referring to Sorge and to the American Federal Council that he controlled: 'the German party, or more properly speaking the Marx party', as Sauva described it on the following day (see Eccarius, 'Reports', p. 96. See also Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 89).

⁴⁷ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 716 (minutes by Joukovsky). Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 79.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

⁴⁹ Only Eccarius mentioned this in his report on the congress (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 88); he appears to have been absent during the debate and vote. On the following day, Guillaume and Eccarius protested about the validity of a similar vote (relative majority and not a majority of votes cast) and were thus able to push through the continuation of the debate despite Marx's objections; see Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 91; Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 164–65; as well as Eccarius, 'Reports', p. 97.

⁵⁰ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 81.

⁵¹ The minutes once again contain variations in the voting results; see Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 158, 177 (first numbers; only the delegates who voted for New York are named). Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 81 (second numbers; names). Sorge also noted a vote cast for Barcelona (Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 158), which was because the Belgian delegate Eberhard nominated Barcelona or Madrid (see text in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 189; see also Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 80). In his report to the North American Federation of the International, Sorge noted the following vote result: 31 votes for New York, 14 for London, 1 for Barcelona, 1 for Brussels and 10 abstentions (see *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 314).

⁵² Personal interview with Joukovsky by Nettlau, see Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 717. For more about the logic behind the support of the General Council's transfer to New York among those belonging to the *minority* ('it will actually be the same for us as if it did not exist'), see Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 234.

– especially resolution no. 9 of the London Conference concerning the ‘political action of the working class’, i.e. their constitution into a political party and the conquest of political power – into the General Rules. In an anonymous article printed on 29 August 1872 in the Vienna *Neue Freie Presse*, he wrote:

According to the announcement made by the London General Council, the future organisation of the International is to be discussed. In this connection it is the intention of the General Council to propose the insertion in the General Rules of a decision which was adopted by the Conference of delegates of the International held last year in London and according to which the members of the Association in the different countries should organise into political parties. It is on this point that a heated struggle will break out between the supporters of the Conference decision and the so-called abstentionists who refuse to have anything at all to do with politics. [...] the trend represented by the German socialists has made such progress that at the Congress not only the English, the Dutch and the Danish, but also the majority of the Swiss, French, Spanish and Portuguese will support the insertion of the above-mentioned London Conference decision in the General Rules of the International.⁵³

Marx’s vision that delegates from around Europe would flock to support resolution no. 9 was wishful thinking. The debate at the public meeting on the evening of 6 September 1872 began with a motion to add the following text (based on the wording of resolution no. 9) to the General Rules:

In its struggle against the collective power of the propertied classes, the working class cannot act as a class except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to all old parties formed by the propertied classes. This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to insure the triumph of the social revolution, and of its ultimate end, the abolition of classes. The combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economical struggles ought, at the same time, to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists. The lords of land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defence and perpetuation of their economical monopolies, and for the enslavement of labour. The conquest of political power has therefore become the great duty of the working class.⁵⁴

The Blanquist delegate Vaillant – true to his vision of a military-style organisation of the International – spoke out *in favour* of the motion: ‘Violence is used against us, and violence can only be driven away with violence; the economic struggle must become one with the political struggle and during the revolution, by way of the dictatorship of the proletariat, abolish the classes.’⁵⁵ The German social democrat Hepner also spoke out in support of the proposed resolution, once again demonstrating his ignorance:

⁵³ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 139–41.

⁵⁴ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 159. The insertion of this text as an article in the General Rules was suggested by Vaillant at the General Council meeting on 23 July 1872: Resolution no. 9, he explained, ‘has produced a great sensation and most of the success of the International of late is due to that resolution, hence the Council ought to reaf-firm it and adopt it as one of the fundamental rules of the society’. Marx and Engels (apparently in concert with Vaillant) immediately supported the motion: ‘Citizen *Engels* seconds it – the same reasons that made us adopt it at the Conference still exist and we shall have to fight it out at the Congress. Citizen *Marx* says there is another view; we have two classes of enemies: the abstentionists, and they have attacked that resolution more than any other; the working classes of England and America let the middle classes use them for political purposes; we must put an end to it by exposing it. The resolution is carried.’ (*The General Council: Minutes*, vol. 5, p. 263).

⁵⁵ Sorge, ‘Protokoll’, p. 85.

abstention from all political activity leads to the police station, of which we have experience in Germany. The Bakuninist party in Germany was the General Association of German Workers [ADAV] under Schweitzer, and the latter was finally unmasked as a police agent. At the outbreak of the war these people were extremely patriotic in their mood [...]. Those were the results of the abstention policy. Only after the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine did these people realise their mistake and become conscious of their chauvinism. To what, then, does political abstention lead? To calmly looking on with one's hands in one's pockets when a revolution breaks out in France, [when a] political coup d'état takes place? The International movement knows no abstention. [...] Here we have talk against authority: we also are against excesses of any kind but a certain authority, a certain prestige will always be necessary to provide cohesion in the party. It is logical that such anti-authoritarians have to abolish also the federal councils, the federations, the committees and even the sections, because authority is exercised to a greater or lesser degree by all of them; they must establish absolute anarchy everywhere, that is, they must turn the militant International into a petty-bourgeois party in a dressing-gown and slippers.⁵⁶

Hepner's bizarre speech once again revealed the Great Wall of China surrounding the German social democrats.⁵⁷ For instance, calling Lassalle's centralist ADAV the 'Bakuninist party in Germany' was quite absurd – in reality, the ADAV fused with the SDAP two and a half years later. Hepner himself even admitted to having difficulties understanding the contentious issues: the minutes state that 'He has never been able to understand the special teaching of the abstentionists'.⁵⁸ He apparently was unable to grasp that the advocates of abstention from parliamentarianism could represent a different concept of socialism (namely a social-revolutionary one) than the German social democrats.

'The discussion was not a serious one', Guillaume justifiably lamented later.⁵⁹ In his reply to Hepner, he tried to emphasise the fundamental differences. Guillaume explained the politics of the General Council:

we find them summarized in the German communists' manifesto of 1848, in the articles that assign the workers' State all the centralising powers of the existing States.⁶⁰ These conclusions of the 1848 manifesto express the true meaning of the resolution [no. 9] adopted in London in September 1871. You want to conquer political power, which you then will use to benefit the working class and to organise it economically, according to an essentially communist model. The conclusions of the manifesto of 1848 expressly indicate this. Now, wherever you leave centralisation in place, whatever the class may be that it is to benefit, you will still have all the vices inherent in the State [*l'Etat*].⁶¹ Where you have industrial armies, you will have a headquarters

⁵⁶ Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 160–61.

⁵⁷ See above, p. 296.

⁵⁸ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 83.

⁵⁹ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 232.

⁶⁰ This refers to the list of measures at the end of section II of the *Communist Manifesto*, which were 'pretty generally applicable'; see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 505. For more about the name 'German communists' manifesto', which came from an American edition printed at the time, see above, p. 518, n. 167.

⁶¹ Jules Guesde also criticised this in a letter dated 22 September 1872: 'Mr Marx's dream, and that of the German socialists, is, once power is in their hands, to create a Monster State, owner of the land, of credit, of the factories and workshops – in a word, of all the instruments of labour – and to allot to each his task, dividing the workers according to its whim, etc., etc. More than ever, the governed shall be governed, and the governors govern. Authority, far from being abolished, is expanded by all the new powers with which the State shall find itself endowed, today belonging to the private sphere of the individual.' (Guesde to Gironis, 22 September 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 5638).

[état-major], a term frequently employed in discussions concerning the General Council; you will have a hierarchy and therefore an authority. This is the future toward which London's resolution [no. 9], which you revive today, must lead us. As federalists, we reject this conquest of political power by the working class [...].⁶² We do not want to interfere in the present government systems, in parliamentarianism, because we want to overthrow all governments (*aplatir*). We have unfortunately allowed ourselves to be called abstentionists – an expression very badly chosen by Proudhon.⁶³ Hepner is wrong to call us political abstainers;⁶⁴ what the minority at the Congress aimed at was not political indifferentism, but a special kind of politics negating bourgeois politics and which we should call the politics of labour. The distinction between the positive politics of the majority and the negative politics of the minority was, by the way, clearly brought out in the definition of the aims pursued by the one and by the other: the majority wanted *the conquest of political power*, the minority wanted *the destruction of political power*.⁶⁵

Podolinskii, an observer at the congress, described his impressions in letters written on the following day:

The hall was full of people, more than half of whom were workers, and Guillaume's speech, briefly but energetically translated by Van den Abeele, produced such an impression on them that Marx, finally getting angry, shouted that Van den Abeele had not translated correctly, which was quite unjust according to the Belgians and the Dutch,⁶⁶ Engels also made similar observations in respect of Guillaume's speech, from which you may draw the conclusion that they are bad at logical thinking.⁶⁷ After the meeting Brismée said that Marx and Co. would not dare to speak and act as they had done at an ordinary meeting of workers and not at a congress where more than half were Jacobins and so on. Even some French Communards are beginning to be dissatisfied, and if the workers were really counted then more than half of them would be federalists. Marx in general behaves unbecomingly; for instance he prompts the chairman what he should do – it would be better if he were in the chair himself.⁶⁸

Marx's son-in-law Longuet was the last to speak. In response to Guillaume, he repeated the theory that *a functioning organisation can only be authoritarian* and escalated matters with his veiled threats:

where will Guillaume's collectivism lead without a certain centralisation of powers? The workers have to organise as political parties for the sake of the economic struggle, otherwise nothing will remain of the International and Guillaume, whose master Bakunin is, cannot belong to the IWA with such views.⁶⁹

On the next day (7 September 1872), the *majority* at the congress voted in favour of ending the debate despite Brismée and Dave's protests: 'Three speakers have spoken in favour, only one against. The discussion has been suppressed.'⁷⁰ In the ensuing vote on inserting the aforemen-

⁶² *Liberté*, 15 September 1872, p. 3.

⁶³ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 162.

⁶⁴ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 84.

⁶⁵ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 233.

⁶⁶ Podolinskii to Lavrov, 7 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 521.

⁶⁷ Podolinskii to Idel'son, 7 September 1872, in Sapir (ed.), *Vpered!* 1873–1877, vol. 2, p. 417.

⁶⁸ Podolinskii to Lavrov, 7 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 521.

⁶⁹ Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 91.

⁷⁰ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 93 (here erroneously 'is stopped' instead of 'has been suppressed' [*on étouffe*]; corrected according to the original wording in Le Moussu, 'Procès-verbaux', p. 75). See also the written note of protest by Cyrille, Dumont (pseudonym of Faillet) and Pihl (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 195–96).

tioned text regarding the *constitution of the proletariat into a political party* and the *conquest of political power* as art. 7a into the General Rules of the International, 27 or 29 voted in favour, 4 or 5 against, and 9 or 8 abstained.⁷¹

With this vote and the resolution to move the General Council to New York, all of the decisions had been made that would lead to the end of the International in its present form. Even longtime members of the General Council – like Jules Johannard, who voted with the *majority* for the most part – were infuriated with Marx and Engels. On 7 September 1872, Johannard wrote his General Council colleague Jung who had stayed behind in London:

There is a manoeuvre which I do not hesitate to qualify as unworthy on the part of men [Marx and Engels] whom I had been used to consider honest. For the rest, I shall tell you all that is going on here; since the very first day it has been nothing but a centre of base intrigues, they have not feared to sacrifice the Association for the sake of having their proposals adopted. You will be surprised to learn, I suppose, that the General Council is to be transferred in future to *New York!* Yes, my dear fellow, to America. You can imagine the resolution declaring that the Association was to become a political party, and moreover the General Council in the New World. You can imagine the General Council sending *orders or communications* to the Parisians, the Germans, the Spaniards. I swear there will be a good laugh when that is known, but we shall talk about it soon. [...]

My poor friend, where is our impartiality, our justice? If I had foreseen what was going to happen I swear I would have entreated you to come. It is almost a crime to have allowed the poor International to be mutilated as it has been for the last week. [...]

The vote is taking place on the composition of the General Council, which they are trying to put into the hands of Mr. Sorge, the man who will be fatal to the Association, mark my words. [...] Marx and Engels are making unheard of blunders and are displaying an unprecedented passion against any opposition; their clumsiness is revolting even their friends.⁷²

Sorge took on the chair of the congress on the last day of meetings, which were at times so chaotic that he had to hammer at his table with a cane to get the attention of the delegates. Eccarius described him as a sort of Grim Reaper of the International: ‘Sorge with his stick, as he appeared yesterday, was the Prussian Corporal to a T; he will not retrieve the falling fortunes of the society with ukases and decrees sent from the other side of the Atlantic.’⁷³

Constitution of the *minority* and the final meeting of the Congress of The Hague

Of course, there was a lot of informal networking going on among both sides parallel to the official proceeding of the congress. ‘Elections and such like matters are settled at the Hôtel Pico where Dr. Marx is to be seen, and at the Café National, where the Federalists talk matters over’, Eccarius wrote in his report on the congress.⁷⁴ Already on 3 September 1872, many delegates of

⁷¹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 166 (first numbers, without names); Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, pp. 93–94 (second numbers, including names). Le Moussu’s numbers were used in the official edition of the Congress of The Hague resolutions printed at the time; see ‘Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague’, p. 282.

⁷² Jules Johannard to Jung, 8 [7] September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 524–25.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 102, see also p. 97.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

the *minority* met for a first private meeting, which the Spanish delegates described as follows in a report:

on the night of the 3rd [of September], a meeting was held outside of the Congress, in order to secure the agreement of all the anti-authoritarian delegates. In attendance [other than the Spanish delegates] were the Belgians, Dutch, those from Jura, some French and Americans, making a total of 16. These meetings should continue to be held, they will bear their fruit against the authoritarian tendencies.⁷⁵

As there was a wide spectrum of opinions among the federations critical of the General Council,⁷⁶ it was very difficult to reach an agreement on a common approach. Schwitzguébel sent Jung a confidential message on the following day (4 September) stating that the *minority* was as yet unable to agree on a joint declaration.⁷⁷ Only after the *majority* voted to expand the General Council's authority and move it to New York did negotiations reach the decisive phase. A large part of the *minority* attended a meeting on the afternoon of 6 September in the Café National. According to Joukovsky's notes, this included the Belgian delegates Brismée, Herman, Splingard, Eberhard and Coenen; the Spanish delegates Morago, Farga Pellicer, Marselau and Alerini; the Italian Cafiero; the American delegates Sauva and West; the English delegates Eccarius, Sexton and Roach; and the Swiss delegates Guillaume, Schwitzguébel and Joukovsky.⁷⁸ Joukovsky noted the main issues discussed at the meeting: '(1) how to establish lasting relations [between the federations]. (2) position regarding the next congress'.⁷⁹ Eccarius wrote a comprehensive report of the meeting for the *Times*:

The Spanish delegates would have made good their words by drawing up a manifesto to repudiate the Acts of the Congress on the spot; but the Belgians are not for extremes, they want to be left alone and be on good terms with everybody. The prevailing opinion is that for all practical purposes the General Council at New York will not exist for Europe. [...] The question submitted for consideration was by what means a regular correspondence, independent of the General Council, could be established among the European Federations.

Brismée opined that the thing which everybody had thought the General Council would be instrumental in establishing, an International Trades' Federation, had not been brought about, and therefore the main thing for which a General Council was needed was still left undone. If the various trades of different countries could be brought into communication with each other, so that each trade formed a union of its own throughout Europe, it would not be difficult to ally the trades in Federations, and society would ultimately be grouped according to occupations.

The go-between from New York [Sauva] was of opinion that on no account must they dissociate themselves altogether from that International whose office would in future be at New York. Who could tell but that next year the General Council might again take its seat in the old world, and the friction of the next 12 months might wear out the Marx and Sorge party?

⁷⁵ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Circular á todas las federaciones locales', 9 September 1872, IISG, CNT (España) Archives, C88.

⁷⁶ See above, pp. 287–90.

⁷⁷ Johannard to Jung, 4 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 512.

⁷⁸ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. +348. For more about the correlation between these notes by Joukovsky and the meeting on the afternoon of 6 September 1872, see Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 274.

⁷⁹ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. +348.

Guillaume seemed to estimate the situation at its true value. He asked the trimmers if they were not disposed to break at once, what guarantees they had they would not be excommunicated before the year was over, and then they would be driven to revolt?⁸⁰

There seems to have been a breakthrough in the negotiations that evening. Speaking of the final discussion among the representatives of the *minority*, Guillaume reported:

they had exchanged ideas and noted their agreement on the principle of autonomy and now only had to express that agreement in a statement to be presented to the Congress. At first this statement seemed to be a very laborious matter because of certain divergences in detail between the delegates of the various federations; but after the vote transferring the seat of the General Council to New York, it went smoothly. On the Saturday morning [the last day of the Congress, 7 September 1872] a final formulation was arrived at and presented to the opposition delegates for signing.⁸¹

The fact that the entire spectrum of General Council critics overcame their differences and agreed on a *joint declaration* was due in large part to efforts of Guillaume, who had to placate several delegates. Guillaume did not only have to convince the moderate Dutch and Belgian delegates but also Cafiero, for example, who had apparently accompanied the Jura delegates to The Hague as a representative of the radicals, so as to counterbalance Guillaume's willingness to compromise. Guillaume later recalled:

while some Belgians, such as Coenen, Spingard, and Herman, from the first looked with some mistrust on these Jurassians, who had been represented to them as Bakunin's men, our excellent friend Cafiero, whose intransigence could ill accommodate itself to our moderation, sometimes took the latter for weakness and seemed to believe, when I refused to break with the General Council prematurely, that I had made a pact with the enemy.⁸²

Cafiero, Guillaume, and Bakunin apparently already had heated discussions in Switzerland regarding strategy. Bakunin seems to have favoured the confrontational line of the Italian sections and must have hoped that the Spanish and Jurassic delegates would quickly break with the General Council and withdraw from the congress.⁸³ Eccarius also found that the *minority* had made a tactical mistake by staying at the congress. In his report for the *Times*, he wrote:

Notwithstanding, however, all this manifestation of independence, the Federalists to-day betrayed their promises. After repeated declarations that they should consider the bond of union broken if the powers of the General Council were augmented, they are still undecided what to do, and continue to attend the meetings, to beat the wind and be outvoted. [...] The Jura delegates, Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, have protested by their votes on all the essential points. Guillaume has spoken a good deal of truth, but he and his colleague have sanctioned the proceedings by their presence and by taking part in them.⁸⁴

Guillaume pointed out to Nettlau that if the Spanish and Jura delegates had been confrontational and had ostentatiously left the congress, then the Belgian, Dutch and English delegates

⁸⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 89–90.

⁸¹ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', pp. 234–35.

⁸² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 351–52. Cafiero was able to justify his uncompromising attitude with provisions in the Jura delegates' imperative mandate (see above, p. 238). Guillaume, on the other hand, admitted to Nettlau: 'We did not bother with the imperative mandate, J. G. says; the main emphasis was on uniting the federations against the General Council.' (Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4573 B.)

⁸³ See also above, p. 290.

⁸⁴ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, pp. 86, 102.

‘would have stayed on the General Council’s side and Marx would not have lost the reigns of the International as completely as he did.’⁸⁵ If Guillaume had not tried to reach an understanding, Nettlau concluded, this might have occurred,

which was Marx’s desire, the withdrawal of his open critics while the rest of the International and the Belgians would have remained under his control. Now the main parts of the International were allies and the General Council and Marx had for their part become superfluous – a completely different situation.⁸⁶

Guillaume told Nettlau about his discussion with Cafiero on this matter:

When Guillaume tried to explain to the delegates of the aforementioned countries that it wasn’t a matter of spreading anarchist theories but rather the autonomy of ideas, the free choice of direction for each federation, Cafiero was very unhappy as he always wanted Guillaume to advocate anarchy. Cafiero was furious the entire time that Guillaume was negotiating with the others, making compromises, proceeding in a conciliatory fashion, *in order to unite all of Marx’s critics*. Cafiero said, it would be better for us to stand alone than to make any kind of concessions. Guillaume replied: We will win over the Belgian, English, American Internationals. Cafiero: They aren’t important to us because they don’t think like us. Guillaume: Is it important that they don’t think like us? We want to be on good terms with socialists all over the world, whatever their opinion.⁸⁷

While the *majority* resolved on the last day of the congress (7 September 1872) to add the resolution regarding the *constitution of the proletariat into a political party* and the *conquest of political power* as art. 7a to the General Rules of the International, the *minority* had just agreed on an equally historic statement of principles, which was to be presented at the final meeting of the Congress of The Hague. As the public meeting that evening was meant to inform the audience about the goals and purpose of the International, the remaining delegates – almost a third had already left – met for the final meeting at 10 p.m.

Only one item remained on the agenda for the last meeting: the final report of the commission to investigate the Alliance. Before the report was read, the ex-commission member Walter (pseudonym of Van Heddeghem) took the floor. He had already resigned from the commission, ‘because there are no proofs against the accused’.⁸⁸ He now repeated his resignation before the congress, this time saying ‘that there is not enough time for a thorough investigation and Guillaume has refused to answer certain questions’.⁸⁹

Lucain (pseudonym of Potel) then read the commission report, which came to the following conclusions:

1. That the secret Alliance founded on the basis of rules completely opposed to those of the International Working Men’s Association, has existed, but it has not been sufficiently proved to the commission that it still exists.
2. That it has been proved, by draft rules and by letters signed ‘Bakunin’, that this citizen has attempted, perhaps successfully, to found in Europe a society called the Alliance, with

⁸⁵ Nettlau, ‘Nachträge’, n. 4573 B. Reprinted in Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 352.

⁸⁶ Nettlau, ‘Michael Bakunin’, vol. 4, p. 151.

⁸⁷ Nettlau, ‘Nachträge’, n. 4573 B.

⁸⁸ Cuno, ‘Commission’, p. 342.

⁸⁹ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 170. This didn’t prevent Van Heddeghem from expressing his support for the commission in a written statement a few minutes before the end of the congress (see text in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 198–99).

rules completely at variance, from the social and political point of view, with those of the International Working Men's Association.

3. That Citizen Bakunin has resorted to dishonest dealings with the aim of appropriating the whole or part of another person's property, which constitutes an act of fraud.

Furthermore, in order to avoid fulfilling his obligations, he or his agents have resorted to intimidation.⁹⁰

For these reasons, the report proposed that the congress '1. Should expel Citizen Bakunin from the International Working Men's Association. 2. Should likewise expel citizens Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, being convinced that they still belong to a society called Alliance.'⁹¹

As Van Heddeghem had resigned, the report was only signed by Cuno, Lucaïn (pseudonym of Potel) and Vichard – Splingard, the fifth commission member, protested against the commission report and stated, 'Only one thing, in my opinion, has been established at the debate, and that is Mr. Bakunin's attempt to organise a secret society within the International.' As the motion to expel Bakunin, Guillaume, and Schwitzguébel from the International went beyond the scope of the commission's investigative mandate, he declared his 'intention of opposing the commission before the Congress'.⁹²

Splingard had every reason to distance himself from his colleagues' peculiar report. While the first point states that it 'has not been sufficiently proved' that the Alliance still exists, a few lines later the majority of the commission believes that Bakunin, Guillaume, and Schwitzguébel 'still belong to a society called Alliance'. Another part of the report even casts doubt as to whether the Alliance ever existed: Bakunin, the second point states, has 'perhaps successfully' attempted to found a secret society.

No evidence was provided to back the claim that the draft of the Alliance's statutes diverged from those of the International. The commission also did not investigate the accusations against the General Council as the congress had told it to on 5 September.

Cuno didn't seem bothered that the report was irrational when he took the floor: 'It is absolutely indisputable that there have been intrigues inside the Association; lies, calumny and treachery have been proved, the commission has carried out a superhuman job, having sat for 13 hours running today. Now it seeks a vote of confidence by the acceptance of the demands set forth in the report.'⁹³ At this point, Alerini vehemently complained

that people are being condemned in their absence and that no one dares to advance considerations in support of the condemnation.⁹⁴ [...] the commission has only moral convictions and no material proofs; he was a member of the Alliance and is proud of it, for it was the *Alliance* that founded and strengthens the I.W.A. in Spain as a result of which there are now 84 federations in existence in Spain.⁹⁵ You have no right to prevent me from being a member of secret societies. If

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 481–82.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 482. The Spanish delegates and Joukovsky, the report concluded, were 'not implicated in the matter' (*ibid.*). Despite the resolution at the congress meeting on 3 September that the decision regarding Joukovsky's mandate would 'be deferred until Marx's motion against the Alliance is dealt with' (see above, p. 312), the congress never got back to this matter.

⁹² *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 483.

⁹³ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 170.

⁹⁴ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 101.

⁹⁵ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 170.

you do so, I will say that it is a coterie, a church,⁹⁶ [that] you are a Holy Inquisition; we demand a public investigation and conclusive, tangible proofs!⁹⁷ Do the Rules say that one must not be a member of a secret society? No! Then what are you accusing these men of? Of having conspired! Everybody conspires. More than that, if I had known that a secret society would be useful to the International, I admit frankly that I would have been a member of it.⁹⁸

Fluse explained,

that the Alliance is only an aberration of certain minds. We are told that the rules are contrary to the International. Are not the rules of the Grand Orient⁹⁹ contrary to the International, and there are plenty of members of the Grand Orient among us; better still, if I asked for their expulsion, your astonishment would know no bounds; we have the same reason to be astonished at the resolutions of the commission. Here I can only note one fact: wherever the Alliance existed the International developed vastly; and wherever the General Council had a hand there was division in those countries. For example, Spain and Switzerland, where the General Council's private circular [the *Fictitious Splits*] was nothing but a bad joke. To sum up: since the Alliance has done more and better for the good of the International than the General Council has, I should prefer to vote for the dissolution of the Council than for the expulsion of those who belonged to the Alliance.¹⁰⁰

Johannard declined to defend Bakunin or Guillaume, but asked himself, 'if the commission has done its duty properly: Walter [Van Heddeghem] withdraws, hesitates. Spingard does not think he is clear enough about things.'¹⁰¹ Spingard then spelled out his objections and demanded to know,

how Marx obtained the documents written by Bakunin, there must be something fishy here.¹⁰² If the Alliance is prosecuted as a secret society, how have the documents been obtained? by traitors? – They cannot be accepted.¹⁰³ [...] the Alliance existed in Geneva and Spain before the IWA; in Geneva, you yourself admitted them; prove that it still exists [...].¹⁰⁴ You have at your disposal only a draft of the rules, is that a proof?¹⁰⁵ Brother Morago: He [Bakunin] uses old terms.¹⁰⁶ It is a phantom that you don't know and cannot know except through traitors. I deplore to see you strike a man who, like Bakunin, has consecrated himself to the Revolution.¹⁰⁷

Marx replied 'that Spingard behaved in the commission like the advocate of the Alliance, not as an impartial judge. [...] the documents were obtained in the most honest of ways, to be

⁹⁶ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 101.

⁹⁷ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 170.

⁹⁸ Fluse, 'Account', p. 275.

⁹⁹ Grand Orient de France is one of the oldest Masonic Grand Lodges in Europe. Its members included many radicals and socialists during the second half of the 19th century.

¹⁰⁰ Fluse, 'Account', p. 276.

¹⁰¹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 101.

¹⁰² Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 171.

¹⁰³ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 102.

¹⁰⁴ Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 107.

¹⁰⁵ Fluse, 'Account', p. 275. For evidence that the programmes and statutes were drafts, see above, pp. 317–19.

¹⁰⁶ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 722 (minutes by Joukovsky). This is a reference to Bakunin's letter to Francisco Mora, in which there is talk of 'brother Morago'; see above, p. 193. In fact, Bakunin did not only use the word *frère* (brother) to refer to the members in a secret society; see, for example, Bakunin to Paride Suzzara Verdi, 26 February 1872, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁰⁷ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 102.

exact they were sent without any request for them.’¹⁰⁸ This was of course incorrect: in letters to Spain (Lafargue), Switzerland (Utin) and Russia (Baranov and Daniel’s son), Marx and Engels had – as described above – feverishly sought documents which would damage Bakunin’s reputation. In the end, the only piece of evidence against Bakunin himself was Nechaev’s nefarious letter to Lyubavin.¹⁰⁹ The personal allegations against Bakunin in the third point of the commission report (fraud, intimidation, etc.) were based solely on this document even though the commission itself said that the letter was ‘probably written by Nechayev’.¹¹⁰

Spillingard also relayed Joukovsky’s testimony before the commission about the events, which made the third point of the commission report seem groundless: ‘An accusation of swindling is contained in it against Bakunin. Here is Zhukovsky’s explanation: Bakunin received the £1,200. They say that he sent no more than two or three pages of the work. Bakunin owes money, that is all.’¹¹¹ Marx replied harshly that he ‘did not wish to publicise the letter on account of a debt. But if people misuse the name of a secret society in order to arrange their own affairs by means of threats, they deserve no consideration.’¹¹² Marx, however, knew from Lyubavin that this was untrue. When Lyubavin sent Marx Nechaev’s threatening letter, he included an accompanying letter with a reasonable explanation of the matter: ‘Bakunin’s participation in it is not at all proved; the letter could really have been sent by Nechayev quite independently of Bakunin.’¹¹³

Through his false statements, Marx – whose correspondence with Engels was riddled with financial dealings – revealed that he was not interested in the facts surrounding Bakunin’s advance. The *majority* wasn’t interested either as it was already past midnight and the congress bureau had been told by the landlord that the hall had to be vacated. And so it was decided that the ‘accused’, Guillaume and Schwitzguébel, could make a final statement and that the vote regarding the expulsions would follow. Guillaume refused to speak in his defence:

this would apparently be taking seriously the farce organised by the majority. He limited himself to noting that it was at the whole of the federalist party that the majority wished to strike a blow by the measures taken against a few of its members;¹¹⁴ the whole process is a tendentious one and the idea is to kill the so-called minority, in reality the majority; I have been brought to the fore all the time in the discussion these days and been allowed to speak to show by my expulsion on Saturday that it is the federalist principle that is condemned here. (Cries of No! No! No!)¹¹⁵

After Schwitzguébel made a short statement – his conviction had been clear from the start and he would in any event remain in the International – Dave took the floor and pronounced the ‘Minority Declaration’ (‘Déclaration de la minorité’) to the surprise of the *majority*:

We the undersigned, members of the minority at the Hague Congress, supporters of the autonomy and federation of groups of working men, faced with a vote on decisions which seem to us to be contrary to the principles recognised by the countries we represented at the preceding

¹⁰⁸ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 171.

¹⁰⁹ See above, p. 326.

¹¹⁰ See above, p. 329.

¹¹¹ Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 104. This was also Lyubavin’s résumé: ‘Only one thing is certain, that Bakunin showed complete unwillingness to go on with the work he had begun, although he had received money for it.’ (see above, p. 329)

¹¹² Le Moussu, ‘Procès-verbaux’, pp. 86–87.

¹¹³ See above, p. 329.

¹¹⁴ Guillaume, ‘The Congress of The Hague’, pp. 240–41.

¹¹⁵ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 172.

congress, but desiring to avoid any kind of split within the International Working Men's Association, take the following decision, which we shall submit for approval to the sections which delegate us:

1. We shall continue our administrative relations with the General Council in the matter of payment of subscriptions, correspondence and labour statistics.
2. The federations which we represent will establish direct and permanent relations between themselves and all regularly constituted branches of the Association.
3. In the event of the General Council wishing to interfere in the internal affairs of a federation, the federations represented by the undersigned undertake jointly to maintain their autonomy as long as the federations do not engage on a path directly opposed to the General Rules of the International approved at the Geneva Congress.¹¹⁶
4. We call on all the federations and sections to prepare between now and the next general congress for the triumph within the International of the principles of federative autonomy as the basis of the organisation of labour.¹¹⁷

The following delegates signed the 'Minority Declaration': the four Spanish delegates Morago, Alerini, Marselau and Farga Pellicer; the two Jura delegates Schwitzguébel and Guillaume; the American delegate Sauva; the Dutch delegates Dave, van der Hout and Gerhard; and the Belgian delegates Fluse, Van Den Abeele, Coenen, Eberhard, Brismée, Spingard and Herman.¹¹⁸ The Communard Cyrille wrote the following on the declaration (later crossed out): 'I sign to declare that the Congress of The Hague has been but a mystification, that social science has derived no profit from it. Victor Cyrille, French delegate.'¹¹⁹

A motion to end the debate was then put to a vote and passed. The vote on the expulsion of Bakunin, Guillaume and Schwitzguébel followed amid increasing confusion so that both of the minutes and even the official edition of the congress resolutions contain different results.

The delegates first voted to expel Bakunin from the International with 27¹²⁰/28¹²¹/29¹²² in favour, 6¹²³/7¹²⁴ against and 7¹²⁵/8¹²⁶ abstentions.

¹¹⁶ Meant are the General Rules adopted at the first congress of the International in Geneva (1866) before the authority of the General Council was expanded in the Rules through the resolutions of the Basel Congress (1869) and London Conference (1871).

¹¹⁷ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 199–200.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 200. The original manuscript of the 'Minority Declaration' has not survived. A copy made by Cuno that still exists includes 'J. Van der Hout, delegate of Amsterdam', but contemporaneous publications of the 'Minority Declaration' in the press fail to mention that he signed; for the reasons, see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, pp. 520–21. According to Guillaume, Spingard and Herman's signatures were missing on the original document; see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 343.

¹¹⁹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 200.

¹²⁰ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 104–5.

¹²¹ Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 174–75 (names).

¹²² Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 173 (votes).

¹²³ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 104–5.

¹²⁴ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 175 (names).

¹²⁵ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 104–5.

¹²⁶ Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116 (names).

In favour: Johann Philipp Becker, Cuno, *Dereure*, Dumont (pseudonym of Faillet), Dupont, Duval, Engels, Farkas, Frankel, Friedländer,¹²⁷ Heim (pseudonym of Oberwinder), Hepner, Johannard, Kugelman, Lafargue, Le Moussu, Longuet, Lucain (pseudonym of Potel), *McDonnell*, Marx, Pihl, Serrailier, Sorge, Swarm (pseudonym of Dentraygues), Vichard, Walter (pseudonym of Van Heddeghem), Wilmart, Wróblewski.

Against: Brismée, Coenen, Cyrille,¹²⁸ Dave, Fluse, Herman, Van Den Abeele.

Abstentions: Alerini, Farga Pellicer,¹²⁹ Guillaume, Marselau, Morago, *Sauva*, Schwitzguébel, *Splingard*.

The motion to expel Guillaume was voted on next and passed with 25 in favour, 9 against¹³⁰ and 8¹³¹/9¹³² abstentions.

In favour: Johann Philipp Becker, Cuno, Dumont (pseudonym of Faillet), *Dupont*, *Duval*, Engels, Farkas, *Frankel*, Heim (pseudonym of Oberwinder), Hepner, *Johannard*, Kugelman, *Lafargue*, Le Moussu, *Longuet*, *Lucain* (pseudonym of Potel), Marx, Pihl, *Serrailier*, Sorge, *Swarm* (pseudonym of Dentraygues), Vichard, Walter (pseudonym of Van Heddeghem), *Wilmart*, Wróblewski.

Against: Brismée, Coenen, Cyrille, Dave, Fluse, Herman, *Sauva*, *Splingard*, Van Den Abeele.

Abstentions: Alerini, *Dereure*, Farga Pellicer, Friedländer, Guillaume,¹³³ *McDonnell*, Marselau, Morago, Schwitzguébel.¹³⁴

The italicised names in the above lists indicate which delegates voted differently in the vote that followed – *Dereure*, for example, first voted *in favour* of expelling Bakunin but then *abstained* from the vote on Guillaume's expulsion and finally voted *against* expelling Schwitzguébel. This trend can be seen among numerous delegates: McDonnell switched from voting in favour to abstaining, Sauva and Splingard abstained and then voted against. By the time the delegates voted on Schwitzguébel's expulsion, the balance of power had been tipped, the *majority* collapsed and the motion to expel Schwitzguébel was rejected: only 14¹³⁵/15¹³⁶ delegates were in favour, 16¹³⁷/17¹³⁸ against and 7¹³⁹/8¹⁴⁰/10¹⁴¹ abstained. Even Lucain (pseudonym of Potel) abstained, and he was a member of the commission to investigate the Alliance which had just proposed Schwitzguébel's expulsion.

¹²⁷ Only named in Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 174.

¹²⁸ Only named *ibid.*, p. 175.

¹²⁹ Only named in Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116.

¹³⁰ Up to here, identical in Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 105; Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 174–75 (names).

¹³¹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 105. Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116 (names).

¹³² Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 173 (votes).

¹³³ Missing in 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289.

¹³⁴ Only mentioned *ibid.*

¹³⁵ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106 (names).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* (votes; this result was used in the official edition of the Congress of The Hague resolutions printed at the time, see 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289). Sorge, 'Minutes', pp. 174–75 (names).

¹³⁷ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106 (names). Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 175 (names).

¹³⁸ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106 (votes; used in the official edition of the Congress of The Hague resolutions printed at the time, see *International Herald*, 14 December 1872, p. 5; in the reprint in 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289, this is corrected to '16').

¹³⁹ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106 (votes; used in the official edition of the Congress of The Hague resolutions printed at the time, see 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289).

¹⁴⁰ Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106 (names).

¹⁴¹ Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116 (names).

In favour: Johann Philipp Becker, Cuno,¹⁴² Dumont (pseudonym of Faillet), Engels, Farkas, Heim (pseudonym of Oberwinder),¹⁴³ Hepner, Kugelmann, Le Moussu, Marx, Pihl, Sorge,¹⁴⁴ Vichard, Walter (pseudonym of Van Heddeghem), Wróblewski.

Against: Brismée, Coenen, Cyrille, Dave, Dereure, Dupont, Fluse, Frankel, Herman, Johannard, Longuet, Sauva, Serrailier, Splingard,¹⁴⁵ Swarm (pseudonym of Dentraygues), Van Den Abeele, Wilmart.

Abstentions: Alerini,¹⁴⁶ Duval, Farga Pellicer, Friedländer,¹⁴⁷ Lafargue, Lucain (pseudonym of Potel), McDonnell, Marselau, Morago, Schwitzguébel.¹⁴⁸

According to Guillaume's report on the congress, Schwitzguébel immediately protested against the result: 'he pointed out that his expulsion had been proposed for exactly the same motives as that of Guillaume and that it was absurd to expel one and not the other. The majority did not reply, and Guillaume for his part stated that he continued to consider himself a member of the International.'¹⁴⁹ In the chaos that followed and amid 'cheers for Labour', the congress was closed at 12:30 a.m.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴² Abstained according to Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116.

¹⁴³ Missing in Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106.

¹⁴⁴ Missing *ibid.* and in 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289.

¹⁴⁵ See Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 351. Mistakenly listed as voting for Schwitzguébel's expulsion in Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106; Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 175.

¹⁴⁶ Missing in 'Resolutions of the General Congress Held at The Hague', p. 289.

¹⁴⁷ Only in Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116.

¹⁴⁸ See Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 351. Schwitzguébel is missing in Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 106; Sorge, 'Protokoll', p. 116.

¹⁴⁹ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 242.

¹⁵⁰ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 174.

CHAPTER 18. The Congresses of St. Imier, Brussels, and Córdoba

AT THE INVITATION OF THE DUTCH Federal Council,¹ most of the delegates took the train from The Hague to Amsterdam that Sunday morning (8 September 1872). The members of the *majority* attended a public meeting at around noon where various speeches were held ‘on the tasks and aims of the International Working Men’s Association, on the work of the Congress which had just ended and on the future of the Association’.² In his speech, Marx emphasised the three main results of the Congress of The Hague: the General Council’s expanded authority, its transfer to New York, and the resolution concerning the conquest of political power in order to overthrow the existing regime by peaceful or violent means.³ The speakers also included Engels and his confidant Dupont, who attacked Bakunin violently.⁴ Marx then took a week long holiday with his wife, his daughter Eleanor, and Engels at the seaside resort Scheveningen.⁵

The delegates of the *minority* declined to take part in the public meeting of the *majority* and instead attended a demonstration in solidarity with striking printers in Amsterdam in the early evening of 8 September. Guillaume wrote a report on the demonstration for the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin*:

several hundred persons, including many women, were present. The delegates of the International were invited to speak, and by way of protest against the *ukases* of the majority it was *Guillaume*, expelled the day before by those gentlemen, whom they entrusted to speak in the name of the International. His speech, translated into Dutch by *Dave*, was listened to with en-

¹ See text in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 276. Announced during the evening meeting on 4 September 1872 (Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 55; Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 140).

² *Ibid.*, p. 177.

³ See Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, pp. 254–56. Marx declared: ‘We know that the institutions, customs and traditions in the different countries must be taken into account; and we do not deny the existence of countries like America, England, and if I knew your institutions better I might add Holland, where the workers may achieve their aims by peaceful means’ (*ibid.*, p. 255). For more about Bakunin’s criticism of this, see below, p. 560, n. 104.

⁴ A correspondent for the *Algemeen Handelsblad* reported: ‘Citizen Engels says a few insignificant words, after which citizen Dupont gets the opportunity to speak, particularly, it seems, in order to jump on Michael Bakunin, the well-known Russian socialist. The tireless patriot, another Blanqui and the perpetual victim of his own pursuits; incarcerated in all of Europe’s prisons; sentenced to death twice, once in Saxony, the second time in Austria; extradited time and again and sentenced to hard labour in Siberia; then escaped from the Russian slavery under thousands of deprivations, escaped by the Amur and crossing through America to London – him, the sixty-year-old martyr who turned grey in exile, one would certainly have deemed beyond the suspicion of being a traitor or even a bought over spy of Russia. But citizen Dupont nurtures other thoughts about him. For the speaker Bakunin is nothing less than a wretch who has worked against the International, who has undermined its authority, who wanted to centralise the power in his hands and to induce Spain to disloyalty. The speaker announces that on Saturday the outraged congress expelled the degenerate Michael Bakunin from the International, declared him unworthy to remain a member of that association any longer.’ (*Algemeen Handelsblad*, 10 September 1872, p. 2).

⁵ See Karl Marx. *Chronik seines Lebens in Einzeldaten* (Moscow: Marx-Engels-Verlag, 1934), p. 337.

thusiasm by the printers. *Dave* and *Brismée* then spoke. Mr. Engels, who had mistakenly come to this meeting, seeing the sentiments of the Dutch workers, departed in haste.⁶

The delegates then went to a meeting of the Amsterdam section where the 'Minority Declaration' was read and unanimously ratified by those present.⁷

Parallel to this official programme, the delegates discussed how to proceed: after the Congress of The Hague, the Spanish delegates – in accordance with their mandate⁸ – were to attend the alternative congress convened in Switzerland by the Italian Federation during their founding congress.⁹ And so the following delegates belonging to the *minority* headed south toward Belgium on the next day (9 September 1872): the Belgian delegates Fluse, Van Den Abeele, Coenen, Eberhard, Brismée, Splingard, and Herman; the Jura delegates Guillaume and Schwitzguébel; the Spanish delegates Marselau, Morago, Farga Pellicer, and Alerini; and Cafiero and Joukovsky.

In Brussels, the delegates gave a report on the Congress of The Hague to a meeting of the Brussels Local Federation. The meeting was described in an article based on a report by the Spanish delegates:

After a lively, interesting and illuminating discussion, in which our Belgian brothers demonstrated the full spirit of autonomy that animates them, the assembly of the Brussels Federation – in view of the minority declaration in the Congress of The Hague and because of the mystifications, injustice and intrigues that constituted the Congress – agreed not to recognise said Congress of The Hague or the General Council of New York; furthermore they agreed to put all their efforts into asserting this resolution in all the sections and federations.¹⁰

Those attending the meeting seem to have objected to Bakunin's expulsion in particular: 'The Brussels sections and the Federal Council of Brussels have decided in a joint meeting that there were grounds for considering as null and void the expulsion of *Bakunin* from Neuchâtel and invite all the [anti-]authoritarian federations to protest against this expulsion.'¹¹ Guillaume, Schwitzguébel, Cafiero and the Spanish delegates finally headed toward Switzerland on the evening of 10 September 1872.¹² Guillaume went to Neuchâtel; Schwitzguébel, Cafiero and the Spanish delegates went to Zurich, where Bakunin was waiting for them.

Bakunin had exchanged letters with Cafiero since his departure from Zurich on 30 August 1872 as well as with Guillaume and Schwitzguébel.¹³ On 6 September, Bakunin recorded receiving a letter from Cafiero in his diary and noted: 'stupid – disappointing'.¹⁴ This may have been in reaction to the letter itself or to the news about Guillaume's moderate approach. Two days later,

⁶ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 244. See also the report in *Federación*, 28 September 1872, p. 1.

⁷ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 244.

⁸ Seventh point of the Spanish delegates' imperative mandate, see above, p. 278.

⁹ See above, pp. 236–37.

¹⁰ *Federación*, 28 September 1872, p. 1.

¹¹ Report by a spy dated 11 September 1872, APP, Ba 944. The words 'from Neuchâtel' appear to have been added later, probably in reference to Bakunin's membership in the Jura Federation.

¹² Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 355. The Spanish delegates sent a letter from Basel to the Spanish Federal Council in Valencia on 11 September 1872; see The Spanish Federal Council to the Gracia Local Council, 25 September 1872, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, p. 71. Joukovsky, who had spent all of his money, was unable to leave Brussels where he was arrested by Belgian police and incarcerated for several days; see Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4595. Podolskii to Lavrov, 16 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 531. M. Vuilleumier, 'Sur quelques proscrits de la Commune', *Le Mouvement social*, no. 44, July–September 1963, p. 68.

¹³ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 33–35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

he noted that a letter from Cafiero was 'pretty good'.¹⁵ This may have been in reference to the understanding reached by the delegates of the *minority*. By contrast, Bakunin apparently did not think much of the 'Minority Declaration', a compromise that had to do justice to all of the viewpoints of the delegates critical of the General Council. Guillaume recalled that Bakunin considered it 'undignified', that he 'had awaited something energetic'.¹⁶

Bakunin had other priorities: in view of the dramatic crisis within the International, Bakunin started developing projects at the end of August 1872 that would enable the militant members of International's different federations to communicate directly with one another, so that their activities could be better coordinated after the unavoidable clash in The Hague. Bakunin recorded his activities in his diary: 'Wrote const[itution] of the P. P.' on 20 August 1872, 'Wrote constitution in the evening' on 2 September, 'Statutes of Y.' on 3 September, 'Statutes of the Alliance' on 4 September, and 'Wrote Alliance statutes' on 5 September.¹⁷ Thus, while the commission to investigate the Alliance was chasing the mirage of the ubiquitous Alliance with a programme 'completely opposed' to that of the International, Bakunin began working on a programme for an alliance, which was yet to be formed and was created in order to empower the International's most active members.¹⁸

At the end of August 1872, the members of the Italian and Jura Federation had agreed to hold an international alternative congress.¹⁹ The first Italian delegates, Fanelli and Nabruzzi, arrived in Zurich on 5 September – while the Congress of The Hague was in full swing – where they met Bakunin.²⁰ Along with Malatesta who arrived on 7 September, they were the first to lay eyes on Bakunin's drafts of programmes for his as-yet-unformed alliance.²¹ Cafiero, Schwitzguébel, and the Spanish delegates arrived on the evening of 11 September in Zurich and Costa arrived on September 12. They all joined the discussion: 'Morning and evening reading and discussion of the statutes', Bakunin noted in his diary on 12 September; 'Accepted – Fraternal kiss and formal handshake', he wrote on 13 September.²²

As Malatesta's recollections suggest ('together with Bakunin and the others, Swiss, Spanish and French, we began those interminable discussions to which Bakunin brought so much of his magnetism'²³), those present were busy discussing current issues and networking, while Bakunin once more seems to have been the only one to take his *drafts of an organisation which only existed in theory* and the *secret imaginary* 'Committee of the Alliance' seriously.²⁴ Guillaume later admitted,

for my part, indifferent to formalities, like my Jurassian friends – and Bakunin often reproached us for it – I didn't bother myself with that aspect of the matter at all, and I don't recall

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁶ Personal interview with Guillaume by Nettleau, see Nettleau, 'Nachträge', n. 4606 A. See also above, pp. 289–90.

¹⁷ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 33–34.

¹⁸ Several drafts of the programme from August/September 1872 exist; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, pp. 177–208.

¹⁹ See above, p. 239.

²⁰ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 34.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 35–36. The *Condenado* received letters on 11 and 12 September that were probably written by Morago; see *Condenado*, 19 September 1872, p. 2.

²³ E. Malatesta, *Scritti*, 3 vols. (Geneva: Edizione del 'Risveglio', 1934–1936), vol. 3, p. 246.

²⁴ See above, p. 318.

if I had read the statutes it concerned; but I was happy to think that a solid agreement had been made for the purposes of propaganda and action.²⁵

Bakunin, the delegates who had met in Zurich and allied members of the Russian colony in Zurich²⁶ travelled to St. Imier on 14/15 September 1872 where an extraordinary congress of the Jura Federation and the international alternative congress were to take place. After Schwitzguébel read a report, the 16 delegates²⁷ attending the Jura congress passed a motion declaring the Congress of The Hague resolutions 'as being unjust, inopportune, and exceeding the powers of a congress' as well as rejecting 'in every way the authoritarian powers of the General Council'.²⁸ With respect to the expulsion of Jura Federation members Bakunin and Guillaume voted for by the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague, the delegates of the Jura congress voted in a second resolution to issue a declaration defending their honour, to refute the allegations made against them and to declare that the St. Imier Congress 'continues to recognise comrades Bakunin and Guillaume as members of the International belonging to the Jura Federation'.²⁹

An hour after the Jura congress ended, the international alternative congress got under way in the same hall. The delegates included Alerini, Farga Pellicer, Marselau, and Morago for the Spanish Federation; Costa, Cafiero, Bakunin, Malatesta, Nabruzzi, and Fanelli for the Italian Federation; the Communeur Louis Pindy and the Lyonesse refugee Camille Camet for French sections; the Communeur Gustave Lefrançais for two American sections; and Guillaume and Schwitzguébel for the Jura Federation. On 15 and 16 September, four commissions formed by the delegates met to draft resolutions for the congress. These drafts, which were unanimously adopted on 16 September, were much more strongly worded than the 'Minority Declaration'. This was obviously due to the collaboration of Bakunin and other proponents of revolutionary socialism. A first resolution began by stating that the 'majority [of the Congress of The Hague], artificially organised, evidently has no other goal than to bring about the domination of an authoritarian party within the International'. The St. Imier Congress thus resolved to 'absolutely reject all the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague, not recognising in any way the powers of the new General Council it has appointed'.³⁰ In a second resolution, a 'pact of friendship, solidarity, and mutual defense' was agreed on, which was to counter the authoritarian tendencies of the old and new General Council. All of the International's federations were invited to join this friendship pact in order to come into direct contact with one another and declare their opposition to the General Council's interference. The third resolution responded to the Congress of The Hague's resolution regarding the *constitution of the proletariat into a political party and the conquest of political power*:

Considering,

²⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 10. Guillaume recalled that he had already spoken with Alerini, Farga Pellicer and Cafiero in Amsterdam about a cooperation between the most active members of the International; see *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 353.

²⁶ For more about Bakunin's contact with Russian students in Zurich, see J. M. Meijer, *Knowledge and Revolution. The Russian Colony in Zuerich (1870-1873). A Contribution to the Study of Russian Populism* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1955), pp. 64-154.

²⁷ Including Guillaume, Bakunin and – as representatives of the Slavic section in Zurich – Ralli und Gol'shtein, see 'Les deux Congrès de Saint-Imier', *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 September to 1 October 1872, p. 11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

that wishing to impose upon the proletariat a uniform course of action or political programme as the only path that can lead to its social emancipation is a pretension as absurd as it is reactionary [...],

The congress convened at St. Imier declares:

1st That the destruction of all political power is the first duty of the proletariat.

2nd That any so-called provisional and revolutionary organisation of political power to bring about this destruction can only be one more deception and would also pose as great a danger to the proletariat as all the governments existing today.

3rd That, repelling any compromise in order to achieve the social revolution, the proletarians of all countries must establish, outside of all bourgeois politics, the solidarity of revolutionary action.³¹

These resolutions together represented a powerful counterbalance to the Congress of The Hague resolutions. On an international scale, the second resolution was particularly important because the 'St. Imier pact' between the International's federations improved on the most decisive part of the 'Minority Declaration'.

The downfall of the Congress of The Hague's *majority*

As opposed to the defiant activities of the federations belonging to the *minority*, the Congress of The Hague's *majority* quickly fell into decay – it had apparently lost all legitimacy in the eyes of most of its contemporaries. The congress observer Podolinskii wrote, for example:

In fact, the centralists won the battle but the moral victory was positively on the side of the anarchists, which made that, in the first place, the victory of the centralists was by far not as complete as they had expected, that the Belgians and the Dutch who had initially taken a neutral position had joined the anarchists, and that with their dirty victory Marx, Engels & Co. had made that the opinion both of the congress and of the public had turned against them, whereas Guillaume obtained the opposite result. [...] Brismée says that in a normal workers' meeting Marx and Co. would never have dared act in such an authoritarian way as they did at the congress and, as a matter of fact, almost all the workers at the congress are on the side of the anarchists.³²

In addition, the main part of the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague – the coalition of the *French and Germans* so prized by Engels³³ – stopped playing a role in the International:

- The French Blanquist delegates voted for the expansion of the General Council's authority and the resolution enshrining the *constitution of the proletariat into a political party* and the *conquest of political power* into the General Rules, but they were shocked by the decision to move the General Council to New York and left the Congress of The Hague before it was over. Not two months later, the Blanquists announced their withdrawal from the International in a brochure.³⁴
- The Blanquists were able to isolate Serrailier, secretary for France in the old General Council and the new General Council's representative for France, from his remaining contacts:³⁵

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Podolinskii to Idel'son, 7 September 1872, in Sapir (ed.), *Vpered!* 1873–1877, vol. 2, p. 417.

³³ See above, p. 305.

³⁴ 'International and Revolution', p. 186.

³⁵ Martinez, 'Amis éprouvés et sûrs', p. 160.

‘I can get almost no more correspondence [from France]. I must admit that we’ve lost our men’, Serrailier lamented in a letter to Engels dated 9 December 1872.³⁶ He also complained that he no longer had a French-language organ of the International at his disposal, while two newspapers critical of the General Council – the Belgian Federation’s *Internationale* and the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin* – were available in France. When Van Heddeghem reported to the Ferré Section in Paris upon returning from The Hague, he had to face the scorn of its members:

In a general meeting, the section declared, by a unanimous formal vote, that it did not accept the authoritarian decisions of the majority, passed thanks to Marxist intrigues, and resolved to study a new organisation for France without regard to the existence of the new General Council of New York.³⁷

The arrests in December 1872 and the scandal surrounding the suspected spies Dentraygues and Van Heddeghem and their testimony at the trials in March 1873³⁸ compromised and marginalised the General Council even more in France since Van Heddeghem had even been given a provisional mandate by the new General Council in New York on 30 December 1872.³⁹ ‘Communications are interrupted, no payment received’, the New York General Council complained of France.⁴⁰ Engels even admitted that ‘all communications have broken down’.⁴¹

- The German social democrats continued to show little interest in the International. The Germans, Engels fantasised, ‘were very disheartened by the Hague Congress, where they expected nothing but fraternity and harmony in contrast to their own squabbles, and have become apathetic’.⁴² In reality, Liebknecht, for example, must have felt vindicated that he hadn’t put more energy into the International over the years – with the General Council in New York, he could now take it even less seriously. In a letter to Borkheim, Liebknecht let Marx and Engels know that a report on the Congress of The Hague would have to be published in the *Volksstaat*, ‘so as to somewhat correct the horrible impression the proceedings [in The Hague] have made due to all of the reports, even friendly ones. Namely, the deportation [!] of the General Council to New York has to be made plausible.’⁴³ Liebknecht wrote Engels on 21 October 1872: ‘That the *principle* of the International was saved, pleases me; I only wish that the *International itself* had been saved, which, as long as the General Council is deported in New York, only exists in *principle*.’⁴⁴ Despite the fact that Liebknecht was obviously trying to justify the continued low-level commitment to the International

³⁶ RGASPI, fond 1, opis’ 1, delo 3397.

³⁷ Paul Dubiau to the editors of the *Liberté*, no date, in *Liberté*, 27 April 1873, p. 4.

³⁸ See above, pp. 308–9.

³⁹ In the mandate, Van Heddeghem was given the authority to suspend the membership of individuals or organisations in the International within the ‘Paris district’, for example; see text in *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 5 March 1873, p. 219. The General Council justified this in a statement dated 23 May 1873; see Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, pp. 472–74.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 508.

⁴¹ Engels to Sorge, 3 May 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 492. See also Engels to Sorge, 14 June 1873: ‘Serrailier has absolutely nothing to write about, since he does not have a single address in France any more’ (*ibid.*, p. 507).

⁴² Engels to Sorge, 3 May 1873, *ibid.*, p. 493.

⁴³ Borkheim to Engels, 9 October 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 557.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 574–75.

in Germany, his analysis was quite correct. Marx and Engels were able to inscribe their political viewpoint into the General Rules of the International, banish their opponents and put a complaisant General Council out of reach of its opposition. But from then on *their International* only existed *in principle*. Engels on the other hand had apparently believed that a fixed congress would be enough to force the International's dissident federations to their knees. On the day after the constitution of the new General Council in New York, Engels called on Sorge to take punitive action against the resolutions of St. Imier and clamoured for more expulsions:

you cannot simply ignore the resolutions of the Jurassians [in St. Imier] which, having been passed by a Federal Congress, amount to an open declaration of war. [...] It is a very good thing that these gentlemen have openly declared war and thus given us a sufficient reason to show them the door. [...] Swift, vigorous action against these eternal troublemakers is, in our view, very much in place as soon as you have the evidence in your hands, and will probably suffice to disperse the threatened *Sonderbund* [separate union].⁴⁵

As the coming months would show, the term 'separate union' could be more readily used to describe the General Council's faction.

The Brussels Congress (December 1872)

In Belgium, the Congress of The Hague resolutions were soon condemned by just about everyone. Pierre Fluse, who was the delegate at the Congress of The Hague for the Vesdre valley Local Federation, wrote the following upon his return for his federation's organ, the *Mirabeau*:

In fact the struggle was on the one hand between the supporters of authority and centralisation, represented above all by the General Council, by the Germans and by the French, and the supporters of pure anarchy on the other. Two major questions were submitted to us for discussion, and both of them were solved in a manner contrary to our hopes. There was first of all the question of extending the powers of the General Council, of increasing the powers which it had possessed until now, and then of sanctioning by the vote of a world Congress the resolution [no. 9] adopted at the London Conference on the political action of the working classes. The General Council has become a veritable power, whereas we would have wished it to lose even the power which it already had; the resolution of the London Conference was accepted, whereas we had fostered the hope that the majority of the Congress, recognising at last that it was entering on a path which was ruinous and dangerous for the Association, would renounce these erroneous ideas and its counter-revolutionary tendencies. [...]

Two trends of ideas divide the International today. Some think that the Working Men's Association must be organised as a *hierarchy*, that is to say, that it needs a head linking together and directing from above the scattered members of this vast body. Force being the guiding principle and the only support of modern states, they think that we also must use the force that is in us, which is the result of our organisation, and constitute ourselves into a powerful political party capable of conquering political power in order to replace the bourgeois state by the people's state, the *Volksstaat* of the German socialists. This is, as we were reminded at the Hague Congress,⁴⁶ a return to the programme of the German communists of 1848. This conception, in

⁴⁵ Engels to Sorge, 5 October 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 435–36.

⁴⁶ A reference to Guillaume's speech on 6 September 1872, see above, pp. 340–341.

our opinion, has no serious philosophical value, because the organisation of the International, the fruit of this entirely mystical conception, is neither free, nor natural, nor, consequently, true. It is not free because it receives its impulse from above, because it creates an authority *outside itself*, and sacrifices the conscience of the people; it is not natural because, coming from above, it does not take into account the liberty, the autonomy of each of its members, but substitutes for the individual's or the group's own, *essential* authority of the acquired and artificial authority of a few men who, by the nature of the functions they have been given, find themselves at the top of the organisation, at the head of the hierarchy; lastly, it is not true because, by borrowing its mode of functioning from one of the forms of the Absolute, authority, it can only end up by establishing within itself a party, that of the top, holding all the rest of the organisation under its domination, by imposing its own sovereign will on that organisation as the rule of its conduct. This system, which emerged fully armed from the eternally ravaged flanks of the Absolute, must be applied in an equally absolutist manner, if indeed it can ever triumph. The people's state, the last and perhaps the ideal form of revolutionary reaction, emerges naturally, fatally from this artificial and extra-natural organisation. Whatever it does, this people's state, in order to maintain itself, will have to call on the reactionary forces which are natural allies of authority: the army, diplomacy, war, centralisation of all powers preventing the liberty and initiative of individuals and groups from emerging and manifesting themselves. Liberty, in fact, is illusory in this system, since it exists only by the constant diminution of force, by the progressive destruction of power, and because all the wheels of the system function, on the contrary, in such a way as to render the power of the people's government as crushing as the power of the bourgeois government is today. Once engaged on this arbitrary and despotic road, one must fatally climb one by one all the rungs of authority; there is no place on this fatal road where one can stop. Do you want a new and striking example of this? The Basle Congress gave the General Council the right to *suspend* a section of the International. This formidable right, which in a moment of blind confidence and social inexperience, if we may say so, we granted to the Council, placed it above the whole of the Federation to which the excommunicated section belonged. We bitterly regretted our error, but we could entertain the hope that this resolution would never be applied. The Hague Congress disillusioned us. We learned there that the Council's authority was not great enough, and the majority of the Congress lost no time in filling this gap. From now on the General Council will have the right to suspend a whole federation, that is to say, it has become the supreme arbiter of the revolutionary destiny of a whole nation. Were we wrong in saying that once engaged on this road, it is impossible not to encroach more and more on the autonomy of the groups until in the end they are all absorbed and destroyed completely!

Contrary to the supporters of authoritarianism and centralisation, we think with Bakunin (Bakunin, *Almanach du Peuple pour 1872*)⁴⁷ that the International Working Men's Association would have no meaning at all if it did not tend invincibly towards the abolition of the state. It only organises the popular masses in view of this destruction. [...] We are reproached with being *abstentionists* in politics. At the Hague Congress this term was proved to be quite inappropriate. In respect of states and governments our politics is in fact *negative*, and in this sense we

⁴⁷ Fluse is referring to M. Bakounine, 'Organisation de l'Internationale', in *Almanach du Peuple pour 1872* (Saint-Imier: Propagande socialiste, 1871), p. 19: 'The International Working-Men's Association would make absolutely no sense unless it led invincibly to the abolition of the State. Only in order to destroy every State does it organize the masses of the people' (Bakunin, *From out of the Dustbin*, p. 141). For the original text by Bakunin on which the article was based, see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 257–58.

understand to a certain point that we are called abstentionists. But we have our own politics, the true politics of the people and of labour, and that politics is *positive*. It is *federalism* which we oppose to authoritarianism. Every political form being intimately linked to an economic organisation and depending on that organisation, the federalist politics must be different from the authoritarian politics, because the economic organisation corresponding to these two political forms is essentially different. Authoritarianism is, in effect, the political expression of the communist principle which leads to the constitutions of a people's proprietor state; federalism, on the contrary, is the political expression of the collectivist principle which leads to the free federation of free associations of producers. The difference between the two paths followed by the International is therefore clearly seen, and it is not difficult to foresee which of the two will lead to the democratic and social Revolution.⁴⁸

A letter from Belgium dated 3 October 1872, probably written by the Congress of The Hague delegate Coenen, was printed in the Jura Federation's *Bulletin*:

In Antwerp and Ghent, the workers completely approve the stance of the minority at the Congress of The Hague with regard to the General Council; they applaud our declarations, and certainly at the next congress the pretensions of the ambitious authoritarians shall be reduced to zero [...]; we shall see who gets the best results, ourselves, the organisers of the revolution, or the Marxist counter-revolutionaries, when the hour arrives for the final struggle.⁴⁹

Florent Flinck, member of the International in Verviers, suggested putting '*Anarchy opposed to authoritarianism*' on the agenda of the upcoming Belgian federal congress and emphasised our indignation at the completely unjustified exclusions pronounced by the Congress of The Hague. These are the counterpart of the votes relating to the General Council and to the political stance of our Association. But we are an-archists and we highly disapprove of the authoritarian efforts knowingly led by some members of the Society.⁵⁰

The Belgian Federation's *Internationale* included the following commentary at the end of October 1872:

After some time, as the consequences of the Congress of The Hague become clearer, it shall be recognised that at least one useful and salutary task was fulfilled: the sharp and clear division between the politickers and authoritarians, on one side, and on the other, the workers who want the Social Revolution and nothing else.⁵¹

Even a moderate like De Paepe – who had written to London ten days before the Congress of The Hague, 'that I personally (and the majority of the Belgians with me) am by no means with the Jura, but certainly with the General Council'⁵² – was now completely disillusioned. He wrote Marx on 26 October 1872,

that I regret the divisions which exist in the International; that I deplore the violent or offensive language that it seems to be the intention to continue on either side, and that I consider as harmful to our Association certain of the measures voted at The Hague such as the expulsions and the

⁴⁸ Fluse, 'Account', pp. 256–58, 260–61. This part of Fluse's report was published in the *Mirabeau*, 22 September 1872, pp. 1–2.

⁴⁹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 October 1872, p. 4. In Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, pp. 17–18, the author is said to be 'one of the Belgian delegates to the Congress of The Hague' from Antwerp.

⁵⁰ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 October 1872, p. 4. For more about Flinck's authorship, see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 17.

⁵¹ *Internationale*, 27 December 1872, p. 1.

⁵² See above, p. 287.

extension of the General Council's powers in respect of the national federations and the sections, above all when the General Council is being located in America, that is to say in a country where it will be very difficult to have an exact idea of what is happening in the federations and sections of the old continent.⁵³

A month later, the Belgian Federal Council also complained in a letter to the new General Council in New York about 'the unfortunate situation brought about in the Association by the majority of the Congress of The Hague' and announced 'that the Belgian Federation, by means of its delegates who are to meet in congress next 25 December, will make a binding decision concerning the line of conduct that the Belgian Federation shall take'.⁵⁴

The Federal Council then took a clear position in its report to the Brussels Federal Congress:

Since the Congress of The Hague, where the struggle so long anticipated finally broke out between, on the one hand, the supporters of authority and centralisation, represented by the General Council, the Germans, and the French who have bowed before Karl Marx, acting only under his influence and inspiration, and on the other hand, the defenders of pure revolutionary ideas, the anarchists, enemies of all authoritarian centralisation and indomitable partisans of autonomy from the level of the individual to that of the federations, [since that Congress] the minority represented by Spain, Holland, the Swiss Jura, and Belgium, continuing their protest against the decisions taken by an artificial majority in violation of the most basic principles of the revolution, has not ceased for a moment to demand the sanction of justice for its cause. Moreover, the most solemn declarations came from all federations ratifying the noble and energetic conduct of the minority. The victory, never in doubt for a moment, is every day extended, making the party of anarchy, autonomy and federation more compact, more harmonious, more united than ever, to the great confusion of the authoritarians, who wished to crush us beneath the chariot of their master, Karl Marx.⁵⁵

In the discussion among the delegates of the federal congress that followed, the position of the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague was once again repudiated, the 'Minority Declaration' was unanimously approved and the following resolution adopted:

The Belgian Congress of the International Working Men's Association held on 25 and 26 December in Brussels declares null and void the resolutions carried by an artificial majority at the Congress of The Hague, and does not wish to recognise them, as being arbitrary, authoritarian and contrary to the spirit of autonomy and federalist principles.

Consequently, it will proceed immediately to the organisation of an autonomous and federative pact between all the regional federations who wish to contribute to it, and it does not in any way recognise the new General Council in New York that has been imposed on us at The Hague Congress by a specious majority in defiance of all the principles enshrined in the General Rules.⁵⁶

⁵³ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 576. See also Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 355.

⁵⁴ The Belgian Federal Council to the General Council in New York, 30 November 1872, in Devreese (ed.), *Documents relatifs aux militants belges*, p. 439.

⁵⁵ 'Congrès ouvrier belge des 25 et 26 décembre 1872', *Internationale*, 29 December 1872, p. 1.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2. In the debate regarding the abolition of the General Council that followed, it was suggested that a European Federal Council be elected at the next general congress; see *ibid.*, 5 January 1873, p. 1.

The Córdoba Congress (December 1872)

There was also blunt criticism of the Congress of The Hague in Spain. Its resolutions became known and provoked protest in Spain even before the delegates Alerini, Farga Pellicer, Marselau, and Morago returned. Members of the International in Murcia, for example, informed the Federal Council, that they

protest against all of those that – calling themselves members of the International – conspire against anarchy, collectivism and atheism, work for authority, and therefore can never earn their trust, whoever they were. [The members of the International in Murcia] show their distrust before the decision taken by the fifth International Congress [in The Hague] stating ‘that the conquest of political power is the great duty of the working class’.⁵⁷

The Federal Council agreed with this assessment of the new art. 7a: ‘It is easy to predict the effect that this will produce in Spain, given the revolutionary ideas that we support’.⁵⁸

A meeting of the Local Federation of Chamartín de la Rosa adopted the following resolution:

Considering that the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague were sanctioned by a majority fabricated at the will of the Great Sultan of London;

Considering that the authoritarian and centralist tendencies of said Sultan and his majority are turning the Association into an eminently political corporation to seize power when it deems appropriate to satisfy his plans and aspirations;

Considering that the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague when in practice, open the abyss where our beloved and grand Association will sink in disrepute;

Considering that in place of having love for it and organising it solidly, they show that they are enemies who try to disorganise and discredit it; given these considerations, this [Local] Federation declares, before all good members of the International: Karl Marx and his majority to be traitors to the cause of the proletariat and accordingly rejects said resolutions, declaring them null and void.⁵⁹

After their return to Spain, the Spanish delegates gave reports on the Congress of The Hague and St. Imier Congress at meetings in Sans, Barcelona, Badalona, San Martín de Provensals, Gracia, Tarragona, Reus, and Valencia between 5 and 12 October.⁶⁰ They filed their written report with the Federal Council in Valencia on 16 October. The Federal Council decided to print

⁵⁷ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 264 (meeting on 24 September 1872).

⁵⁸ The Spanish Federal Council to José Belda, 28 September 1872, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, p. 95.

⁵⁹ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 265–66 (meeting on 24 September 1872). The Spanish Federal Council also agreed with this resolution; see The Spanish Federal Council to the Local Council of Chamartín de la Rosa, 21 September 1872, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, p. 49.

⁶⁰ On 22 September 1872, Alerini, Farga Pellicer, Marselau and Morago left Switzerland (Bakounine, ‘Carnet’, 1872, p. 37; Seco Serrano [ed.], *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 272 [meeting on 27 September 1872]). Marselau was the first to arrive on 3/4 October 1872 in Barcelona; Morago and Farga Pellicer arrived on 6 October (Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, pp. 146, 179). Charles Alerini was first forced to remain in Genoa as there were no ships travelling directly to Spain (without stopping in France, which would have been dangerous for him). A few days later he managed to catch a boat to Palma de Mallorca (*ibid.*, pp. 224, 246). For more about the tour from 5 to 12 October, see *ibid.*, pp. 179, 193; Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 285 (meeting on 8 October 1872), p. 290 (meeting on 11 October 1872), pp. 294–95 (meeting on 15 October 1872). *Federación*, 12 October 1872, pp. 2–3; 26 October 1872, pp. 1–2. *Condenado*, 17 October 1872, p. 3.

the report as a brochure and send it to all of the local federations.⁶¹ In a closing statement in the brochure, they mentioned the Barcelona Local Federation's proposal that a congress be convened as soon as possible, 'with the aim of drawing up a line of conduct that should be followed in this region [Spain] in view of the resolutions of The Hague and St. Imier'.⁶² On 14 November 1872 after the majority of members of the International in Spain supported this proposal, the Federal Council convened the Córdoba Federal Congress on 25 December 1872⁶³ – the same date as the Belgian federal congress was to open.

In the meanwhile, Mesa was the General Council's last supporter of note in Spain: 'we need men, and I am alone, and to top it all, ill', Mesa complained to Engels.⁶⁴ The circulation of the *Emancipación*, edited by Mesa, which Tomás called the 'organ of the few authoritarians',⁶⁵ had been cut in a half within three months.⁶⁶ Despite the fact that Engels was sending money so that the newspaper could be 'kept alive',⁶⁷ it went under six months later. After the Congress of The Hague, Mesa had first audaciously called on Engels to have the General Council in New York make use of its new authority and expel the Spanish Federal Council. An extraordinary federal congress could in turn be convened in order to elect a new Federal Council in Spain that would be friendly to the General Council.⁶⁸ However, the Córdoba Congress convened by the Federal Council came at an inopportune moment for Mesa and his supporters: whether because of their boycott call⁶⁹ or their small numbers and resources, of the 50 delegates who attended the

⁶¹ At a meeting on 18 October 1872, the Federal Council decided to print 1,500 copies of the report ('Memoria a todos los internacionales españoles'); see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 301. The Federal Council already had to order 1,000 more copies by 8 November 1872; see *ibid.*, p. 334.

⁶² Consejo Federal, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales*, p. 45. The suggestion from Barcelona had been sent to the Federal Council on 11 October 1872 and dealt with during its meeting on 15 October; see Consejo Local de la Federación Barcelonesa, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales*, p. 6. Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, pp. 293–94.

⁶³ Consejo Federal de la Federación Regional Española, 'Circular á todas las federaciones locales', 14 November 1872, *Federación*, 23 November 1872, p. 1. Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 347 (meeting on 14 November 1872). The date and location of the federal congress had already been suggested by the Federal Council in their closing statement dated 18 October 1872 in the Spanish delegates' report on the congress. Bakunin did not seem to be up to date about these events because he only resumed his correspondence with Spain at the beginning of November 1872: before the end of the year, he wrote letters to Alerini, Farga Pellicer, Morago, and Marselau as well as several 'collective' letters to 'H' or 'Ermani' (i.e. Hermanos = brothers), including on 16 December 1872, nine days before the start of the Córdoba Congress: 'Sent collective letter to the Spanish with advice for Córdoba, [addressed] to Pellicer via registered mail' (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 49). The content of these letters is unknown as none of them have survived.

⁶⁴ Mesa to Engels, 19 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 536. See also Mesa to Engels, 5 November 1872: 'I have to do everything myself! And the situation is becoming increasingly serious, and I am alone, absolutely alone.' (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3385).

⁶⁵ The Spanish Federal Commission to the editors of the *Mirabeau*, 31 May 1873, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 4, p. 311.

⁶⁶ Mesa to Engels, 5 October 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 553.

⁶⁷ Engels to Sorge, 16 November 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 448. In a letter to the General Council dated 15 April 1873 (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 161), Engels indicated that he financed the *Emancipación* with 15 pounds sterling.

⁶⁸ Mesa to Engels, 19 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 536.

⁶⁹ *Emancipación*, 9 November 1872, pp. 1–2. Mesa was at first undecided as to whether the New Madrid Federation should battle it out at the Córdoba Congress or not go at all (see Mesa to Lafargue, about 12 November 1872 [summary by Engels], IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 4936). A month later, Mesa was convinced that 'Our only solid ground, believe me, is having protested against the very convocation of the congress' (Mesa to Engels, 29 December 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3414). Of the 101 local federations that existed in Spain in December 1872, only five

Córdoba Congress only one, Mariano Rodríguez from Granada, had an imperative mandate to support the Congress of The Hague resolutions.⁷⁰

The agenda at the Córdoba Congress, whose delegates represented 42 local federations with 236 sections and 20,402 members,⁷¹ covered all of the controversial issues that had occupied the International in Spain: the Madrid Local Federation's stance toward the New Madrid Federation, the Alianza, a revision of the organisational structures, etc. The sixth item on the agenda addressed the 'attitude of the Spanish Regional Federation with regard to the Congress of The Hague and St. Imier'.⁷² During the fourth administrative meeting on the opening day of the congress on 25 December, a commission made up of 18 delegates was formed to look at both congresses.⁷³ Their report was read at a public meeting three days later. After giving a detailed description of the situation, the report went on to criticise the Congress of The Hague resolution on the *constitution of the working class into a political party and conquest of political power*:

The commission deems the resolution that obligates all members of the International to constitute themselves into a political party and that declares that the first duty of the proletariat is the conquest of political power as being contrary to the broad base of the International Working Men's Association, the aim of which is to collect within it all those that suffer the injustices of present society. Because far from uniting all efforts of everyone interested in emancipating themselves, the resolution tends to alienate and repudiate all those that do not conform with the political programme that a General Council or a congress were so kind to prepare. The commission also believes that to affirm that the first duty of the proletariat is the conquest of political power is to declare that poverty, or social injustices, come from the evil of governments, and this means to deny or hide that they have their origins in the institutions of present society which naturally give rise to all political power. Assigning this as the first duty of the working class is to deny all of the considerations of the General Rules of the International and to distract the

federations (Alcalá de Henares, Vitoria, Saragossa, Lérida and Toledo) and individual sections in other locations supported the New Madrid Federation's protest (the corresponding declarations appeared in the *Emancipación* between 23 November 1872 and 4 January 1873). Only the Lérida and Saragossa Local Federations also notified the Federal Council of their protest; for their reply, see Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 2, pp. 308, 365–66. The Federal Council decided not to reply directly to the New Madrid Federation's boycott call: 'If it were a local federation, then we would answer all of its slanderous affirmations, but as they are not members of the International it would be a waste of time – time which needs to be dedicated to the general issues of the Federation' (The Spanish Federal Council to the Palencia Local Council, 16 November 1872, *ibid.*, p. 126). The New Madrid Federation tried to create a rival federation by forming another federal council in Valencia on 26 January 1873. That federation had about 200 members nationally – compared to the 30,000 members of the Spanish Federation – but there is no evidence that it survived past that summer: Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 641. The Spanish Federal Commission to the editors of the *Pensamiento Social*, 24 March 1873, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 4, p. 82. See also below, p. 386.

⁷⁰ Mesa to Engels, 29 December 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 3414. Rodríguez had announced his support for the General Council and the *Emancipación* in an open letter dated 30 July 1872 (*Emancipación*, 3 August 1872, p. 4); before the Córdoba Congress, Paulino Iglesias sent an appeal to Rodríguez in name of the editors of the *Emancipación* (excerpt in the *Federación*, 11 January 1873, p. 2) asking him to represent the interests of the New Madrid Federation at the congress.

⁷¹ See details in Consejo Local de la Federación Barcelonesa, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales*, pp. 7–8, 11. A number of local federations also adopted the resolution of the Córdoba Congress afterward; see below, p. 563, n. 35.

⁷² *Estracto de las actas del tercer congreso*, p. 15. Suggested by the Barcelona and Valencia Local Federations, see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 333 (meeting on 8 November 1872). *Condenado*, 28 November 1872, p. 1.

⁷³ *Estracto de las actas del tercer congreso*, p. 18.

working class from the path which they should follow to arrive at their emancipation – which is to seek to destroy all powers and not to conquer them. Because by conquering power for themselves they would do the same what up to now all classes have done, and would disavow completely its grand mission to realise justice, not only for themselves but for all of humanity.⁷⁴

The following resolution was then proposed:

Considering, now, that the Congress of The Hague has a vice at its origin;

Considering that it is vicious in its constitution and in its procedures;

Considering that the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague are harmful and contrary to the programme that the proletariat should follow;

The commission proposes that the congress reject the Congress of The Hague and not recognise its authoritarian resolutions.⁷⁵

The commission report proposed the following resolution regarding the ‘St. Imier pact’:

For that reason, considering:

That the pact of friendship, solidarity, and mutual defence approved by the Congress of St. Imier, is becoming the salvation of the unity of the International, which is threatened by the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague;

That through this medium the first condition that should exist within our Association – solidarity – will not be broken and will be safe from the attacks that a General Council, once given power, could instigate.

The commission proposes that the congress declares itself in agreement with the Congress of St. Imier and therefore adherents to the PACT OF FRIENDSHIP, SOLIDARITY, AND MUTUAL DEFENSE which was voted upon in said Congress. [...]

The Spanish Regional Federation will practice solidarity in the interior and the exterior, with all the federations regardless of the opinions that unite or separate them, accepting or not the General Council of New York, if they are still recognised by it or suspended by it, because for us, the International exists with or without it.⁷⁶

After the commission report was read, the meeting was interrupted for an urgent telegram sent from the Belgian federal congress which was in session at the same time:

The following telegram was read out.

‘The Belgian Congress greets the Spanish Congress.

Long live St. Imier! Autonomy and federation!

Eugène Steens.’

The felicitation of the Belgian Congress is received with a great enthusiasm by the delegates present.⁷⁷

In the discussion that followed, Tomás declared that the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague ‘was trying, with good or bad intentions, to turn the free federation of autonomous groups into a disciplined party under the direction of the General Council that could betray it or fool it, making the complete and radical emancipation of the proletariat impossible.’⁷⁸ Nobody came forward when the congress meeting chair Miguel Pino asked if anyone opposed or had any doubts about the commission report. José García Viñas then spoke in the name of the commission and

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–33.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34–36.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

recommended that the report be accepted, for 'our complete and radical emancipation will only be possible through the medium of a free and eminently federative organisation'.⁷⁹ Everyone present voted for the report, except for Rodriguez who abstained.⁸⁰

The seventh item on the agenda was 'La Alianza de la Democracia Socialista, its organisation and its activities'. A commission was also formed on 25 December 1872 to investigate this question. It included the delegates Rodriguez, José Prat, Antonio Sanchez, Emmanuel Fournier, José Serrallonga, Felipe Martín, Pedro Vazquez, Fernando Cúrtu, Andrés Torrens, Felipe Jané, Juan Mendez, Fernando Fernandez, and Manuel Dominguez.⁸¹ None of the commission members appears to have belonged to the Alianza. The commission reported on 28 December that it had not discovered anything negative about the Alianza, 'since in general those who belonged to this association are those who have done the most work in favour of the International and contributing to its development'.⁸² Rodriguez, who did not sign the commission report and did not speak during the discussion that followed, was the only one to vote against the report. 30 delegates voted in favour of the report and 16 former Alianza members abstained.⁸³

The commission's report on the Madrid Local Federation's conduct toward the New Madrid Federation was passed without objection; this time Rodriguez abstained. He later declared 'his conformity with the report, but the mandate of his Federation stopped him from voting in favour of it'.⁸⁴ After making further enquiries, Rodriguez sent an open letter to the *Federación* the very next day in which he withdrew his support for the New Madrid Federation. He had only ever read the *Emancipación* and had trusted its editors, he explained: 'Today, considering the evidence and information that were presented to me in Córdoba, I realise my error'.⁸⁵

The decisive resolutions of the Congresses of St. Imier, Brussels, and Córdoba cast a dark shadow over the Congress of The Hague resolutions. 'Marx is dead', the *Federación* concluded on 11 January 1873:

The International Working Men's Association is not the General Council or the Congress of The Hague but rather what it has essentially always been: *a pact of solidarity and of mutual defence between all workers in the world against the old pact of solidarity between the bourgeois*. It is the substitution of the power of the one for the power of the collective and of centralisation for anarchy. In a word, the International returns to being without bosses which is what it has always been and that is the biggest danger to the institutions of the old regime.⁸⁶

Bakunin and the Congress of The Hague

Bakunin must have been happy about the harsh criticism that the Congress of The Hague was facing internationally. In addition to numerous *politically* motivated repudiations of the Congress of The Hague resolutions, several declarations defended Bakunin *personally* as his integrity had

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 18–19.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁸⁵ *Federación*, 11 January 1873, p. 2. The *Emancipación* countered that Rodriguez must have been misled; see *Emancipación*, 18 January 1873, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *Federación*, 11 January 1873, p. 1.

been called into question by the commission to investigate the Alliance. Aside from the second resolution of the Jura Federation's St. Imier Congress where the delegates declared their support for Bakunin and Guillaume,⁸⁷ the Spanish delegates Farga Pellicer, Alerini, Marselau, and Morago sent an open letter to the Brussels newspaper the *Liberté* which had published a detailed account of the Congress of The Hague.⁸⁸ Their letter attacked the report of the commission to investigate the Alliance, included in the *Liberté* as well:

We take this opportunity to protest vigorously, as we have already done at the Congress of The Hague, not only against the inquisitorial findings of a commission which, shamefully, Jesuitically, in a judgment full of impudent contradictions, hurls defamation against honourable, intelligent comrades who are known to the working class as most dedicated to the cause and whom we esteem now more than ever, but also against the ridiculous right that the same commission arrogated to itself to propose, to this majority that had been fully prepared in advance, their expulsion from the International.⁸⁹

The *Rivoluzione Sociale* (the Italian Federation's official organ initiated by a resolution at the Rimini Conference; its first issue was printed by Guillaume's print shop at the beginning of October 1872)⁹⁰ also included a harsh criticism in an article titled 'The Congress of The Hague' ('Il Congresso dell'Aia'). Various people may have worked together on the article: Bakunin, who noted in his diary on 10 September 1872: 'Wrote article for Italian journal';⁹¹ Cafiero, who was together with Bakunin between 11 and 23 September in Zurich, St. Imier, and Neuchâtel;⁹² and Andrea Costa, who was the only Italian delegate to the St. Imier Congress to remain in Switzerland after 23 September as he was in charge of publishing the *Rivoluzione Sociale*.⁹³ The article attacked the commission to investigate the Alliance:

The fruit of this commission is the condemnation of Mikhail Bakunin and James Guillaume, whose hands we are honoured to shake. We would be ashamed to protest against this resolution, which condemns two of our friends to ostracism: it says that it condemns the members of the *Alliance*, but just what is this Alliance? Does the General Council know it well? Has it studied it? Are its principles opposed to the International? But if it was the Alliance that founded the International in Spain, why does the General Council now seek its death? The Commission for investigation should have answered these questions first, heard the sides and then made its judgement: instead, it was given a vote of confidence on that occasion, so as to have done with the Alliance once and for all, it made its judgement and condemned arbitrarily: some members of the commission itself protested: but to what end? The General Council wished it thus: its will be done.

⁸⁷ See above, p. 356.

⁸⁸ Reprinted in Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 323–44.

⁸⁹ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 353. Lucain (pseudonym of Frédéric Potel), a member of the commission to investigate the Alliance, protested against this in an open letter to the *Liberté* dated 10 October 1872. He argued that the Spanish delegates had recognised the integrity of the commission at the Congress of The Hague as they had testified before it without reserve. He also noted that the commission's complete report was as yet unpublished (which it would remain) and that the commission members were working hard to finish it (*Liberté*, 20 October 1872, p. 3).

⁹⁰ Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 31. Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 43.

⁹¹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 35.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 35–37. Lehning thought that Cafiero may have written the article with Bakunin's help; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. LVII.

⁹³ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 43.

So what then was the Congress of The Hague? We have called it a betrayal: to carry out which the Grand Council used all those means which those whose existence is threatened make use of.⁹⁴

In another letter to the *Liberté*, Bakunin's Russian friends Ogarev, Zaitsev, Ozerov, Ross, Gol'shtein, Ralli, El'snits, and Smirnov had the following to say about the report of the commission to investigate the Alliance:

In this report, obviously inspired by hatred and the desire to finish off an awkward opponent, whatever the cost, they dared to bring charges of fraud and blackmail against our friend and compatriot Mikhail Bakunin. The majority of this Congress is complicit in a great infamy by ordering the expulsion of a man whose entire life has been dedicated to serving the great cause of the proletariat [...]. Mr Marx, whose abilities we do not wish to deny, at least on this occasion made a serious miscalculation. Honest souls, in all countries, are only likely to feel disgust and indignation at such a crude plot and so flagrant a violation of the simplest principles of justice. As for Russia, we can assure Mr Marx that all his manoeuvres shall always be in vain. Bakunin is too widely known and esteemed there for slander to harm him.⁹⁵

Bakunin received support not only from his political allies but also from those who had previously been reserved toward him, such as the members of the Brussels Local Federation⁹⁶ or Émile Aubry from Rouen, who had spoken out against the Geneva section of the Alliance in May 1870 after the split of the Romance Federation. In a letter to the *Internationale*, the organ of the Belgian Federation, Aubry now highlighted his impartiality: 'We who defend Bakunin today against the oriental despotism of the General Council, or rather of its leader, were [in 1870] the first to combat his project.'⁹⁷

Voices warned early on that the conflict in the International would become personal. Already at the end of 1871, Joukovsky wrote: 'It is no more a question of personalities, whoever they may be: as grand as Marx or Bakunin, or as petty as Utin; men come and go, the International remains.'⁹⁸ And the Communard Aristide Claris commented after the Congress of The Hague:

The danger for the International, if danger there be, does not lie in the persecution to which aristocratic and bourgeois governments can subject it. The real danger lies in the Association's lack of organisation, in the petty and childish ambition of men whom circumstances have placed at its head, and finally, in the divisions that have erupted in its midst for a year now.

Two schools of thought, each representing a different principle, have emerged within the great workers' Association and threaten to undermine its development: the authoritarian current represented by the London General Council, at the head of which is Karl Marx, and the anti-authoritarian or anarchic current that has been thought, quite wrongly, to be personified by Mikhail Bakunin, but which is actually represented by the Latin federations [*les fédérations de race latine*], such as the Italian Federation, the Spanish Federation, the Jura Federation, the Belgian Federation and the French sections of London, Geneva, and central and southern France.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ 'Il Congresso dell'Aia', p. 3.

⁹⁵ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, pp. 353–54.

⁹⁶ See above, p. 354.

⁹⁷ *Internationale*, 27 October 1872, p. 2 (anonymous letter by Aubry; authorship noted in Boivin, *Le Mouvement ouvrier dans la région de Rouen*, vol. 1, p. 522). Reprint of Aubry's statement from May 1870 against the Geneva section of the Alliance: *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 235–43.

⁹⁸ See above, p. 170.

⁹⁹ Claris, *La proscription française*, pp. 53–54.

Bakunin had always taken a similar view. For example, he wrote the following to Italy in December 1871/January 1872:

Marx and Co. have done me the honour of making me, who have no other ambition than to really be friends with my friends, the brother of my brothers, and the ever faithful servant of our thought, of our shared passion, the leader of a party. They foolishly imagined – it was really too much honour to my supposed power – that I had been able, by myself, to stir up and organise the French, Belgians, Swiss, Italians and Spanish into a compact and overwhelming majority against them.

[...] I have already had occasion to declare that I did not consider myself in any way to be an inventor of new truths and principles, that I have never created systems, and now I will add that I have never claimed to be the leader of a party or a very influential and important member of the International; I was always content to be a passionately devoted member. I will say furthermore: the scope of the International, the goal it has set for itself, is so broad that there is room for the full exercise of the activity of each, but there can be none for the dominance or even the direction of anyone.¹⁰⁰

And in his comprehensive letter to Anselmo Lorenzo, Bakunin wrote in May 1872:

It is another one of the odious stratagems of our enemies to want at all costs to represent [me] as the leader of a party. They would like to personalise the issue in order to be able to suppress it more easily. [...] in the dirty and hateful polemic of the German journals, I have been quite often represented as a very ambitious man, motivated by the proud or vain pretension of presenting myself as a rival to Marx in the International. Nothing could be more false. It is true that in the matters which have been related, not to the very principles of justice and equality, but to their achievement, as well as to the organisation of the popular power by means of the International, I profess an order of ideas diametrically opposed to those of Marx. But I have never ever presented myself as a personal antagonist, much less as his rival [...].¹⁰¹

Bakunin returned to this subject at the beginning of October 1872 when – after returning to Zurich from St. Imier on 18 September 1872 – he started writing a response to the report of the commission to investigate the Alliance in a long letter to the *Liberté*:

How have these Messieurs [Marx and his associates] not understood that in attacking me with this astonishing fervour they have done more for my glory than I have been able to do myself; for all the disgusting stories that they have spread with this impassioned hatred against me throughout all corners of the world naturally collapse under the weight of their own absurdity, but my name is untarnished, and to this name, which they have so powerfully contributed to making known to the world, remains attached the real, legitimate glory of having been the merciless and irreconcilable enemy, not of their persons, with which I am so very little concerned, but of their authoritarian theories and of their ridiculous and odious pretension to world dictatorship. Thus, if I were a vainglorious, ambitious man, far from resenting them for all these attacks, I would owe them an infinite debt of gratitude, for in trying to denigrate me, they have done what I never had the intention nor the desire to do: they have elevated me.¹⁰²

Bakunin used this letter to the *Liberté* to air his opinion on the history and fundamental questions of the conflict in the International. What happened at the Congress of The Hague seemed

¹⁰⁰ Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 1, pt. 2, p. 116, 163.

¹⁰¹ Bakunin to Anselmo Lorenzo (1), 10 May 1872, p. 7, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

¹⁰² 'Lettre au journal *La Liberté* de Bruxelles', p. 17, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

provocative enough. In view of the pluralistic internal organisation and the wide spectrum of political views present in the International, it can be regarded as an effrontery that Marx's *minority faction* tried to enshrine his viewpoint in the General Rules and thus force his opinion concerning the *constitution of the working class into a political party* and *conquest of political power* – which most of the Federations opposed – on the rest of the International.

To claim that a group of individuals, even the most intelligent and well-intentioned, will be able to become the thought, the soul, the guiding and unifying will of the revolutionary movement and the economic organisation of the proletariat of all countries, this is such a heresy against common sense and against the historical experience, that one wonders in astonishment: how was a man as intelligent as Mr Marx able to conceive it?

The popes at least had the excuse of the absolute truth they claimed to hold in their hands by the grace of the Holy Spirit and in which they were supposed to believe. Mr Marx has no such excuse [...]. And what must one think of an International Congress that, in the so-called interest of this revolution, imposes upon the proletariat of the entire civilised world a government invested with dictatorial powers, with the inquisitorial and papal right to suspend regional federations, to expel entire nations, in the name of a so-called official principle which is nothing other than the thoughts of Mr Marx himself, transformed by a specious majority vote into an absolute truth? [...]

Meanwhile, we fully recognise their right to go in the direction that they think best, provided they leave us the same freedom. We even recognise that it is quite possible that by their history, their special nature, the state of their civilization and all their current situation, they are forced to go in this direction. Let the German, American and English workers try to conquer political power, then, as they like. But let them allow the workers of other countries to proceed with the same energy to the destruction of all political powers. Freedom for all and mutual respect for this freedom, as I have said, are the essential conditions of international solidarity. But Mr Marx obviously does not wish this solidarity, since he refuses to recognise this freedom.¹⁰³

Next to the elimination of the pluralism within the internal organisation of the International, Bakunin warned the victory of the Marxists would have another dire consequence: the labour movement would become 'gentrified' (*embourgeoisée*). According to Bakunin, the political-parliamentary strategy that Marx and Engels advocated would in practice lead to compromises and alliances with the bourgeois parties¹⁰⁴ they feigned to exploit, and the workers in parliament would themselves become part of the bourgeoisie: the commitment of the labour movement to the methods (parties) and forums (parliament) of the bourgeois and state politics, which Marx and Engels were pushing for, would bring about this transformation because the workers – 'in destroying their moral strength, their trust in themselves' – would be removed from their traditional lifestyle and an '*intelligent*, respectable minority, that is to say duly gentrified', would be born within the proletariat.¹⁰⁵ By contrast Bakunin advocated the idea of associations

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2, 6, 24.

¹⁰⁴ For example, Bakunin summarised Marx's speech after the Congress of The Hague (see above, p. 555, n. 3) as follows: 'that in certain countries [...] the social question could be resolved tranquilly, legally, without struggle, amicably, which could mean nothing other than this: it can be resolved by a series of successive peaceful, voluntary and wise transactions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat' ('Écrit contre Marx', p. 31, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

¹⁰⁵ Bakounine, 'Lettre au journal *La Liberté*', pp. 23, 30. Marx 'perverts the workers making reasoners of them', Bakunin already wrote during the early years of his acquaintanceship with Marx (Bakunin to Pavel Annenkov, 28 December 1847, p. 4, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*).

built on the autonomous culture of resistance of the workers, 'who, being almost completely unsullied by bourgeois civilisation, carry in their hearts, in their passions, in their instincts, in their aspirations [...] all the seeds of the future socialism'.¹⁰⁶

Bakunin worked on his letter to the *Liberté* from 1 to 8 October. He then left Zurich and travelled to Locarno from 11 to 22 October making stops in Berne, Neuchâtel, Lausanne, and Montreux.¹⁰⁷ For unknown reasons, he never finished his letter. While he was writing the letter in Zurich, however, Bakunin added a footnote about *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution*, which was published in 1871, 'of which I have only published the first part and of which I propose to publish the next soon'.¹⁰⁸ In Locarno, Bakunin worked from 4 November to 11 December 1872 with interruptions on the next instalment of *The Knouto-Germanic Empire* – he called the manuscript 'Writing Against Marx' ('Écrit contre Marx') in his diary.¹⁰⁹ Bakunin only wrote about the conflict with Marx in the first third of the manuscript. He then re-examined his conflict with Mazzini, compared Mazzini with Marx, and then wandered irrecoverably off-topic, discussing historical determinism, the partition of Poland, the German national character and more, never returning to the subject at hand. In a passage in the first third of the manuscript, Bakunin criticised Marx's attempt to force the opinion of a minority on the International as follows:

But why is it precisely this programme which they claim to introduce *officially*, obligatorily, into the Rules of the International? Why not that of the Blanquists? Why not our own? Because Mr Marx invented it? That is no reason. Or even because the German workers seem to accept it? But the anarchic programme is accepted, with a very few exceptions, by all the Latin federations [...].¹¹⁰

Bakunin also asked:

how should one hope that the proletariat of all countries, finding itself in conditions so different in temperament, in culture, and in economic development should submit to the yoke of a uniform political programme? One cannot imagine it, it would seem, short of madness! Very well, Mr Marx is not sufficiently amused to imagine it; he has wished to put it into practice. – Tearing up the pact of the International by a despotic act of force, he has wished, he still means today

¹⁰⁶ Bakounine, 'Écrit contre Marx', p. 12. See also Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 3, p. 6. The historian Petra Weber wrote, 'In his criticism, Bakunin addressed a fundamental deficit in Marxist theory: the complete abstraction of the emotional, moral and cultural needs of the workers, which were expressed in their call for the return of the dignity of work and the search for new forms of cooperation and community building that they conducted through their associations. Marx's conviction that workers could only arrive at socialism by passing through the 'Caudine Forks' of capitalism led him to ignore the large role that the types of work and traditions of artisans played at the time, so that he was quite indifferent to the formation of associations. He was shut out of the cultural dimension and everyday experience of associative worker-socialism because he saw the growing worker's movement above all as an instrument for class struggle with which to seize power, while Bakunin recognised, from the workers' perspective, the socio-cultural dimension of the idea of associations for workers' (Weber, *Sozialismus als Kulturbewegung*, p. 234, see also pp. 462–63).

¹⁰⁷ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 38–40.

¹⁰⁸ Bakounine, 'Lettre au journal *La Liberté*', p. 25. For more about Bakunin's various drafts of the manuscript 'L'Empire knouto-germanique', see above, pp. 67–70.

¹⁰⁹ Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 42–48. Bakunin also refers to *The Knouto-Germanic Empire and the Social Revolution* in the manuscript itself (Bakounine, 'Écrit contre Marx', p. 60); he may have planned on inserting it after the section 'Historical Sophisms of the German Communists' Doctrinaire School' (see above, p. 70).

¹¹⁰ Bakounine, 'Écrit contre Marx', p. 22.

to impose a uniform political programme, *his own programme*, upon all the federations of the International, i.e. upon the proletariat of all countries.

The result has been a great rift within the International. One can be under no illusions about it: the great unity of the International has been called into question, and this, let me repeat once more, solely thanks to the Marxian party, which by means of the Congress of The Hague has attempted to impose the thought, the will, the politics of its leader upon the entire International.¹¹¹

As the power politics arising from Marx's 'despotic act of force'¹¹² or 'coup d'état'¹¹³ in the International reminded Bakunin of Bismarck's power politics, Bakunin once again applied his criticism of the state to the International.¹¹⁴ The idea was so dear to Bakunin that he at times carried his polemic comparison of Marx and Bismarck too far. For example, he reasoned that Marx just like Bismarck wanted 'the establishment of a great Germanic State for the glory of the German people' and that Marx was an 'ardent patriot of the great Bismarckian fatherland', etc.¹¹⁵ The passages where Bakunin focussed on the question of state in his comparison seem more relevant:

Here is what separates Mr Marx from Mr Bismarck: it is the form and the conditions of government. One is an aristocrat and even a monarchist; the other is really a democrat, a social democrat and a republican socialist into the bargain. We see now what unites them: *it is the real cult of the State*. I have no need to prove it in the case of Mr Bismarck; his proofs have been given. He is a man of the State from head to toe and nothing but a man of the State. But I do not believe I shall have too hard a time proving that it is the same with Mr Marx. He loves government so much that he has wished to institute one even in the International Working Men's Association, and he so adores power that he has wished, that he still intends today to impose his dictatorship upon us.¹¹⁶

Bakunin had already arrived at a similar conclusion in his letter to the *Liberté*: 'Between Bismarckian politics and Marxian politics there is a difference which is certainly quite detectable, but between the Marxians and ourselves there is an abyss. They are governmentalsists, we are really anarchists.'¹¹⁷

Although the conflict in the International did not take place under the mantle anarchists vs. Marxists, it is striking that *during the conflict regarding the General Council's leadership role* the word 'anarchists' was used for the critics of the General Council and the words 'anarchy' and 'anarchistic' as synonyms for their federalist ideas and criticism of the state.¹¹⁸

- Podolinskii, who was an observer at the Congress of The Hague, described the delegates critical of the General Council as 'the anarchists (that is how I shall call this side for brevity's sake)'.¹¹⁹

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Bakounine, 'Lettre au journal *La Liberté*', p. 35.

¹¹⁴ See also above, p. 149.

¹¹⁵ Bakounine, 'Écrit contre Marx', pp. 3, 48.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹¹⁷ Bakounine, 'Lettre au journal *La Liberté*', p. 3.

¹¹⁸ The term 'anarchy' had only been used occasionally before and not to describe a wider political movement; see Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 1.

¹¹⁹ See above, p. 334.

- In its report to the Brussels Federal Congress in December 1872, the Belgian Federal Council stated that the conflict in the International represented a struggle

between, on the one hand, the supporters of authority and centralisation, represented by the General Council, the Germans, and the French who have bowed before Karl Marx, acting only under his influence and inspiration, and on the other hand, the defenders of pure revolutionary ideas, the anarchists, enemies of all authoritarian centralisation and indomitable partisans of autonomy from the level of the individual to that of the federations.¹²⁰

- In January 1872, Bakunin described the looming conflict in the International as a struggle between ‘the authoritarian communists, partisans of the emancipation of the proletariat by the state, and the federalists, i.e. the anarchists, sworn enemies of the principle of authority both in theory and in practice, who believe that the emancipation of the proletariat can only take place through the abolition of the state’.¹²¹
- In August 1872, Bakunin’s friend Arman Ross concluded that two directions were emerging within the International, ‘the anarchist and the statist’.¹²²

The term ‘anarchy’ had its longest history (within the International) in Spain: Farga Pellicer had already declared himself an anarchist at the founding congress of the Spanish Federation in Barcelona in June 1870.¹²³ On 8 September 1872, Francisco Tomás explained:

With respect to the aim and purpose of the International, you could see that there are two currents within the Association: one founded in unitary and centralist principles, and the other in the principles of anti-authoritarianism and federalism. The former has as its aim the organisation of the International as a political party and as its purpose the conquest of political power. The latter has as its aim the organisation of all workers to demolish all the institutions of this corrupt society and the abolition of political-legal-authoritarian conditions providing a free worldwide federation of free associations of free producers. The Spanish Federation is in the ranks of the latter, that is, anarchist collectivism.¹²⁴

In Switzerland, anarchy was also adopted as a label to identify a political movement relatively quickly – the Geneva Section of Socialist Atheists already used the term in its declaration of principles in September 1871:

Since the state is the political expression of bourgeois interests, consecrating social iniquities and repressing all freedoms, whether individual or communal,

¹²⁰ See above, p. 363.

¹²¹ Bakounine, ‘Article français’, pp. 16–17.

¹²² See above, p. 290.

¹²³ See above, p. 159.

¹²⁴ The Spanish Federal Council to the editors of the *Boletín de la Asociación de Trabajadores*, 8 September 1872, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, p. 10. And in November 1872, Tomás offered the following definition: ‘With respect to your question we will tell you that anarchy is understood as the destruction of all political-legal-authoritarian conditions and consequently as reuniting all of humanity in a free worldwide federation of free agricultural and industrial worker’s associations, as the only way to abolish privilege, tyranny and exploitation so that all human beings will be free and dignified’ (The Spanish Federal Council to the members of the International in Tarrasa, 22 November 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 166). See also the Spanish Federal Commission to the Anna Local Council, 2 April 1873, *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 121; the Spanish Federal Commission to the Calatayut section, 8 June 1873, *ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 133.

We declare ourselves Anarchists.

Thus the Section manifests its formal intention to destroy every governmental principle, under whatever form it may appear, in order to put in its place the autonomy of the individual and of the commune. Moreover, to achieve this goal, it calls for abstention from all participation in politics, for to destroy the state, we cannot use the same means as those who support it.¹²⁵

Far more than the occasional references in Belgium and Switzerland, statements in programmes from Spain and Italy led anarchy to become a benchmark and label for a social-revolutionary mass movement for the first time in history. But the use of the term remained controversial. After having written a leading article in the *Solidarité* on 20 August 1870 in which he declared its socialism to be ‘an-archist and popular’,¹²⁶ Guillaume recanted in January 1872:

We have been wrong to use, without closely examining it, the terminology of Proudhon, from which we drew those famous words, *abstention* and *an-archy*. [...] For quite a long time, for my part, I have asked that instead of speaking of *abstention*, we should speak of the *politics of the proletariat*, defining this politics as follows: ‘Demolition of all existing political institutions and their replacement by economic institutions. Destruction of the centralised state and its replacement by the federation of autonomous communes’. [...] As to the word *anarchy*, I have never liked it, and I have always asked that it be replaced by *federation of autonomous communes*.¹²⁷

In the following year, Guillaume continued to include the term ‘anarchy’ as one of the ‘Proudhonian expressions’ that ‘were marred by tasteless equivocations and rhetoric. *Federalism* expresses the same idea as *anarchy*, and expresses it much better’.¹²⁸ In 1876, Guillaume wrote the following commentary for the Jura Federation’s *Bulletin*:

The words *anarchy* and *anarchists* are, in our eyes and in those of many of our friends, words we should stop using, because they only express a negative idea without giving any positive theory, and they lend themselves to unfortunate misrepresentations. No ‘anarchic program’ has never been formulated [...]. But there is a *collectivist* theory, formulated in the congresses of the International, and it is to this that we are dedicated [...].¹²⁹

Flinck, however, had already argued in a letter to the *Bulletin* in October 1872: ‘It seems to me that an-archy is the necessary corollary of collectivism. These two principles, being developed simultaneously, ought to mutually guarantee one another, which will preclude collective rights from infringing on individual rights and vice versa’.¹³⁰ And Benoît Malon concluded in a letter written shortly before the Congress of The Hague:

¹²⁵ ‘Declaration of Principles’ (‘Déclaration de Principes’), appendix to The Section of Socialist Atheists to the General Council, 15 September 1871, RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 390. For more about the Section of Socialist Atheists, see above, p. 118.

¹²⁶ *Solidarité*, 20 August 1870, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Guillaume to Jeanneret, 17 January 1872, in Vuilleumier (ed.), ‘La correspondance de Gustave Jeanneret’, p. 98.

¹²⁸ Guillaume to Cyrille, 22 September 1873, in M. Vuilleumier (ed.), ‘La Correspondance d’un internationaliste: Victor Cyrille (1871–1874)’, *Movimento operaio e socialista* 12 (1966), p. 265.

¹²⁹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 7 May 1876, p. 1. Guillaume later claimed that two members of the Lugano section had written these lines; see Guillaume, *L’Internationale*, vol. 4, p. 14. Nettelau interpreted Guillaume’s reservations about the term ‘anarchy’ as follows: ‘Guillaume was only ever interested in the labour movement as a whole and the anti-authoritarian movement was for him only a battlefield coalition made necessary by the situation; he considered its development to pure anarchy an aberration’ (Nettelau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 5, p. 130). In his unpublished memoirs, Nettelau added, Guillaume ‘had gathered the anti-authoritarians together in The Hague in 1872 and would have liked to have gotten along with Lassalle’s followers and some of the Swiss. He was *not* interested in anarchy’ (quoted according to *ibid.* vol. 2, p. xiii).

¹³⁰ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 October 1872, p. 4. See also above, p. 362.

Let us talk further of this difference in the International. It saddens you: that is understandable. However, is there nothing more to it than personal hatreds? For Marx, Utin, Bakunin, Serrailier, Vaillant, yes; for the others, no! I even have doubts concerning Bakunin, who is, deep down, a very warm and friendly soul. [...] I see that this split was inevitable. The International wanted to generalise its aspirations too quickly, or rather, it wanted to generalise the means of struggle employed by different peoples. In view of what matters to me, I think this *generalisation* is gaining ground every day and that just as family types tend to disappear, so national types will end up disappearing, blending more and more into the infinity of the human type; at present, however, the differences exist, and the last war has increased them for the moment. Since the *Reformation*, the Anglo-Germanic people has pursued a politics of state reforms which has no counterpart in the historical development of the Gallo-Roman peoples (France, Italy, Spain, Walloon Belgium, and Romance and Jurassian Switzerland). The latter have only achieved progress through *revolutions*, and in a more or less conscious way, they have broken with the old governmental order. They are *anarchic*: this is the right word for it, until a better one can be found.¹³¹

¹³¹ Malon to Mathilde Roederer, 29 August 1872, IISG, Descaves Papers, no. 696.

CHAPTER 19. The Geneva Congresses and the disastrous New York General Council

IN VIEW OF THE BROAD OPPOSITION to the Congress of The Hague resolutions, things did not bode well for the New York General Council when it commenced its work. The American delegates Sorge and Dereure weren't exactly warmly welcomed upon their return to the United States. The *Socialiste* – the official organ of the Francophone American sections – was already voicing criticism by the end of September 1872:

The Congress of The Hague, instead of opening the way to a general reconciliation, only deepened the schism. And why? To satisfy the *dubious* aims and personal grudges of Karl Marx and of his lieutenant, the famous Sorge, promoter of our divisions in America.¹

When Dereure attended a meeting of his home branch of the International – New York's Francophone section no. 2 – on 29 September 1872 for the first time since his return, his fellows members felt compelled to, 'after a vote for exclusion, to have him thrown out of the meeting hall by his old comrades whom he had slandered after having betrayed them'.²

Benoît Hubert – a member of the Spring Street Council, Sorge's rivals – declared in an open letter:

We want freedom for the sections and individuals as well as for the federations, something that the elect of the Congress of The Hague are indisposed to give to their flock. The manner in which they thought to emancipate us disgusts and outrages us, doubtless because we hold convictions different from theirs, and because we have too great a love of the freedom of conscience.

However, we must not make war on them for what has already been done; let them take the path that they have marked for the future, and if sometimes they accomplish something of use to the working class, we shall applaud them. But for the present, *let us ignore them and take our own way* to attain our goal [...].³

In truth, the new General Council's failure was less to blame on the hostile actions of its opponents than on their contempt for it – and above all on home-grown problems. The election of the new General Council members was already an arduous process at the Congress of The Hague: a list put forward by Marx did not receive the absolute majority required for a quorum, which led to a dispute among the delegates:

[Sorge] decidedly rejects his own candidature and informs the delegates that the move of the General Council to New York has come unexpectedly for him and for the New Yorkers, that it

¹ *Socialiste*, 29 September 1872, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, 6 October 1872, p. 2. See also the letter from Benoît Hubert in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 20 July 1873, p. 4.

³ The Spring Street Federal Council to the editor of the *Socialiste*, 23 October 1872, in *Socialiste*, 27 October 1872, p. 2. This opinion was also aired in Belgium: 'soon, doubtless, it shall be completely forgotten that there is a General Council in New York, the inheritor of the one in London and of the political views of the men who comprised it' (*Internationale*, 27 October 1872, p. 1).

would be imposing on the New Yorkers a heavy burden which should not be made heavier by placing at their side men with whom they could not work well.⁴

Lafargue's motion was passed to interrupt the meeting so that a new list of names could be drawn up. The following twelve General Council members were then elected and authorised to name three more of members: Dereure, Fornaccieri, S. Kavanagh, E. P. Saint Clair, Carl Laurel, E. Levièle, Édouard David, Conrad Carl, Friedrich Bolte, Francis-J. Bertrand, Osborne Ward, and Carl Speyer.⁵ It is unlikely that anyone at the congress knew any of the new members other than Dereure, who was present: 'the Congress was forced to vote with its eyes closed', Guillaume complained, 'none of the Europeans knowing the candidates proposed'. For his part, Sorge was unelectable because 'as an individual he aroused antipathy even in some of the majority'.⁶ Cuno, who after the congress emigrated to the United States where he cooperated with Sorge, wrote that they could hardly be part of the new General Council because 'we are considered "Marxist creatures"'.⁷

Nevertheless, Sorge's membership in the new General Council had obviously been planned from the very start. Engels, for example, contacted Sorge as a matter of course whenever he had questions about the General Council. And Sorge sent the following unabashed report from New York on 12 October 1872:

It was a week yesterday since I opened [!] the General Council and informed them [the members] of my view of the state of affairs and the impending work. [...] Yesterday evening there was another sitting but I was not present. Cuno informed me that the General Council had co-opted me and then appointed me General Secretary [...].⁸

Two of the General Council members elected at the Congress of The Hague didn't want to have anything to do with the nomination. Édouard David declared in an open letter dated 1 October 1872 that because the Congress of The Hague resolutions were

the result of a conspiracy in which the principles inscribed in our General Rules were insolently trampled for the benefit of a coterie greedy for authority, I refuse to sit on a General Council that comes from this congress, from which so many of us hoped for a general reconciliation, a solid and eminently revolutionary reorganisation, recommending practical means, leaving behind any ambiguity as to the line of conduct to be followed and the end to be attained, and which produced nothing but bitter disappointments for all.

I am also leaving the Tenth Ward Hotel Council, composed of the same men forming the General Council, who are completely devoted to Karl Marx and act only at his moral impetus.

I feel no disposition to serve under the banner of the denunciator of the Spanish socialist Alliance. Whatever the quality of his genius may be, I cannot think highly of him after the acts he has committed before and during the Congress of The Hague.⁹

⁴ Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 165.

⁵ *Ibid.* Le Moussu, 'Minutes', p. 92.

⁶ Guillaume, 'The Congress of The Hague', p. 235.

⁷ Cuno to Engels, 8 October 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 3040.

⁸ Sorge to Marx, 12 October 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 564–65. Jung commented on this at the British federal congress on 26 January 1873: 'When New York was proposed as the seat of the General Council, Johannard said that was only to get it in the hands of Sorge, the tool of Marx. Sorge had made himself so obnoxious that no one would have voted for him and Marx promised that he should not be on the Council. A few vacancies were left to be filled up at New York, and the first thing the new council did was to instal Sorge as General Secretary.' (*Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 3).

⁹ *Socialiste*, 20 October 1872, p. 2.

Osborne Ward, the only native of the United States in the General Council, also declared in a letter dated 9 October 1872 that he was unwilling to work with Sorge, whom he had gotten to know at the New York Congress in July 1872:¹⁰

I have been sent by my section to represent it at the Congress of New York, and it is there I found my reason to not wish to accept a seat on the General Council. There I witnessed too many things that I consider positively subversive and contrary to the success of an international workers' association.¹¹

The General Council, Ward went on to explain, had distorted the principles of the International:

Discussed at the various congresses, they had been adopted with satisfaction by the members of the International. They took as their basis the idea of the complete autonomy of the sections, which have the right to organise themselves as seems good to them, in accord with the general principles that are their shared law.

None found fault with this organisation, and the great International Working Men's Association prospered.

However, due to a lack of wisdom, they created a General Council with the power to meddle in the affairs of the Federal Councils and the sections. The result was a furious war of national rivalries, suspicions and personal slander.

The good General Council forgot the principles, repudiated them, and no longer concerned itself with anything but the task of governing with a supreme authority.¹²

Ward wrote that he had attended the opening meeting of the new General Council only to announce his resignation.

Other General Council members also soon ceased their activities: Fornaccieri 'doesn't come anymore either', Sorge wrote;¹³ Kavanagh 'has left us high and dry, too';¹⁴ and Conrad Carl 'announced his resignation, but we did not accept it yet'.¹⁵ The fate of further members of the General Council was described in a confidential report dated 11 August 1873: Dereure has quit 'because he had to accept work in a distant part of the country'. E. P. Saint Clair, the General Council's archivist, disappeared with the archive: he 'did not take his seat in the Council since the end of Novbr. 1872 – without any case assigned & we had some difficulty in obtaining hold of our papers in his possession.' And finally, the accountant E. Levièle absconded with the General Council's funds: he 'absented himself from the meetings since beginning of January 1873 &

¹⁰ See above, p. 291.

¹¹ *Socialiste*, 20 October 1872, p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Sorge to Engels, 6 December 1872, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5766. Sorge issued Fornaccieri an ultimatum on 18 November 1872 to take part in the General Council's activities; see Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 419, see also p. 442. Apparently Fornaccieri did not attend a single General Council meeting; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 425.

¹⁴ Sorge to Engels, 12 February 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5775. Both Kavanagh and Sorge later denied having any disagreement whatsoever; see Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 455.

¹⁵ Sorge to Engels, 14 May 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5783.

returned the funds of the Council only as late as May 30th.¹⁶ All of the vacant posts remained empty despite various attempts to fill them.¹⁷

The remaining prestige which the General Council possessed as an institution was squandered through its actions. In the General Council's first communiqué dated 20 October 1872, they stubbornly insisted that the Congress of The Hague purified the International 'from disturbing elements', made political action obligatory, and expanded the authority of the General Council. In addition, the federations were now supposed to consult with the General Council before they 'enter into new fields of activity' or 'engage the International Working Men's Association by public acts'.¹⁸ When Engels called for punitive actions against the Jura Federation on 5 October 1872 after hearing about the resolution of the congresses in St. Imier,¹⁹ the New York General Council formed a commission to draw up proposals on 27 October. The General Council was particularly peeved about resolutions I and II of the Jura Federation's St. Imier Congress, which came to Guillaume and Bakunin's defence and rejected the Congress of The Hague resolutions 'as being unjust, inopportune, and exceeding the powers of a congress'.²⁰ According to Sorge, these resolutions 'present a flagrant infraction of the Rules'.²¹ On 3 November, the General Council declared the St. Imier resolutions to be 'null and void' and issued an ultimatum to the Jura Federation to retract them within 40 days.²²

The Jura Federation's Federal Committee discussed the letter at its meeting on 8 December 1872²³ and decided to address a circular to all of the International's federations, informing them of the General Council's ultimatum and calling on them to take action:

The moment has come either to renounce the programme of federal autonomy or to affirm in practice the resolutions adopted by the minority at The Hague. We call on all the federations. We invite them to tell us what they think of our stance, whether the Jura Federation must forgo counting on the aid of the federations who want to maintain the autonomist principle, or whether all want to resist the development and application of the authoritarian dogma formulated by the majority at the Congress of The Hague.²⁴

¹⁶ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', pp. 504–5. The General Council only disclosed on 9 May 1873 – 'the affair being rather delicate' – that Levièle had disappeared with its funds. The matter was resolved a few weeks later after a New York section intervened. Levièle and Saint Clair were later removed from the list of General Council members for being in breach of his official duties (*ibid.*, pp. 470, 475–76, 504). Levièle never handed over the ledgers; see Sorge to Marx, 26 November 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 4142.

¹⁷ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', pp. 442, 453, 455, 468, 480, 495, 504. The association of the New York Communards was turned away when it offered to appoint a delegate; see Sorge to Engels, 25 June 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5791.

¹⁸ 'Address of the General Council to the Federations, Affiliated Societies, Sections and all Members of the International Working Men's Association', *International Herald*, 23 November 1872, p. 5.

¹⁹ See above, p. 359. On 29 October 1872, Engels again demanded that steps be taken against 'the impertinent behaviour of the Jurassians': 'If we do not, without further ado, take energetic steps to suspend the Jurassians because of their Congress resolutions, which ride roughshod over the Rules and the Hague resolutions, and to expel the members of the anti-authoritarian Congress, in so far as they belong to the International at all, and to proclaim and justify such actions, then these people really will become altogether too cocksure.' (Engels to Cuno, 29 October 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 441).

²⁰ See above, p. 356.

²¹ The New York General Council to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 8 November 1872, in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 December 1872, p. 2.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ 'Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du Comité fédéral jurassien du 8 décembre 1872', *ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

The New York General Council was not considered worthy of a reply by the Jura Federation's Federal Committee as their congress in St. Imier had already decided to no longer recognise 'the authoritarian powers of the General Council';²⁵ 'the Committee of the Jura Federation', Guillaume later wrote, 'did not have to enter into correspondence with men who, without laughing, believed themselves able to "declare null and void" the resolutions taken by the delegates of the Jura sections'.²⁶

As their ultimatum fell on deaf ears, the General Council decided on 5 January 1872 that it was 'obliged to suspend the Jura Federation, and it hereby does suspend it until the next General Congress'.²⁷ Three weeks later on 26 January 1873, the General Council also threatened the other federations in a circular: 'Societies and individuals refusing to acknowledge the Congress Resolutions or wilfully neglecting to perform the duties imposed by the statutes and administrative regulations, place themselves outside of and cease to belong to the International Workingmen's Association.'²⁸

Reactions in Belgium, Spain, and Italy

With these actions, the General Council had backed itself into a corner from which it would never come out. In Belgium a congress of the Vesdre valley Local Federation, which had about 5,000 members, met in Verviers on 9 February 1873 and sent the following telegram to Jura:

Verviers, 9 February, half past 1 in the evening.

The New York Council suspends the Jura Federation. Long live the Jura Federation!

In the name of the Verviers Congress:

Gérard GEROMBOW.²⁹

Two days later, the newly elected Vesdre valley Local Council sent a letter to the Jura Federation in which it aired its opinion of the New York General Council's suspension of the Jura Federation:

From all sides, you have received assurances of robust support; you have not ceased to deserve well of the International Working Men's Association; it is the duty of all federations to take up your cause and to encourage you to persevere on the path you have chosen. You have with you Spain, Italy, Holland, and Belgium, and much of France, England and America. Today, as the New York General Council has just suspended the Jura Federation, the Federal Council of the sections and workers' associations of the Vesdre valley, acting on behalf of the quarterly Congress, held Sunday, 9 February, in Verviers, sends you warm words and its deepest sympathies and declares that for its part, it considers the decision of the General Council null and void and will continue to count you among the most worthy and dedicated federations of the International Working Men's Association.

²⁵ See above, p. 356.

²⁶ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 42.

²⁷ The New York General Council to the Jura Federation, 5 January 1873, in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1873, p. 2. Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 435. The General Council also suggested that members and sections of the Jura Federation who did not recognise the St. Imier Congress's resolutions join the Romance Federation (*ibid.*).

²⁸ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 1194. The wording of the resolution was again based on a suggestion by Engels; see Engels to Sorge, 4 January 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 465. See also Marx to Bolte, 12 February 1873, *ibid.*, p. 475.

²⁹ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 February 1873, p. 2.

Trusting in the broad and fertile principles of autonomy and the free federation of groups, the workers of the Vesdre valley have the same aspirations as you and nourish the same hopes, and they consider it a sacred duty, when men full of ambition or seized by dementia, having sworn to abolish authority, want to reconstitute it for their own benefit, to raise their voices in protest, with all the energy they can muster, against such a despicable abuse of power.

Keep to your work, then, comrades; keep on, do not lose heart: the true International is with you; with its assistance and with yours, we shall eventually triumph over the reactionaries of the revolution.

This protest shall also be sent to the Council of New York.

Long live the Jura Federation!

Long live the International Working Men's Association!

Verviers, 11 February 1873.³⁰

This opinion seems to have been widespread in Belgium – the General Council no longer had any advocates let alone a correspondent there.³¹ After receiving the General Council's circular of 26 January 1873 (see above), the Belgian Federal Council reminded the General Council that they no longer felt obliged to reckon with it.³² The next Belgian federal congress that took place on 13 and 14 April 1873 in Verviers called for the abolition of the General Council after a lengthy debate.³³

The Jura Federation's suspension also made waves in Spain. Apparently in response to the circular by Jura Federation's Federal Committee dated 8 December 1872 (see above) which shared the news of the General Council's ultimatum, the Córdoba Federal Congress announced its solidarity with all other federations whether they were recognised by the General Council or not.³⁴ The newly elected Spanish Federal Commission (*Comisión federal*) informed the New York General Council about this resolution on 27 January 1873, and added:

From an extract of the minutes of the Córdoba Congress, you can see the decisions taken by it as being most radical and revolutionary, because it asserted that only through freedom and free federation can one maintain the grand unity of the International and enable the practice of the great principle of solidarity amongst the workers of the world. [...] that congress has been the most important of those held by the Spanish Regional Federation because 50 delegates attended representing 42 local federations, forming a total of 230 sections. In addition lots of local federations that expressed their inability to attend because of a lack of resources or because they were dedicated to the support of pending strikes, declared themselves for anarchist and collectivist ideas, as confirmed by the Córdoba Congress that rejected the authoritarian decisions

³⁰ The Local Council of the Vesdre valley to the Jura Federation, 11 February 1873, *ibid.*, 1 March 1873, pp. 2–3.

³¹ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', pp. 507–8.

³² The Federal Council resolved: 'To make it known to the New York Council that, in accordance with the decisions of last December's Belgian Congress, the Belgian Council no longer felt obliged to reckon with it' (*Internationale*, 13 April 1873, p. 2). This refers to the Brussels Federal Congress held on 25 and 26 December 1872; see above, p. 363.

³³ 'Le Congrès Belge à Verviers', *Mirabeau*, 27 April 1873, p. 2. In addition, drafts of revisions to the Rules were commissioned, which were adopted at the next federal congress in Gohyssart-Jumet; see below, p. 569, n. 133.

³⁴ See above, p. 366. On 19 December 1872, the Spanish Federal Council wrote the Jura Federation's Committee to confirm that it had received the circular dated 8 December and expressed the hope 'that the majority of the members of the International in the world will protest against said decision of the General Council, the worthy successor to the defunct Council in London.' (Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas [eds.], *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 2, p. 367).

taken by the Congress of The Hague and adhered to the pact of friendship, solidarity and mutual defence formulated by the anti-authoritarian Congress of St. Imier.³⁵

On 17 February 1873, the Spanish Federal Commission received news of the General Council resolution suspending the Jura Federation. The minutes of that day's meeting relate the reaction:

The New York General Council sent us a letter dated 5 January (1873),³⁶ received on this day, containing a copy of the authoritarian decree dated 8 November of last year sent to the Jura Federation, which nullified the resolutions taken by the extraordinary Congress of St. Imier and gave 40 days to revoke them. In other words, this *government cancels*, on its own authority, resolutions that the regional congresses by their own sovereignty have taken, because it [the General Council] commonly believes that it is the International and that members of the International lack reason and need a group of *infallible people* to approve or cancel all their actions.

As the sections of the Jura Federation have reinforced their adhesion to the resolutions of their extraordinary congress and the General Council has not received a retraction of said resolutions or in other words, because the workers of Jura did not want to obey them, said General Council states that it is 'obliged to suspend the Jura Federation, and it hereby *does suspend it* until the next General Congress'. [...]

Said General Council, according to this logic, will have to suspend four fifths of the International's global membership – those that do not accept or recognise the authoritarian resolutions formulated by the fictitious majority at the Congress of The Hague because they are unjust, inopportune, and exceeding the powers of a congress.

It is agreed to present a project of rebuttal in the next session.³⁷

In a letter written on the same date to Italy, the Federal Commission stated: 'The members of the *government* of the International are very stupid if they think that the workers of Jura will retract the decision and adopt resolutions that are contrary to their aspirations.'³⁸ The Jura Federation's Federal Committee was also sent a declaration of solidarity on the same day:

if said government knew of the resolutions of the Córdoba and Brussels Congresses it is nearly sure that they would not have taken the ridiculous decision to suspend you because they would have to also suspend the Spanish, the Belgian and other federations. [...] To do this in Spain they would have to suspend 30,000 workers and be left with more or less 200 members. For our part we find an excommunication by said General Council has the same effect as one by [Pope] Pius IX, and for you it will be the same because if some schemers suspend you, you will be recognised by the vast majority of the International's members worldwide.³⁹

After a short discussion at the next meeting of the Federal Commission, the wording of a reply to the General Council was agreed upon:⁴⁰

³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 71–72. See also above, pp. 365–67. The Córdoba Congress resolutions were later adopted by 28 local federations – representing 73 sections and 4,293 members – that did not attend the congress; see Consejo Local de la Federación Barcelonesa, *Circular á todas las Federaciones locales*, pp. 8–9.

³⁶ For the resolution suspending the Jura Federation, see above, p. 383.

³⁷ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 2, p. 59.

³⁸ The Spanish Federal Commission to the Italian Correspondence Commission, 17 February 1873, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 3, p. 177.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 180–81; see also The Spanish Federal Council to the editors of the *Condenado*, 10 October 1872, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 224. For the reply of the Committee of the Jura Federation, see Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 2, p. 69 (meeting on 24 February 1873).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 64 (meeting on 21 February 1873).

If the workers believed that the unity of the International was founded on the artificial and [always] fictitious organisation of whichever centralising power, your unqualified conduct would be sufficient to divide the International [...]. Despite the decree suspending the Jura Federation, this General Council can rest assured that said Federation continues to be recognised by the vast majority of the members of the International in the world who will consider your resolution unjust, inopportune, and exceeding the powers of this correspondence and statistics centre, which, thanks to the plotting of various schemers or narcissists, has been turned into a dictatorial and absolute power that has no reason for existing and should not and cannot be permitted in the midst of such a highly democratic Association like the International.⁴¹

A copy of the letter was sent to the Jura Federation's Federal Committee with the following comment: if Sorge and company 'continue along the path undertaken, they will be soon outside of the International, thus remaining as *governors without subjects*'.⁴²

Naturally, the Italian Federation did not recognise the resolutions of the Congress of The Hague, which it had boycotted. The first issue of the *Rivoluzione Sociale*, the official organ of the Italian Federation, did not mince words, either:

the conquest of political power by the proletariat, which was the opinion of some, has become a duty – a dogma of a new church, outside which there is no salvation: doctrinarism and the absolute are now part of the programme of the International. [...] Our policy, the St. Imier Congress said so, is negative policy: by forcing a particular, *positive political theory* on us, the majority at the Congress of The Hague is betraying the Association; and we will not sit down with traitors. [...] Let us await the Revolution so that it may test our strengths: let it judge between *authoritarians* and *anarchists*.⁴³

The refugee Jules Guesde, who had been in Rome since April 1872 and was a correspondent there for various Francophone newspapers, reported in a letter dated 22 September 1872: 'As for Italy, it has gone further down the autonomist path. It means to ignore the new General Council, just as it ignored the old one.'⁴⁴

In a remarkable feat for the former corresponding secretary for Italy and Spain in the General Council, Engels only had *one contact person* left in all of Spain (Mesa) and *one confidant* in all of Italy: Enrico Bignami in Lodi who had formed the section of the International there and edited the *Plebe*, the only newspaper supporting the General Council in Italy. Engels complained in a letter to Sorge on 2 November 1872: 'Bignami is the only fellow in Italy to have taken our side, even though not very vigorously up to now. [...] He is surrounded by the autonomists and so still has to act circumspectly. I hear nothing from Turin any more. In Milan Cuno must find at least one contact for us so that we at least get reports.'⁴⁵

In further letters, Engels added, 'If we lose Lodi and the Plebe, we shall no longer have a pied-à-terre in Italy'⁴⁶ and 'our people are in a tiny minority'.⁴⁷ The Italian refugee Vitale Regis, a

⁴¹ Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 3, p. 202. Instead of the word 'always' added here in the first sentence, the version by Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas noted a missing, illegible word. The word is added here based on a contemporaneous French translation that appeared in the *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 15 March 1873, p. 3.

⁴² Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 3, p. 211.

⁴³ 'Il Congresso dell'Aia', pp. 3–4.

⁴⁴ Guesde to Gironis, 22 September 1872, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 1, delo 5638.

⁴⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 444–45.

⁴⁶ Engels to Sorge, 4 January 1873, *ibid.*, p. 467.

⁴⁷ Engels to Sorge, 16 November 1872, *ibid.*, p. 450.

former General Council member and Engels' correspondent in Geneva, was brutally honest with him: 'The terrain is completely in the hands of the dissidents in Italy'.⁴⁸ By 20 March 1873, the only news Engels could send Sorge from Italy was that 'there is nothing to report apart from the fact that the Lodi section has not yet reconstituted itself and the one in Turin has probably come apart at the seams'.⁴⁹

The International was more active than ever in Italy at this time – it only refused to have contact with Engels and the General Council. The Italian Federation's Correspondent Commission replied to the Jura Federation's circular of 8 December 1872, which disclosed that the General Council had threatened to suspend them:

Comrades, we have received your letter and you can imagine our response. We are more than ever decided to follow the path that the St. Imier Congress clearly determined, and we said so in writing, several days ago, to the delegates of the Spanish International at the Córdoba Congress; no dealings can be possible between authority and anarchy, and we are for *anarchy*; that is to say, we are for the spontaneous federation of working forces from the bottom up [...]. This, believe us, is what the Internationalists of Italy think, and you can count on the solidarity that the brothers in Italy declared at St. Imier, given the New York Council is thinking of suspending you using the powers that the *intrigues* (let us call things by their proper names) at The Hague bestowed on them. If the New York Council does not recognise you, do not worry about its authoritarian pretensions: the majority of workers' federations recognise you [...]. It is this recognition, and not the *placet* of a council, that you need – as the International is here: not in the brains of a few men suffering from authority.⁵⁰

On 10 January 1873, the second congress of the Italian Federation was convened on 15 March 1873 in Mirandola in accordance with a resolution of the Rimini Congress. After arrests and police repression, the congress had to be moved to Bologna where it took place from 15 to 17 March 1873 – 53 delegates representing 150 Italian sections attended.⁵¹ After hearing reports regarding the Congresses of The Hague and St. Imier, the delegates decided

that by wanting to usurp a dictatorship in the universal proletariat's organisation, in light of the courageous opposition of a good many nuclei and sections, the London General Council believed it necessary to meditate and prepare a coup in order to concentrate the powers that were conferred on it;

that its pretension to wish to impose on the entire Association a political and sociological programme of *authoritarian communism* for a new state constitutes an act of reaction;

that the ploys used in The Hague to form a fictitious, equally self-interested majority and the lies spread systematically over a year in order to create a biased commission to investigate and expel two of our comrades, to whom we express our esteem and affection, constitute an act of base treason;

that this Congress cannot but fully accept and re-confirm the resolutions of the Rimini and St. Imier Congresses;

⁴⁸ Regis to Engels, 5 March 1873, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 264.

⁴⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 484.

⁵⁰ Favilla, 22 February 1873, p. 2.

⁵¹ Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, pp. 50–51, 55–56. *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 April 1873, p. 2. The Italian Correspondence Commission to the anti-authoritarian federations abroad, 18 March 1873, in P. C. Masini (ed.), *Carte della Commissione di Corrispondenza dall'Archivio della Federazione Italiana dell'Associazione Internazionale dei lavoratori (1872–1874)* (Milano: Edizioni del Gallo, 1966), p. 29.

that for this reason the Italian Federation disowns the decisions of the Congress of The Hague and refuses the New York General Council any role or interference in the International.⁵²

In further resolutions, the congress declared itself *atheist, materialist, anarchist, and federalist* and reiterated the Italian Federation's entrance into the 'St. Imier pact'.⁵³ In the months that followed, the Italian Federation continued to grow thanks to the formation of regional federations in Romagna,⁵⁴ Umbria,⁵⁵ and Tuscany.⁵⁶ According to police reports, the Italian federation had ten regional federations and a total of between 26,000 and 32,000 members by early 1874.⁵⁷ Sorge noted with resignation that in Italy, 'The Secessionists seem to have a good field there yet'.⁵⁸

The split of the English International

Unlike the unified response in Belgium, Spain (except for Mesa's group), and Italy (except for Bignami's group), opinions in the International in Britain were divided. After the Federal Council split at the beginning of December 1872 because of the Congress of The Hague resolutions, the members of the British International – which was already in decline – grouped themselves around two rival Federal Councils. Members of the old London General Council (Jung, Hales, Eccarius, Roach, Mottershead, etc.) belonged to the *council of the majority* who did not recognise the Congress of The Hague resolutions or the New York General Council – not because they were against the idea of the conquest of political power propagated by the resolutions but because they were against making a *particular political viewpoint* obligatory. On 6 November 1872, Hales wrote a first official letter to the Jura Federation:

We will fight as vigorously as yourselves for the federal principle and the autonomy of the sections, but at the same time we do not agree with your ideas on politics. We fully believe in the usefulness of political action, and I think every member of every section of our federation is convinced of this; [...] we fully accept that there may be such differences of opinion as to the policy that is to be followed in order to achieve the great principles for which we both fight. This is further proof that the principle of federalism is the only one on which our Association can be based. [...] It would certainly be impossible to adopt a uniform policy that would apply to all countries and all circumstances.⁵⁹

⁵² Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 60–61.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 61, 63. The wording of the resolution was drafted by Costa (personal interview with Malatesta by Nettlau, see Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4627), but possibly inspired by Bakunin: various resolutions from Bologna 'are surely based on his writings', Nettlau presumed in *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 2, p. 202. Bakunin also noted a good deal of correspondence with his political allies in Italy in his diary from the end of September to the end of December 1872 – but most of it is lost (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, pp. 37–50); Cafiero, Fanelli, Palladino and others also visited Bakunin in Locarno (*ibid.*, pp. 42–43, 45, 50–51).

⁵⁴ Founding congress of the Romagna Federation (*Federazione Romagnola*) in San Pietro in Vincoli near Ravenna, on 20 July 1873, see Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, pp. 73–77.

⁵⁵ Founding congress of the Marches and Umbria Provincial Federation (*Federazione Provinciale Marchigiana ed Umbra*) in Pietra della Croce near Ancona, on 10 August 1873, see *ibid.* pp. 79–84.

⁵⁶ Founding congress of the Tuscan Federation (*Federazione Toscana*) in Pisa, on 7 December 1873, see *ibid.* pp. 88–95.

⁵⁷ F. Della Peruta, 'La consistenza numerica dell'Internazionale in Italia nel 1874', *Movimento operaio* 2 (1949–1950), pp. 104–6.

⁵⁸ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 509.

⁵⁹ The British Federal Council to the Committee of the Jura Federation, 6 November 1872, in *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 December 1872, p. 2. In a reply dated 17 November 1872, Schwitzguébel wrote in the name of

At a meeting of the British Federal Council on 27 November 1872, according to the keeper of the minutes, Hales argued that

the Congress of the Hague had completely changed the constitution of the Association. Political action had been made obligatory, 'and that Political action was to be under the control and direction, not of the country itself, but of a General Council sitting 3,000 miles away.' It meant turning adrift all the Trades Unionists, and the abandonment of the right of private judgement. Under those resolutions no Section could take part in any movement, or initiate any action, except under the instructions, or with the permission of the Council of New York, and if that Council sent word to do anything, however absurd it might appear, it would have to be done, for the General Council could, under the new powers with which it had been invested, suspend any Section or Federation without assigning any reason for so doing.⁶⁰

After the split in the Federal Council, the council of the majority released a circular on 10 December 1872 signed by Hales and George Bennett, in which they committed themselves to the

General rules as they existed prior to the Congress of the Hague, which congress we consider was not fairly constituted, and in no way represented the majority of the members of the Association, either in ideas or as to numbers; and we believe the resolutions passed thereat, would, if they were carried into effect, virtually destroy the Association, and thus undo the grand work which has been accomplished since its formation in 1864.

By one of the resolutions passed at the Hague Congress on the last day of its sitting (after the majority of delegates had left,) but which has been placed as No. 1 in the official report: 'Political action was made obligatory upon all members of the "International"', and this would if accepted have the effect of turning adrift all Trades Unions, and such other social organisations whose rules or circumstances compel them to be neutral upon political questions. [...]

We, individually and collectively, are in favour of Political action, believing it to be the duty of the Working class to seize political power whenever an opportunity occurs, but at the same time we recognise the fact that the struggle for the Emancipation of Labour has many phases, and we are in favour of accepting in our ranks all who are working towards the great end we have in view.⁶¹

A circular issued in response by the Manchester Foreign Section, which was really written by Engels, emphasised the legitimacy of the Congress of The Hague and argued that its resolutions were binding:

whether the resolutions of the General Congress of our Association, held at The Hague in September last, are to be considered valid or not [...] is not a question at all. According to its General Rules, Article 3, the duty of the General Congress is to 'take the measures required for the

the Jura Federation's Committee: 'if our aspirations are the same, we differ, as you say, concerning the means to be employed in order to attain the goal. But if we have adopted a line of conduct for ourselves that seems to us to be necessitated by the circumstances, the idea shall never occur to us to criticise the English workers for pursuing different tactics; you are the sole judges of what it is useful and appropriate to do where you are' (*ibid.*, pp. 2–3). See also Hales's letter written in April 1873 (excerpts *ibid.*, 15 May 1873, p. 4).

⁶⁰ *International Herald*, 30 November 1872, p. 6. Samuel Vickery, who would later become the secretary of the *council of the minority*, tried to counter Hales's argumentation: 'the Association could not do without a head. Dictatorship was an evil, but a necessary evil. It was necessary to have a dictator, to have one, but have him bound hand and foot. Federalism meant having a number of petty dictators, while Centralisation meant having one dictator, he was in favour of the one.' (*ibid.*)

⁶¹ British Federal Council, *To the Branches, Sections and Members of the British Federation of the International Working Men's Association* [London 1872].

successful working of our Association.' The Congress is its legislative power. Its resolutions are binding upon all. Those who do not like them may either leave the association, or try to reverse them at the next congress. [...] But neither any section, nor the British Federal Council, nor any national Congress called by it, has the right to repudiate resolutions of a General Congress lawfully convoked. Whoever attempts such a thing, places himself virtually outside the pale of the International, and that, in effect, the signatories of the circular [Hales and Bennett] have done.⁶²

Engels repeated a familiar line of reasoning in responding to the criticism of the Congress of The Hague resolutions:

That the resolutions taken were penetrated by the true spirit of internationalism is proved by the fact that they were almost all taken by majorities of three to one, and that the delegates of the two nations lately involved in fratricidal war – the French and the Germans – almost always voted for them to a man.⁶³

And Engels used the following peculiar argument to oppose the call for a British federal congress that Hales and Bennett had made at the end of their circular:

in America, in France, in Germany, in Poland, in Austria, in Hungary, in Portugal, and in the whole of Switzerland, with the exception of a little knot of scarcely 200 men,⁶⁴ the Hague resolutions are gladly accepted⁶⁵ [...] we protest against the convocation of any British Congress which is to sit in judgment upon the law of the Association as established by the delegates of all nations represented in it. [...]

It is necessary that we recognise as legitimate delegates to the Federal Council only those who will uphold the authority of the Congress of the Hague, and endeavour to carry out the resolutions passed there.⁶⁶

The majority of Federal Council members including Hales and Jung ignored these objections and convened a federal congress, which was attended by their supporters on 26 January 1873 in London 'to decide upon the acceptance or rejection of the resolutions of the Congress of the Hague, and to elect a new Federal Council'.⁶⁷ The address convening the congress countered Engels' argument that the Congress of The Hague resolutions were binding (see above):

when the rules were adopted making the Congress the legislative power, it was self-understood that the Congress should be a Congress of *bona fide* Delegates, from *bona fide* Sections, and not a packed meeting composed of sham delegates from sham sections.

⁶² Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, pp. 92, 95, 97. In order to cover up Engels' authorship, a meeting of the Manchester Foreign Section resolved to 'copy your [Engels'] manuscript and then destroy yours [the original]' (Adolf Wegmann to Engels, 12 January 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 6279).

⁶³ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 95. Engels also noted that the Congress of The Hague resolution regarding the working class's conquest of political power was by and large the same as resolution no. 9 of the London Conference, which Hales, Mottershead, Jung, Bradnick, Mayo and Roach all voted for (*ibid.*). The address convening the English federal congress on 26 January 1873 included a counter-statement; see British Federal Council, 'Address to the Branches', pp. 3–4.

⁶⁴ According to the report of its Federal Committee at the Neuchâtel Congress in April 1873, the Jura Federation – which is apparently being referred to here – had 408 members; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 443.

⁶⁵ This wave of approval for the Congress of The Hague's resolutions was just as fictional as the widespread recognition of the London Conference resolutions; see above, p. 184.

⁶⁶ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 97. Marx's 'Address of the British Federal Council' (*ibid.*, pp. 98–104) was written at about the same time and included a similar line of reasoning.

⁶⁷ British Federal Council, 'Address to the Branches', p. 1.

The Hague Congress we assert was a sham; and when the Congress we convoke meets, we will lay evidence before it that will prove That men were present at the Hague and voted by virtue of credentials purporting to be from Sections that never existed. That credentials were given to men who were not members of the Association. That credentials were offered to men at the Hague upon condition that they should vote a certain way, which credentials were indignantly refused. That *under instructions* blank credentials were brought over from America which were not issued by the Sections from whom they purported to be. That there credentials were given by certain persons to whomsoever they pleased.⁶⁸

The address also commented on Engels' make-believe list of countries that had accepted the Congress of The Hague resolutions, which included the United States, France, Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary, Portugal, and Switzerland (see above):

We would ask how this information was obtained? The Federal Council never heard of it, though it was in correspondence and received newspapers from five of the Countries named. The fact is, the statement is not true. In some of the Countries mentioned the International does not exist, so India, China, Japan, and Siam, might as well have been added to the list. We challenge the production of a list *with the names and addresses of Secretaries* of those Federations and Sections who have recognised the Congress of the Hague, and accepted its resolutions. Nearly all the Federations of the International have repudiated them. They have been formally denounced by the Federal Councils of America [Spring Street Council], Spain, Italy, Belgium, and the Jura Mountains, by many Sections in France, and by two Congresses openly called.⁶⁹

The London Federal Congress of the General Council's critics held on 26 January 1873 was attended by twelve delegates and observed by numerous members of the International. It was to decide on whether to accept or repudiate the Congress of The Hague resolutions. Hales informed the congress that the council of the majority had concluded from delegates' reports that the Congress of The Hague was a swindle, and Hales and Jung provided a number of examples.⁷⁰ The following resolution was adopted unanimously:

Considering that the Hague Congress was illegally constituted, the majority present being a fictitious one, created for the purpose of swamping the true representatives of the members of the Association.

That the resolutions passed thereat were subversive of the 'Fundamental Pact' of the Association, which recognized the right of every Federation to decide upon its own action.

That the programme for that Congress had not been previously submitted to the cognizance of the branches as required by the General Rules, Administrative Regulations Art. 1, Rule 10.⁷¹

This Congress of British delegates repudiates the action taken at the Congress of the Hague, and its nominee the so-called General Council of New York.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5. The council of the minority's response, written by Marx, referred to several newspapers as supposed proof that the Congress of The Hague resolutions had been accepted; see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 123.

⁷⁰ *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, pp. 2–3.

⁷¹ A reference to section I, art. 10 of the General Council's revised edition of the Rules published in November 1871, see Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/22, p. 369. This clause was based on art. 1b of the Administrative Regulations; see *Rules of the International*, p. 6.

⁷² *Report of the Second Congress of the British Federation*, p. 4. At the congress of the federations in Geneva, Hales announced on 1 September 1873 that 21 sections in England had protested against the Congress of The Hague

The other side was just as resolute: Samuel Vickery, secretary of the *council of the minority*, sent a letter to the New York General Council on 6 January 1873 in which he promised the payment of dues, approved of the suspension of the Jura Federation, and called on the General Council to expel Hales and Jung from the International ‘as the principal schemers and conspirators of the separatist movement in England’.⁷³ The council of the minority organised a federal congress in Manchester on 1 and 2 June 1873 where their followers accepted the Congress of The Hague resolutions and announced their support for the General Council in view of the necessity of forming international union.⁷⁴

Naturally Sorge was more than happy to take side with the council of the minority and send an affectionate official address to the Manchester Federal Congress on 9 May 1873:

The resolutions of the G[eneral] Congress at the Hague about the political action of the working classes are bearing their fruits and the working classes prepare themselves to enter the new field of action. Necessarily such a transition is producing discussions and even strifes, of which you had your full share, but the time is near at hand, when the minds of the working-men will be settled and the perturbing spirits be left out in the cold.

The G[eneral] C[ouncil] has full confidence in the good faith & intelligence of the delegates assembled & expects good results from this Congress [...], keep our standard pure & our ranks clean! Never mind the small number! No great work was ever begun by a majority!⁷⁵

Despite such rallying cries and the propaganda of two rival federal councils, nothing could hide from the fact that the International was in trouble in Britain – especially since internal conflicts had become prevalent: William Riley, who put his journal the *International Herald* at the council of the minority’s disposal, wrote Marx on 17 February 1873: ‘7 in 8 of the readers of the *Herald* are as little interested in Jurassians – Hague – Sorge – Alliance – federation – resolutions – &c as they are in cosmogony or metaphysics.’⁷⁶

But the downward spiral had deeper roots: in contrast to the countries on the Continent, the early British International was mostly made up of associated unions, whose commitment to the International declined as their status rose due to legal recognition (1867 Reform Act, 1871 Trade Union Act). The number of unions associated in the International thus shrank from 33 in 1867 to 8 by autumn 1872.⁷⁷ The Paris Commune, which did not enjoy much support from the English unions, brought this process to fruition: the General Council’s alignment with the Commune led to fierce attacks from the English press and in June 1871 resulted in the resignation of the prominent union members George Odger and Benjamin Lucraft from the General Council,⁷⁸ which they had been part of since its inception. The International attempted a fresh start in Britain by

resolutions or agreed with the St. Imier resolutions; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 36, 605.

⁷³ Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, pp. 445, 453, 468–69, 508. A decision on the request for expulsion was postponed: ‘The G[eneral] C[ouncil] defers its action thereon until additional information arrives’ (*ibid.*, p. 469).

⁷⁴ *General and British Federative Rules of the International Working Men’s Association, together with a Report of the Second Annual Congress of the British Federation, held at Manchester, June 1st & 2nd, 1873* [London 1873], p. 21.

⁷⁵ Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, p. 470.

⁷⁶ RGASPI, fond 21, opis’ 1, delo 117/14.

⁷⁷ See H. Collins, ‘The English Branches of the First International’, in A. Briggs and J. Saville (eds.), *Essays in Labour History: In memory of G. D. H. Cole*, revised edition (London, Melbourne, Toronto, New York: Macmillan, St Martin’s Press, 1967), p. 249.

⁷⁸ ‘Minute book of the General Council March 21–November 7, 1871’, p. 566 (meeting on 20 June 1871).

proactively forming new local sections. But the new sections had little growth potential next to the mighty unions and in view of the fierce conflict surrounding the Congress of The Hague. The rival congresses in London and Manchester were the First International's last in Britain. The International effectively fell apart by the end of 1873.

The congress of the federations (1–6 September 1873)

A year before the schism in the British Federation, the International's American Federation split into two rival organisations: the Tenth Ward Hotel Council, which was friendly to the General Council, and the Spring Street Council, which was critical of the General Council. After the Congress of The Hague, the conflict intensified. The Tenth Ward Hotel Council supported Sorge's General Council – both bodies had more or less the same members – while the Spring Street Council distanced itself from the Congress of The Hague resolutions⁷⁹ and supported its opponents. On 2 February 1873, the Spring Street Council member Benoît Hubert expressed their solidarity with the Jura Federation's Federal Committee but also had some criticism:

Our Federal Council *approves* the resolutions of the congress that was held at St. Imier on 15 September 1872,

1st With the exception of those who seem to oppose all political action;⁸⁰ – and on these resolutions, our Council *asserts* that the means by which the International Working Men's Association seeks to accomplish its goal are simultaneously *social* and *political*, and that the sections and council have the independent right to determine for themselves when and under what circumstances political action may be desirable and practicable.

2nd With the exception, too, of those who seem to limit the quality of the persons entitled to be members of the International Working Men's Association so that they could only be *waged* workers.⁸¹ Our Council asserts that anyone, waged or not, who accepts and wishes to defend the principles of the International Working Men's Association is eligible for and can be admitted to membership, and that each section and council is responsible for the integrity of its members. Provided that members of certain societies with special missions, independent of the object of the International Working Men's Association, or any individuals professing to have such a special mission, are not allowed.

These are the resolutions taken by our Council at its meeting of 19 January 1873, and it has given me permission to translate and communicate them to you.⁸²

The Dutch Federal Council also supported the critics of the Congress of The Hague and repudiated the Jura Federation's suspension in a letter to the General Council dated 15 February 1873:

The sections Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam declare that they are in full agreement with the feelings of the *minority* as expressed at the congress held in The Hague, that is to say: we will keep up our relations with the General Council; we will continue to contribute our membership dues as before but we will never give the General Council the right to suspend or to exclude sections or federations. As a consequence we *don't* agree with the suspension of the

⁷⁹ See above, p. 379.

⁸⁰ This is in reference to the third resolution of the St. Imier Congress; see above, pp. 356–57.

⁸¹ This seems to be a reference to the emphasis on proletarian struggle found in various resolutions; see 'Les deux Congrès de Saint-Imier', p. 14.

⁸² *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 April 1873, p. 3.

Jura Federation, although we have to admit that – after the decisions taken at the congress in The Hague – the General Council *was not in a position* to act otherwise.⁸³

The New York General Council's ego was so inflated that it even took issue with this neutrally worded, ambivalent declaration recognising the General Council but not its resolutions: in its yearly report, the General Council warned that the Dutch members of the International 'will soon find out, that nobody can serve two masters & that by such equivocal attitude they will in the end lose the respect of both parties'.⁸⁴

Sentiments in Portugal toward the General Council seemed just as mixed but at least more favourable. The *Pensamento Social*, the official organ of the International in Lisbon, welcomed the Congress of The Hague resolutions on 6 October 1872.⁸⁵ However, in a letter written to the Spanish Federal Council only four days earlier, José Fontana – a member of the Lisbon Local Council (*Conselho da Federação Local*) – stated that the majority of the International's Portuguese members were in favour of keeping the General Council only as a correspondence centre.⁸⁶ On the one hand the Lisbon Local Council distanced itself from the Córdoba Congress resolution and declared its support for the New Madrid Federation,⁸⁷ and on the other it continued to correspond with the Spanish Federal Commission and asked for copies of the *Federación*, the *Condenado*, etc.⁸⁸ The New York General Council received letters from the Lisbon Local Council but no membership fees: 'Communications not very regular – dues promised'.⁸⁹

The German social democrats continued to view the goings-on in the International with friendly indifference. Liebknecht even informed Engels that the *Volksstaat* could 'not concern itself much with international polemic for the time being'.⁹⁰ The Congress of The Hague resolutions were not printed in full in Germany nor were they voted on at the party's congresses – they weren't even on the agenda.

Because of state persecution, the International was unable to act openly in Austria, Hungary, and Poland, and was more or less reduced to the clandestine activities of individuals there. Beginning in May 1872, the International in Denmark also faced severe persecution: the three activists Louis Pio, Poul Geleff and Harald Brix were arrested as ringleaders in the night between 4 and 5 May 1872 and were sentenced to six, five, and four years of hard labour respectively in March 1873. Sophus Theodor Pihl was the only delegate from Denmark to the Congress of The Hague,

⁸³ The Dutch Federal Council to the General Council, 15 February 1873, in *Werkman*, 22 February 1873, p. 3. For the General Council's reply, see Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', pp. 456–58. The Dutch Federal Council added that only the Utrecht section had accepted the resolutions of the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague; however, they later approved the 'Minority Declaration', as well; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 36, 120. In November 1872, the General Council still seems to have enjoyed more support in Holland than it did in February 1873; see Bruno Liebers to Marx, 3 December 1872, RGASPI, fond 21, opis' 1, delo 193/13; Engels to Sorge, 7 December 1872 [referring to a statement by van der Hout], in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 453. The Jura Federation's suspension may have led to the swing in opinion.

⁸⁴ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 507.

⁸⁵ *Pensamento Social*, 6 October 1872, pp. 1–2.

⁸⁶ Seco Serrano (ed.), *Actas de los Consejos*, vol. 1, p. 282 (meeting on 4 October 1872). See also The Spanish Federal Council to José Fontana, 5 October 1872, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 1, p. 155.

⁸⁷ Nobre França to the New Spanish Federation, 13 January 1873, in *Emancipación*, 1 February 1873, p. 3.

⁸⁸ See, among others, The Spanish Federal Commission to the Lisbon Local Council, 10 August 1873, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 5, p. 167, as well as pp. 161, 164.

⁸⁹ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 509, see also p. 483.

⁹⁰ Liebknecht to Engels, 8 February 1873, in Opitz (ed.), 'Unveröffentlichte Briefe', p. 410. For Engels' angry reply on 12 February 1873, see Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 477.

and he voted with the *majority*. Upon his return to Denmark, he was attacked both personally and for his role as delegate, which led to his resignation from the Danish Federal Council. 'Have not heard another word from Pihl', Engels wrote in July 1873.⁹¹ The International was then banned in Denmark on 14 August 1873, but its members never even contacted the New York General Council.⁹² 'The devil take the socialists of all these peasant countries', Engels cursed about the Danes.⁹³

Several sections continued to be active in France despite the persecution. Some of them declared their support for the St. Imier Congress resolutions in letters to the Jura Federation's Federal Committee, and some even joined the Jura Federation where they paid their union dues.⁹⁴ A clandestine federal congress took place in France around October 1872, which was attended by 23 delegates from French sections. They adopted resolutions on the following issues: 'with regard to the present political action of the working classes, the congress votes for abstention pure and simple in electoral affairs' – passed with 22 in favour and one against – and: 'With regard to the organisation of working-class forces, the congress votes for the creation of autonomous groups.'⁹⁵ In the months that followed, two Lyonese sections and the sections in Saint-Étienne were particularly active. The latter were in touch with Bakunin, Guillaume, and Pindy in Switzerland and had correspondents in Italy, Belgium, and Spain.⁹⁶ By contrast, Engels and Serrailier no longer had any contacts in France by this time.⁹⁷ On 8 June 1873 and 15 August 1873, further clandestine regional congresses took place in Saint-Étienne and Lyon. The congress in Lyon was attended by about 30 delegates who expressed their support for 'the absolute autonomy of groups' and 'the emancipation of the workers "by all possible means"'.⁹⁸

The thankless job, in view of the mood in the International, of keeping the centralist International afloat filled Sorge with resentment. By the beginning of August 1873, the New York General Council – despite its persistence – had only collected the following payments: *full* dues were paid by the New York Tenth Ward Council (more or less the General Council) and *partial* dues were paid by German ('the cheapskates in Hamburg have sent us 25 talers')⁹⁹ and Austrian

⁹¹ Engels to Sorge, 26 July 1873, *ibid.*, p. 521. Engels even lent Pihl money on 10 September 1872; see promissory note in RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 3, delo 79.

⁹² Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, pp. 429–30. Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', pp. 496 and 508.

⁹³ Engels to Sorge, 26 July 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 520.

⁹⁴ 'Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du Comité fédéral jurassien du 10 novembre 1872', *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 10 November 1872, pp. 5–6. See also Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 37. A section in Mulhouse (Alsace) was represented at the Congress of the Federations in Geneva by the Jura Federation delegate Pindy; the text of the mandate, signed by the corresponding secretary Eugène Weiss, can be found in Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 121–22.

⁹⁵ 'Extrait du procès-verbal de la séance du Comité fédéral jurassien du 10 novembre 1872', p. 6. Bakunin had already written in a letter from the beginning of November: 'There was recently a semi-clandestine congress in Lyons that declared in our favour' (Bakunin to Gambuzzi, 3 November 1872, in Nettlau, 'Nachträge', n. 4612).

⁹⁶ *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 22 April 1874, pp. 386–87. From the end of June until the beginning of July 1873, Pierre Gillet travelled from Saint-Étienne to Neuchâtel for a meeting with Guillaume and Bakunin (*ibid.*, p. 387); in his testimony before court, Gillet retracted his statement regarding his meeting with Bakunin, but gave evidence regarding their correspondence (see *ibid.*, 24 April 1874, p. 394).

⁹⁷ See above, p. 358.

⁹⁸ *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 22 April 1874, pp. 386–87.

⁹⁹ Sorge to Engels, 27 May 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5785. Sorge was referring to the committee of the SDAP in Hamburg.

social democrats.¹⁰⁰ Sorge bemoaned that the payments received by the General Council were so ridiculously low and erratic that they did not even cover the postage costs.¹⁰¹ In his confidential yearly report, he complained that the split in the International was the ‘most disagreeable business’.¹⁰² And on 30 August 1873, he wrote a letter to Marx, Engels, Johann Philipp Becker, and others in which he stated that keeping the General Council in New York would be an ‘*undesirable occurrence*’.¹⁰³

Sorge hoped that he would be relieved of his duties at the next general congress, which was to take place in Switzerland according to a resolution of the Congress of The Hague.¹⁰⁴ In light of the dwindling support for the General Council, an alarmed Engels wrote Sorge on 3 May 1873 that the ‘Alliancists’ (i.e. the majority of federations, who were critical of the General Council) were doing everything in their power ‘to turn up at the Congress in force, whereas on our side everyone is going to sleep’.¹⁰⁵ Neither French, nor German, nor Danish delegates would attend the congress, Engels continued, and it would be difficult to mobilise the few remaining groups friendly to the General Council in other countries.

From England only a few delegates can come and it is very doubtful whether the Spaniards will send one, so it is to be expected that the Congress will be very poorly attended and that the Bakuninists [the General Council critics] will have more people there than us. The Genevans themselves are doing nothing, the *Égalité* seems to be defunct, so that even there no great support appears likely – merely the consciousness that there we shall *be sitting in our own house*¹⁰⁶ and among people who know Bakunin and his gang and can throw them out if need be. So Geneva is the *only* place possible [to hold a congress], and to secure a victory for us, the only necessary condition remaining – *though it is an absolutely indispensable one* – is that, in accordance with the resolution of 26 January,¹⁰⁷ the General Council should now announce the following *resignations*:

1. The *Belgian* Federation, which has declared that it has nothing to do with the General Council and which has repudiated the Hague resolutions.¹⁰⁸
2. That part of the *Spanish* Federation which was represented in Córdoba and which contravened the Rules by declaring the payment of dues to the General Council to be optional, and which has also repudiated the Hague resolutions.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁰ Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, p. 496.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 505, 508–9.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 507.

¹⁰³ IISG, Jung Papers, no. 1007. ‘I’m waiting’, he wrote on 20 August 1873 to Marx, ‘for the General Council to be moved back to Europe and am really tired’ (IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, D 4140).

¹⁰⁴ Sorge, ‘Minutes’, p. 168. Le Moussu, ‘Minutes’, p. 100.

¹⁰⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 493.

¹⁰⁶ The Genevan sections of the International had held their meetings in the Temple Unique – a Masonic Temple that used to belong to the Genevan Freemasons – since 28 March 1869. Due to the decline of the International’s Geneva sections, they had to vacate the building in 1873. The General Council’s congress thus took place at the Hôtel de Navigation in Geneva.

¹⁰⁷ See above, p. 383.

¹⁰⁸ See above, pp. 363, 384.

¹⁰⁹ On 28 December 1872, the delegates of the Córdoba Congress decided unanimously to change the federal statutes so that local federations could decide if the membership dues would be sent to the General Council in the future; see *Estracto de las actas del tercer congreso*, p. 28, 66. For the Congress of The Hague resolutions, see above, pp. 365–67.

3. The *English* sections and individuals represented at the would-be [!] London congress of 26 January, who have likewise repudiated the Hague resolutions.¹¹⁰
4. The Jura Federation which, at the congress they are due to hold shortly,¹¹¹ will undoubtedly give us adequate grounds to extend the resolution on suspension.

Lastly, it could be announced that the so-called Italian Federation which was represented at the so-called congress of Bologna (instead of Mirandola), is not a member of the International at all since it has never satisfied even a single one of the conditions laid down by the Rules.

Once this resolution has been published and the General Council has set up a committee in Geneva to make preparations for the Congress and to scrutinise the mandates *in advance*, a committee consisting e.g. of Becker, Perret, Duval and Utin, if he is there, the mass surge forward of the Bakuninists will have been forestalled. As soon as the General Council has issued instructions to the committee that these people cannot be given recognition as delegates until they have been granted admission by the majority of the real and acknowledged delegates of the International, all will be well. Even if they were in the majority, they would be innocuous; they could go elsewhere and hold their own congress, but without having brought their majority to bear vis-à-vis ourselves. And that is all we can ask for.¹¹²

Marx's pessimism shows that he too was disillusioned: 'The Hague Congress must have brought us at least *the one* advantage that the rabble will be removed from our midst.'¹¹³

Sorge did what Engels asked and had the New York General Council pass a resolution on 30 May 1873 declaring that all of the federations, sections, and individuals who attended the Congresses of Brussels, Córdoba, and London 'have placed themselves outside of & are no longer members of the International Workingmen's Association'.¹¹⁴ In another resolution passed on the same day, the General Council announced 'that no regional Italian federation of the International exists'.¹¹⁵

The General Council sank into oblivion after these resolutions, which were ignored by most everyone. The federations namely took it upon themselves to convene the next congress. Various possibilities were discussed on how the federations should deal with the congress: on 16 September 1872, the delegates at the international congress in St. Imier expressed the wish that all of the federations that had entered the 'pact of friendship, solidarity, and mutual defence' would meet 'not later than in six months' for an extraordinary congress.¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the Córdoba Federal Congress of the Spanish Federation passed a resolution on 28 December 1872 suggesting that, in view of financial considerations, a 'Congreso anti-autoritario' (anti-authoritarian congress) should take place after the International's next regular congress.¹¹⁷ The Bologna Fed-

¹¹⁰ See above, p. 392.

¹¹¹ The Jura Federation's Neuchâtel Congress on 27 and 28 April 1873 is meant.

¹¹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 493–94 (here erroneously 'genuine' instead of 'real' delegates [*wirklich*, 'real movement', etc., see above, pp. 82–83]). Becker also suggested that the congress take place in Geneva; see Becker to Sorge, 19 May 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, pp. 109–10.

¹¹³ Marx to Johann Philipp Becker, 7 April 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 489.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 512. Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 475.

¹¹⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 512. Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 475. Bignami, the General Council's only supporter in Italy, refused to print this resolution in the *Plebe*; see Bignami to Engels, 8 August 1873, in Del Bo (ed.), *La corrispondenza di Marx e Engels*, p. 271.

¹¹⁶ 'Les deux Congrès de Saint-Imier', p. 14.

¹¹⁷ *Estracto de las actas del tercer congreso*, p. 36, 38.

eral Congress of the Italian Federation suggested that a 'Congresso antiautoritario' take place five days *before* the International's congress.¹¹⁸ 'The anti-authoritarian congress and the general congress' also stood on the agenda of the Jura Federation's Neuchâtel Federal Congress on 27 and 28 April 1873. Guillaume mentioned the Spanish and Italian resolutions and added: 'We still do not know Belgium's opinion; we only know that it does not recognise the so-called New York General Council, and that consequently it shall cooperate with us for the convocation of the general congress by the initiative of the federations themselves.'¹¹⁹ The minutes of the debate that followed note, 'that for us, the only *general congress of the International* shall be that which is convoked directly by the federations themselves, and not that which the so-called New York General Council might attempt to convoke'. The following resolution was adopted:

Considering that it is fully in keeping with the General Rules that the General Congress of the International meets each year, regardless of whether one is convoked by a General Council,¹²⁰

The Jura Federation proposes to all the federations of the International to meet in a General Congress on Monday 1 September 1873 in a city in Switzerland. [...]

The Committee of the Jura Federation is charged with studying the selection of the city where the General Congress should meet and making their proposal known to all the federations after consulting the Jura sections.¹²¹

After consulting with the sections of the Jura Federation¹²² and with other federations,¹²³ the Federal Committee sent an invitation on 8 July 1873 to all of the International's federations to the next congress which was to be begin in Geneva on 1 September 1873.¹²⁴

Almost at the same time (a week earlier on 1 July 1873) and without knowing about the preparations being undertaken by the federations, the New York General Council followed Engels'

¹¹⁸ Masini (ed.), *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ 'Le Congrès Jurassien des 27 et 28 avril 1873', *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 May 1873, p. 4.

¹²⁰ 'The delegates assemble at the appointed time and place without any special invitation.' (*Rules of the International*, p. 4).

¹²¹ 'Le Congrès Jurassien des 27 et 28 avril 1873', p. 4. At this point in time a pre-congress meeting was still planned for 28 August 1873 – an idea 'that we had only accepted in order to please the Italians' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 69). This was called off in June 1872; see the following note.

¹²² *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 6 July 1873, p. 4. After the Jura Federation's Federal Committee and the Geneva section of propaganda agreed in May 1873 to organise the congress in Geneva, the Federal Committee adopted Guillaume's proposal on 23 June 1873 'to send circulars to all the sections proposing the city of Geneva as the location for the General Congress [...] and to ask the sections for permission to postpone the congress for 2 [*sic*] days from 28 August to 1 September' ('Procès-verbaux du Comité fédéral de la Fédération jurassienne', Archives de l'État Neuchâtel [AEN], Fonds Guillaume, Carton 4, Liasse IVb). This decision was explained in the corresponding circular dated 24 June 1873: 'the information that has come to us demonstrates to us the fruitlessness of an anti-authoritarian congress before the general congress until the federation[s] that deny the authority of the New York Council are the majority within the International and they come alone to a congress they have convoked themselves' (typewritten copy in the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace [HIWRP], Stanford, Boris I. Nicolaevsky Collection, Series No. 183, Box No. 239).

¹²³ On 11 May 1873, the Belgian Federal Council decided to suggest to all of the federations that the Jura Federation should be entrusted with convening the congress somewhere in Switzerland, 'without taking into account or according much importance to the other congress that could be held in said country' (The Belgian Federal Council to the Spanish Federal Commission, 17 May 1873, in *Federación*, 7 June 1873, p. 3). According to a letter from the Spanish Federal Commission dated 27 August 1873, the Italian, Belgian, Dutch, and British federations agreed with this suggestion; see The Spanish Federal Commission to the Sabadell Local Council, 27 August 1873, in Seco Serrano/Martínez de Sas (eds.), *Cartas, Comunicaciones y Circulares*, vol. 5, p. 219.

¹²⁴ *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 13 July 1873, p. 4.

advice and convened the next congress on 8 September 1873 likewise in Geneva.¹²⁵ Engels had seriously underestimated his opponents when he expressed the hope ‘that in reality they are in as bad a way as we are and that internal squabbles have exhausted and irritated their people too’.¹²⁶

In reality, the Sixth General Congress of the International Working Men’s Association from 1 to 6 September in Geneva,¹²⁷ convened by the Federations, was every bit as international as the previous congresses. Twenty-six delegates took part representing federations from seven countries. The delegates included Verrijcken and Dave (mandates from Belgium); Van Den Abeele (mandates from Holland and Belgium); Hales and Eccarius (mandates from Britain); Farga Pellicer and García Viñas (mandates from Spain); Alerini and Brousse (mandates from Spain and France); Cyrille and Costa (mandates from Italy); Pindy (mandates from Jura and France);¹²⁸ Guillaume, Spichiger, and Andrié (mandates from Jura); and Claris and Joukovsky (with a mandate from the Genevan Communards’ section of propaganda).¹²⁹

After the election of the congress bureau, which was made up of one delegate per federation, reports were read regarding the situation in each federation and three commissions were formed to draft resolutions for the congress regarding the revision of the Rules, general strikes, and statistics.¹³⁰ During the public meeting on the congress’s second day, Guillaume, speaking in the name of the commission on the revision of the Rules, suggested that the *General Council be abolished*. According to the minutes, Joukovsky took the floor during the ensuing debate:

When our Association was founded, at a time when the regional federations had not been organised, while the workers were only united in scattered sections, we had to have a General Council. Such an institution was absolutely necessary. [...] But at the Basel Congress, the General Council obtained certain powers, powers it soon exceeded. Manifestos were issued, sections suspended, all in the name of the International. Where did the General Council find its right to speak and act on behalf of our Association? Where did it get permission to take on board individuals without a mandate, some of whom were not even affiliated?

I arrive at the Congress of The Hague. There, the sections were in the minority; the General Council was almost the only one represented there. By means of a fictitious majority, those of our companions who aspired not to follow in the footsteps of Karl Marx were dismissed. With this majority, it usurped the right to suspend an entire federation.

As a faithful but perhaps unintelligent executor of Marx’s orders, the newly elected General Council, moving to New York, suspended the Jura Federation. Immediately the English, Italian, Belgian, and Spanish members of the International ceased all correspondence with the Council. It retained the title of ‘general’, but was from then on a general without soldiers.

¹²⁵ Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, p. 486.

¹²⁶ Engels to Sorge, 14 June 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 509.

¹²⁷ The meeting took place in the second floor of the Brasserie Schiess, which had room for 150 people (delegates and observers); see police report dated 2 September 1873, Schweizerisches Bundesarchiv (BAR), Berne, E 21, 14006.

¹²⁸ For more about Pindy’s mandate from Mulhouse (Alsace), see above, p. 567, n. 94. Mandates for Lyon and Saint-Étienne were issued for Pindy by the Lyon Regional Congress of French sections on 15 August 1873; see *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 22 April 1874, pp. 387; see also *ibid.*, 23 April 1874, p. 389.

¹²⁹ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 6–7. In accordance with the Administrative Regulations of the International (see above, p. 542, n. 45), the section of propaganda only had one vote at the congress. The congress accepted the suggestion by the mandate commission – made up of one delegate per federation – that only one of the two delegates be given the right to vote (*ibid.*, p. 8).

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 10–41, 45–46.

Can such an authoritarianism be permitted among us? Obviously not. I conclude therefore that the General Council should be abolished.

Perrare. The discussion into which we have just entered is useless, in my opinion. We are all contrary to the institution of the General Council in its current form, and I do not think any of us has a mandate to defend its existence here.¹³¹

In the recorded vote that followed, the congress voted unanimously to abolish the General Council. The spectators expressed their approval with ‘long and boisterous applause’.¹³²

The revision of the Rules was the dominant item on the congress’s agenda.¹³³ The General Rules’ preamble was returned to its original state – in accordance with the published minutes of the Geneva Congress in 1866.¹³⁴ Of the eleven articles that were then adopted in the new Rules, articles 6 to 8 were the most important:

Art. 6.

The mission of the congress is to bring together the aspirations of workers in different countries and to harmonise them through discussion.

At the opening of the congress, each regional federation shall report on the progress of the Association during the past year.

No use shall be made of the vote except for administrative matters; questions of principle cannot be subject to a vote.

The decisions of the general congress shall be binding only for the federations which have accepted them.

Art. 7.

In the general congress, the votes shall be cast by federation, with one vote for each regional federation.

Art. 8.

Each year, the congress shall task a regional federation with organising the next congress. The federation which has been mandated thus shall serve as the Federal Office of the Association; the various sections or federations must send any questions they wish to place on the agenda of the congress to this office at least three months in advance in order that they may be brought to the attention of all the regional federations.

The Federal Office may also act as an intermediary for matters of strikes, statistics, and general correspondence between the federations that shall address it for that purpose.¹³⁵

These articles sought to solve the problems of the previous years and make a repetition of the Congress of The Hague impossible: in order to protect the pluralism in the International, the

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹³³ The Jura Federation’s Neuchâtel Congress on 27 and 28 April 1873 had worked out the main issues, such as the removal of articles relating to the General Council in the General Rules; see ‘Le Congrès Jurassien des 27 et 28 avril 1873’, p. 4. The Belgian Federation’s Gohyssart-Jumet Congress on 1 and 2 June 1873 put forward a first draft (the text can be found in the *Internationale*, 8 June 1873, pp. 2–3). The Geneva section of propaganda prepared a further draft of the Rules between 12 July and 6 August 1873, which was largely based on the Belgian draft (the text is in *Travail*, 29 August 1873, pp. 5–6).

¹³⁴ There was only a slight change in the wording of the preamble of 1866; see Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 73. The Italian Federation’s Bologna Congress had already called for ‘The old Recitals of the International’s programme to be re-established’ in March 1873 (Masini [ed.], *La Federazione Italiana*, p. 62). Bakunin had suggested a return ‘to our original General Rules’ in November/December 1872 (Bakounine, ‘Écrit contre Marx’, p. 16).

¹³⁵ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 103.

delegates agreed to only decide on administrative issues in the future and not on questions of principle. The remaining decisions were no longer voted on by the delegates but by the federations. What's more, a federation that did not agree with a resolution did not have to implement it. In order to safeguard the International's open-handed internal organisation, the General Council was replaced with a Federal Office (*Bureau fédéral*), which would only be activated when necessary.

Bakunin did not attend the congress; he left Locarno for Berne for a month at the beginning of September 1873.¹³⁶ It is likely that he was not even interested in the organisational issues the delegates debated. He wrote the following after he heard that a Federal Office had been proposed:

Even if a Central Commission had been given no powers and no rights and only obligations it would still soon become that General Council; it would have had its agents, its own propaganda and official, its own official statistics, its private connections and therefore its own aims. Unavoidably, it would, sooner or later, become some sort of government. [...] I don't want to put anything whatsoever in the place of the powers we have destroyed because we don't need such a thing. We have destroyed the authoritarian edifice, our programme is anarchy, so there is no reason for discussions. This was our first blow, part of the building has collapsed, a second a third blow has to be given and the whole building of Marxism falls apart.¹³⁷

The congress delegates were more forgiving: upon Farga Pellicer's suggestion, an address written on the congress's second last day was sent to the General Council's congress, which was to start on 8 September. It called for solidarity among all workers 'however they may organise themselves'.¹³⁸ The Belgian delegate and congress chair Laurent Verrijcken closed the congress with the following words:

The agenda of the congress having been exhausted, we hereby close the public meetings. But at this moment, as we conclude our deliberations, we must carefully clarify the meaning of this congress: two ideas were found in conflict after the Congress of The Hague: federalism and authoritarianism. It is the first of these two principles that has been accepted by all the federations of the International; it is in order to reorganise the International upon a federalist basis that we have been delegated here. The Geneva Congress of 1866 concluded the first pact of union

¹³⁶ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 141. Bakunin travelled to Berne for medical consultations with his friend Dr Adolf Vogt, to contact delegates after the end of the Geneva Congress, and to get information from politicians in the Swiss capital about his status as a foreigner (*ibid.*). In August 1873, Bakunin was elected a delegate to the congress by the Slavic section in Zurich ('Procès-verbaux du Comité fédéral de la Fédération jurassienne', meeting on 24 August 1873). The correspondent of the *Journal des débats* wrote from Geneva that Bakunin 'had obtained a mandate as a delegate from the Russian students in Zurich [...] but he had been dissuaded from coming' (*Journal des débats*, 6 September 1873, p. 2). In a report for the French police, the Suisse journalist William Reymond reported on a chat he had with Bakunin: 'It seems to be Guillaume who managed to discourage Bakunin from attending the 1 September congress of the International' (report signed 'Verrières' from 30 September 1873, see appendix no. 2 in W. Eckhardt, 'Bakunin und der 6. Kongress der Internationale (Genf, 1.-6. September 1873)', *Syfo – Forschung & Bewegung* 3 [2013], p. 55; for more on Reymond see Vuilleumier, 'L'exil des communeux', pp. 284–87). But it seems most likely that Bakunin did not attend the congress as he had already decided to leave the International. In letters to the *Journal de Genève* and the Jura Federation's *Bulletin* in September and October 1873, Bakunin announced that he was retiring from public life and leaving the International; see Lehning (ed.), *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 5, pp. 231–35. However, Bakunin only did this in order to mask his clandestine activities in the Italian revolutionary movement; see Nettelau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 753.

¹³⁷ Bakunin to Zamfirii Ralli-Arbore, September 1873, pp. 1–2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. Nevertheless, Guillaume stated that Bakunin eventually considered the Geneva Congress a triumph (handwritten note by Guillaume in Nettelau, 'Nachträge', n. 4610).

¹³⁸ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 100, see also p. 97.

between the workers; since then, the intrigues of a few ambitious types have caused the International to deviate from the line which it had followed from the beginning; the Geneva Congress of 1873 brought our Association back onto the right path; the working class wants no more leaders and directors, it wants to take control of its own affairs.¹³⁹

The General Council's congress (8–13 September 1873)

The General Council had convened its Geneva Congress on 8 September 1873 – two days after the congress of the federations ended. Sorge was ‘forced to abandon’¹⁴⁰ his plan to delay the congress, which he first suggested in May 1873 and his General Council colleagues Carl and Bolte repeated in June.¹⁴¹ As there was not enough time for consultations, the congress was even convened without waiting for the reply of those in Geneva who were to host it.¹⁴²

The General Council's congress was to be organised by two crumbling local groups: the Romance Federation and the Group of German-speaking Sections.¹⁴³ The *Égalité*, the Romance Federation's official organ over many years, had celebrated the results of the Congress of The Hague on 2 November 1872¹⁴⁴ – six weeks later, the newspaper was discontinued after a four-year run. The Romance Federation's Committee made numerous attempts to reorganise because of its dwindling membership. Already in May 1872, an initiative was started to found a Swiss Regional Federation (*Fédération régionale suisse*), which was to encompass the Romance Federation, Jura Federation, and Italian- and German-speaking sections in Switzerland. At the Romance Federation's last congress on 3 and 4 August 1873, heralded as the founding congress of the Swiss Regional Federation, only the Geneva sections joined the new federation. The Romance Federation, Johann Philipp Becker summed up three months later, was ‘dead and the *Fédération régionale* stillborn’.¹⁴⁵ Parallel to this initiative, the spokesmen of the Romance Federation – including Perret, the Federal Committee's longtime corresponding secretary, and Duval, the Romance Federation's delegate to the Congress of The Hague – attempted to reorganise on an international level. In August 1873, they published a brochure¹⁴⁶ in which they disassociated themselves from both Marx and Bakunin and blamed the conflict in the International on changes to the original

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁴⁰ Note by Sorge in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 110.

¹⁴¹ See Sorge to Engels, 14 May 1873 and 9 July 1873, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5783 and 5792.

¹⁴² On 11 April 1873, Sorge had called on the federal committees of the Group of German-speaking Sections and the Romance Federation to choose a meeting place for the next congress and to inform the General Council of their decision; see Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, pp. 462–63. The General Council convened the congress on 1 July 1873 without having heard back from Geneva. In a letter to the Romance Federation dated 11 July 1873, Sorge justified this move by saying the congress had to be convened in due time (*ibid.*, pp. 487–88).

¹⁴³ For more about the Group of German-speaking Sections, see above, p. 443, n. 25.

¹⁴⁴ *Égalité*, 2 November 1872, pp. 1–2.

¹⁴⁵ Becker to Sorge, 2 November 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 125. See also the statement by Gustave Bazin at the General Council's Geneva Congress on 9 September 1873 ([Eccarius], ‘The Sixth International Working-Men's Congress’, 13 September 1873, p. 8). Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 3, p. 460. M. Vuilleumier: ‘La Première Internationale en Suisse’, in Fauvel-Rouif (ed.), *La Première Internationale*, p. 246.

¹⁴⁶ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 228–38. According to statements made at the time, the Communard Gustave Cluseret was the brochure's author; see Guillaume to Victor Dave, 25 September 1873 (referring to a statement by Joukovsky), the manuscript is reproduced in *Orto*, no. 12, February 1933, illustrations, [p. 2]. Marx to Engels, 9 September 1873 (referring to a statement by Trusov), in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 530. [P. Lavrov], ‘Letopis rabochago dvizheniya’, *Vpered!* 2 (1874), section 2, II., p. 27.

General Rules, among other things. They suggested that the General Council only be made up of craftsmen, that it should only be responsible for correspondence and statistics, and that its members should not be re-elected, etc. 'As for the seat of the General Council, the same holds', they continued:

It must be moved back to Europe, to remain there. Too long a stay in the same location leads to preponderant influences, increasingly personal and political more than socialist. London testifies to this. By contrast, New York is too far away. Communications become too infrequent and expensive. They lose all timeliness. Thus, another city must be found besides London.¹⁴⁷

By printing a resolution proposal at the end of the brochure that included some of the aforementioned ideas,¹⁴⁸ the spokesmen of the Romance Federation all but repudiated the Congress of The Hague resolutions.

As the General Council's last remaining loyal figure in Geneva, Johann Philipp Becker was the only person who came into question to organise its congress. He recalled how along 'hobbled in a most miserable state the congress, which hung itself as it were around my neck in order to be saved by me'.¹⁴⁹ Engels was at first sure of victory when he heard that the congresses of the federations and the General Council had been convened for more or less the same time: 'The Jurassians have carried out their decisive retreat'.¹⁵⁰ Sorge also exclaimed cockily: 'As to the "anti-authoritarian" congress, the workers will understand that they have nothing to hope or fear from a congress without authority, i.e. without a reason to exist'.¹⁵¹ Becker, on the other hand, cautioned:

The separate union (Bakuninists) are also holding their first special congress here eight days before us and are boasting loudly about numerous delegates coming from every country, namely from Germany as well, to visit it. We have to make every effort that ours is in no way inferior [...].¹⁵²

Marx also appealed to Becker on 7 April 1873: 'You must even now start working to ensure a large attendance'.¹⁵³ However, it proved difficult to find delegates: the General Council members from New York could not attend because they lacked funds.¹⁵⁴ Marx and Engels refused to represent the General Council but reluctantly consented to accept other delegate mandates: 'We shall presumably have to go [to Geneva], for various reasons', Engels wrote Sorge coolly on 26 July 1873, 'although we would, of course, prefer to stay here'.¹⁵⁵ Serrailier was supposed to travel from London to Geneva as a delegate for the British council of the minority and the General Council's representative. According to the comprehensive instructions Sorge sent him, Serrailier was to call for the Jura Federation's expulsion, the transfer of the General Council to

¹⁴⁷ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 234.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 235–38.

¹⁴⁹ Becker to Sorge, 22 September 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁰ Engels to Sorge, 14 June 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 508.

¹⁵¹ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 488.

¹⁵² Becker to Sorge, 21 August 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, pp. 117–18.

¹⁵³ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 489.

¹⁵⁴ Sorge to Engels, 11 July 1873, in IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5793. See also Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 495.

¹⁵⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 519. A mandate from the New York section 1 for the Geneva Congress was included in Sorge's letter dated 20 August 1873. It was issued to Marx or 'in case he refuses' to Engels (RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 3, delo 85).

Europe, even more control over the federations for the General Council, etc.¹⁵⁶ When Serrailier read this, he called his trip to Geneva into question. He told Marx on 29 August 1873 that the instructions contained 'things, such as increasing the powers of the Council, that he could not defend either personally or in the name of the Federal Council'.¹⁵⁷

The last straw was the aforementioned critical brochure, which was sent by Perret, Duval and others to the British council of the minority along with a letter from Perret that, among other things, called for the withdrawal of the 'unlimited powers' the General Council had been granted at the Congress of The Hague.¹⁵⁸ This was particularly troubling as it came from a longtime ally of the General Council who was supposed to be organising its congress. In light of this, Marx immediately wrote Engels that it would be better if Serrailier did not go to the Geneva Congress: 'The scandal rebounds back on us, not him, if he goes.'¹⁵⁹ Hepner, who was to be a German delegate to the General Council's congress, also received a last-minute 'counter-order' from Engels.¹⁶⁰ As there were no signs of life coming from other countries, Marx and Engels decided that they could skip their own congress: 'After long hesitation', Engels later explained candidly, 'and after receiving lukewarm reports from some places and no news at all from others, Marx and I had come to the conclusion that the Congress would become essentially a local Swiss affair and that since no one would be able to come over directly from America, we would do best to stay away too'.¹⁶¹ Becker cursed: 'To hell with smart-assed big shots who are afraid of losing their face! They should have come twice if they thought that trouble was brewing'.¹⁶²

At first, Becker expected delegates for his congress from Germany, Austria, England, and the United States. 'When it turned out that we were mistaken', he later wrote,

we had all the more reason to push for as many delegates as possible in order to ensure that we would have a decisive majority and that the congress would be held. If the delegates had not been produced, then naturally we could have made it impossible to hold the congress by backpedalling, which would have been easy to motivate. But in view of the preceding congress [of the federations] which caused a worldwide sensation, we would have seen this as a dreadful moral defeat and triumph for the separate union [...].¹⁶³

To make up for the lack of delegates, Becker began enlisting members of the German workers' association in Geneva to attend the congress. He recalled that 'in order to lend more credence to the congress through membership figures and to ensure the proper direction a majority, I produced 13 delegates out of thin air'.¹⁶⁴ Most of the delegates 'produced out of thin air' had blank mandates from Austria-Hungary, which Heinrich Oberwinder had brought with him to

¹⁵⁶ Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 497.

¹⁵⁷ Marx to Engels, 29 August 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 523.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted according to Marx to Engels, 30 August 1873, *ibid.*, p. 526. See also Marx to Sorge, 27 September 1873, *ibid.*, pp. 534–35.

¹⁵⁹ Marx to Engels, 29 August 1873, *ibid.*, p. 524. 'In the circumstances, the sorrier our Congress turns out to be the better, of course, [...] if Serrailier doesn't go.' (Engels to Marx, 30 August 1873, *ibid.*, p. 525).

¹⁶⁰ Marx to Engels, 30 August 1873, *ibid.*, p. 526. See also Engels to Marx, 3 September 1873, *ibid.*, p. 528.

¹⁶¹ Engels to Sorge, 25 November 1873, *ibid.*, p. 537. See also Marx to Sorge, 27 September 1873, *ibid.*, pp. 534–35.

¹⁶² Becker to Sorge, 2–4 October 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 123. See also Becker to Marx, 4 March 1874, RGASPI, fond 1, opis' 5, delo 3388.

¹⁶³ Becker to Sorge, 2–4 October 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 124.

¹⁶⁴ Becker to Sorge, 22 September 1873, *ibid.*, p. 119.

Geneva on 6 September 1873.¹⁶⁵ Oberwinder himself later referred to the delegate figures as an ‘artificial majority, as to whose creation I readily admit to being the main culprit’.¹⁶⁶

At the opening day of the congress on 8 September 1873, 30 delegates came together, most of them Genevans. Of the six delegates who had come from outside Geneva, only three came from abroad: Theodor Burckhardt from Stuttgart, Oberwinder from Vienna, and Van Den Abeele from The Hague.¹⁶⁷ The latter had attended the congress of federations where he had announced ‘that he has a mandate to attend the authoritarian congress of 8 September subsequently in order to resolutely demand from those who composed it to return to more conciliatory ideas. If this approach does not succeed, the Dutch will break off all relations with the comrades of the General Council’.¹⁶⁸ The General Council had already received a similar message directly from Holland in a letter from the Dutch Federal Council dated 20 July 1873: ‘We wish to take part in the general congress that several federations wish to hold in Geneva – 1 September [...]. Now, comrades, we believe that you would do well, on your part, to recognise the next congress in Geneva and to represent yourselves there’.¹⁶⁹ Sorge replied furiously: ‘the responsibility for and the consequences of this measure shall be on your head’.¹⁷⁰ He then told the General Council’s representative, Serrailier, to bar Dutch delegates from the congress.¹⁷¹ Van Den Abeele was nevertheless admitted, but he left early a few days later.¹⁷²

Becker did his best – with the help of the 13 delegates created ‘out of thin air’, whose names remain unknown to this day, and the three international delegates – to keep Perret, Duval, and the Romance delegates at bay with their reorganisation plans and to get the congress over and done with. However, the congress was still a complete disaster: several ad hoc changes were made to the General Rules (the general congress would only occur every two years, for example), but the authenticity of the resolutions remains unclear¹⁷³ as the notes with the exact wording

¹⁶⁵ Becker to Sorge, 2–4 October 1873, *ibid.*, pp. 124–25. Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 641.

¹⁶⁶ H. Oberwinder, *Die Arbeiterbewegung in Österreich. Eine authentische geschichtliche Darstellung* (Vienna: Verlag von Eduard Hugel, 1875), p. 41. See also *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 21 September 1873, p. 2. Six months later the *Bulletin* reported that Oberwinder ‘has distributed to several persons *nine* mandates, supposedly Austrian, that were forged by his hand [...] The original of one of these forged mandates is in the possession of one of our friends’ (*ibid.*, 22 March 1874, p. 3).

¹⁶⁷ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, pp. 640–42. See also [Eccarius], ‘The Sixth International Working-Men’s Congress’, 12 September 1873, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 36. For more about Van Den Abeele’s mandate, see *ibid.*, pp. 119–20.

¹⁶⁹ Quoted according to Sorge to Serrailier, 15 August 1873, in Bernstein (ed.), ‘Papers of the General Council’, p. 511.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 503.

¹⁷¹ See Marx to Engels, 29 August 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 524.

¹⁷² [Eccarius], ‘The Sixth International Working-Men’s Congress’, 17 September 1873, p. 4.

¹⁷³ The minutes of the New York General Council’s meeting on 7 October 1873 state the following: ‘A letter was received from the chairman of the 6th General Congress, Jean Duparc, with news about the congress. It refers to a telegraphic dispatch from 17 September to the G[eneral] C[ouncil] in New York, *which never arrived*. The news is thus incomplete and in the meanwhile it amounts to the General Council staying in New York for the next two years and that the next congress will take place in Zurich in 1875’ (*Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 11 October 1873, p. 4). See also J. Ph. Becker, ‘Über die Kongresse zu Genf’, *Volksstaat*, 8 October 1873, p. 2. B. Gutschmann, ‘Bericht über den Allgemeinen Kongreß der Internationalen Arbeiter-Assoziation’, *Tagwacht*, 4 October 1873, p. 4. The General Council didn’t hold a congress in Zurich or anywhere else in 1875.

and a large part of the congress material disappeared shortly after the congress. Becker wrote a contrite letter to Sorge on 4 October 1873:

I had my problems finding the congress documents and getting hold of them. The congress president Duparc has been reprimanded in the meantime and has taken refuge in Turin; Bazin, one of the French secretaries, has found shelter in Brussels; Durand-Savoyat, the other French secretary, who had all the documents, has disappeared who knows where.¹⁷⁴

Neither a list of delegates nor official minutes were ever published. The labour movement's press didn't report in detail about the congress, either.¹⁷⁵ On 15 November 1873, Becker had to admit to Sorge, that 'with the lost French secretary Durand-Savoyat, the book has also been lost which contained the elaborated resolutions'.¹⁷⁶ In a letter to the *Volksstaat*, Becker was thus only able to name the congress's 'most important resolutions provisionally'.¹⁷⁷ No resolution was mentioned concerning whether the General Council would remain in New York. Nevertheless, Becker wrote Sorge that there was 'no option other than New York left' and that he had to accept it.¹⁷⁸

Sorge wrote a dejected response to a New York section's enquiry about his congress:

The G[eneral] C[ouncil] indeed harbours doubts whether the last congress in Geneva was a regular, *general* congress. [...] The congress documents sent to the G[eneral] C[ouncil] are in such a state (small pieces of paper and strips, written with pencil, smudged, incoherent) that it will likely be quite impossible to learn the details of the congress from them. In addition *the first secretary* of the congress has disappeared and with him the original text of most of the adopted resolutions. The G[eneral] C[ouncil] thus sees itself forced to continue its work on the basis of the resolutions of The Hague until the next general congress.¹⁷⁹

After the Geneva Congress, the New York General Council convened its last general congress on 15 July 1876 in Philadelphia, which was attended by eleven delegates from American sections. There the General Council faced facts, proposing a resolution to dissolve their International, which the congress adopted.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁴ Becker to Sorge, 2–4 October 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 125.

¹⁷⁵ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 625. Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 748.

¹⁷⁶ Becker to Sorge, 15 November 1873 in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 126. Becker wrote on 25 November 1873, 'we had hoped, futilely, to find some missing documents, which probably have disappeared forever with Durand-Savoyat' and that he had sent the rest of the material to Sorge on 24 November (*ibid.*, p. 130). Sorge later recalled, 'Only in the second half of December did a package arrive with the congress documents in an indescribable and irrevocable mess' (note by Sorge *ibid.*, p. 132).

¹⁷⁷ *Volksstaat*, 24 September 1873, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Becker to Sorge, 22 September 1873, in *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen*, p. 119. The Jura Federation's *Bulletin* reported the following results in the vote on the General Council's seat: 7 delegates for Geneva, 11 delegates for New York. See *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 22 March 1874, p. 3.

¹⁷⁹ Freymond (ed.), *La Première Internationale: Recueil*, vol. 4, p. 248 (copy of the manuscript). The edition in Bernstein (ed.), 'Papers of the General Council', p. 526, is inexact.

¹⁸⁰ *Verhandlungen der Delegirten-Konferenz zu Philadelphia, 15. Juli 1876* (New York: Druck der Social-Demokratischen Genossenschafts-Druckerei, 1876), p. 7.

CHAPTER 20. Politics and historical narratives

THE FALL OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL'S International did not bother Marx: 'The fiasco of the Geneva Congress was unavoidable', he suddenly admitted in a letter to Sorge on 27 September 1873; he purported that it had been obvious beforehand that 'the great majority at the Congress would have consisted of Swiss – moreover, of local Genevans'. He suggested that the General Council not 'give a jot for the Geneva local decisions, to simply ignore them. The only good decision adopted there, to postpone the Congress for 2 years, facilitates this mode of action.'¹ He shrewdly concluded: 'As I view European conditions, it is quite useful to let the formal organisation of the International recede into the background for the time being'.² Engels breathed a sigh of relief after Sorge ceased his activities for the General Council altogether in August 1874:³ 'All the better. It means that we have absolutely no responsibility for the nonsense any more and it will soon die a natural death.'⁴ In other words: Marx and Engels' attempt begun in 1871/2 to replace the pluralism in the International with their political doctrine and the federalist internal organisation with centralist structures ended in political shambles – the Marxist International was rejected or ignored pretty much 'all along the line'. Marx and his doomed centralist International made the Congress of The Hague observer Sergei Podolinskii wonder on 7 September 1872

that such an intelligent man as he could attach so much importance to the external side of victory when it was already clear from all the facts that public opinion was inclined towards the other side. [...] At least he would have left the stage with honour if he had remained with equal rights with the others, whereas now he is subjected to a shower of accusations, partly just.⁵

Even after they had failed, Engels and Marx held on to the sense of superiority to which they had grown accustomed. Despite the fact that the International had long ago brushed aside his allegedly *real movement* and that his small band of followers was as much of a 'sect' as anyone,⁶ Marx didn't let go of the conviction he first expressed in 1871 that *he* had to defend the *real movement of the working class* against all of the deviant sects.⁷ Engels still referred to the remains of the sections friendly to the General Council as the 'real International' at the end of 1873⁸ even

¹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 534–35.

² *Ibid.*, p. 535.

³ See Sorge to Engels, 14 August 1874, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 5809.

⁴ Engels to Marx, 21 September 1874, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 45, p. 51.

⁵ Podolinskii to Lavrov, 7 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 522.

⁶ The Swiss historian Erich Gruner made this observation when considering the criteria in Marx's own theory on sects; see E. Gruner 'Die Schweiz als Schauplatz internationaler Macht- und Prinzipienkämpfe in der Ersten Internationale', *Historische Zeitschrift* 204 (1967), p. 313. See also Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 187.

⁷ See above, pp. 82–83.

⁸ Engels to Sorge, 25 November 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 538.

though they were clinically dead; ‘there are circumstances’, Engels divined in a letter written in the summer of 1873 while the General Council was on its deathbed,

in which one must have the courage to sacrifice *momentary* success for more important things. Especially for a party like ours, whose ultimate success is so absolutely certain and which has developed so enormously in our own lifetimes and before our own eyes, momentary success is by no means always and absolutely necessary. Take the International for instance. After the Commune it had a colossal success. The bourgeois, struck all of a heap, ascribed omnipotence to it. The great mass of the members believed things would stay like that for all eternity. We knew very well that the bubble *must* burst. All the riff-raff attached themselves to it. The sectarians within it became arrogant and misused the International in the hope that the most stupid and meanest actions would be permitted them. We did not allow that. Knowing well that the bubble must burst some time, our concern was not to delay the catastrophe but to take care that the International emerged from it pure and unadulterated.⁹

We have now, Engels congratulated himself, ‘got rid of the rotten elements with honour to ourselves’.¹⁰ Marx even claimed that the international protest against the Congress of The Hague ‘is only helping us to *purge* the Association of the unsavoury or feeble-minded elements who have pushed their way in here and there’.¹¹ Engels reckoned that the problem in the International was that its founders were ‘bound to open its doors to socialists of all shades’, forgetting ‘that the very scope of its programme would allow the declassed elements to worm their way in’.¹² It’s all too obvious that Marx and Engels were trying to sugarcoat their failures so that they could continue to believe in their own infallibility: the International obviously didn’t split because of the *riff-raff*, *sectarians*, and *unsavoury and declassed elements* that had to be *purged*, nor because of Engels’ imaginary, ominous *bursting bubble*. This contempt for other socialist movements, about which these comments speak volumes, lays bare a disdain for the lifeblood of the International – its pluralist internal organisation. Engels now only sneered at ‘this naive conjunction of all factions’,¹³ which he had been unable to defeat. In the aforementioned letter written in the summer of 1873, Engels proclaimed:

One must not allow oneself to be misled by the cry for ‘unity’. Those who have this word most often on their lips are the ones who sow the most discord, just as at present the Jura Bakuninists in Switzerland, who have provoked all the splits, shout for nothing so much as for unity. [...] old man Hegel said long ago: A party proves itself victorious by *splitting* and being able to stand the split. The movement of the proletariat necessarily passes through different stages of development; at every stage part of the people get stuck [...].¹⁴

In view of the opposition in the International to Marx and Engels’ political programme, they obviously preferred to split rather than accept the International as a pluralist organisation where their opinion would be in the minority. Marx claimed that the ‘*life or death of the International*’

⁹ Engels to Bebel, 20 June 1873, *ibid.*, pp. 512–13.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 513.

¹¹ Marx to Daniel’son, 12 December 1872, *ibid.*, p. 456.

¹² Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 454. Engels varied his explanation of the International’s downfall as needed. In a letter dated 12–17 September 1874, Engels put forward the following, equally simplistic theory: ‘When, thanks to the Commune, the International became a moral force in Europe, the row began at once. Each tendency wanted to exploit the success for itself. The inevitable decomposition set in’ (*ibid.*, vol. 45, p. 41). It didn’t occur to Engels that his actions had contributed to this ‘decomposition’.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Engels to Bebel, 20 June 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, pp. 512, 514.

was at stake;¹⁵ in reality, he meant the implementation of his doctrine. The idea of pluralism was just as alien to him as it was to Engels, who, for example, in November 1871 had already assumed there would be a split in Spain.¹⁶ One year later, Engels was emphatic that a minority loyal to the General Council that split from the Spanish Federation would 'be of greater value than all the vague nonsense hitherto'.¹⁷

Marx and Engels' partisan and friend-or-foe mentality is often cited as the main reasons why they lost touch with reality and failed to understand the situation in the different countries.¹⁸ It also explains the great deal of time they spent denouncing and stigmatising schools of thought other than their own. Marx and Engels' incessant attacks against alternative socialist movements didn't only blind themselves but also their contemporaries and following generations, who to this day sometimes confuse the labour movement with its Marxist variant and whose concept of history is still distorted by the vestiges of Marx and Engels' denunciations.

The pamphlet 'L'Alliance'

A pamphlet written by Engels, Lafargue and Marx in 1873 was particularly defining in this respect. As described above, only three of the five members of the Congress of The Hague commission to investigate the Alliance were able to agree on a final report. The delegate Van Heddeghem (pseudonym: Walter) resigned from the commission and Springard protested against the report.¹⁹ The three members of the commission who signed the report – Cuno, Vichard, Potel (pseudonym: Lucain) – wanted to protect themselves: they demanded from the congress that 'the documents which have been communicated to them, as also the statements made, should be published by them in an official organ of the Association'.²⁰ Before Cuno emigrated to the United States after the Congress of The Hague, he issued Vichard a mandate 'to publish the Report and the Documents on the inquiry into the Alliance affair, and to sign my name'.²¹ But it was Potel who took the commission documents to Brussels and promised to write a comprehensive report in September, which he would send to Vichard in London.²² In a letter to Sorge, Engels pledged that as soon as he had Potel's papers 'all the evidence about Bakunin and the Alliance will be compiled and printed'.²³ Potel only ever edited a part of the commission's minutes which he

¹⁵ In letters written in June/July 1872, see above, pp. 287, 291.

¹⁶ See above, pp. 172–73.

¹⁷ Engels to Sorge, 16 November 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 449.

¹⁸ Such as in Italy: 'all of Marx and Engels' actions with regard to Italy bear the marks of improvisation, superficiality and disinformation' (Masini, 'La preparazione della conferenza di Rimini', p. 12); in Spain (M. Molnár, 'Quelques remarques à propos de la crise de l'Internationale en 1872', in Fauvel-Rouif (ed.), *La Première Internationale*, p. 442); in England: 'Marx and Engels didn't see that their partisan thinking only correlated to the political situation in England in part' (D. Mares, 'Die englischen Publikationsorgane der IAA. Zum Kontext der politischen Tätigkeit von Karl Marx', *MEGA-Studien*, 1998/2, p. 46); and in the United States: 'Karl Marx never understood the Yankees or fully grasped the situation in America' (Messer-Kruse, *The Yankee International*, p. 183).

¹⁹ See above, pp. 346–47.

²⁰ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 482 (here erroneously 'in the official organ' instead of 'in an official organ' [*dans un organe officiel*]; corrected according to the original wording in *Liberté*, 15 September 1872, p. 4). The congress agreed that the documents should be published; see Sorge, 'Minutes', p. 173.

²¹ *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 484.

²² See Engels to Sorge, 21 September 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 430. Serrailier and Vichard to Potel, 23 September 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, pp. 491–92.

²³ Engels to Sorge, 21 September 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 430.

sent to Vichard in London along with an introduction in the first half of November 1872. Potel promised to send the rest of the material quickly²⁴ – he was unable to do so as he fell ill and died on 13 December 1872.²⁵

In September and November 1872, before Potel died, Engels proposed that he and Lafargue write the commission report even though they had not been part of the commission to investigate the Alliance.²⁶ He planned on including all manner of material damaging to Bakunin regardless as to whether it had been presented to the commission or not: ‘We have now received some more very nice material, which could not be laid before the Commission because it arrived too late.’²⁷ The text Engels and Lafargue began working on at the beginning of April 1873²⁸ was more of a diatribe than a commission report or minutes. Bakunin’s life and work all the way back to before the foundation of International (since his exile in Siberia in 1857) was examined in a bizarre and defamatory fashion. This diatribe was so extensive that it could not be published ‘in an official organ of the Association’ as called for by the commission members.²⁹ It was published in September 1873 as a 137-page pamphlet titled *The Alliance of Socialist Democracy and the International Working Men’s Association* (*L’Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs*).³⁰ Engels financed the printing costs of 32 pounds³¹ and arranged for a German version, which had a title that suggested a colportage novel: ‘A Complot Against the International Working Men’s Association’.³²

In writing the pamphlet ‘L’Alliance’, Engels and Lafargue made use of Marx and Engels’ many polemic texts, Lafargue’s Spanish pamphlet from June 1872³³ and in particular Utin’s 180-page

²⁴ Potel to Vichard, [4 or 11 November 1872], in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 578. Attached to this letter: Potel, ‘Report’.

²⁵ Obituary in *Internationale*, 22 December 1872, pp. 3–4.

²⁶ ‘as soon as Lafargue, who is now here [in London], has found somewhere to live, we shall make a start on the Alliance business. Lucain [pseudonym of Potel] still has a lot of papers in Brussels’ (Engels to Sorge, 16 November 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 451).

²⁷ Engels to Sorge, 21 September 1872, *ibid.*, p. 430.

²⁸ See Marx to Becker, 7 April 1873, *ibid.*, p. 489. For more about the authorship, see Engels to Sorge, 26 July 1873: ‘Lafargue and I wrote it together; only the conclusion is by Marx and myself.’ (*ibid.*, p. 521).

²⁹ The members of the Congress of The Hague’s commission to edit the minutes (!) (Dupont, Engels, Frankel, Le Moussu, Marx, and Serrailier) were named as the authors pro forma (*ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 556). Incidentally, the commission to edit the minutes never published the minutes of the Congress of The Hague as they were supposed to. The minutes were only published 86 and 98 years after the Congress of The Hague (Sorge, ‘Protokoll’; the minutes by Le Moussu were first published in Russian in *Gaagskii Kongress*, vol. 1, pp. 9–80). In a letter dated 18 July 1873, Vichard confirmed as a member of the commission to investigate the Alliance that he had given his documents to the commission to edit the minutes. ‘I am therefore in no way connected with any report which may be made by any other commission in place of the one specially nominated by the Congress’, he concluded (*The Hague Congress*, vol. 1, p. 504).

³⁰ [K. Marx, F. Engels and P. Lafargue], *L’Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs. Rapport et Documents publiés par ordre du Congrès International de La Haye* (London, Hamburg: A. Darson, Otto Meißner, 1873).

³¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 395. See also Engels to Sorge, 12–17 September 1874: ‘I have advanced £32 for the cost of printing the Alliance and shall certainly lose something like half of it’ (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 45, p. 41).

³² [K. Marx, F. Engels and P. Lafargue], *Ein Complot gegen die Internationale Arbeiter-Association. Im Auftrage des Haager Congresses verfaßter Bericht über das Treiben Bakunin’s und der Allianz der socialistischen Demokratie*, Brunswick: Druck und Verlag von W. Bracke jr., 1874.

³³ Lafargue, *A los internacionales*, see above, p. 191.

diatribe on Bakunin written between August and November 1872.³⁴ Interestingly enough, the nefarious letter by Nechaev to Lyubavin³⁵ was not printed or even mentioned in the lengthy pamphlet. After the Congress of The Hague, Marx had thanked his contact Daniel'son for providing him with this document: 'The letter sent over to me has been duly received and has done its work.'³⁶ And on 12 December 1872, Marx asked whether he 'may make public use of that letter or not?'³⁷ Lyubavin, the original addressee of Nechaev's letter, agreed on the condition that his name be mentioned 'as he does not wish to take upon himself the role of an anonymous accuser'.³⁸ Marx and Engels thus had free rein to publish Nechaev's threatening letter – but didn't make use of it. So the commission to investigate the Alliance's demand that 'the documents which have been communicated to them' be published was not fulfilled. As a result the public didn't find out why Bakunin had been accused of *dishonest dealings, fraud and intimidation* – bizarre accusations that impelled nevertheless the *majority* at the Congress of The Hague to expel Bakunin from the International. The pamphlet 'L'Alliance' explained somewhat ambiguously that Bakunin had been expelled 'also for a personal deed. The authentic document in support of this deed is still in our hands, but political considerations oblige us to refrain from publishing it.'³⁹ According to a letter he wrote to Daniel'son on 18 January 1873,⁴⁰ Marx had trepidations because Bakunin's Russian friends had threatened in the *Liberté* to publish all the details of the affair.⁴¹

Instead the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' included the Alliance's programme from 1868 with which they applied for membership in the International,⁴² the draft of a programme and rules from autumn 1868 which Utin had sent⁴³ and Bakunin's letter to Mora dated 5 April 1872.⁴⁴ 'The book [the pamphlet 'L'Alliance'] will hit the autonomists like a bombshell', Engels confidently wrote to Sorge on 26 July 1873, 'and if anyone at all can be broken, it will finish off Bakunin'.⁴⁵ Almost every page of the book is filled with polemic zeal, which above all aimed to ruin the reputation of 'pope Bakunin' who was purportedly only concerned with giving 'himself the pleasure of the drama which it conferred on him personally in front of his false international brethren and in front of his mirror', and to brand Bakunin's 'modern Society of Jesus', with its 'tartar' language, a creation of 'small men with atrophied minds' where one only met 'traitors or dupes' and so on and so forth.⁴⁶

³⁴ Utin, 'To the Fifth Congress', see above, pp. 284–85.

³⁵ See above, p. 326.

³⁶ Marx to Daniel'son, 25 November 1872, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 452.

³⁷ Marx to Daniel'son, 12 December 1872, *ibid.*, p. 456.

³⁸ Daniel'son to Marx, 27 (15) December 1872, in *The Hague Congress*, vol. 2, p. 598.

³⁹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 580.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 44, pp. 469–70.

⁴¹ 'We think it neither necessary nor opportune to discuss here the alleged facts upon which they saw fit to erect the bizarre accusation leveled against our compatriot and friend [Bakunin]. These facts are well known to us, known in their least details, and it shall be our duty to reestablish them in their truth, as soon as we believe we can do so' (Lehning [ed.], *Archives Bakounine*, vol. 2, p. 353). They never went through with this out of respect for Nechaev, who was first under threat of extradition to Russia and then put on trial in St. Petersburg. Bakunin likely refused to address the matter in public in his manuscript for the *Liberté* for the same reason; see *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁴² Bakunin, 'Programme and Rules of the Alliance' (1868), pp. 379–82.

⁴³ See above, p. 285. For evidence that these texts were *drafts*, see above, pp. 317–19.

⁴⁴ See above, p. 193.

⁴⁵ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 521.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 23, pp. 480, 553, 459, 526, 556. Nettlau described the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' frankly as 'pseudo historiography [...], copied without reserve by so many who are clueless about the background and blind followers

Already in May 1872, the *Fictitious Splits* had failed to have the desired effect because its polemic approach dealt with the conflict in terms of intrigues and personalities instead of examining the political issues that had long ago come to the forefront. The pamphlet 'L'Alliance' was even more misguided than the *Fictitious Splits* in that almost the entire International had by then abandoned the General Council and repudiated the Congress of The Hague resolutions for political reasons.

In an open letter to the *Journal de Genève* concerning the Congress of The Hague and the commission to investigate the Alliance, published on 25 September 1873, Bakunin wrote:

Who today does not know that this Congress was nothing but a Marxist fake, and that this commission, upon which were seated two spies (Dentraygues and Van Heddeghem)⁴⁷ took resolutions that it declared itself to be unable to justify, demanding that the congress make a vote of confidence;⁴⁸ the sole honest member of the commission protested energetically against these odious and ridiculous conclusions in a minority report.⁴⁹

Disgruntled at the clumsiness of his agents, Mr Marx took the effort of writing a new report himself, which he publishes today under his own signature and that of some of his accomplices.

This new brochure, I am told, is a formal denunciation, a police denunciation, against an association that goes by the name of *The Alliance*. Driven by his furious hatred, Mr Marx did not shy away from slapping himself in the face by publicly assuming the role of a police agent, informer and slanderer.⁵⁰

The authors of the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' had already tried to defend themselves against the accusation that they were denouncing a revolutionary group by printing the drafts of programmes and statutes from autumn 1868: 'Let the ringleaders of the Alliance cry out that they have been denounced. We deliver them up to the scorn of the workers and the benevolence of the governments whom they have served so well in disorganising the proletarian movement.'⁵¹ It was of course not the first time that secret documents of revolutionary groups were released: Bluntschli published Weitling's papers in 1843,⁵² Wermuth and Stieber published programmes of the Communist League – i.e. Marx and Engels' own secret society – in 1853–1854,⁵³ and Testut published editions of a wide variety of the International's conspiratorial documents in France during the 1870s.⁵⁴ However, all of these publications emanated from the police.

Guillaume refused to comment on 'L'Alliance'. This pamphlet, he later wrote, 'drew no response from us but our contempt'.⁵⁵ The journal *Travail*, apparently published by the Genevan

of Marxism. In fact, almost every word in this brochure can be proven untrue or biased' (Nettlau, 'Bakunin und die Internationale in Spanien', p. 244).

⁴⁷ Only Van Heddeghem (pseudonym: Walter) was a member of the commission to investigate the Alliance; see above, p. 316.

⁴⁸ See above, p. 347.

⁴⁹ For more about Spingard's opposition, see above, p. 347.

⁵⁰ 'Lettre au *Journal de Genève*', in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*.

⁵¹ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 459.

⁵² J. C. Bluntschli, *Die Kommunisten in der Schweiz nach den bei Weitling vorgefundenen Papieren. Wörtlicher Abdruck des Kommissionsberichtes an die H. Regierung des Standes Zürich* (Zurich: Druck von Orell, Füßli und Comp., 1843).

⁵³ C. G. L. Wermuth and W. Stieber, *Die Communisten-Verschwörungen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. Im amtlichen Auftrage zur Benutzung der Polizei-Behörden der sämtlichen deutschen Bundesstaaten auf Grund der betreffenden gerichtlichen und polizeilichen Acten dargestellt*, 2 vols. (Berlin: Druck von A. W. Hayn, 1853–1854).

⁵⁴ Testut, *L'Internationale et le jacobinisme*, and various other publications.

⁵⁵ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 148.

section of propaganda in August/September 1873, included a short review of the pamphlet 'L'Alliance':

The men of the former General Council in London have just published a new lampoon against those who refused to obey them. It is titled *The International and the Alliance of Socialist Democracy* and is sold for 2 francs and 50 centimes; quite expensive. The Marxists' impotent rage is once again given free rein and facts of common knowledge are distorted. Such-and-such a citizen who was never part of the *Alliance of Socialist Democracy* is treated as an Alliancist and a disciple of Bakunin; another is represented as a disruptive element, etc., etc. All the old tales invented with the most egregious bad faith are painstakingly reprinted by the poor wretches of the authoritarian camp. But it is all to no effect, and the clamour of the Messieurs of London has no meaning or significance, especially now that they are reduced to their own devices, abandoned by all true friends of the International, all partisans of the social revolution. This booklet is the 'swan song' of the Marxist party.⁵⁶

No one else attacked in the pamphlet thought it worthy of a reply. Engels cursed:

not the slightest attempt to reply to anything. Outine has been here for 4 weeks or so and has told us still more wonderful stories about Bakunin. The fellow has really put his catechism into practice; for years now he and his Alliance have lived exclusively from *blackmail*, relying on the fact that nothing could be put into print about this without compromising other people who have to be taken into account. You have no idea what a low-down gang they are. That aside, their pseudo-International is as quiet as a mouse; the pamphlet has exposed their frauds and Messrs Guillaume & Co. will have to let the dust settle first.⁵⁷

Utin's 'wonderful stories' and the aforementioned loss of touch with reality were enough to allow Engels to keep faith in his beliefs.

Surprisingly the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' was above all criticised by people who were not close to Bakunin and his ideas and who had remained neutral in the conflict within the International. The Russian emigrant Lavrov, for example, described 'L'Alliance' as a 'rather bilious and not especially conscientious pamphlet'.⁵⁸ And in the *Vpered!*, which he edited, he complained that the pamphlet consisted of

bitter polemics against people who stood in the first ranks of the federalists, who had been excluded from the International at the Hague Congress. This results from the purpose of the brochure, which is full of private matters that could only have been collected by hearsay, so that their credibility could not have been unquestionable for the authors. [...]

Most of our readers will have the same unpleasant feelings with which we read it and, fulfilling our duty as chroniclers, with which we put these regrettable phenomena on our pages.⁵⁹

After he heard about this statement, Engels – who became more and more fanatical in his views over the years – attacked Lavrov as well in an article in the *Volksstaat*:

First let us remark that the Bakuninists are here presented simply as 'Federalists', as opposed to the alleged *Centralists*, as if the author believed in this non-existent [!] opposition invented by the Bakuninists [!]. [...] The main charge, however, is that the report is full of private matters the

⁵⁶ *Travail*, 13 September 1873, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Engels to Sorge, 25 November 1873, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 44, p. 538. Guillaume later wrote: 'Thus Engels naïvely imagined that if the Bulletin had not deigned to concern itself with his pamphlet, this was because we felt ourselves unable to reply.' (Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 3, p. 149).

⁵⁸ Lavrov to Jung, 30 October 1873, IISG, Jung Papers, no. 754.

⁵⁹ [Lavrov], 'Letopis rabochago dvizheniya', pp. 26–27.

credibility of which could not have been indisputable for the authors, because they could only have been collected by hearsay. How Friend Peter [Lavrov] knows that a society like the International, which has its official organs throughout the civilised world, can only collect such facts by hearsay is not stated. [...] if one is describing the history of a gang like the Alliance, among whom there is such a large number of tricksters, adventurers, rogues, police spies, swindlers and cowards alongside those they have duped, should one falsify this history by knowingly concealing the individual villainies of these gentlemen as 'private matters'? Much as it may horrify Friend Peter, he may rely on it that we are not done with these 'private matters' by a long chalk. The material is still mounting up.⁶⁰

In an article for the *Volksstaat*, Engels also attacked Peter Tkachev – an emigrant who had connections with the Blanquists and who was certainly no friend of Bakunin.⁶¹ Tkachev responded in an *Open letter to Mr Friedrich Engels (Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels)*. He defended himself in the letter and criticised Engels' attempts to belittle him in the eyes of *Volksstaat* readers. He also turned his attention to Bakunin:

You have forgotten that while we fight the Russian government, we fight not only in the interest of our homeland but also in the interest of all Europe and in the interest of workers in general and that because of this common issue we are your allies. You have forgotten that by mocking us, you have done a service to our common enemy, the Russian state. You have forgotten all this and have only remembered that we Russians had the incredible audacity, during the great conflict that has split the International Working Men's Association in two, not to stand under the same flag as you. You make a serious accusation against the *Vpered* because in its report to the Russian readers on this conflict it refers to your tactless brochure against the 'Alliance' as a diatribe, because it did not want to wade through that polemical dirt – the dirt in which you and your friends try to taint the biggest and most self-sacrificing representative of the revolutionary era in which we live.

You insult me in all manner of ways because you see 'Bakuninistic phrases' in my brochure,⁶² which were unknown to me until now, from which you deduce that *our* sympathies and at the same time the sympathies of the large part of our resolute revolutionary party are not on your side, but on the side of a man who dared to raise the flag of rebellion against you and your friends and who since that time became your most fierce enemy, your nightmare, your bête noire, your apocalypse.

As such the Russian emigrant literature has convinced you that our revolutionaries, both the 'moderates' and the 'radicals', in many ways differ from you and dare to have and to express an own opinion in many matters. Instead of approving of our independence or – if we were to err – to point out our errors and prove that they are untenable, you became angry and insulted us without giving a rational reason.

High-ranking civil servants act in a similar manner when they face any form of resistance. Their authoritative character is disgusted when faced with a person who does not agree with them, who dares to have a different opinion than these honourable gentlemen. With the passion which you have directed towards us, you have proven that you yourself belong to the race of high-

⁶⁰ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 24, p. 21–22.

⁶¹ For his analysis of Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*, see details in Bakunin, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, vol. 4, pp. 88–91.

⁶² P. N. Tkachev, *Zadakhii revolyutsionnoi propagandy v Rossii. Pis'mo k redaktoru zhurnala 'Vpered!'*, [London] 1874.

ranking civil servants. How could you accuse us Russians of having dictatorial characteristics? Does Mr Bakunin not have the right to respond now to all of your insinuations: 'medice sanne te ipsum!'⁶³

Peter Tcatschoff⁶⁴

The pamphlet 'L'Alliance' was particularly criticised by socialists in Russia until the beginning of the 20th century. Engels gave it to all the young Russians who visited him,⁶⁵ with sobering results: 'I have never gotten to know a Russian socialist', Eduard Bernstein wrote in 1910, 'who has not criticised it more or less harshly'.⁶⁶

The *Mémoire* of the Jura Federation

A few months before the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' was released, a detailed account of the conflict in the International had already been published by the Jura Federation: its *Mémoire* (memorandum) described the history of the International in Switzerland and the conflict with the General Council – and it didn't mince words, either.⁶⁷ A 139-page appendix included excerpts from the International's newspapers, pamphlets, congress resolutions, the programme of the Geneva section of the Alliance, as well as speeches and articles by Bakunin and others. The idea for this voluminous 424-page publication first popped up in the summer of 1871 after a fierce debate in Geneva as to whether the Alliance section had been admitted into the International by the General Council. At the time, Guillaume asked Robin in London to have the Alliance section's membership confirmation verified by the General Council.⁶⁸ When Guillaume informed Bakunin about what had happened, he dropped everything and began writing the manuscripts 'Protest of the Alliance' and 'Report on the Alliance' on 4 July 1871 in which he gave a detailed account of the Alliance section and the conflict within the International in Geneva.⁶⁹ Bakunin sent a 'Parcel'

⁶³ Actually 'Medice, cura te ipsum' ('Physician, heal thyself!'): The Bible, Luke 4:23.

⁶⁴ P. Tcatschoff [Tkachev], *Offener Brief an Herrn Friedrich Engels, Verfasser der Artikel 'Flüchtlings-Literatur' in Nr. 117 und 118 des Volksstaat. Jahrgang 1874* (Zurich: Typographie der Tagwacht, 1874), pp. 11–12. Marx sent Engels a copy of the brochure on which he wrote, 'Attack in a humorous manner. So dumb that Bakun[in] could have collaborated' (Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/24, p. 1141; reproduced on p. 1139). Engels then wrote an article in response to Tkachev in which he claimed to prove 'that all the accusations Mr. Tkachov has made against me, with that virtuous mien of injured innocence that becomes all Bakuninists so well, are all based on claims he not only knew to be false, but were also a pack of lies that he himself had concocted' (Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 24, p. 38). Engels railed against Tkachev's criticism of the smear campaign against Bakunin: 'The dirt that came to light on this occasion was, to the very last particle, of Mr. Bakunin's own making, and not his worst by any means. The pamphlet in question ['L'Alliance'] made him out to be far cleaner than he really was.' (*ibid.*, p. 37).

⁶⁵ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 750.

⁶⁶ Bernstein, 'Karl Marx und Michael Bakunin', p. 5.

⁶⁷ The following can be found in the preface: 'Our impartial readers shall testify that this book represents the true story, and as complete as our scope permits, of the development of the International in Switzerland. If personal details and some polemical passages are found mixed in with the narrative, it is because these details and this polemic were a situational necessity' ([Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 2). Lavrov reiterated in his review that the *Mémoire* was 'for the history of the International in Switzerland [...] unquestionably important', but the concentration on the history of the conflict was regrettable: 'the fight of the International in Switzerland against state and capital occupies an absolutely insignificant place compared with polemics that expose the struggle of the parties for the power and for the organisational form of the Association.' ([Lavrov], 'Letopis rabochago dvizheniya', pp. 5–6).

⁶⁸ See above, pp. 72–74.

⁶⁹ Remark by Guillaume in Bakounine, *Œuvres*, vol. 6, p. 5. Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1871, pp. 13–18.

with some of the manuscripts to Guillaume on 5 August 1871.⁷⁰ On the following day, Bakunin sent an appeal 'To the friends of the section of the Alliance of Geneva':

Let us address a *memorandum* to the Federal Committee [of the Jura Federation] in St. Imier, [...] I have already sent the first part of a draft for a memorandum to James [Guillaume]; I shall send him the end of it soon. It is too long – but it contains all the elements of our defence, and it should be easy to make a brief memorandum out of it, whether for Jouk[ovsky], Perron, or James [...].⁷¹

This 'brief memorandum' was meant to defend the section of the Alliance at the London Conference, but the plan was abandoned after the section was disbanded prematurely.⁷² Guillaume nevertheless stuck with Bakunin's idea, which he wrote about in a letter to Joukovsky, the secretary of the Geneva section of the Alliance, on 10 August:

I think that the memorandum drawn up by Mikhail, the first part of which I sent you yesterday, still has its *raison d'être*. You therefore must meet again to examine this memorandum and make whatever changes you shall find appropriate – and then publish it, such that it can be placed in the hands of every one of the delegates at the London Conference [...].⁷³

As there was no reaction to Bakunin or Guillaume's appeal in Geneva, the idea came up after the London Conference to also deal with the conflict among the sections of the Romance Federation in the proposed *Mémoire*.⁷⁴ The following plan was suggested in a letter by the Jura Federation's Federal Committee to the former members of the Alliance's Geneva section on 27 September 1871:

Here is what we think must be done, not only for the Alliance, but also to explain the split which has taken place in the Romance Federation: a *Mémoire* must be addressed to all the locals of the International, so that all the men who cherish the interests of our Association can judge concerning this conflict with knowledge of the cause. We think that comrade James Guillaume is the most authoritative among us to undertake the composition of the *Mémoire*; for that reason, he will need to have in his hands all the documents that might serve for that history, for the exposition of the facts pertaining to the Alliance and the split.⁷⁵

The next federal congress of the Jura sections in Sonvillier on 12 and 13 November 1871 officially authorised the Federal Committee to compose the *Mémoire*.⁷⁶ Although a commission was formed for this purpose,⁷⁷ Guillaume seems to have done all of the work.⁷⁸ In December 1871,

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁷¹ Bakunin to the section of the Alliance de Genève, 6 August 1871, pp. 1–2, in Bakounine, *Œuvres complètes*. A year earlier on 8 July 1870, the Committee of the Alliance section had already decided to publish a memorandum on their section's history since its admission into the International and the secretary, Joukovsky, was assigned with this task (Andréas/Molnár [eds.], 'L'Alliance de la démocratie socialiste: Procès-verbaux', p. 202). This resolution appears to have been forgotten.

⁷² See above, p. 78.

⁷³ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 558.

⁷⁴ The St. Imier Federal Congress of the Jura sections on 9 October 1870 had previously resolved to draft a 'detailed report' on the split in the Romance Federation for the next congress of the International; see 'Coup d'œil historique sur la situation de la Fédération romande durant les quelques mois qui viennent de s'écouler', *Solidarité*, 28 March 1871, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Nettlau, *Life of Michael Bakounine*, p. 560.

⁷⁶ [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 1, 233.

⁷⁷ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 242.

⁷⁸ As repeated calls to the members of the Geneva section of the Alliance to send relevant documents and pertinent information remained unanswered, Guillaume only had Bakunin's aforementioned manuscripts and Paul Robin's

Guillaume hoped that the *Mémoire* could be published 'in a matter of weeks'.⁷⁹ However, because he only began writing in early 1872 and printing in July 1872, he had to give up all hope of bringing the *Mémoire* along to the Congress of The Hague. By the time he was ready to leave for The Hague, only five printing sheets (the first 80 pages) and a part of the appendix had been printed.⁸⁰ This only covered the time from the beginning of the International in Switzerland to the debates over the Basel Congress (September 1869). Because of the amount of material and financial problems, the publication was delayed until the end of April 1873,⁸¹ when it was finally released under the title *Mémoire Presented by the Jura Federation of the International Working Men's Association to all Federations of the International* (*Mémoire présenté par la Fédération jurassienne de l'Association internationale des Travailleurs à toutes les Fédérations de l'Internationale*) by the Committee of the Jura Federation.

This crucial response to Marx and Engels' campaign has not reached a wide audience over the years for a number of reasons: it was not released by a proper publisher and has yet to be reprinted or translated. The pamphlet 'L'Alliance', on the other hand, was released by the publishers Darson (London) and Meißner (Hamburg) and printed in German in 1874; the translation was even republished in 1920.⁸² Certainly, the main reason behind the impact of the pamphlet 'L'Alliance' is that it became essential to the Marxist representation of history first propagated by Engels and then by the Soviet Communist Party's institutions.

The Jura Federation's *Mémoire* created a sensation when it was first referenced in a German-speaking publication in 1892(!): the Swiss socialist Louis Héritier published a series of articles titled 'The Jura Federation and Mikhail Bakunin' ('Die Juraföderation und Michael Bakunin') in the *Berliner Volks-Tribüne*. He undertook a detailed analysis of the newspapers the *Égalité*, the *Solidarité* and the *Mémoire* of the Jura Federation. Despite various misinterpretations in his commentary, it was the first time a German-language publication described the conflicts and political differences in Switzerland, which spread across the entire International.⁸³ Engels was furious and growled in a letter to Bebel: 'Now you see how my work gets interrupted! These

memoirs written in 1872 (see Robin, 'Mémoire justificatif') to work with; see Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 215.

⁷⁹ Guillaume to Jeanneret, 14 December 1871, in Vuilleumier (ed.), 'La correspondance de Gustave Jeanneret', p. 93.

⁸⁰ Guillaume, *L'Internationale*, vol. 2, pp. 242, 305. [Guillaume], *Mémoire*, p. 1. On 9 September 1872, Bakunin received two copies of this part (Bakounine, 'Carnet', 1872, p. 35). In a circular by the Jura Federation's Committee dated 24 November 1872, the sections' committees were asked for financial support in the form of subscriptions; see *Bulletin de la Fédération jurassienne*, 1 December 1872, p. 4.

⁸¹ The preface is dated 15 April 1873; the publication was first announced *ibid.*, 1 May 1873, p. 10.

⁸² With the absurd title 'Karl Marx or Bakunin? Democracy or dictatorship? A brochure to combat the precursors of Bolshevism', see [K. Marx, F. Engels and P. Lafargue], *Karl Marx oder Bakunin? Demokratie oder Diktatur? Eine Kampfschrift gegen den Vorläufer des Bolschewismus. Zeitgemäße Neuauflage der Berichte an die sozialistische Internationale über Michael Bakunin von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels* (Stuttgart: Volksverlag für Wirtschaft und Verkehr, 1920). The social democratic publisher Wilhelm Blos wanted to have the text interpreted as being against the Bolcheviki. He wrote in the preface, 'the Bolchevism of today is none other than the Bakuninism of yesterday, only cast in a new form' (*ibid.*, p. 3). Max Nettlau declared: 'It is a damning indictment of the socialist and other historiography of all nations that this source [the *Mémoire*] has remained unused while the wretched Alliance pamphlet has been translated and referenced.' (Nettlau, 'Michael Bakunin', vol. 4, p. 188).

⁸³ L. Héritier, 'Die Juraföderation und Michael Bakunin', *Berliner Volks-Tribüne*, 6 August 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 13 August 1892, supplement, p. 2; 20 August 1892, supplement, p. 4; 3 September 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 17 September 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 1 October 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 8 October 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 22 October 1892, supplement, pp. 2–3; 5 November 1892, supplement, p. 2; 12 November 1892, supplement, p. 2; 19

absurd *Tribüne* articles have forced me to intervene.’⁸⁴ In a public statement released on the same day, Engels railed: ‘Although the author appears to take pains to treat his subject objectively and impartially, he in fact depicts it as the anarchist gentlemen depicted it themselves and wished it to be depicted’.⁸⁵ In contrast to Hérítier’s balanced political analysis, Engels dusted off his old conspiracy theories, stating that ‘a *secret* Alliance with the aim of putting into the hands of the anarchists control over the whole International’ was ‘the background to the whole dispute’.⁸⁶ ‘And all this’, Engels concluded,

and much more to correct the now warmed-up anarchist falsifications of history may be studied in the work commissioned by the Hague Congress: *L’Alliance de la Démocratie Socialiste et l’Association Internationale des Travailleurs*, London & Hamburg, 1873, German by Kokosky: *Ein Komplott gegen die Internationale*, Brunswick, Bracke, 1874.⁸⁷

And so Engels did his best to give coming generations the impression that the controversial pamphlet from 1873 was a faithful representation of what had happened. But there were even a few Marxists who cast doubt on the account of history portrayed in the pamphlet ‘L’Alliance’ – such as the Marxist historian Franz Mehring (1846–1919): the reluctance to deal with Bakunin’s political position and the conflict in the International, Mehring complained, ‘places this pamphlet below anything else Marx and Engels ever published’.⁸⁸ And the council communist Otto Rühle referred to ‘L’Alliance’ as a ‘malicious pamphlet, in which almost every line is a distortion, almost every allegation an injustice, almost every argument a falsification, and almost every word an untruth’.⁸⁹

November 1892, supplement, pp. 1–2. 10 December 1892, supplement, p. 2; 24 December 1892, supplement, pp. 2–4. See also Nettlau, *Geschichte der Anarchie*, vol. 5, p. 187.

⁸⁴ Engels to Bebel, 15 November 1892, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 50, p. 30.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 27, p. 344. By contrast, Hérítier had the following opinion: ‘even though I am personally a staunch opponent of the anarchists, I can’t help but compliment them when they deserve it.’ (Hérítier, ‘Die Juraföderation und Michael Bakunin’, 10 December 1892, p. 2).

⁸⁶ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 27, p. 346. Hérítier on the other hand was of the following opinion: ‘in reality, this conspiracy was completely insignificant and harmless.’ (Hérítier, ‘Die Juraföderation und Michael Bakunin’, 10 December 1892, p. 2).

⁸⁷ Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 27, p. 346. In a response to Engels printed at the end of Hérítier’s series of articles, he addressed the accusation that he had only conveyed the anarchist perspective: ‘I hardly laid eyes on any documents other than those made by the anarchist’s opponents – such as the *Egalité* and Becker’s *Vorbote* etc. If I didn’t put more weight on this kind of literature, then only because it does not really represent the socialism struggling with anarchism, but represents petit-bourgeois ideas with religious affectations. [...] One will thus understand that I would never ever become enthralled with such a socialist movement’ (Hérítier, ‘Die Juraföderation und Michael Bakunin’, 24 December 1892, p. 4). Engels and Hérítier continued their conflict in letters; see Hérítier to Engels, 23 December 1892, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 2382; Engels to Hérítier, 20 January 1893, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 50, pp. 85–86; Hérítier to Engels, 23 January 1893, IISG, Marx/Engels Papers, L 2383. Hérítier took a rather defensive position here and blamed various contentious issues on translation errors. When the first volume of the *Œuvres* (Paris: P.-V. Stock, 1895) was released in 1895, Hérítier published an article on Bakunin; see L. Hérítier, ‘Michael Bakunin und seine Schriften’, *Neue Revue (Wiener Literatur-Zeitung)*, 25 September 1895, pp. 1227–32; 2 October 1895, pp. 1253–61.

⁸⁸ Mehring, *Karl Marx*, p. 521.

⁸⁹ O. Rühle, *Karl Marx. His life and work* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1929), p. 306.

Epilogue

The perception of the First International is to this day shaped by ideology as more ideologues than historians have studied its history. The International's significance – as the catalyst for the development of the ideas of various socialist movements – is often obscured by biased perspectives dictated by party policy, which both the living and the dead must conform to. This is most obvious in Marxist historiography, which for the most part tried to force the International into the communist narrative: 'The triumph of the principles of Marxism', an official Communist Party account of the First International tells us, is the 'main result of the International's activities'.¹ As we have seen, Marx and Engels' efforts in the International didn't end in a triumph but in a catastrophe. As opposed to the 'centralist' International, friendly to the General Council, which collapsed soon after the Congress of The Hague, the so-called anti-authoritarian, autonomous, or federalist International continued its work for years in numerous countries and without Marx or the General Council. When Bakunin died on 1 July 1876, social-revolutionary socialism had far more followers than all of the other socialist movements together.

But the federalist International's influence also faded eventually: the International's initiators from 1864 – French Proudhonists and English union members – no longer belonged to the International and the second generation of members were neutralised by the international persecution that followed the Paris Commune. The Italian and Spanish Federations that came along in 1870 and 1872 could not compensate in the long run for the centre which had broken away.

There have been many attempts to explain the downfall of the International, which had its last congress (of the federations) in Verviers from 6 to 8 September 1877: Eccarius said that the Franco-German War (1870–1871) had already ruined the International;² 30 years later, Pierre Ramus blamed the demise on the involvement in politics;³ Fritz Brupbacher argued that social-psychological factors were pivotal;⁴ in 1914 Malatesta suggested that programmatic determina-

¹ *Die Erste Internationale*, vol. 2, p. 637.

² [Eccarius], 'The Sixth International Working-Men's Congress', 10 September 1873, p. 10.

³ 'The International ceased to exist and function as soon as it got involved with politics' (P. Ramus, *Nach vierzig Jahren. [28 September 1864 – 28 September 1904]. Ein historisches Gedenkblatt zur vierzigjährigen Gründung der Internationalen Arbeiter Association* [London, 1905], p. 13).

⁴ 'The breeding ground for a movement that requires strong personalities with a thirst for freedom as did federalism, steadily worsened. Thus, the labour movement in most countries took on forms that corresponded with the psychology of the workers – the masses of factory workers. And a movement which fit this bill precisely was the social democratic movement. They didn't have the Promethean, storm-the-heavens mentality of the anti-authoritarian International, but they were adequate for modern industrial workers who were not particularly self-willed. [...] Marxism imparted a strong belief in outside powers that would come to the rescue of the proletarians, which voluntaristic anarchism could not offer. The tenet that the development of capitalism itself was to the benefit of the enslaved proletarian must have increased the appeal of Marxism. The possibility that something as safe as a ballot could bring about the social revolution must have been very comforting to the psychology of the proletarian.' (F. Brupbacher, *Marx und Bakunin. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Internationalen Arbeiterassoziation* [Munich: G. Birk & Co., (1913)], pp. 177–78).

tions were the main evil that brought the International to its knees;⁵ newer research names factors such as official recognition of the unions, the economic crisis in the 1870s and the orientation of the proletarians toward the nation state.⁶

In addition, one can speculate as to whether the International might have remained viable longer if Marx and Engels had not tried to

- force the opinion of a minority on the majority, thus removing the basis for a wide spectrum of ideas within the International,
- create a central body with wide-ranging powers, thus undermining the pluralist internal organisation of the International, which had allowed different movements to cooperate, and
- expel their political opponents in order to – as Marx put it – ‘*purge* the Association of the unsavoury or feeble-minded elements’,⁷ which became a favourite tactic of communist organisations throughout history.

In particular, Marx and Engels did not want to or were unable to understand that socialist opinions, concepts and movements other than their own existed; instead, a great deal of energy was wasted attacking these in order to reframe them as conspiracies among intriguers, adventurers, spies, etc. To this end, Marx and Engels reacted to their numerous opponents by attempting to

- criminalise them (‘he and his Alliance have lived exclusively from *blackmail*’, ‘all more or less bought by the bourgeoisie and government’),
- ascribe them to a particular class (‘men of middle-class origin’, ‘peasant people as backward as they are’),
- and above all defame them (‘tricksters, adventurers, rogues, police spies, swindlers and cowards’, ‘fanatics and intriguers of the sect’, etc.).

If they had not *tried to banish contemporary socialists by organisational and ideological means*, then socialism’s diversification into social democracy, communism, and anarchism during the last third of the 19th century might have occurred in a less controversial and more transparent fashion. Instead, this missed opportunity has meant that the story of socialism’s different movements is to this day concealed behind polemical-ideological mudslinging.

Party officials like Liebknecht could be seen as the big winners of the fall of the International because they had concentrated on developing their national parties and more or less ignored the

⁵ ‘The International was a workers’ association that sought to gather the whole proletariat into it, and thus its terrain was the economic struggle, irrespective of the political, philosophical and religious opinions that could have divided its members. And it was a mistake (the mistake which, in my opinion, led more than any other to its demise) to have adopted during its congresses certain theories which became the official doctrine of the Association. These theories (collectivism or communism, democratic socialism, anarchism) should have remained, in my view, the programme of ideological groups, who should have made propaganda of them among the masses in the International’ (E. Malatesta, ‘Ancora fra Guillaume e Malatesta’, *Volontà*, 21 March 1914, p. 2).

⁶ See M. van der Linden, ‘The rise and fall of the First International: An interpretation’, in van Holthoon/van der Linden (eds.), *Internationalism in the Labour Movement*, vol. 1, pp. 332–33.

⁷ See above, p. 408.

International. Marx expressed the hope in 1878 that the social democratic parties in the various countries would form ‘international groups’, so that the International would pass ‘from its first period of incubation to a higher one’.⁸ Engels hoped that the next International ‘will be directly Communist’.⁹ When numerous socialist groups formed an association in July 1889, which came to be known as the Second International, they picked a loose, federalist internal organisation without a General Council. Marx’s centralist vision only became reality in March 1919 when the Third International was formed, the Communist International. Within a few years, the organisations of its member nations were put under the control of a strict central authority in Moscow, which was led by Lenin and then Stalin. By contrast, the Spanish National Confederation of Labour (*Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, CNT) – the heir of the International’s Spanish Federation and its successor the Spanish Regional Federation of Workers (*Federación de Trabajadores de la Región española*) that was formed in 1881 – knew that it had different roots: at the CNT congress in December 1919 in Madrid, 437 delegates representing 700,000 members announced, in view of the Communist International, ‘That the Confederación Nacional del Trabajo declares itself firm defender of the principles that, supported by Bakunin, gave shape to the First International’.¹⁰

However, the meaning attached to the names Marx and Bakunin – the alleged clash of titans – is a modern invention for the most part.¹¹ It wasn’t the rivalry between two arch-enemies or a personal vendetta based on resentments that made the conflict between Marx and Bakunin so important. Of importance was that the conflict heralded the beginning of a split within socialism between parliamentary party politics aiming to conquer political power and social-revolutionary concepts. The federations defending their autonomy became aware of what separated them from the social democratic movement influenced by Marx, which relied on centralist organisational forms, the establishment of national labour parties, and the conquest of political power. This can be seen as a decisive moment in the history of political ideas: the split between centralist party politics and federalist grassroots movement. The separate movements found their greatest advocates in Bakunin and Marx; in this respect, their difference in ideas lives on to this day.

⁸ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. I/25, p. 157.

⁹ Engels to Sorge, 12–17 September 1874, in Marx/Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 45, p. 42.

¹⁰ A. Elorza (ed.), ‘El Congreso Confederal de la Comedia’, *Revista de Trabajo*, nos. 49–50, 1975, p. 488.

¹¹ The following was written recently with regards to the incorrect historical portrayal of Marx, which has been constructed posthumously: ‘The sensational reception that Marx later had, can in no way be compared to his contemporaneous effect; it is completely preposterous to want to make the one the benchmark for the other.’ (J. Herres and R. Roth, ‘Karl Marx, oder: ‘Wenn die Karell Kapital gemacht hätte, statt etc.’’, in S. Zahlmann and S. Scholz [eds.], *Scheitern und Biographie. Die andere Seite moderner Lebensgeschichten* [Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2005], p. 60).

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