



Joseph  
Weydemeyer

*Pioneer of American Socialism*

KARL OBERMANN

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BY KARL OBERMANN



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## FOREWORD

In the summer of 1944, the International Fur and Leather Workers Union (C.I.O.), with its 100,000 members, was asked to sponsor a Liberty Ship. It was given this honor because of its magnificent efforts during the first four War Loan drives, in the course of which it raised \$22,000,000. The union chose the name "Joseph Weydemeyer" for the ship it sponsored. Joseph Weydemeyer was a German-American, a political exile from Germany, a friend of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, and the first Marxist in the United States.

Joseph Weydemeyer was not one of those immigrants who brought with them to this country their prejudices, their stereotypes, superstitions, and illusions and attempted to preserve them in this country, as did so many political, social, and religious sectarians of his day. Nor did he fall victim to that vulgarized conception of American democracy which asserts that the American type of bourgeois democracy has once and for all solved all the problems of human society. This former Prussian artillery officer, who came to the United States in 1851, espoused the ideas of scientific communism, the theory and practice of the liberation of the working class.

He resisted all temptations to look upon the relatively young American bourgeoisie, with its enormous influence on all the other classes in society, and on youthful American capitalism as anything but historically conditioned forces—transitory, not eternal forces. As a Marxist he never allowed himself to be cowed by the power and influence of the ruling classes; nor was he depressed by the weaknesses, the splits, and the confusion in the young American labor movement.

Armed with the theory of Marxism, then so new and far from widely accepted, he avoided the mistakes made by so many other political exiles who called themselves democrats, socialists, and communists. He understood the most important requirement of Marxism, both in its practical and theoretical aspects: always taking into account the specific peculiarities of

a country, which distinguish it from other countries within the same period of history.

Only thus could the thoroughgoing German democrat and communist become a representative of the interests of the American working class; only thus could the German immigrant join the most progressive section of the American working class and become an outstanding fighter in its ranks; only thus could he become an American Marxist.

Weydemeyer came to the United States at a time when the "industrial revolution" was making giant strides. Gold had been discovered in California and people were beginning to flock to the Pacific Coast. The total value of industrial production almost doubled in the decade of 1850-60. Basic changes in the world market were taking place. Unlike Europe with its rigid censorship, America still offered vast possibilities for enlightening the rapidly growing industrial population.

With the growth of the working class and the prospect of sharpening social tensions and conflicts inevitably accompanying the capitalistic concentration in industry, it was of decisive importance to give Marxism a solid foundation in the United States. Only thus could the workers have the clarity and enlightenment so necessary in the social struggles that lay ahead. It was Weydemeyer's merit that in this period of American history he aroused attention to the doctrines of Marxism and defended them against all slanders. As a man who knew how "to study concrete questions in all their concreteness," he was of tremendous assistance to Marx and Engels with whom he collaborated until his death in 1866. However small were the first Marxist groups founded by Weydemeyer and his colleagues, and however great the difficulties in spreading Marxist ideas, this was a vital first step.

Johann Jacoby, a courageous German democrat and political writer, wrote at the time: "The formation of the smallest workers' organization will be of greater value to the future historian of culture than the battle of Sadowa."

It is in this light that we must judge the activity of Joseph Weydemeyer, his work as an organizer and propagandist. These were the first groping steps, the first phase of growth in which the labor movement in the United States became acquainted with Marxism.

Weydemeyer was undoubtedly an outstanding personality. From the day he came to the United States until his untimely death fifteen years later, he participated actively in American life. A clear thinker and a man of action, his activities ranged from political journalism and trade union organization to service in the Northern army and public office in St. Louis.

He was one of those German-Americans whom the annual report of the American Historical Association for 1898 described as follows: "The effect of the activity in their adopted country on the political and social life of large portions of the United States has been very great and is plainly perceptible to the present day. It follows that the nature of their influence and the manner in which they exercised it become highly important subjects of historical investigations." Yet up to now no comprehensive evaluation of Weydemeyer's work and real significance has been written. This book is a first attempt to fill this need. In it the reader will find an account of Weydemeyer's work and thought in relation to the new trade union movement, the fight against slavery, the Civil War, and the organization of the working class as an independent social and political force. His story is an integral part of the history of America and of the formation and development of the labor movement. It is impossible to retrace the life work of this man whose name has remained a living memory without recognizing how genuinely American and yet profoundly international was this first outstanding Marxist on American soil. His tireless activities as a builder of labor organizations; his persistent efforts to fuse the German-American labor movement with the general trade union and political movement of the American working class; his distinguished role in the Union Army in the war against slavery; his political and personal collaboration with his friends, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, were characteristic phases of a life whose guiding thought was Marxism and the cause of progress. When Weydemeyer died the American working class lost one of its great sons and pioneers.

Since Weydemeyer's day, the American labor movement in general and the American Marxist movement in particular have made great progress. The evolution of the United States has confirmed what the founders of scientific socialism, Karl

Marx and Frederick Engels, pointed out a hundred years ago in their *Communist Manifesto*. It has confirmed that the class struggle between capital and labor has become the decisive conflict in society, regardless of the specifically national or historically conditioned forms in which this conflict appears. But the hundred years that have passed since the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto* have also proved beyond a doubt that in the final analysis the working class in every country in the world can only triumph over its class enemies if it adopts Marxism as its theory and guide to action. Otherwise, all its victories will remain but transitory victories.

The reader of this book will be in a position to convince himself of the usefulness of the study of Marxism. In it he will once again find the proof that it is just as ridiculous to identify Marxism with an ideology limited to any one nation as it is to say that the basic laws of natural science are valid only for one special country.

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Joseph Weydemeyer, the first American Marxist. That German-American, a political exile from his native land, occupies a place of honor in the history of the American labor movement and in the century-old history of the development of Marxism.

K. O.

## I

### FORMATIVE YEARS

In the beginning of the 1840's, after the accession to power in Prussia of Friedrich Wilhelm IV, the democratic opposition intensified its demands for freedom of the press and representative government in Germany. In this effort the radical "Young Hegelian" movement played a noteworthy part by striving to raise the level of political consciousness and culture in the country. Among those belonging to the group of "Young Hegelians" were Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. From 1842 on, the *Rheinische Zeitung* (*Rhenish Gazette*) of Cologne became one of the most militant publications of the movement: it was the product of an alliance between representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie of the Rhineland and a number of writers of the "Young Hegelian" school. Marx was among the leading collaborators on this paper and became its editor at the end of 1842.

#### ARTILLERY LIEUTENANT WEYDEMEYER

The *Rheinische Zeitung* won a good deal of influence among the young officers stationed in Prussian garrison towns in the Rhineland and Westphalia. Most of them came from bourgeois families employed in government service. Among the officers of the garrison in Minden (Westphalia) who in 1842 came into direct contact with the group around the *Rheinische Zeitung* was the twenty-four-year-old artillery lieutenant, Joseph Weydemeyer.<sup>1</sup>

Weydemeyer, son of a Prussian government official in the Westphalian city of Muenster, who went through high school and the Berlin military academy and now stood on the threshold of a promising career as an army officer, became a constant visitor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* group which had been formed in Cologne in order to discuss social problems. This

fact had a decisive influence on Weydemeyer's future: discussions in this study circle impelled him along the path of social and political activity and fixed his resolve to fight for democracy and freedom.<sup>2</sup>

Although banned in 1843, the *Rheinische Zeitung* had sown fertile seeds among the officers and men in many a Rhineland and Westphalian garrison. In Minden, Weydemeyer had won over many of his fellow-officers: the success of his efforts may be gauged by the fact that many prominent figures in the German Revolution of 1848 and later in the American Civil War—such as Fritz Anneke, August Willich, Hermann Korff, and Friedrich von Beust—served with him in Minden where they first became acquainted with progressive and democratic ideas. The officers at Minden began a study circle, and Weydemeyer became so imbued with socialist ideas that he decided to devote himself to writing and journalism. After almost six years as a professional officer, he left the army on the ground that "his position as a Prussian officer no longer jibed with his views."<sup>3</sup>

#### DEBUT AS A JOURNALIST

Weydemeyer entered the field of journalism as an assistant editor of the *Triersche Zeitung* (*Trier Gazette*), a radical paper which played an important part in spreading democratic and socialist ideas in the home town of Karl Marx during the years before 1848. Originally inspired by the views of the great utopian socialist Charles Fourier, it espoused in 1844 a vague philosophical socialism and became the organ of Dr. Karl Gruen, one of the theoreticians of so-called "True Socialism" in Germany. The difficulties with which the *Triersche Zeitung* had to cope forced young Weydemeyer to come to grips at once with the daily struggle for freedom of the press and opinion in Germany. Frequently the censors blue-penciled entire pages of the paper and almost daily the editorial board faced the problem of how to bring out their publication despite the censorship.<sup>4</sup>

Mounting social tensions, especially in the Rhineland and Silesia, gradually forced German socialist groups to the realization that exclusively moral principles offered no solution of their problems. It began to dawn upon them that these moral principles would not prove decisive in the achievement of their aims. Rejecting the tenets of philosophical socialism as idealistic chatter, Weydemeyer plunged into a study of basic social and economic questions. At the start of 1845 this trend was given a decided impetus by the publication of the *Holy Family*, the first joint work of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, which laid bare the "illusions of speculative philosophy,"<sup>5</sup> and the appearance of Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*, written, in the author's words, "to give German socialism, then trotting out empty phrases, a factual basis by describing the social conditions created by modern large-scale industry."<sup>6</sup>

Weydemeyer was among the first to recognize the significance of Engels' book. Shortly after its appearance, he wrote an article of some thirty pages in the second volume of *Dies Buch gehoert dem Volk* (*This Book Belongs to the People*), a year-book issued by his brother-in-law Otto Luening. The article consisted mainly of excerpts from Engels' study, which Weydemeyer described as "one of the most important works in our contemporary literature."<sup>7</sup>

Henceforth Weydemeyer resolved to concentrate on social and economic problems. He was one of the first in Germany to utilize Marx's and Engels' conception of the material basis of social development in the analysis of events.

In the summer of 1845 he became co-editor of the *Westphaelische Dampfboot* (*Westphalian Steamboat*) and was soon its leading collaborator on socio-economic problems. The *Westphaelische Dampfboot*, one of the outstanding monthlies of the socialist movement, was edited by Otto Luening, first in Bielefeld, the center of the Westphalian textile industry, and later in Paderborn. Until 1848 this socialist periodical fought stubbornly against the censorship, and opened its pages generously to the writings of Marx and Engels. In his own ar-

ticles, Weydemeyer defended the point of view of scientific socialism against the idealist and utopian concepts of the philosophical socialists; he saw to it that important contributions by Marx and Engels were printed in the magazine. In fact, he even planned to place the periodical in the hands of the two founders of scientific socialism.<sup>8</sup>

Weydemeyer's first article on economics dealt with a problem which was then in the center of attention: Free Trade or Protection. His point of departure was the question: How can the condition of the workers be improved? This attitude led him to explore the various economic measures and demands then under discussion. Thus he wrote in July 1845: "They [*i.e.*, the business leaders] desire free competition, as they desire freedom of the press; but they desire it for themselves, not against themselves. They want to exploit, but not to be exploited. . . ."<sup>9</sup>

Weydemeyer's articles soon engaged the attention of the bourgeois publications. They were indignant at his method of "exposing existing social evils and deficiencies down to the last detail," and remarked that he was noting only "the negative side of the question." This evoked a reply from Weydemeyer in which he clearly defined social relationships. "It is society," he emphasized, "that creates its own conditions; and it is society alone that transforms them when it recognizes them as evil. The state itself is only a product of society; it is the form in which society has hitherto appeared as long as it has existed as such. It forms the ligament that holds together its component parts."<sup>10</sup>

#### THE AGRARIAN QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES

In the early summer of 1846, Marx and his friends in Brussels found themselves forced to take a stand on events in the United States. Hermann Kriege, a member of their communist group, who had traveled to America in 1845 by way of Brussels, became editor of the *Volkstribun* (*Tribune of the*

*People*), organ of the German-American Social Reform Association. In it, Kriege advanced certain social illusions, particularly on the question of land reform, as principles of communism. Instead of giving a fundamental analysis of the specific peculiarities of the American scene and the social demands arising therefrom, Kriege had fostered the illusion that the only solution for avoiding social misery was to be found in abolishing land rent and giving free land to the poor. On May 11, 1846, Marx and his Brussels friends refuted Kriege's errors in a memorandum and sent their resolution as a lithographed circular to their friends in Germany. This circular came into Weydemeyer's possession a month later.

In order to combat similar illusions then current in Germany, Weydemeyer asked for permission to reprint the document. Before this permission was granted, it appeared almost verbatim in the July issue of the *Westphaelische Dampfboot*. At first, Marx disapproved of too hasty a publication of the text. But on August 19, 1846, Weydemeyer wrote to Marx that in his opinion all other considerations were superfluous since in the meantime Kriege himself had printed the statement in the *Volkstribun*. Furthermore, Weydemeyer pointed out that even the editor of the *Dampfboot*, Otto Luening, had agreed to reprint the text in a self-critical effort to clarify certain ambiguous conceptions in their own ranks. Specifically, Weydemeyer could point to the fact that publication of this document gave them an opportunity to say things to German readers which, in view of the strict censorship, could not be expressed openly and in relation to German conditions.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

In the summer of 1845 Marx and Engels meeting in Brussels set about to "work out in detail the newly formulated approach [the materialist conception of history] in various directions." This had become urgently necessary since the radical followers of Hegel were opposing emphasis on social questions by resorting to philosophical phrases and dogmas and were seek-



ing to divert attention from these questions by means of idealist concepts. A fundamental exposition of the materialist conception of history was all the more essential since "the actual production process" and not ideas and concepts "must be considered the basis of all history."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the working class had to be given proof that "communism did not mean the elaboration in the imagination of a completely perfect ideal society, but signified rather an insight into the nature and the conditions of the struggle led by the proletariat and the general aims arising therefrom."<sup>13</sup>

Laboring about a year and a half at the task, Marx and Engels laid the scientific basis of the materialist conception of history in a study, *The German Ideology*. This study, the full text of which was published only after the Russian Revolution, first became known in Germany through the efforts of Weydemeyer. The latter had moved to the Westphalian city of Bielefeld. At that time the province of Westphalia was a key center of the socialist and communist movement; and in Bielefeld Weydemeyer lost no opportunity in discussing the works of Marx and Engels with his socialist and communist friends.

In April 1846, Weydemeyer received from Marx the manuscript of the completed sections of *The Germany Ideology* so that he could begin negotiations for publication. He fully approved Marx's and Engels' treatment of the "German ideologists" and felt that the cause of labor would not be served by compromises or "the mania of reconciliation." Two letters are extant from Weydemeyer to Marx, in which the former discusses his conversations with his Westphalian friends.<sup>14</sup>

The first letter, dated April 30, 1846, declares:

"On the question you raise that it may be superfluous to criticize Stirner, I have already heard this point of view expressed by several. I have had a particularly long discussion with Buergers about it. But I feel even more strongly than before that such a criticism is necessary. His ideas are still powerfully implanted in people's minds, especially those of the

communists themselves, even though the nonsense is not expressed with the clarity of a Stirner. The approach by means of categories and constructions is still to be found in writings of much more positive content, in which the framework is better constructed and concealed. Here I have read a large section of your 'Ego' [in *The German Ideology*] with Luise\* who likes it very much."<sup>15</sup>

In the second letter, dated May 14, 1846, he writes:

"In general, it is very regrettable that you have allowed yourselves to engage in such a polemic; there really exists here, even among the most capable people, such a sympathy for anyone who has ever earned a reputation, as for example Bauer, Stirner, and Ruge, that one feels sick about it. They would like to extend their hands in order to protect them from blows. And if this protection proves ineffective, they give the one who dealt the blow an angry look. A few days ago I had a rather lively discussion with several of them, including Rempel: it concerned especially the three names mentioned above. Then too they insist that all attacks be delivered in a purely 'scientific' fashion, without anger, like a judge speaking from the bench, and especially without irony or satire. For, to ridicule a man who has written a book of more than twenty pages is a crime, akin to high treason and deserving of punishment. I am sincerely pleased with the loud outcry of disbelief which your criticisms have evoked in the German provinces. Really, if I were one day to write a criticism I would season it with as much malice as possible, simply in order to annoy my dear countrymen a little. Their tender nerves will have to be tried even more, so that they will once and for all get rid of their over-great sensitivity."<sup>16</sup>

In the summer of 1846, Weydemeyer concentrated his efforts on establishing a socialist publishing house which would bring out *The German Ideology* and other writings of Marx and Engels. Marx himself followed these efforts with a certain

\* Luise, Weydemeyer's wife, was a good friend of Marx and his wife.

amount of impatience since he was most anxious to see such a publishing house started. Weydemeyer had already received pledges of financial support from two wealthy Westphalian communists, Julius Meyer and Rudolf Rempel; but these promises were withdrawn when the two men found what they considered were better undertakings in which to invest their capital. Undaunted, Weydemeyer looked for other friends to back his project. At the same time, he offered the manuscript of *The German Ideology* to other publishers. Marx was rather annoyed that Weydemeyer had not succeeded in making a go of his venture, but the misunderstanding was soon cleared up. Marx himself finally proposed that a portion of *The German Ideology* be published in the *Westphaelische Dampfboot*. On this occasion, the publisher of the paper, Otto Luening, told Marx in a letter of July 16, 1847, that "he could count on the *Dampfboot*" and added: "My own writings as well as those of Weydemeyer are close to your point of view."<sup>17</sup>

#### VISIT TO BRUSSELS

This period of fermentation in the labor movement coincided with a visit by Weydemeyer to Marx and Engels in Brussels. He has paid a visit to Marx in Paris in 1844. According to Franz Mehring, the historian of German socialism, this second meeting took place at the beginning of 1846, before *The German Ideology* was completed; according to F. A. Sorge, leading American Marxist in the period following the Civil War, it took place at the end of 1846 or the start of 1847. The significance of Weydemeyer's visit lies in the fact that it was related to efforts to lead the labor movement out of the stage of secret societies imbued with utopian conceptions and to form a political party with demands and activities corresponding to the needs of the times. In the course of 1847, therefore, the secret society known as the League of the Just was transformed into the Communist League, whose social demands were first openly expressed at the beginning of 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto* written by Marx and Engels. The

organization of the workers as a class, with their own social and political program, had begun.

On September, 16-18, 1847, representatives of industry and trade had gathered at Brussels for a Free Trade Congress. The German Workers' Society, founded a month previously in that city by Marx, undertook in conjunction with other workers' groups to present in the name of labor its own conception of free trade in opposition to that of the spokesmen of industry. This first common effort of the workers led to the founding in Brussels, on November 7, 1847, of the International Democratic Association.<sup>18</sup>

After his Brussels visit, Weydemeyer was no longer merely a literary colleague of Marx and Engels. Henceforth he was an organizer and representative of the Communist League, and he soon informed his friends in Westphalia and the Rhineland of what had happened at Brussels. In 1847-48, he had a hand in organizing the Cologne Communist League. On the roster of this organization were all the names of those who had gained prominence several years previously in the course of the "Weydemeyer case." The reputation of these men in military circles was still sufficiently alive to cause the soldiers to refuse to break up the first great demonstration which the Cologne group, led by Willich, organized on March 3, 1848.<sup>19</sup>

Further details concerning Weydemeyer's activities in 1847 and early in 1848 are sparse. This calm and resolute Westphalian never indulged in self-advertisement or self-praise. We do know that in 1847, for financial reasons, he accepted a position as engineer in the construction of the Cologne-Minden railway line. At the same time he continued his active journalistic work with the *Westphaelische Dampfboot*.<sup>20</sup> In a review of "the German press and its most recent efforts," the democratic-minded Leipzig publisher, E. O. Weller, mentioned the *Westphaelische Dampfboot* and the *Bruesseler Deutsche Zeitung* (*Brussels German Gazette*) as "the two publications most active in furthering the aims of the liberals and radical democrats, without keeping silent as to the weaknesses of these two parties."<sup>21</sup>

## THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

In March 1848 the German people rose in revolt. Since the Cologne-Minden Railway Company forbade its employees to take part in political demonstrations, Weydemeyer gave up his post as engineer and devoted himself wholeheartedly to the democratic uprising of the people.<sup>22</sup> He felt that a concentration of all democratic forces under the banner of a resolute democracy offered the only possibility for the success of the movement; and from the outset he realized that the people themselves would have to impose their will through the democratic movement rather than calmly sit by and wait for the National Assembly to discuss a constitution.

At the first conference of the German democratic societies, held in Frankfurt-on-the-Main on June 14-17, 1848, under the chairmanship of Julius Froebel, Weydemeyer represented the city of Hamm (Westphalia). The 234 delegates to the conference advocated a "democratic republic" with a constitution, "in which the community assumes responsibility for the freedom and well-being of the individual." The participants, including such figures as Weydemeyer, Anneke, and the poet Ferdinand Freiligrath, declared themselves ready to support the popular movement in organized fashion through the democratic societies.<sup>23</sup>

In that same month of June 1848 a pamphlet was published in Hamm—it was Weydemeyer's translation from the French of the speech delivered by Marx on January 9, 1848, at Brussels on the question of free trade. Entitled *Advocates of Protective Tariff, Free Trade Men, and the Working Class*, it contained a foreword by Weydemeyer in which he gave a clear analysis of the tasks facing the German working class in the struggle for democracy.<sup>24</sup>

While attending the Frankfurt conference, Weydemeyer and Luening accepted the offer of posts as editors of the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung*, a new paper projected by the Socialist publisher C. W. Leske of Darmstadt. This paper, which was to be published in Darmstadt near Frankfurt, was intended to be not only a mouthpiece of the extreme left wing, the so-called Don-

nersberg Club, of the Frankfurt National Assembly, but also "an organ of democracy" like the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (*New Rhenish Gazette*) which Marx and Engels established in Cologne shortly after the outbreak of the Revolution of 1848. It sought to serve as a direct link between the most progressive elements in the National Assembly who were busy drafting a constitution and the democratic movement of the people.

Early in June the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* announced its forthcoming appearance as a daily on July 1, asserting: "Our paper stands above all for democracy, the rule and sovereignty of the people."<sup>25</sup> During the first months of its career the paper had to wage a bitter struggle to defend democracy. Already the gains of the Revolution of March 1848 were endangered by the intrigues of the princes and Court party and as a result of hesitations, maneuvers, and compromises in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, who viewed the framing of a constitution as an opportunity to come to an agreement with the princes. In the struggle to preserve these gains the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* soon gained prestige for itself among the German people. This was especially true in South Germany, where many papers took it as a model, above all the Munich daily *Vorwaerts* (*Forward*), which first appeared on August 6, 1848. Thus the editors of the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* could proudly declare in their announcement for subscriptions for 1849: "The tendencies of the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* are expressed in its title and will remain steadfastly the same during the coming year."<sup>26</sup>

In the opening months of 1849 Weydemeyer and his paper campaigned vigorously for unity between the democratic mass movement and the left wing of the democratic party in the National Assembly. The sharpening of relations between the popular movement and the National Assembly made this an urgent task if the democratic constitution was to go into effect and the people's sovereignty maintained. To acquit himself more effectively of this task, Weydemeyer moved his paper in April to Frankfurt-on-the-Main. Its slogan now became: "Carry the national constitution for Germany."<sup>27</sup>

On May 18, 1849, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of Cologne, the newspaper which had most resolutely championed the cause of democracy in Germany, was banned and its editor-in-chief, Karl Marx, banished from Prussia. It now fell to Weydemeyer and his *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* to continue the militant traditions of Marx's paper. The latter placed high hopes in Weydemeyer: on May 19, he visited Frankfurt and had a long talk with his friend, remaining until May 21 in Weydemeyer's house before proceeding with Engels to Baden. In those crucial days Marx himself made a last attempt to persuade the left wing in the National Assembly to pass a resolution ordering the army of Baden and the Palatinate to Frankfurt to protect the National Assembly.

It became clear that the future of democracy in Germany depended on the success of the democratic movement of the masses in Baden and the Palatinate. When armed struggle broke out in these two provinces, the Frankfurt National Assembly was finally dissolved, and a rump parliament was set up in Stuttgart. During these weeks of continuous surrenders and retreats by the German bourgeoisie to the rulers of Prussia, leading to Prussian hegemony over all Germany, Weydemeyer did his utmost in daily articles in the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* to organize popular resistance to the reactionaries.<sup>28</sup>

#### EFFORTS TO REORGANIZE THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE

When on July 23, 1849, the besieged city of Rastatt had to open its gates to the Prince of Prussia, the fate of German democracy was sealed. The Communist League had lost many of its bravest members in combat. Others managed to save their lives by fleeing. Weydemeyer was one of the few veteran revolutionaries who remained in Germany, and the task of reorganizing the badly shattered democratic movement now devolved upon him. Inasmuch as he was still allowed to edit his paper, Marx and Engels counted heavily on his support. At Marx's request Weydemeyer first tried to find a publisher

for the series of articles, "Wage-Labor and Capital," which Marx had begun in 1849 in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and for several other works by Marx and Engels.<sup>29</sup>

But it soon became evident that no German publisher dared to bring out these writings. In view of this blanket refusal, Marx, who had moved to England toward the end of 1849, entertained the idea of founding another periodical; he even thought of continuing to publish the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* as a monthly in London with the aim of hastening the reorganization of the Communist League in Germany. Accordingly, he approached Weydemeyer with a request that the latter advertise the publication in his *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* and make himself personally responsible for its distribution in Frankfurt. In a letter of December 12 he also asked Weydemeyer for an article for his monthly on the political situation in South Germany.

Illness and financial worries delayed the appearance of their publication. When it finally came out in 1850, it encountered serious difficulties in distribution. A mood of discouragement and disappointment now permeated the ranks of the workers. Moreover, the beginning of industrial prosperity had caused a marked ebb in the revolutionary movement. Faced with a steadily worsening situation, the London exiles were torn by quarrels and dissension. Marx and Engels showered Weydemeyer with requests for financial help. Weydemeyer's collection of contributions for the relief of the London refugees was not without success. But it meant laboriously detailed work, which set sharply in relief the temporary hopelessness of the situation in Germany. The meager circulation of Marx's new monthly, the *Neue Rheinische Revue* (*New Rhenish Review*), was another evidence of that fact: Weydemeyer could dispose of only a fraction of the one hundred copies he had taken over. On June 15 he sent a payment of 54 gulden and added: "I put enough pressure on the people, but nevertheless no one is in a hurry to pay."<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile Weydemeyer continued to play an active part in reorganizing under illegal conditions the Communist

League. He concentrated his efforts on bringing back into the fold "those who had grown inactive and those members who were acting on their own." Thanks to his indefatigable labors, Frankfurt was one of the regions in which the labor movement made headway despite the reactionaries. As early as June 1850, the central committee of the League could point to Frankfurt and Cologne as the main centers of the reconstituted League. From later evidence of members of the organization, it appears that in the summer of 1850 Weydemeyer was able to form new sections of the League in West and South Germany, particularly in Giessen (Hesse) and Nuremberg. He even succeeded in organizing an illegal congress in Frankfurt, with delegates attending from Giessen, Mainz, Mannheim, Hanau, and a few other places in West Germany.

In September of that year, a split developed in the League. Several veteran fighters like Willich, still imbued with revolutionary fervor, refused to agree with the position of Marx and Engels that the situation in Germany rendered revolutionary action impossible. Marx at once informed Weydemeyer of this development; and a letter of the latter to Marx dated October 13, 1850, revealed that Weydemeyer aided greatly the new leadership of the League in Cologne, headed by Ronald Daniels.<sup>31</sup>

#### LAST DAYS OF THE NEUE DEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

During 1850, censorship measures and stringent press decrees made it increasingly difficult for the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* to appear. Nevertheless Weydemeyer carried on courageously as editor. He even dared to mention Marx's name in print and to discuss his works in a cautious manner. On July 4 he printed a statement from Marx himself, in which the latter corrected an erroneous interpretation of the Marxian concept of class struggle as formulated by Otto Luening. In this rectification, Marx referred to the *Communist Manifesto* and developed his concept of the abolition of classes.<sup>32</sup> Several months later, on December 13, the Senate of the city of Frankfurt clamped

down on the militant paper. It was banned on the ground of "insulting the government in Frankfurt and the governments friendly to it," and its editors banished from the city. The last number of the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* appeared on December 14, 1850.<sup>33</sup>

Thus began 1851, the last year Joseph Weydemeyer was to spend in Germany. Yet he did not dream of deserting his post of combat. At first he attempted to remain in Frankfurt. Little is known of his underground activity during the early months of 1851, but enough to prove that he did effective work. The main sources are his correspondence with Marx and the bill of indictment against his collaborators, Peter Roeser and Heinrich Buegers, in the Cologne Communist trial. A report of Hermann Becker to Marx on April 5 states that Weydemeyer was even planning to launch a new Communist magazine named *Neue Zeitschrift (New Periodical)*, together with Becker, Buegers, Daniels, and others.<sup>34</sup>

This plan never materialized. In May 1851 the arrest of a co-worker named Nothjung in Leipzig revealed to the police that the Communist League had resumed activity. The police found and confiscated in Nothjung's house a circular letter addressed to the relatively strong Frankfurt branch of the League. Consequently, Weydemeyer expected to be arrested any day. When at the beginning of June he learned that the Prussian police were hunting for him, he thought it wise to go into hiding. He rented a room in "a quiet inn in Sachsenhausen" near Frankfurt. From this hiding-place he continued to correspond by way of his wife with Marx and his other friends. He was even quite hopeful about the future: in a letter to Marx of June 10, he declared that he would wait for the storm to pass and utilize the time to write a popular book on economics for workers.

Events in Frankfurt filled him with hope. There the working class showed that it was very much alive. On July 6, a people's picnic held in the Frankfurt municipal park and sponsored by the workers' brotherhoods and other labor and democratic organizations, was attended by twenty-five thousand

people. During this period, too, his lively correspondence with Marx and Engels bore witness to his hopeful outlook. On June 19, Engels wrote from Manchester to consult with the former Prussian artillery lieutenant and obtain his advice on certain military-political matters. And from London Marx wrote on June 27 that he was "busy from 9 o'clock in the morning to 7 in the evening at the British Museum . . . studying historical and economic data . . ." in order to finish some writings on political economy. Unlike a good many other refugees, these men did not bewail their dismal fate but went right on forging weapons for the battles to come.<sup>35</sup>

#### PLANS TO EMIGRATE

It was not in Weydemeyer's nature to remain inactive for any length of time. At the end of June, many German newspapers, at the bidding of the authorities, printed the letters and statements found on those members of the Communist League who had been arrested. They published the documents with numerous distortions and falsifications, thus seeking to incite public opinion and provoke a mass trial against the League. Weydemeyer now realized that the time was fast approaching when he would no longer find it possible to continue activity in Germany. On July 5 he informed Marx of what the newspapers had printed and told him that, although the police had not yet discovered his whereabouts, they were still looking for him. And he exclaimed: "The devil himself couldn't stand this eternal squirming and remaining in hiding!"<sup>36</sup>

He finally suggested the following plan to Marx: since he did not wish to fall into the hands of the police, he thought of going into exile in Switzerland, where he considered his chances of making a living better than in London, especially in the railway construction industry. Should that fail, the only course left to him would be to go to America. Although he was not enthusiastic about the prospect, he felt that he would

have to leave since he was certain that the coming spring the reactionaries would again be on the warpath.

As arrests increased in Germany, flight became imperative. Despite the difficulties of their own situation, Marx and Engels did all they could to aid Weydemeyer. They were happy to hear from Zurich around the middle of July that their friend had succeeded in fleeing to Switzerland with his wife and two children. But it soon became obvious to Weydemeyer that his chances of making a living in that country were slim, so, as he wrote to Marx on July 27, the only thing left for him to do was to migrate to the United States.

Weydemeyer now engaged in correspondence with Marx and Engels on the question of leaving for America. Each of them carefully weighed the pros and cons of the undertaking. Above all, they discussed what role America could play in advancing the cause of labor and social progress, since the victory of the counter-revolution in Europe had made work on that continent immeasurably more difficult. It so happened that at that very time Charles A. Dana, foreign editor of the *New York Tribune*, whom Marx had met in Cologne in 1848 while the American was touring Europe, invited him to collaborate on the *Tribune*. Pleased by the prospect of being able to write for an American newspaper, Marx wrote to Weydemeyer on August 2, 1851:

"Dear Weydemeyer:

"I have just received your letter from Engels and hasten to reply to you. Of course, I should have liked—even though it was impossible to hold you here—at least to have seen you and spoken with you before your departure.

"But if you are going to America, you could not find a more propitious moment for doing so, both for finding a way to make your living as well as for doing useful work for our party. In fact, it is almost a certainty that you will obtain a post as editor on the *New Yorker Staatszeitung* [*New Yorker State Gazette*]. It was previously offered to Lupus [Wilhelm Wolff]. He is sending you a letter addressed to Reichhelm, the co-

owner of the paper. That's enough about material things, but you mustn't lose any time. . . .

"When you are in New York, go see Charles A. Dana of the *New York Tribune* and give him regards from Freiligrath and myself. He may be of use to you. As soon as you arrive, write me at once, but still at Engels' address, since he is in the best position to forward our mail. If you can remain in New York, you will not be far removed from Europe; and with the complete suppression of the press in Germany, a press campaign can only be waged from New York.

"Your Karl Marx."<sup>37</sup>

A few days later, on August 7, Engels wrote in the following vein:

"The fact that you are going to America is bad, yet I really don't know what other advice to give you if you can find nothing in Switzerland. In London there is absolutely nothing under way. . . . After all, New York doesn't seem so far from England, especially from here, since steamships regularly make the trip from Wednesday of one week to Saturday of the following week, and seldom take the full ten days. Furthermore, there is much to be done in New York; and an official representative of our party who is also grounded in theory is very much needed there. You'll find enough good elements to work with. Your greatest handicap will be that the available Germans who are worth anything become easily Americanized and give up any thought of returning. Then too we must consider the special conditions in America: the ease with which the overflow population settles on the land, the necessarily increasing tempo of the country's prosperity which makes people consider bourgeois conditions as a *beau idéal* [beautiful ideal]. Those Germans who think of returning home are for the most part only demoralized individuals *à la* Metternich and Heinzen. Besides, you'll find the whole German mob [*Reichsmob*] in New York. I have no doubt that you'll be able to help there."<sup>38</sup>

While Weydemeyer prepared to leave Switzerland, Marx and Engels continued to discuss the question of his emigration. They were concerned with making the best possible use of his splendid abilities for the movement and felt that his going might well prove a great boon to the cause. Marx expressed his thoughts in a letter to Weydemeyer sent on September 11:

". . . If only I had more acquaintances here, I would try to get you a position as an engineer, a railroad surveyor, or something along those lines. . . .

"And yet I rack my brain with plans as to how you might settle here. For once across the ocean, who will guarantee that you will not lose yourself somewhere in the Far West. We have so few forces, we must be so sparing with our talents. . . ."<sup>39</sup>

Eventually, however, Engels persuaded Marx that Weydemeyer's plan might prove decidedly advantageous to the movement. Already in August he had pointed out that with Weydemeyer's help they might establish a foreign news service for the German-American press in New York. As he said:

"In that respect Weydemeyer could be most useful to you in New York, especially in raising money, which is the main problem. I am convinced that the thing will assume big proportions and that many American correspondents in London and elsewhere will very soon feel it."<sup>40</sup>

Again he emphasized in a letter to Marx:

"We need a reliable person like Weydemeyer in New York. After all, New York is not out of the world; and we know that if we need him Weydemeyer can be relied on."<sup>41</sup>

Weydemeyer himself had no more time to discuss the arguments for and against his emigration. On September 28, 1851, in a farewell letter to Marx from Le Havre, he declared that his decision was irrevocable since he saw no other prospects of making a living for his family of four. So with his wife and two children he left Le Havre on September 29, and after a stormy passage landed in New York on November 7.



The news of his departure impelled Marx to write at once to Dana, highly recommending Weydemeyer to the American editor. He asked the poet Freiligrath to do the same; and he notified a friend of the movement, A. Cluss, an engineer at the Navy Yard in Washington, D. C., of Weydemeyer's arrival. Finally, while the latter was still in mid-ocean, Marx wrote him a long letter containing many proposals and sound bits of advice for his future activity in the United States.<sup>42</sup>

## II

### AMERICAN BEGINNINGS

After 1830, the persecution of democrats and fighters for freedom in Germany drove increasing numbers of political exiles to America. German immigration, which until 1830 averaged 2,200 persons yearly, reached an annual average of 34,000 in the 1830's, rose to 67,000 in the year 1845, and finally exceeded 100,000 after 1848. In the 1850's, the figure for German immigration soared over 200,000 yearly. These immigrants looked upon the United States as the country that offered them new and better possibilities in their struggle for democracy and freedom.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE ACTIVITIES OF GERMAN IMMIGRANTS

As industry expanded in America in the 1830's and 1840's, the conflict between capital and labor came increasingly to the fore. During the 1840's this struggle was also reflected in the free land movement. The newly formed National Reform Association regarded the abundance of land in the United States as the basis of social progress. At the end of 1845, a number of German groups, influenced by German socialist exiles, former members of the League of the Just, founded the Social Reform Association as part of the National Reform Association. The declaration of principles of this group, unanimously accepted at its first meeting on October 31, 1845, stated in part:

"Resolved: We declare solemnly before the face of the world that we have no country but the earth, and that all men have an equal right to live upon it.



"Resolved: We call ourselves Americans, and have no other interests than those of the American people, because America is the asylum of the oppressed everywhere, and because the interest of the American people is the interest of the whole human race. . . .

Resolved: We recognize in the National Reformers our fellow-laborers in the cause of progress, as pioneers of a better future, as the advocates of the cause of the oppressed children of industry, and as the only true democracy of the land."<sup>2</sup>

The German Social Reform Association founded its own paper, the *Volkstribun* (*People's Tribune*), on January 5, 1846; but the publication did not last out the year. This failure to survive was in large part due to the confused stand taken by its editor, Hermann Kriege, who fostered all kinds of illusions on the question of agrarian reform. The result was that the Social Reform Association became an insignificant sect.

The arrival of Wilhelm Weitling toward the close of 1846 aroused new hopes. Weitling, author of *The Gospel of the Poor Sinners*, had become known as the leading representative of artisan communism. Weitling immediately issued an appeal to the workers of America, calling it "An Appeal to the Men of Labor and Toil." And he instituted a propaganda campaign which finally resulted in a new organization among German-American workers, a secret organization called the League for Liberation. Weitling was unable to overcome sectarian tendencies among the German-American workers; he simply gave them a new framework in which to operate. Nevertheless, this League of Liberation gave a renewed impetus to the work.

The year 1848 became a turning point in the history of the German-Americans. The events in Europe in February and March of that year created a new movement for German-American unity, based primarily on support of the democratic movement in Germany. A meeting held in Philadelphia on March 22 saw the formation of a committee which appealed "to our German brothers in New York and Baltimore to form a central committee with us, in order better and more suc-

cessfully to organize the work of the Germans in America with the aim of liberating our former Fatherland." Soon meetings and appeals multiplied in every large city, generating a wave of enthusiasm. Societies for revolution and freedom sprang up, their treasuries constituting a "fund for the Revolution." A meeting of German workers in Philadelphia called by Weitling on April 29, 1848, prior to his return to Europe, passed a resolution to form a general workers' society. Thus, the League for Liberation came out in the open and was able to assume a leading role in the whole German-American movement supporting the 1848 Revolution in Europe.

Besides Weitling, many other Germans hurried back to Europe. The first congress of democratic societies in Frankfurt-on-the-Main on June 14-17, 1848, in which Weydemeyer participated, included three German-American representatives. In the meeting hall, the star-spangled banner hung next to the black-red-gold flag, symbol of German unity and freedom.

But soon after the abortive revolt in Baden, which forced its leader Fritz Hecker to flee to America where he arrived on October 5, 1848, a marked confusion arose in the ranks of the League for Liberation and revolutionary societies of all tendencies. Hecker received a rousing welcome and the campaign to collect funds to aid the revolutionists in Germany continued, but marked differences of opinion arose not only concerning the significance of the events in Europe but also concerning the current tasks of the German-Americans. As the number of political exiles grew, the feeling of pessimism increased; and the "fund for the Revolution" became much more a fund to support exiles in Switzerland and the United States. The ray of light caused by the uprising in Baden and the Palatinate in May 1849 was again quickly extinguished. Defeat of the Revolution brought a seemingly endless stream of refugees to the shores of America.<sup>3</sup>

Weitling, who returned to America at the end of 1849, undertook to revive the German-American labor movement. On January 15, 1850, his *Republik der Arbeiter* (*Workers' Republic*) appeared. In it, he preached co-operative handicraft en-

terprises and exchange banks as the method by which the workers could free themselves of the state and capitalist society. At the outset, Weitling enjoyed success: in New York, tailors, for example, organized in March 1850; and in a single day two thousand German tailors joined the United Protective Union of Tailors. A similar movement arose among the German carpenters, shoemakers, and in other crafts.

English-speaking workers, too, acted along similar lines.

Then, on October 22-28, 1850, a workers' congress was called in Philadelphia by the New York Central Committee of the United Trades and the Philadelphia German-American Workers' Society. Delegates came from many cities, and Weitling's program was endorsed.

But this marked the climax, not the starting point of a broad movement. The congress talked a great deal about exchange banks and cooperatives, but nothing was done to organize the workers. The gathering had few if any practical results, since even an effectively organized co-operative bank demanded the participation of thousands of workers. This was not forthcoming. And in the course of 1851, exiles flocking to the United States after the defeat of the Revolution in Europe brought with them their disillusionment and unclarity, their illusions and prejudices, thus creating more confusion among the German-Americans. The splits among the refugees caused analogous splits among the German-Americans, who became a happy hunting-ground for all sorts of "revolutionary" and reformist schemes. There were the bourgeois liberals, disillusioned by the failure in Germany, yet unclear as to the causes of the failure, and ever ready to pin their faith in new statements and promises by their leaders. Then too there were the democratic and socialist prattlers who thought their cause won if they but zealously proclaimed their ideals and published their revolutionary programs. They were the leading exponents of the numerous "revolutionary" clubs which attracted considerable numbers of German exiles in the United States. By spouting "revolution," these clubs muddled the issue and multiplied confusion. Two different campaigns for a so-called "German

National Loan" arose; each of them pretended to be the only true means of bringing about a new German revolution. The German-American labor movement, which once boasted of many newspapers and embraced 20,000 members in forty states, had turned into a chaotic scramble of conflicting schemes and projects. In the process, it lost practically all its meaning.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of 1851, however, one group sought to bring clarity to the badly split ranks of the immigrants: the socialist Sports Society (*Turnerbund*). It proceeded from the principle that the fight for the rights of the people could not be waged by conspiratorial groups but by a democratic movement rooted among the people.<sup>5</sup>

#### WEYDEMEYER IN NEW YORK

This was the situation which confronted Weydemeyer on his arrival on November 7, 1851. Clarity in the labor movement was urgently necessary, and the workers had to be aided in achieving this clarity if they were to insure their future development.

Marx and Engels set great hopes on Weydemeyer's activity in the United States. The two letters which Marx had written during Weydemeyer's transatlantic journey, on October 16 and October 31, and which awaited him on his arrival in New York, were replete with suggestions and proposals. The first proposal was that the *Communist Manifesto* be immediately published as a pamphlet in both German and English. In this connection Marx pointed out that the German Catholic priest, Eduard Ignaz Koch, who had to flee Germany in 1850 because of his part in the 1848 Revolution, had come to America and was active in New York as a spokesman of the "free community" (*Freie Gemeinde*) and a collaborator on the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*. As early as February 1851, Koch had asked Marx for the *Communist Manifesto*, and a month later twenty copies, together with an English translation from the *Red Republican*, edited by the British revolutionary Chartist Julian Harney, were sent to him with the suggestion

that the translated version be issued as a pamphlet. The October 31 letter to Weydemeyer contained further details concerning this project; at the same time, Marx outlined a plan for setting up a pocket-library in New York which would publish various articles from the *Neue Rheinische Revue*, such as Marx's series on the Prussian bourgeoisie, Engels' article on Hungary, Wolff's "Silesian Billions," and G. Weerth's feuilletons, in addition to reprinting the article against the bourgeois-democratic publicist Karl Heinzen from the *Deutsche Bruesseler Zeitung*. He advised Weydemeyer to write brief prefaces and postscripts with respect to the current situation, so as to "wage the necessary polemic both on the left and the right."<sup>6</sup>

In the October 16 letter, Marx asked Weydemeyer to inquire into the group around Kinkel that was agitating for a "loan" to finance a new German revolution, and effectively expose that absurd idea.<sup>7</sup> Although Weydemeyer was unable to bring these projects immediately to realization, he nevertheless saw from the very outset that his main task was to concentrate on fostering clarity in the ranks of the labor movement.

The first impressions Weydemeyer received in the United States were not overly encouraging. In his first letter to Marx and Engels after his arrival in New York, he wrote on December 1, 1851:

"I did not go to America of my own volition, but I must confess that so far I have seen nothing which can awaken within me the slightest affection for America. I don't think there is another place where one encounters the shopkeeper's mentality in more revolting nakedness. Any other aim in life besides making money is considered an absurdity here, and you can see it on every face, on every brick. Among the great mass of Germans living here, one finds the most wretched specimens imaginable."<sup>8</sup>

But Weydemeyer was not to be put off by difficulties. On the contrary they spurred him to redouble his energies. He sought

to come in contact with the German workers, become acquainted with the German-language press, and inquire into publishing possibilities. Wilhelm Wolff had recommended him for an editorial post on the *Staatszeitung*. But Reichhelm, to whom Wolff had recommended him, had in the meantime withdrawn from the paper. Moreover, as Weydemeyer grew more closely acquainted with the *Staatszeitung*, he realized that to work on that paper would be "very compromising." He was not much more favorably impressed by the other German papers published in New York by German refugees: whether it was Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter*, Heinzen's *Schnellpost (Dispatch)*, Froebel's *Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung (General German Gazette)*, the *Demokrat*, the *Abendzeitung (Evening Gazette)*, the *Luzifer*, or any of the others, they all had a very limited circulation, restricted in the main to personal followers of the publishers. And most of these papers had a very short life.

Yet Weydemeyer felt that he could succeed with a weekly of his own. Since Reichhelm promised financial backing if he could get his London friends as regular collaborators, Weydemeyer wrote confidently to Marx asking him to send over articles at once, so that he could bring out the first issue of his paper in January 1852.

### DIE REVOLUTION

In this paper, which was to be called *Die Revolution*, he proposed to continue the work of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and especially the *Neue Rheinische Revue*, by staunchly defending democracy and Marxian historical materialism. In *Die Revolution*, the "resolutely revolutionary party" was to have for the first time on American soil an organ enabling it to further the social interests of the working class in the economic and political events of the day. Without losing any time, Weydemeyer made known his plan in a circular letter sent to workers' circles in December 1851. In it, he asserted:

"Up to now only the party hostile to the working class judged the material economic basis of all social events in its true light. Hence the need for greater determination, since the final conclusions can only be drawn if one proceeds from correct premises."<sup>9</sup>

To demonstrate to the working class the economic basis of all social evolution was the prerequisite to building a class-conscious labor movement. Weydemeyer's letter further explained the tasks of *Die Revolution*:

"It will be the task of the new weekly to give as clear a picture as possible of the class struggle which is becoming ever more concentrated in the Old World and can only end in the abolition of all class differences; it must keep its readers constantly acquainted with all changes which occur in the industrial and commercial relations of the various peoples and classes and their political attitude toward each other, by which revolutionary explosions can be prepared."<sup>10</sup>

Weydemeyer's paper fitted in so well with Marx's desires for a practical outlet for his writings that he wrote by return mail on December 19, pledging his own collaboration and that of his friends. He wanted to write immediately the history of Napoleon III's recent *coup*, and promised to get Engels, Wolff, Weerth and, above all, the most popular poet among the German democrats, Ferdinand Freiligrath, to contribute timely articles. At the same time Marx told Weydemeyer to get in touch with A. Cluss, at the U. S. Navy Yard in Washington, D. C., whom he recommended as one of "the best and most talented people." But even before he received this letter Weydemeyer had already suffered the first setback with respect to his project. Reichhelm had withdrawn his promise of financial aid. Undaunted, Weydemeyer proceeded with plans to bring out the first issue of the weekly. He wrote to London:

"If the people see how different it will be from all the other examples of the German press here, perhaps the money will be raised. So send articles as quickly as possible—but, above

all, a poem by Freiligrath, that's the most attractive item."<sup>11</sup>

According to a statement made by Marx on December 13, Weydemeyer sought to insure the material basis of his paper by setting up a committee of action. But here too he had no success. Nevertheless he continued to announce the forthcoming appearance of his weekly. The following notice appeared in the New York *Turn-Zeitung* on January 1, 1852:

"*Die Revolution*, a weekly edited by J. Weydemeyer, former editor of the *Neue Deutsche Zeitung* which was suppressed by the police in Frankfurt-on-the-Main, will appear every Sunday with the collaboration of the editors of the former *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Ferdinand Freiligrath, etc. The business office of the paper is at 7 Chambers Street."<sup>12</sup>

On January 5, Weydemeyer informed Marx that he "had begun his gamble, in a spirit of recklessness without money and without any solid support." The only material asset of this journalistic enterprise was its purchase of the *Luzifer*, a dying magazine which, however, still had over 400 subscribers.

In England, Marx and his friends were equally interested in seeing Weydemeyer make a go of the venture, and they did everything in their power to assure his success. But the first articles sent by Engels were lost in transit. Marx, however, had already sent the beginning of his *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, which was to prove the paper's crowning achievement. Weydemeyer attached unusual importance to receiving a special contribution from the widely respected poet, Freiligrath. The latter had not published anything since his flight from Germany in the summer of 1851, and pressing material needs had forced him to enter the business world. At Marx's personal request, therefore, he sat down and penned his first work since his hurried exodus from Germany: his "Poetic Epistles," a sharply satirical picture of the times which did not hesitate to poke fun at the way in which some of the German exiles were playing at revolution. It was a

political editorial in verse, written with characteristically biting incisiveness, and in this first work in exile the poet poured forth all the sentiments which for months he had kept to himself. On January 16, Marx sent Freiligrath's first epistle to Weydemeyer with the comment: "Write a friendly letter to Freiligrath. You don't have to be afraid to pay him compliments. . . ."13

Weydemeyer complied at once, and a week later Freiligrath addressed to him personally the second part of his epistle. Engels, too, wrote from Manchester on January 23: "Now I think I can send you something regularly every week, perhaps a feuilleton next time, just for a change. . . ."14

Despite this promising start, Weydemeyer's financial worries were far from over. The prevailing mood among the German-American workers militated against widespread material support of the publication. The first number of *Die Revolution* appeared on January 6, 1852. After the second number, published on January 13, he found it impossible to cover the costs of printing. Informing Marx at the end of January that he would have to cease publication, he presented the following picture of the situation:

"Unemployment, which has risen to unprecedented heights since autumn, sets grave obstacles in the way of any new undertaking. And then for some time now the workers here have been exploited in so many various ways. First Kinkel, then Kossuth, and most of them are asinine enough to contribute a dollar for this hostile propaganda rather than a penny for the expression of their own interests. The American soil has a most corrupting effect on people and at the same time fills them with arrogance, as if they were far superior to their comrades in the Old World."15

However, Weydemeyer's indestructible optimism, which even now made him feel that he could continue the paper if only he could raise two hundred dollars, buoyed Marx's spirit as well. Encouraged to continue with undiminished energy to write for *Die Revolution*, specifically to complete his 18th

*Brumaire*, Marx became so engrossed in the work that, as he stated in a letter of February 13 containing another section of it, "the thing is spreading out under my hands." In a postscript to this letter, Mrs. Marx added:

"My husband has called upon practically every available Communist pen for contributions and has even turned to Germany; some of the writings, Freiligrath's poem for instance, should insure a much wider circulation for your paper. . . ."16

Nor did Marx show any signs of discouragement in his letter of February 20. Indeed, he asked Weydemeyer to write more often so that he could keep his collaborators in good humor. And he added: "I'm standing with a whip behind them all and will succeed in driving them to work."17

At the beginning of March, after four months in the United States, four months of unremitting activity in the labor movement, Weydemeyer saw his personal finances reach a low point, forcing him to accept a position as a surveyor. As he wrote to London, his family had been increased by the birth of "a young revolutionary." Moreover, after careful consideration he had made up his mind to cease trying to issue *Die Revolution* as a weekly. Instead, he would issue it from time to time as his financial situation warranted. On March 25, Marx sent the concluding portion of his 18th *Brumaire* and at the same time congratulated Weydemeyer on the birth of his son:

"There is no more interesting time than the present for a child to come into the world. When people will be able to go from London to Calcutta in seven days, we both will have been long since beheaded or have palsied heads. And Australia and California and the Pacific Ocean! The new world bourgeoisie will no longer understand how small our world was."18

In the same letter Marx told of his negotiations with the Hungarian exiles. They promised to raise five hundred dollars for *Die Revolution* if a certain Banya, a Hungarian refugee, were accepted on the editorial board. But nothing came of the five hundred dollars. Banya soon turned out to be a police spy!

Weeks passed without Weydemeyer achieving any success in his attempts to raise money. Meanwhile Marx's household was in the throes of serious financial troubles. One of the children died in the early days of April, and the resulting worries and over-exertions forced Mrs. Marx to a sick-bed. Wilhelm Wolff wrote to Weydemeyer on April 16, telling him of "the general bad luck and terrible distress of almost all our acquaintances." This letter crossed one written by Weydemeyer on April 9, which contained good news:

"Help from an unexpected quarter has finally overcome the difficulties which stood in the way of publishing Marx's pamphlet. After sending my last letter, I met one of our Frankfurt workers, a tailor, who also arrived here last summer. He immediately placed his entire savings, \$40, at my disposal."<sup>19</sup>

The world has never learned the name of this simple worker who made possible the publication of the *18th Brumaire*.

We have no further records of the second volume of the series with Freiligrath's "Epistles." Only a copy of the issue containing Marx's *18th Brumaire* has been found, one that was sent by Weydemeyer to London and came into the possession of Friedrich Lessner, member of the General Council of the First International. The introductory sentences which Weydemeyer wrote for the foreword to this volume on May 1, 1852, show that he had not given up hope of continuing to publish *Die Revolution*:

"The weekly *Die Revolution* which I edited, only lasted two issues. Lack of capital—since the sale of shares did not yield the expected results—forced me to abandon the venture for a time. But I hope soon to be in a position to resume it. Until then, however, I will collect the material intended for *Die Revolution* in occasional volumes, the first of which I am herewith presenting to the public. The rapidity with which these are sold will determine how long it will be before I publish succeeding volumes. The material for a second volume is already partially ready; naturally, it is of timely interest,

and, unlike the *18th Brumaire* by Karl Marx, much of it would be lost if publication were postponed."<sup>20</sup>

Then Weydemeyer discusses the significance of Marx's work, the *18th Brumaire*. In this study of contemporary history, the first important published work by Marx since the suspension of the *Neue Rheinische Revue* in 1850, the author gave a thorough-going analysis of the process of history. It provided the best answer to the campaign which had been waged for months by so-called chosen leaders of the revolution, such as Karl Heinzen and others, against the articles of Marx and Engels in the *New York Tribune* on the causes of the defeat of democracy in Europe. Weydemeyer's preface compared Marx's objective and documented study with the unseemly ravings of his slanderers, to whom Weydemeyer himself was preparing a further reply in forthcoming volumes.

In the papers left by Weydemeyer were also found two articles by Engels intended for *Die Revolution* and dealing with events in England from the fall of the Palmerston Government on December 22, 1851, to the electoral reform.<sup>21</sup>

#### POLEMICS AGAINST HEINZEN AND OTHERS

Soon after his arrival in New York, Weydemeyer realized that he would have to speak out against Karl Heinzen. The latter sought to gain notoriety by revealing the "inside story" of events in Europe, in which he characterized the princes as the root of all evil and denounced the "class-fantasy" (*Klassenreiterei*) as a "stupid invention of the Communists." In view of the dissensions among the political refugees it was essential to refute Heinzen's assertions. And the best method of answering all the various overt and covert attempts to demolish the Marxist conception of the class character of society as either a plagiarism or an invention was by a clear exposition of the facts.

Weydemeyer's first article against Heinzen appeared in the *New York Democrat* early in 1852. This piece, which unfortunately has not been preserved, received the approval not only

of Marx but also of the English Chartist leaders, Ernest Jones and Julian Harney, whom Heinzen claimed as proponents of his point of view. In fact, the result was that Jones publicly took a position against Heinzen. In an open letter written to Weydemeyer, Jones sketched British history as a history of class struggles. Marx sent the Chartist leader's letter to Weydemeyer on March 5, 1852, and added some advice of his own. He commented: "Your article against Heinzen . . . is very good, both brutal and subtle, a combination in any polemic worthy of the name."<sup>22</sup>

Weydemeyer's polemical talents aided Marx in bringing to an end the stifling dissensions among the immigrants. Thanks to him, the Communist League was kept informed of the activities of Heinzen, Kinkel, and other exiles in the United States, and was able to take the necessary counter-measures against them. Moreover, it could count on Weydemeyer to clarify its point of view right on the spot. In February 1852 Weydemeyer asked that all the documents of the League be sent to him so that he could refute any and all slanders by referring to authentic texts. At a League meeting held in London on March 24, Marx delivered a report based on information received from Weydemeyer and Cluss, dealing with the actions of Heinzen, Kinkel, and others and the counter-actions taken by Weydemeyer. The meeting unanimously approved of what the latter had done.<sup>23</sup>

The material concerning developments in émigré circles in America which Weydemeyer sent to England in the course of 1852 served Marx and Engels as the basis for several pamphlets. One of them was entitled *Against the Great Men in Exile*. But the Hungarian exile, Banya, to whom the manuscript was given, instead of placing it with a publisher, probably handed it to the German authorities.<sup>24</sup>

In all these discussions among political exiles, Weydemeyer's greatest service perhaps was that from the very outset he clearly and forcefully exposed every anti-Marxist slander, demonstrating that Marx was never guided by personal inter-

ests but by those of the Communist League and of the labor movement in general.

#### "LITERARY AGENT" FOR MARX AND ENGELS

During these years of reaction the European press was closed to Marx and Engels. Hence the American papers, by opening their columns to their writings, contributed to the future development of the international labor movement. On January 5, 1852, Weydemeyer furnished Marx with detailed information about the German-language papers, praising especially the *New York Turn-Zeitung*.<sup>25</sup>

The Marx-Engels correspondence reveals that every week an article went from London across the ocean to Weydemeyer. The following comments recur in practically every one of their letters written early in 1852: "I'm getting something ready for Weydemeyer"; "Today I'm finishing an article for Weydemeyer"; "Today I sent something to Weydemeyer." On February 18, Marx wrote to Engels: "From the enclosed letter from Weydemeyer you can see how necessary it is to keep on sending these articles."<sup>26</sup>

For months the two men wrote only for America. All the translating had to be done by Engels and there were times when he could barely cope with the task. Weydemeyer became, so to speak, a "literary agent" for Marx and Engels in the United States. He submitted the articles sent him to the *New York Tribune* as well as to many local papers in the West and many German-American papers such as the *New England Zeitung* (*New England Gazette*), in Boston. In 1850 Engels had published his *Peasant War in Germany* in the *Neue Rheinische Revue* (Nos. 5 and 6). Weydemeyer reprinted it in installments in the *New York Turn-Zeitung* from January 1, 1852 to February 1, 1853. And a letter of October 12, 1852, from Marx to Engels indicates that Weydemeyer published a kind of news service for his two friends in England, making their most important articles and dispatches available to the American press.<sup>27</sup>



## POLITICAL WRITER

The first American periodical to open its columns to Weydemeyer's own writings was the *New York Turn-Zeitung*, founded on December 15, 1851. This monthly served as a useful channel: in it, he analyzed social developments and took special pains to expose the absurdity of the "National Loan" movement and similar "ultra-revolutionary" ideas that could only confuse and compromise the labor movement. In the third issue of the periodical (January 1, 1852), Weydemeyer made his journalistic debut in the United States with an article entitled "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," in which he gave a deep analysis of the tasks of the workers in the fight for freedom and democracy. He castigated the machine-wrecking attitude of many artisans toward the development of industry and emphasized the social progress inherent in the rise of industrialism. Among other things he wrote:

"The rule of the proletariat has nothing in common with the rule of brutal vandalism: on the contrary, the proletariat is the only class in a position to carry forward the entire heritage of the bourgeoisie because its own prosperity is conditioned by the future development of this heritage. It is the last class which will exercise its rule, since with the removal of all class privileges, all other classes will be dissolved in it, as it has already absorbed all the creative elements of the other classes which have acquired a theoretical understanding of the forward march of history. . . ."28

In the next two issues of the *Turn-Zeitung* (Nos. 4 and 5, dated January 15 and February 1), Weydemeyer criticized the program of those exiles in London who had formed a "Central Committee of European Democracy" in an effort to democratize Europe. The articles were entitled "A Petty-Bourgeois Democratic Program," and they showed the ineffectiveness of such a program since it did not proceed from a solution of the social question. The articles went straight to the heart of the

matter by analyzing the individual demands put forth. On the question of universal suffrage Weydemeyer wrote:

". . . In the eyes of democracy this is indeed the universal panacea for healing all the ills of the world. . . . But in bourgeois society the basis of universal suffrage lies in the economic dependence of the voter, which often forces the worker, for the sake of his own existence, to sell his vote to capital, and keeps the rural population in a backward condition, the inevitable consequence of their isolation and chronic poverty. . . ."29

Meanwhile the misleading agitation for a revolutionary program for Europe had reached its high point in the United States. Two different congresses of "revolutionary" societies took place in January 1852, and by their agitation they sought to paralyze all other efforts at immediate reforms. Weydemeyer came out openly against these attempts. In No. 6 of the *Turn-Zeitung* (March 1, 1852), he began a series of three articles entitled "Revolutionary Agitation among the Exiles." His articles appeared at a time when it had become imperative for the sake of the labor movement to expose the expelled Willich group, with its chatter about "revolution." For the Willich group awakened false hopes, steered the energies of the entire immigrant movement in the wrong direction, and meant splitting and hampering the emergent labor movement.

Weydemeyer's articles showed that a revolution could not be based on mere propaganda and collection of funds, but that it was a social phenomenon transcending speeches by orators. This conclusion marked the first step in the liberation of the German-American immigrants from the domination of the "revolution-makers." It also pointed to a new path for the American workers' movement by fostering an understanding of the true social tasks facing labor in the United States.

Weydemeyer began his series with a brief characterization of these groups: "For months the 'New World' has been overrun by revolutionary agitators in an unprecedented fashion. On all sides demands for aid are addressed to the exiles. They are asked to encourage or even call into being now the Hungarian,



now the German revolution. Germany is represented by the emissaries of two different fractions of the London refugees, each of which solemnly believes that it alone is the true representative of the nation. . . . Both are equally careful not to advance a definite political program, so that under the general banner of 'revolution' they can collect as many dollars as possible."<sup>30</sup>

Weydemeyer then asserted:

"The more these worthy agitators attempt to conceal their real party position behind general phrases, the more necessary is it to analyze that position; the more they attempt to express their relationship to the revolution in general terms, the more urgent does it become to be concrete and specific in discussing it, in order to forestall illusions such as those which caused great damage during the struggles through which we recently passed."<sup>31</sup>

Next he dealt directly with the oft-misused concept of "revolution":

"With the revolution alone, therefore, we have not won much. It is a question of using, of exploiting the revolution, that is, it depends on the struggle after victory, on deciding precisely those questions which the agitators of the 'great party of the revolution,' the compromisers, the Gotha-ites of the revolution try to set aside as untimely. . . .

"Above all, however, revolutions are not 'made'; on the contrary, they are brought about by the appearance of circumstances over which the individuals have no control. Indeed, it would be sad for the peoples of Europe if their fate could be decided by collecting a few paltry dollars. Thus the propaganda of the Kinkels, Goeggs, Ficklers, and the rest only serves publicly to expose the political immaturity of the parties which support them."<sup>32</sup>

This was a new language. Such forthright words had not yet been uttered in American immigrant circles. The "ultra-

revolutionaries" had carried on their propaganda under the aegis of the word "revolution"; they lived by that word, it was their program and text. By analyzing it and stripping it of its romanticism, Weydemeyer publicly exposed the "revolutionary" societies and revealed the hollowness of their phrases. With this analysis, Weydemeyer undermined their standing and prestige among the people. In his second and third articles he dealt in greater detail with the so-called "revolution-makers" and "revolution-joiners," at the same time studying the historic results of their actions.

His words found approval not only in the ranks of the socialist members of the *Turnverein*; they also convinced former followers of Willich and Kinkel who now supported Weydemeyer's views as expressed in the *Turn-Zeitung* and other papers. And within a short time these people became the most active elements in rebuilding the German-American labor movement.

Weydemeyer next turned to the economic field. In the July 1852 issue of the *Turn-Zeitung* (No. 10), he dealt first with the tariff question which, in view of the economic development of the United States, highlighted the differences between the major American political parties. Weydemeyer sought above all to clarify the workers' attitude toward this crucial question, specifically to acquaint them with the economic and political conditions that determined their social existence. At that stage of America's industrial evolution, the tariff problem was to a certain extent one of determining the best conditions for the growth of industry. For industry it was a question of being assured of a monopoly of the market. But Weydemeyer treated the tariff issue for the first time from the standpoint of the living conditions of the workers. He asserted that this deserved special consideration, and that the party of the proletariat would be in a better position to attain an unprejudiced assessment of the effects of free trade or protective tariff by not committing itself to either.

Nevertheless, he did not fail to point out the over-all significance a policy of free trade or a protective tariff would

have in the United States. Devoting a second article especially to this issue in the August 1 number of the *Turn-Zeitung* (No. 11), he discussed above all what attitude the American workers should adopt toward American manufacturers. In this connection he opposed the temperance movements which were based on a lowering of the workers' wages; on the other hand, he supported efforts to develop modern large-scale industry. He emphasized:

"The accumulation of capital is not harmful to society; the harm lies rather in the fact that capital serves the interests of a few. If the bourgeoisie has fulfilled the first task, it is the task of the proletariat to put an end to this state of affairs which has ended in chaos."<sup>33</sup>

Never before in the United States had labor problems been so clearly analyzed from the point of view of the necessary and unavoidable development of an industrial society; never before had capital-labor relations been so forthrightly discussed from the positive standpoint of social progress; never before had anyone in the United States undertaken to show the labor movement its place in the industrial scheme of things, and to indicate that it was the only force capable of making industrial expansion serve the general interests of society as a whole.

In dealing with economic problems Weydemeyer also had to tackle the question of slavery in the South. He turned his attention to this theme in the September 1, 1852, issue (No. 12), of the *Turn-Zeitung* in an article, "Australian Cotton and American Slavery." Going right to the heart of the matter, he passed over the sentimental arguments of the Abolitionists and studied the evil at the economic roots of slavery. He contended that the situation of the southern slaveholders had changed as a result of their loss of the cotton monopoly on the world market and that this change would affect developments in the United States. At the same time, he took the position that the industrial expansion of the United States was

the only basis for the social and political development of the individual states:

"It is unlikely that this shift in relations of the South can be made without powerfully shaking the entire continental United States, for a crash in the South will bring a crash in the North in its wake; and a breakdown in the entire credit system such as occurred in 1836 can again happen if sufficient preparations are not taken in advance. But the sectional tendencies of the South, its special interests, are no longer valid: the parties will develop more sharply and clearly defined over the whole country. The American feeling of independence, which imagines that Americans are less subject to the influences of industrialization than the peoples of old Europe, is over and done with. And so is the cherished supremacy of the agricultural over the industrial interests, of which Senator Douglas spoke so glowingly at the Agricultural Congress last year. North and South will then equally depend on the development of domestic industry for their salvation.

"In a word, the development of Australian cotton planting completes the world rule of the industrial bourgeoisie. And the only legitimate heir of this bourgeoisie is the proletariat."<sup>34</sup>

In No. 15 of the *Turn-Zeitung*, appearing right after the 1852 Presidential elections, Weydemeyer wrote another article called "The Work Stoppages and the Presidential Elections." Here he dealt with the most important events of the year, demonstrating the close link between economic and political factors in the Presidential campaign.

He showed the relation of the economic demands of the Democratic and Whig parties to the social needs of the workers and exposed the contradictions in that relationship. Then he drew the conclusion that in future elections it would be essential to elect men who represented political interests corresponding to the social demands of the great mass of the population. He finished his article with the comment:

"There is one thing not included in the platforms of the Democrats and the Whigs, as well as in that of the other

splinter parties: the formulation of a *labor platform*. Yet that is an urgent necessity which must no longer be deferred. And since nobody before me has undertaken that task, I intend to devote my next article to elaborating that labor platform."<sup>35</sup>

This formulation of a labor program did appear in the article, "Political-Economic Survey," in two numbers of the *Turn-Zeitung* (December 1 and 15, 1852). In a sense, these articles brought to a close the series in which Weydemeyer had analyzed the attitude which the labor movement should adopt toward fundamental economic and political questions. They provided a reasoned study of the world situation, emphasizing the close connections between politics and the world market. Weydemeyer clearly revealed his purpose of encouraging the American workers to see the connections between their own social status and world economic conditions. He sought thereby to demonstrate that they could improve their conditions, not by sporadic individual or local actions, but by common action, by the working class as a whole participating in political and economic movements and thus achieving independent influence. He showed that the satisfaction of daily needs in the United States was bound up with events in England and France in such a way that a business depression in England, for example, would also affect the United States and worsen the lot of the American workers.

He had now been a year in the United States. During this period he had sought zealously to bring ever more clarity into the ranks of German-American labor. He could record with satisfaction in December 1852 that those who, twelve months previously, were still confusing the American workers with their prattle of a "National Loan" and "revolutionary societies," were now admitting their own bankruptcy. In No. 16 of the *Turn-Zeitung* (December 1, 1852), in his article, "The Bankruptcy of the National Loan," Weydemeyer was able to confirm the correctness of the criticism which he had been leveling for months at that futile movement.

#### AN ECHO OF THE COLOGNE COMMUNIST TRIAL

The communist trial in Cologne in October-November 1852 marked the beginning of a new period for the international communist movement. This trial against members of the Communist League was staged by the Prussian authorities in order to compromise it in the eyes of the public; but it ended on the contrary by brilliantly justifying the communist movement and compromising Prussian justice. Efforts by the reactionaries to use the trial as a means of branding the Communist League as a "gang of cheats and criminals" were set at naught as a result of the campaign led by Marx to spread the truth concerning the falsifications of the Prussian police. The German immigrants who had come to the United States precisely because of the spread of reaction in Europe paid close attention to the trial. All the details of the proceedings were made known in America by the *New Yorker Belletristische Journal und Criminal-Zeitung* (*New York Literary Journal and Criminal Gazette*), Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter*, and the *New England Zeitung* of Boston.

Weydemeyer lost no time in utilizing the material at hand. In an article called "Secret Societies and the Communist Trial," in the January 15, 1853 issue of the *Turn-Zeitung*, he clearly exposed the lessons of the trial, namely, "that one cannot conjure up revolutions by means of conspiracies, that it is social crises which call forth revolutions, the cumulative effect of social tensions rather than the petty strivings of individuals."<sup>36</sup>

Once again, early in 1853, the discussion about the Willich group flared up with renewed intensity in the United States when the pamphlet *Revelations Concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*, published by Marx in Zurich and illegally distributed in Germany, became known. This work was an effective document justifying the organization and activity of the working class. Not only did it contain a masterly analysis of the background and methods of the trial; it also gave the labor movement valuable lessons and pointed out the road

it had to follow. This was done by underscoring the methods used at the trial and by exposing the behavior of the confused and untrustworthy members of the Willich group. The *New England Zeitung* for which Weydemeyer wrote, reprinted Marx's pamphlet in full in April 1853.<sup>37</sup>

Willich, for his part, now resorted to the argument that his quarrel with Marx was based simply on a difference of personal opinion. But the more reality demonstrated the incorrectness of his methods, the more he indulged in personal insults and slanders.

On November 7, shortly after the arrival in New York of Dr. A. Jacobi, one of the defendants in the Cologne trial, Weydemeyer in collaboration with Jacobi and A. Cluss wrote an exhaustive statement that was published in the *New Yorker Belletristisches Journal und Criminal-Zeitung* (November 25, 1853), in which he reviewed the whole polemic with Willich and his group. In these articles Weydemeyer thoroughly exposed the slander methods used by Willich and his friends. Referring to the attempt to denounce friends of Marx in the United States as "agents," Weydemeyer vigorously concluded:

"The 'agents' know that the unity of action, the sureness and agreement in thought which have always characterized them and kept them together through thick and thin, will not be understood by their opponents, because the latter have themselves never had firmly grounded principles."<sup>38</sup>

### III

## REVIVAL OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

In the course of these polemics and the resulting campaign of enlightenment, the most advanced elements in the labor movement began to come together again. In January 1852 Marx had informed Weydemeyer of the formation of a new German workers' society in London. In the early summer of that year F. A. Sorge, coming to New York from London, was able to give Weydemeyer a detailed account of the society's activity. Stimulated by this report, Weydemeyer organized the friends of Marx in New York into a group he called the Proletarian League. He informed Engels on June 17 that he had founded a club of five members as an initiating group, and asked to be kept regularly informed of all the proceedings of the London society.<sup>1</sup>

Henceforth this group strongly supported Weydemeyer's propaganda campaign. It constituted the first nucleus of the newly forming Marxist movement in the United States and its work soon gained recognition and esteem among American workers, especially those of German descent. We do not possess many specific details of the activities of this Weydemeyer-led group, but it is noteworthy that the Prussian Police Councillor Stieber, testifying at the Cologne trial, mentioned New York City as one of the centers of the Communist League. Wilhelm Weitling, in his "Final Remarks on the Communist Trial,"<sup>2</sup> also announced that "since Weydemeyer's arrival here a seventeen-man secret group, called the Proletarian League, has begun to function."

THE SPIRITUAL FATHER  
OF THE AMERICAN WORKERS' LEAGUE

Thanks to the indefatigable labors of Weydemeyer's group, efforts of the German-American workers to organize themselves were intensified in the boom year of 1853 and were sustained by a more thorough knowledge of the economic development of the country.<sup>3</sup>

A strike movement vaster than any America had previously witnessed, enhanced the belief of the American working class that its strength lay primarily in solidarity.<sup>4</sup> The German workers played a vital part in this movement.

On March 18, 1853, the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*, which for weeks had carried appeals and announcements from German-American cabinet-makers, tailors, and stone cutters, published a ringing appeal that began: "All out, workers of every craft!" The call continued:

"All out to form one large workers' league! We call upon you not only to stop work in order to obtain higher wages, or to unite for purely political purposes. No, the question now at issue is to formulate a platform according to the needs of the times and to discuss the ways and means of carrying through such a platform. Only in such a way will it be possible to foster the welfare of the workers and build the movement on lasting foundations.

"So workers, all of you, come to the meeting! Only if all crafts stand together and act together, according to one definite plan, will it be possible to do away with the many evils that reduce the workers to the level of beasts of burden.

"So rise up as one man and come to the mass meeting on Monday, March 21, at 8 o'clock in the evening, in Mechanics Hall, 160 Hester St.

"All for one, one for all!

"In the name of the organizing committee,

"P. C. Bluhm, Secretary."<sup>5</sup>

This organizing committee, set up at the insistence of Weydemeyer and consisting of representatives of the Proletarian

League and the German trade unions, envisaged the creation of a unified organization of all workers.

On that March evening, eight hundred German-American workers met in Mechanics Hall and enthusiastically greeted the formation of the American Workers' League. The draft platform presented by the organizing committee approached the organization of the American workers not as a narrow craft-minded group nor as a mutual aid society but as a social class demanding recognition of their rights on the basis of existing social conditions.

The *Turn-Zeitung* greeted the platform on June 1, 1853, as a proof of the increasingly widespread sentiment "that the workers cannot accomplish anything unless they act as a harmonious whole and that therefore the co-operation of all is necessary if the oft-described conditions of the workers are to be improved."

The platform called among other things for the following:

"1. To fight with every means at our disposal and to put a stop, by law, to the competition among capitalists for labor-power as well as the competition of the workers among themselves.

"2. To take measures affording the workers protection against their employers, from arbitrary actions such as wage-cuts, lengthening of the legally prescribed working week, and the like; and at the same time enabling them to obtain by common efforts wage-increases, if necessary.

"3. Furthermore, to take measures making it impossible to exploit the workers by fraud and profiteering of all kinds. . . .

"6. To emphasize the independence of the Workers' League from existing political parties."<sup>6</sup>

This platform shunned the social-utopian views of a Weitling and the political fantasies of the "ultra-revolutionaries," Kinkel and Willich. That it was adopted was without doubt mainly due to the efforts of Weydemeyer.

The discussion at the initial gathering of the Workers' League centered largely around the proposed plan of organi-

zation. On the question of the most effective manner in which to organize the workers, whether on the basis of economic activity in guilds and trade unions or on the more general political basis of residence in districts and wards, the lack of sufficient experience led to a difference of opinion. This first meeting of the League initiated a discussion which was to continue in the labor movement for many decades to come. At bottom, it involved not only the form of the workers' organization but also the content of their ideas, the possibilities and conditions of struggle for the working class and for a proper understanding of the relations between politics and economics.

No definite conclusions were reached at this March 1853 meeting. The predominant tendency was to stress political rather than economic organization of the workers. The concept advanced by Weitling's General Workers' League that the workers should steer clear of politics found little support; but the other extreme point of view, namely that the only way the workers could fight for their rights was exclusively by political organization, threatened to carry the day. Agreement was finally reached on a plan of organization providing that:

"1. The workers would organize in a body, in the following manner: (a) In every ward a workers' society would be formed, *without* distinction as to crafts. (b) Each of these societies would elect, according to its numerical strength, delegates to a central committee, on the basis of one delegate per every hundred or less members. (c) From this central committee, an executive committee would be chosen as well as a finance committee charged with administering all funds. (d) Under the same above-named conditions, all crafts could be represented. But societies less than two hundred strong had the right, in cases specifically involving their craft, to send delegates with full powers to the central committee."<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, this plan provided that for the time being the preliminary committee would function as a continuations committee to see that the decisions of the gathering be carried out, specifically that the Workers' League be built. This com-

mittee, called into being by Weydemeyer and consisting of members of the Proletarian League and the German trade unions, immediately set to work.<sup>8</sup>

During the last week in March 1853, the following notice appeared almost daily in the calendar of events of the *New Yorker Staatszeitung*: "A meeting has been called of the committee charged with organizing the American Workers' League." The sessions of this committee were thrown open to the public, and all its announcements contained the following statement:

"All organized workers' groups are invited to send delegates to the committee's sessions, so that the said committee will be in a position to serve as a link between the various crafts. Moreover, all workers are cordially invited to attend the committee's sessions."<sup>9</sup>

One of the guiding principles of the organizing committee was that it must carry out its tasks in closest contact with the workers themselves. In the midst of the strike movement in New York City, which had reached its high point in March, it was more than ever necessary for the Workers' League in its activities to give consideration to the workers' demands.

So within a few weeks the organizational groundwork of the American Workers' League was laid. Late in March and early in April 1853, local groups of the League were formed in several New York City wards. Within two months, eleven of the twenty wards in New York had formed such groups. The general slogan used by these groups in issuing appeals to the workers living in their ward was: "Workers in all crafts, take this road which will assure your material and spiritual existence."

The Central Committee of the American Workers' League, consisting of delegates from the ward societies and trade unions, set to work at the beginning of April. This committee was the leading political body of the League. Weydemeyer was active in it and it included all the members of the original organizing committee. It chose an executive committee. At its

first plenary session on April 3, 1853, it decided to issue an appeal to the workers of the United States. Proposed by Weydemeyer and several others, this appeal was the first public pronouncement of the new labor organization. Couched in dignified language and expressing far-sighted aims, it aroused a good deal of attention, notably in the German-American press. It declared in part:

"Workers! Brothers!

"The undersigned Workers' League, which has undertaken the task of rallying all the workers of the United States into a great Workers' League, addresses this appeal to you.

"Workers! The time has come for the workers of all national origins to unite into a strong league; it is high time, moreover, that we cease to be used as the helpless instruments of our employers or of other monopolists. . . .

"Not only the recent workers' struggles in Baltimore and other American cities, but all the struggles that have occurred since 1822 have sufficiently shown us that all one-sided efforts of the workers to improve their material lot have redounded to their disadvantage rather than led to the fulfillment of their aims. . . .

"Therefore, workers, let us recognize our task and realize that we can never achieve our aims by individual efforts and movements but only by one closely knit movement. . . . It is therefore essential that we form one organization without distinction as to crafts and national origins, that we may rise up against our tyrannical oppressors, the capitalists and monopolists, in united fashion; and also in order to obtain our just demands at the polls by electing our own candidates. For we will be able to guarantee a human existence for ourselves only if our own representatives sit in the federal and state legislative halls of the United States. Only then will the legislatures pass laws making wild speculation and profiteering impossible and cease legislating exclusively for the benefit of the capitalists and monopolists; and only then will the workers, who constitute a majority of the people, safeguard

their human rights from any direct or indirect attacks.

"Therefore, workers of the United States, we call upon all of you to join the League. We propose the following plan of organization; form groups in every city and locality. Where language differences make it impossible for you to act in unison, maintain separate groups but remain in close contact by means of an elected committee that will co-ordinate your activities. . . . At the same time we urge all existing workers' societies in the United States to join this Workers' League and to this end to enter into negotiations with our executive committee."<sup>10</sup>

Not all of the members active in the League were in agreement as to the need of all workers to co-operate irrespective of language. A tendency still prevailed to limit activities to the German-American workers. But in their appeal the most forward-looking workers, led by Weydemeyer, made clear for the first time the tasks of a genuine labor movement. Even though the demands expressed were not accepted in entirety by the membership of the American Workers' League, the appeal had a rousing effect. This was enhanced by the fact that Weydemeyer personally undertook to make connections with English-speaking workers' groups and made noteworthy progress. Not without reason therefore have American labor historians characterized him as "the most prominent German labor agitator in America" of this period, who clarified for America "the principles of the class struggle and the need of a trade union movement and political action by labor."<sup>11</sup>

It was soon obvious from the response of the German-American workers that the ward societies were attracting interest, and before long they loomed large in the Workers' League. The Central Committee then turned its main attention to the trade unions. Although Wilhelm Weitling himself and his General Workers' League no longer enjoyed widespread support, some of Weitling's ideas were still deeply rooted in the German-American trade unions, notably the belief that participating in politics would harm the workers' interests. Weit-



ling, aroused by the success of the American Workers' League, now emerged from a long period of inactivity to warn the labor movement against "political elements." Hence there was both unclarity and hesitation in the trade unions.

Among the most active German unions, the carpenters, tailors, shoemakers, painters, and cigar-makers had already sent delegates to the Central Committee of the American Workers' League which resolved on April 21 to "proceed to organize the craft groups."

The Executive Committee of the Workers' League first approached the tailors' union. It was agreed that a general tailors' meeting would be called by the League for April 25. This gathering, attended by three hundred people, was addressed by the League president Seydler, who spoke not only of the aims of his organization but also of the need to form national unions throughout the United States and to co-operate with other organizations in the American Workers' League. Showing "how aimless and disadvantageous all one-sided movements of the workers are," he concluded with these words: "There is only one way by which the workers can gain their rights: by uniting all workers!"<sup>12</sup>

The meeting passed the following resolutions: (a) To form a tailors' union that would extend throughout the entire country; (b) To recognize as binding the platform, resolutions, and provisional statutes of the American Workers' League; (c) In consequence of Resolution b, to join the said League and live up to all its rules."

This meeting stimulated further activity on the part of the League in fostering trade-union organization. Steps were taken in the Central Committee of the League to obtain the co-operation of the unions in every craft. On May 1, it passed a resolution that "if a trade in the United States is organized, and it can achieve its rights from the employers only by a general work stoppage, such a stoppage, if it one day takes place throughout the United States, should have our complete solidarity."<sup>13</sup>

Two days later, on May 3, the League appealed to the cigar-

makers, the most active trade-union representatives in the Central Committee and the first to have formed a German-American cigar-makers' union within the framework of the League. A call was now sent out for the formation of a general cigar-makers' union with both English- and German-speaking sections.

On May 15, for the first time, a special delegates' meeting of the "organized and organizing guilds and trade unions of New York and vicinity" was called. The order of business of this meeting covered only one point: affiliation to the American Workers' League. The very next day the shoemakers took up this question at a meeting of their members. On May 20, the second delegates' meeting took place. But these efforts of the Central Committee of the League did not meet with a similar response in every trade union. A report issued at the end of May complains especially about the indifference of the workers and adds:

"Furthermore, we do not wish to overlook the fact that, apart from this indifference, still another reason has hindered, if not endangered, the work of the League thus far in New York, namely, these trade unions which ignore the League, asserting that it is none of their concern, and those which have joined the League but do nothing further about it except to send their delegates to the Central Committee."<sup>14</sup>

In the summer months of 1853 the League suffered from this reluctance of the workers in the trade unions to participate. Even the activities of the ward societies fell off. Activity was centered in the Central Committee, which continued its earnest attempts to unite all the workers. Here the discussion hinged around a program and a definitive constitution. In July a new five-man executive was elected, composed of more active trade unionists than heretofore. And the discussions about a program and a constitution were from now on less concerned with theoretical attitudes than with the material demands of the workers as expressed in the trade unions. The Central Committee, however, could not arrive at any results



in the discussions about a program and a constitution. So at the beginning of September, Weydemeyer took the matter in hand and, after consulting with the other members, called an "extra session" of the Central Committee on September 9.<sup>15</sup> Finally a new program and platform were formulated and presented to the workers at a meeting held on October 11 in Mechanics Hall, New York City. The program contained only practical demands corresponding to the needs of all workers. It ran in part:

"The American Workers' League demands:

"1. The immediate naturalization of every immigrant who has announced in duly legal form his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and will support every measure which helps achieve this end.

"2. That all laws pertaining to the workers be enacted by the Federal government instead of by the individual state legislatures, since the interests of the workers are everywhere the same, in New York as in Missouri and California, in Massachusetts as in Carolina.

"3. Removal of all legal taxes and disabilities so that everyone will be able to obtain his rights. But since the greatest disadvantage for the propertyless lies in the fact that their affluent opponents can buy the best lawyers in the country, the Workers' League must insist on the state supplying lawyers for both sides and in sufficient numbers to allow both sides complete freedom of choice.

"4. Abrogation of all laws placing the workers at a disadvantage, and protection against the use of outmoded and strict disciplinary laws against responsible functionaries.

"5. Abrogation of all laws, such as Sunday laws, temperance laws and the like, which encroach on the workers' enjoyment of their liberty. . . .

"7. Limiting the working day to ten hours maximum."<sup>16</sup>

There was an interesting preamble to these demands which declared:

" . . . Social relations are no longer the same as when the Republic was founded. The introduction and development of large-scale industry have produced a new revolution, dissolved the old classes, and above all, created our class, the class of propertyless workers. New relations require new institutions. So long as industry only serves capital, our position must of necessity worsen with each passing day. . . . Are we to continue to sit calmly by and see how our children face a life without joy, full of need and misery, a lot even worse than our own, when it lies in our power to change the course of events? . . . Let us guarantee our happiness, let us get possession of political power and we will have taken the first step toward improving our conditions, which must of necessity be followed by all the other steps."<sup>17</sup>

The first paragraph of the new constitution declared: "The American Workers' League strives for the organization of the working class into a closely knit and independent political party in order to achieve and guarantee the rights of the workers."<sup>18</sup>

Although the mass meeting of October 11, 1853, adopted this constitution and program and accepted them as the basis for the further activity of the League, the latter did not develop at a markedly rapid pace.

Nevertheless this conscious move on the part of the German-American workers stimulated the entire American labor movement, particularly the trade unions. The significance of the American Workers' League lay, in the first place, in the influence of its political activities. Even the editor of Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter* could not deny that influence. In May 1853 he admitted that the American Workers' League was "undeniably the leading movement among the workers of New York" and "undoubtedly was of deeper and more lasting significance for the labor movement."<sup>19</sup>

With the increase in the movement for higher wages, during 1853 the struggles between capital and labor assumed forms which endowed the working class with a firmer understand-

ing of its economic status in society, specifically of the Marxist position represented by Weydemeyer. The "workers' bureau," set up by the League in the course of the summer to advise workers on all questions and help them find jobs, was an institution which increased working class solidarity by its practical day-to-day work. That same summer, too, the League increased its contacts with organizations of English-speaking workers which, while still slight, were of decided importance.

Weydemeyer's main efforts in the League were in the direction of broadening its political influence. He was its recognized intellectual leader. Opposed to self-isolation as well as to the separation of workers' language groups he was bent on deepening the social consciousness of the workers as a class. He regarded the League as a means of fostering this heightened social consciousness of the entire working class, and he conceived of it as a driving force in the development of the labor movement.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE AMERICAN WORKERS' LEAGUE AND THE WORKINGMEN'S NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

With the slump during the summer months of 1853 the employers sought by wage-cuts to deprive the workers of the gains they had made during the first months of the year. They had a double aim in mind: to destroy the growing movement of the working class and to create a feeling of pessimism among the workers by which their heightened class-consciousness would again be undermined. In the course of this counter-offensive by the employers, the New York trade unions developed a broad solidarity movement which raised an urgent demand for unity of the working class, close collaboration among all trade unions, and the formation of a National Trades Union.

A meeting called on August 31, 1853, by forty trades with over 2,000 trade unionists in attendance, in support of the striking house-painters, passed the following resolution:

"... That all trades and societies represented here this evening agree to send three delegates to a mass convention of the trades of this city . . . and there to devise means of forming a General Trades' Union, to adopt more permanent measures for the protection of working men."<sup>21</sup>

As a practical gesture of solidarity, \$851 was raised at this meeting for the strikers. On September 13, 1853 the Amalgamated Trades Convention met. Again the sentiment was expressed that "the time had come for mechanics to carve out for themselves the way to political and social eminence."<sup>22</sup>

A further step was taken with the discussion of a plan for organizing an Amalgamated Society, with representatives from the various crafts and trades. The plan also envisaged the adoption of the platform of the American Workers' League.<sup>23</sup>

Although these attempts did not lead to permanent results, chiefly because the workers themselves did not have sufficient confidence in their own strength and were fooled by their employers' promises, the idea remained alive. Class-conscious workers sought constantly to realize it. In the early months of 1854, attempts were made in New York to organize all the building trades workers into a union. At a trade union meeting called by six building trades on May 23, 1854, to support the striking stonecutters, Daniel Walford of the Plasterers spoke on the subject: "The Advantages of a National Trades Union." He emphasized "that the good results would be a common and most interesting platform on which workmen could meet irrespective of differences in politics, religion and country; an advance of wages to a fair standard, and a reduction of the hours of labor so that the laboring man may have time for mental improvement."<sup>24</sup>

This meeting resolved "that the building trades should form a Trades Union." On June 19, 1854, five trades—the plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers, stonecutters, and plumbers—formed one union, elected officers, and decided to draw up a constitution.<sup>25</sup>

But very few active trade unionists bothered about putting

these plans into practice. At an open meeting of the carpenters, called on June 26 "for the purpose of a free discussion of the means for the better promotion of the trade," Walford of the Plasterers Society had regretfully to admit to his small audience "that he had not, during his work for many months, met one carpenter who had any favorable idea of a Trades' Society. It had been so with the plasterers, but they are beginning to awake."

That Weydemeyer played an active part in these proceedings is clear from the letters he exchanged with the Workingmen's National Association, founded in April 1853 in Washington, D. C., at the initiative of the machinists led by Sam Briggs. This organization had its own paper, *The Workingmen's National Advocate*, which gave it an opportunity to exchange ideas with Weydemeyer and the American Workers' League, thus giving the labor movement new ideas and an impetus for its further growth. As chairman of the Workingmen's National Association, Briggs addressed a letter to the Washington branch of the League in which A. Cluss, a friend of Marx and Engels, was active. Briggs wrote:

"We are aiming not only to obtain the necessary wages for our work; we must think rather of raising the working class by placing it in the position in society to which it is entitled—by electing people from its ranks to all the law-making bodies of the nation. . . . Let our opponents scorn this proposal if they so choose; we, however, consider it our right, and we have men who are completely capable of undertaking that task."<sup>27</sup>

This letter encouraged Weydemeyer and confirmed the correctness of the policy he had adopted in relation to the American labor movement. He wrote with obvious pleasure to Cluss in Washington:

"It will not be long before the people will be convinced that bourgeois representatives are not at all suited to the interests of the workers . . . neither in the press nor in the law-making bodies nor in the executive offices of the individual states."<sup>28</sup>

The first circular of the Workingmen's National Association addressed to the workers of the United States went more into detail concerning the co-operation of all workers to safeguard their social and political rights. The statement declared among other things:

"As a step toward improving our lot and safeguarding our rights as American citizens, we are of the opinion that the workers are justified not only in taking a stand on all matters bound up with the interests of labor; they are also justified in seeking representation in the legislative halls and the Congress of the United States. . . .

"But the next and most important medium to which we intend to pay attention is the press. We consider it vitally important because it is the best medium through which we can defend our interests and through which the workers can be heard when they give vent to their grievances. . . . We want a press that is exclusively devoted to the interests of the workers, that is under their own leadership and guidance. . . . To that end we have formed an association in this city, which aims to enter into contact with like-minded groups throughout the country. . . ."<sup>29</sup>

Weydemeyer persuaded the American Workers' League to send delegates to meetings of the Workingmen's National Association. These delegates made proposals for such demands as the ten-hour day, limitation of child labor, completely free public education, rights of workers to their wages in cases of bankruptcy, and other points in the program of the League. Above all, they sought agreement on the proposition that "all laws affecting the workers be enacted by the Federal Congress rather than by the individual state legislatures."<sup>30</sup>

Weydemeyer's efforts to foster co-operation between the English-speaking and German-speaking workers were important, and the point of view he put forward basically correct; yet he found that progress was slow due to the political prejudices and lack of understanding in the ranks of the workers. Weitling and his group, clinging to their old attitude of social

isolationism for the workers, vigorously attacked Weydemeyer and his activity in order to cover up the futility of their own aims. But these very attacks on Weydemeyer were a measure of the real value of his activity. While Weitling in his *Republik der Arbeiter* accused Weydemeyer of utilizing "misleading political methods," and attacked his political activization of the workers on the ground that "social organization must precede political organization," he unwittingly demonstrated that Weydemeyer was effectively linking up the political with the economic struggle. Weitling contemptuously characterized Weydemeyer's role in the American Workers' League, declaring:

"So there is the League, of course probably only in the person of Herr Weydemeyer, since the executive committee . . . is . . . Weydemeyer, nobody else. Well, Weydemeyer will soon be able to serve for the entire League."<sup>31</sup>

But these efforts to belittle Weydemeyer's work in the American Workers' League were in vain.

#### CO-EDITOR OF *DIE REFORM*

On March 5, 1853, the first issue of a German-language weekly, *Die Reform*, appeared in New York. The editor-in-chief was Dr. G. Kellner, a forty-eighter who had been active in Kassel as editor of the democratic paper *Hornisse* (*Hornet*) and president of the Democratic Society, until persecution at the hands of the Prussian police drove him to America.

The post of co-editor was given to Weydemeyer. As such, he sought to give the American Workers' League an organ which not only aided its organizational efforts but also supported and made known the demands of the labor movement. The importance of *Die Reform* lies in the fact that for a time this labor paper attained a level far superior to that of all previous German-language labor papers, such as Krieger's *Volkstribun* and Weitling's *Republik der Arbeiter*, representing, as they did, merely sectarian interests. The special character of this

paper and its rapid transformation into a publication appearing twice weekly did not go unnoticed.

"There are only two labor papers which can be considered organs of the Workers Party: the *National Workingmen's Advocate* appearing in Washington and *Die Reform*; for the *Republik der Arbeiter* is, like Weitling, a museum specimen and therefore is of some interest, albeit slight, to archaeologists."<sup>32</sup>

That is what Weydemeyer wrote in July 1853 to the *New England Zeitung* in Boston, founded in 1852, and friendly to the aims of the American Workers League.<sup>33</sup>

It was Weydemeyer himself who had made *Die Reform* into a really important publication. When Marx received the first five numbers of the paper, he replied by return mail to Cluss (April 1853):

"This is at least an honest paper, something rare in America, and a workers' paper. . . . The thing which pleased me most was Weydemeyer's introduction to 'Economic Sketches.' That's good. I have invited the people here to collaborate. . . . On the whole, it's a difficult job to get them to collaborate. I myself am overworked. The others are still a little frightened by previous experiences. Our party is unfortunately very poor."<sup>34</sup>

These "Sketches of National Economy" by Weydemeyer, which attracted many readers to the paper, were a regular column in *Die Reform*. The importance of this special series of articles lay in the fact that, on the basis of economic processes, he gave a fundamental yet popular analysis of the conditions for political and social development. Although in past decades every reform movement had paid attention to social problems, no lasting results had been achieved. These movements were characterized by a lack of understanding of the nature of social development, as a result of which they finally degenerated into sectarian groups. Social reformers who espoused utopian ideas thought that by abolishing

ground rent they would solve all social problems. Weitling advocated co-operative handicraft production as the means by which capitalist production would gradually be stripped of its powers and paralyzed, and then a workers' society slowly built. By isolating itself from society it sought to create a new society.

Weydemeyer's "Sketches of National Economy" sought only to prove that economic development formed the basis of all social evolution and that it alone, in the final analysis, determined social relations. Hence this series of articles sought to awaken the political and social consciousness of the working class by explaining the conditions under which society developed.

Weydemeyer's aim was to bring together facts and data and to offer them to his readers in simple language as an answer to their questions. His explanations flowed directly from the facts. The articles in this series that have been preserved show that Weydemeyer knew how to furnish graphic examples, so that the worker felt quite at home with his analysis.

The articles which have been preserved are from the second part of "Sketches of National Economy," entitled: "Division of Labor" (June-July 1853). Here the author demonstrated how the introduction of the machine changed the status of the worker in society, increasing his dependence on the world economic situation. This section was based largely on Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* and on articles in the *Neue Rheinische Revue* (1850). Weydemeyer started with an explanation of what "the extension of productive forces" signified and what conditioned it. In the second article of "Division of Labor," he asserted:

"The whole history of trade demonstrates that every extension of the productive forces which coincides with a greater division of labor, demands an expansion of the market, and those stoppages of trade which in our own day have shaken the entire structure of society in revolutionary fashion are only caused by the disparity in the growth of both forces, the in-

crease in the productive capacity of industrial forces and a greater division of labor. Stability of the market, on the other hand, which by a limitation of trade would be confined to internal trade, would necessarily produce a corresponding stability in production, that is, would block the entire development of society."<sup>35</sup>

In the following articles of the series, Weydemeyer sought to prove how the industrial revolution had transformed all bourgeois society. Engels' book furnished Weydemeyer with the most telling examples of how social conditions had been changed by the capitalist exploitation of machine labor.

In contrast, Weydemeyer offered the example of Germany's backward production relations in the 1840's. The need of competition turned the workers themselves into machines and made them victims of these relations.

By giving a detailed analysis of the situation in the tailoring trade, Weydemeyer criticized illusions about the possibility of maintaining handicraft production in the framework of capitalist industrialization, notions which had won widespread support as a result of Weitling's campaign for handicraft co-operatives. In this he relied mainly on an article by a former tailor, J. G. Eccarius, "Tailoring in London—or the Struggle Between Big and Small Capital," which had appeared in the *Neue Rheinische Revue*.

This second part of "Sketches of National Economy" ended on July 27, 1853, with the following:

"To the same extent that the productive capacity of society increases, its capacity for consumption decreases, not because the masses do not have to consume but because the satisfying of their needs by means of their labor have been taken away from them; hence the constant need for finding new unexploited markets, in order to prevent industry from being strangled by its own over-production. Hence the constant increase in the number of those who become a burden on society without performing any services in return; hence too, the constant rise in pauperism while general wealth simultaneously

increases. The ceaseless process of the concentration of wealth in ever fewer hands together with the development of mechanization which does away with human labor, places before us the following alternatives:

"Either the famous Malthusian theory becomes a fact: *i.e.*, the elimination of 'superfluous' human beings whose productive capacities can no longer be utilized, in other words, wholesale murder, not of the old and those unfit for labor, as is customary among some savage tribes, but of the excess of proletarian children and of human beings deprived of work by the introduction of new machines; or the elimination of those limitations which prevent production from expanding in line with the real needs of the whole of society and which are the sole reason why the emancipation of man from mechanical, soul-destroying work brings with it, not advantages to everyone, but ruin for the overwhelming majority. In other words, removing the bourgeois monopoly on property which subordinates the interests of the community to a small minority: that is, abolition of private ownership of the means of production.

"Here industry does not play the part of Hercules at the crossroads, uncertain as to which road it should take. The inner logic of its own development drives it forward in one direction. In its strongholds the bourgeoisie will be as little spared as the feudal knights; private ownership of inanimate means of production will be no more prized than were formerly human instruments of production. Daily industry shows in thousands of examples that in no wise does it hold ownership sacred."<sup>36</sup>

At the same time Weydemeyer pointed out how the rapid rise of industry in the United States, marked by the recent completion of important railroad lines—Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (1852), Baltimore and Ohio, Chicago and St. Louis (1853)—brought forth new possibilities and a constant increase in the number of industrial workers, thus affecting social relations in the country. Weydemeyer was concerned, first

of all, with helping the workers become conscious of their position in society, so that they would clearly realize the necessity of participating in political life and in the political struggle for their social demands. He had to overcome the workers' widespread prejudice of the concept of "politics," according to which politics was for professional politicians and did not help the workers to improve their position in society. In an answer to a "Letter to the Editor," Weydemeyer gave the following explanation:

"In order not to fall back constantly on old conceptions of political activity, we must firmly insist that the politics of the workers' party are of a purely social character, that even their electoral choices for Congress are made on a social basis. We have to adopt a new kind of politics—social politics. We must no longer distinguish between the social and the political, but rather between general social interests and individual interests. General unions represent general interests, craft unions individual interests; but both are of a vocational character. For our entire movement, both in general and in specific instances, is based on crafts, on labor, on material interests. And even in a complete workers' state the general unions will always and consistently decide general and industrial questions. For large-scale industry is constantly bringing the separate crafts closer together. Labor is less and less separated by crafts; and in fact, all the crafts are being thrown together."<sup>37</sup>

Weydemeyer and Kellner, the editor of *Die Reform*, did not always see eye-to-eye. The latter tended toward a bourgeois-liberal approach to problems and sought constantly to maintain a neutral position in the inevitable discussions and controversies between the followers of Marx and the pseudo-revolutionaries, the utopians, and the slanderers. Weydemeyer's efforts to make *Die Reform* into a workers' paper bringing clarity into the labor movement clashed with Kellner's attempt to make it a profitable business enterprise which offended no one. Weydemeyer was supported only by his Washington collaborator Cluss. When in the early summer of

1853, both men, extremely opposed to Kellner's attitude, thought of withdrawing from *Die Reform* and asked Marx's advice, the latter answered by return mail (June 1853):

"You have no other paper in New York. Would it not therefore be impolitic to give up Kellner and the paper? In the final analysis, you will only be doing the fellow a favor. Pretend to be naive and continue writing. That's the worst possible thing you can do to him. Don't free him from influences which, it is clear, already weigh damned heavily upon him."<sup>38</sup>

Marx always tried to aid Weydemeyer in the latter's editorial work on *Die Reform* by obtaining articles from his friends in London. In one of the few letters extant from this period, he sought to assure Weydemeyer of Engels' collaboration:

"He is really overworked, but he's a regular encyclopedia, ready to work at any hour of the day or night, drunk or sober, quick as a flash with phrases and ideas. So we can expect something from him in this matter."<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately we have no direct evidence that Engels did send Weydemeyer any articles. We can only say from the available copies of *Die Reform* that reports from Europe signed "London" were written by an excellent observer and thinker who clearly understood the political and social significance of events. This anonymous journalist may well have been Engels. For example, the issue of July 20, 1853, contains a London report of a Chartist meeting which could only have been written by a thorough-going student of the Chartist movement. The hypothesis that at least some of these articles were by Engels gains added support from the fact that in Weydemeyer's posthumous papers there were London reports by Engels written in 1852 for *Die Revolution*.<sup>40</sup>

On October 15, 1853, *Die Reform* became a daily. But at the same time, Kellner's influence carried it further and further away from the labor movement. Because of the still weak and uncertain position of the German-American labor movement, still permeated by bourgeois-liberal tendencies, Weydemeyer

was unable to prevent this turn of events. By October 1853, the American Workers' League had already perceptibly declined. Even after a new platform was adopted, interest in it did not increase, at the same time that German mutual aid, philanthropic, and regional societies flourished. On November 21, 1853, a non-denominational preacher, Dulon, founded in New York a "free community" which preached "the blissfulness of all mankind."<sup>41</sup> Pretty words and utopian promises sounded better to the ears of the German-Americans than presentations of social reality. At the same time, this encouraged Kellner to transform *Die Reform* into a bourgeois organ. On January 2, 1854, at the beginning of the second year of *Die Reform*, Kellner went to the extent of apologizing to the bourgeoisie for the former attitude of his paper: "As long as *Die Reform* was a weekly, of course it had to be purely doctrinaire."<sup>42</sup>

But Kellner had no luck with his change of course. Bourgeois German-Americans mistrusted a paper which but a short while previously had spoken a decidedly revolutionary language. The paper began to lose more and more money. A final attempt to rescue it was made on March 10, 1854, by transferring ownership to a joint stock company. That, too, did not help. On April 26, 1854, the last number of *Die Reform* appeared. The first workers' newspaper in New York, begun with such high hopes, thus went ingloriously out of existence.<sup>43</sup>

Weydemeyer, however, did not limit his activity during this period to the American Workers' League and *Die Reform*. He continued to collaborate on other German-American papers. He devoted special attention to the *New Yorker Demokrat*, a progressive daily for which he had written since his arrival in New York. He sent these papers regularly to Marx and Engels in London, where they were followed with the closest attention. Thus, Engels wrote to Marx on April 10, 1853: "I haven't yet read the pile of *Demokraten* for which Weydemeyer writes articles. I'm devoting this evening to reading them."<sup>44</sup>



In September 1853, Marx informed his American friends that his main consideration was to find time to finish his work on economics. In a letter dated September 15 and addressed to Cluss in Washington, he wrote:

"I'm still hoping . . . to retire for a few months and get a chance to complete my *Economy*. But it looks as though I won't succeed. Constant newspaper chores annoy me. They take away much too much time and yet don't amount to much. However independent one wants to be, one is under obligations to the paper, especially if he receives cash payments as I do. Purely scientific works are something altogether different, and the honor of appearing side by side with a lady correspondent or a special foreign correspondent is certainly not an enviable one."<sup>45</sup>

#### THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA CAMPAIGN OF 1854

The year 1854 was the year of the Kansas-Nebraska controversy, in which political events took a new turn in the United States. Political forces were realigned in the fight for a free and democratic America. Seldom has a bill inspired such a mass movement as that initiated by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. This law made it possible for the Southern slaveholders to enter the new territories of settlement, Kansas and Nebraska, and thus prevent free labor and immigration to regions which were vital to the economic growth of the United States. A call issued almost immediately by anti-slavery leaders called this law "an atrocious plot to exclude from a vast unoccupied region immigrants from the Old World and free laborers from our own states."<sup>46</sup>

A few days after the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was introduced into Congress, on January 29, 1854, the Germans in Chicago, led by George Schneider, a veteran of the Revolution of 1848 and editor of the *Illinois Staatszeitung* (*Illinois State Gazette*), organized a demonstration of protest.<sup>47</sup>

A wave of protest meetings throughout the entire country

followed the demonstration in Chicago. These gatherings indicated the beginnings of new political consciousness in the United States. German immigrants not only took a leading part in the movement; they became a decisive factor in the political regrouping that followed.

"The Germans are moving all over the North and West. They feel even more deeply than the native citizens. . . ."<sup>48</sup> said the *Forest City Democrat* as early as February 1854. On February 20, the *Chicago Daily Democratic Press* published a survey entitled "Germans on the Nebraska Question," which told of numerous German-American meetings throughout the country. From Chicago itself the paper reported a large-scale petition drive among German-Americans. At a meeting held in March 1854, these workers of Chicago declared: "Resolved, that an organization of the liberty-loving German element is necessary, in order to prevent the present organization [the Democratic Party] from continuing to be an instrument in the hands of the slave power."<sup>49</sup>

In New York, too, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill aroused lively discussion among the German-Americans. When the Democratic *New Yorker Staatszeitung* urged its readers not to participate in the agitation against the extension of slavery, progressive-minded Germans, led by Lindenmueller of Berlin, a veteran of 1848, organized a protest demonstration in front of the newspaper's office.<sup>50</sup>

To Weydemeyer it was clear that the Kansas-Nebraska Bill and the wave of protest it unleashed were signs of a political development which the labor movement could not ignore. On the contrary, labor would have to take an active part in it if it did not wish to isolate itself. During the Presidential elections of 1852 Weydemeyer had already attempted to underline the necessity and importance for workers to participate in decisive political events such as elections and activities with regard to work in Congress.<sup>51</sup> In the course of 1853 he had been responsible for this point of view prevailing in the discussions of the Workers' League, as against those who



wished to limit their demands solely to improvements in working conditions, without any participation in political life. The unclarity and political indifference which this attitude had fostered in the ranks of the workers were among the greatest obstacles to the development of the labor movement. Weydemeyer realized that for the future of the American labor movement and specifically that of the Workers' League it was essential to join in the general movement against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In this instance he was even supported by Kellner. At a meeting of the American Workers' League on March 1, 1854, reports were made by Weydemeyer and Kellner, after which the following resolution, proposed by Weydemeyer, was passed:

"Whereas, capitalism and land speculation have again been favored at the expense of the mass of the people by the passage of the Nebraska bill;

"Whereas, this bill withdraws from or makes unavailable in a future homestead bill vast tracts of territory;

"Whereas, this bill authorizes the further extension of slavery, we have protested, do now protest and shall continue to protest most emphatically against both white and black slavery;

"Whereas, finally, we desire to consider and shape our own welfare, free from the dictation of lawmakers, wire-pullers and other hirelings;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we solemnly protest against this bill and brand as traitor against the people and their welfare every one who shall lend it his support."<sup>52</sup>

With this resolution the Workers' League entered into the movement against the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. But the League's influence did not increase as a result of this participation, since the initiative among the German-Americans already lay in the hands of the progressive-minded German-Americans of the bourgeoisie. Among these latter, the movement had begun on a broad basis of political demands.

A situation had arisen in which it was necessary to form

a united front of all anti-slavery people against the slaveholders bent on extending their sway; only thus would free industrial development, the basis of social progress, be made possible. But Weydemeyer's efforts to incorporate the German-American labor movement into the general anti-slavery movement received far from adequate support. Many workers saw no necessity for such a move; on the contrary, they felt that by participating in the general political fight for democratic liberties they would betray the special social interests of the working class. Wilhelm Weitling again sought to gain influence through the Workers' League and republished several of his pamphlets, *What Mankind Is And What It Should Be*, *A Cry for Help to the Men of Labor and Toil*, *Workers' Catechism*, and so forth, in a series called "The Workers' Library." In these writings Weitling rejected all political slogans and advocated a utopian system of collective labor, which would be regulated by a barter-bank system.\*

#### LECTURES ON THE CHARTIST MOVEMENT

Lacking other outlets, Weydemeyer concentrated all his energies on lecturing. In this work he received valuable support from the Central Committee and the 10th Ward Society of the American Workers' League in New York. He did not limit his talks to the German workers, but appeared before committees of the English-speaking workers.<sup>54</sup> The main theme with which he dealt was the Chartist movement in England, since

\* Volume I of the Library<sup>53</sup> carries the following characteristic lines by Weitling:

*Whether Republic or Constitution  
Whether Kaiser, King or President,  
Our state and its leaders are called,  
That is all the same to us, nor is it enough;  
The poor people have nothing in their bellies,  
Nothing on their backs, and always suffer;  
So in the future things must be different.  
We don't care who rules—Hinz or Kunz  
So long as everyone has what's coming to him;  
That's the aim of the Revolution.*

that offered the best example to American workers of that day as to how a labor movement should act and what mistakes it should avoid. Like Marx and Engels, Weydemeyer had learned much from his study of the Chartist movement in Britain. The attempts of Ernest Jones in the summer of 1853 and 1854 "to re-unite the scattered ranks of Chartism on the sound basic principles of the social revolution"<sup>55</sup> again drew the attention of the labor movement to Chartism and offered useful lessons. So at the moment there was no other theme more suitable to awaken the interest of the American workers in politics and for exposing the mistakes of Weitling and other apostles of co-operative methods of self-help, who opposed any action in the political field. The situation created by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 made it clear that without a solution of the slavery question there could be no solution of the social question in the United States; and that any labor movement which did not take into account or base its activities upon the anti-slavery movement was doomed to failure.

#### THE HOMESTEAD BILL PROPAGANDA

The attempts of the slaveholders and their friends to extend slavery turned the anti-slavery struggle of the workers and middle-class democrats in the course of 1854 into a real struggle to safeguard their economic existence. So the demand for agrarian reform, symbolized by the Homestead Bill, had a positive place in this fight: America's fertile soil, it was held, belonged to the people.

The question of land reform had always played a vital role in American social movements. The Homestead Act, expressing the principle of a free grant of public land to actual settlers, was first proposed in Congress in 1846. But not until 1854, when the slaveholders and their friends sought to extend slavery to hitherto free territories of the United States, did the Homestead Act become decisive in the struggle of free labor against slavery. The debates in the summer of 1854, specifically the attacks by southern Senators, made it plain that social

forces were sharply arrayed against each other. Even then the hope of a peaceful solution appeared unlikely. Weydemeyer saw the need for making the Homestead or agrarian question a workers' question: that is, he felt that he had to point out how the fight for the Homestead Act should be waged so that it could serve the general good of the working class. The Homestead Act was of far-reaching political significance: it became the basis of the fight of free labor against the claims of the reactionaries and slaveholders.<sup>56</sup>

In his lectures on the Homestead issue Weydemeyer stressed that it was not a question merely of solving the problem of the individual by guaranteeing everyone land, since the small landowners would again become victims of the large land speculators. In a report of the Central Committee of the American Workers' League (at the end of 1854), Weydemeyer's position is characterized as follows:

"Weydemeyer considered these resolutions [adopted by the English-speaking workers] unsuitable, since a great proportion of these small landowners will soon fall into the clutches of the capitalists and thus the old land swindle will begin all over again. He considered it more advisable for these farmers' groups to come together in the form of an association, aided and controlled by the individual states in the interest of the workers."<sup>57</sup>

Weydemeyer's talks aroused such widespread interest that toward the end of 1854 the Central Committee decided to publish a series of pamphlets by him on the labor question. One of these pamphlets dealt with land reform. In it Weydemeyer proposed the following solution:

"Introduction of large-scale agriculture on those vast areas known as state lands, not in the interests of big capital but in the interest of the workers who constitute the great mass of the nation. Hence, inviolability and indivisibility of state property, development of these lands by workers' associations under the control and with the help of the states. Connecting industrial

enterprises with agriculture and administering them in the same way, so that the saving of human labor by the introduction of machines is not at the expense of the workers, and so that a healthy life and healthy home no longer seem incompatible with large-scale business undertakings."

He closed with the following appeal:

"Inscribe land reform for the workers on your banner, and you will have taken a giant step forward. Unite, not as Germans, Irishmen, or Americans, not as Whigs or Democrats, not as Temperance or anti-Temperance men; unite and organize as *workers*, and you will be the state; you will dictate the laws of society instead of abjectly obeying them. You will be masters instead of serfs!"<sup>58</sup>

Weydemeyer was thus one of the first to enter the struggle against slavery not only as a humanitarian but as a conscious working-class fighter for social progress. This struggle could not be waged as one of isolated groups and organizations; nor could the working class achieve its own aims in this fight unless it went forward in united fashion.

On September 21, 1854, Weydemeyer published a pamphlet in which he stressed the need for a general workers' convention and urged the workers to elect delegates to such a congress. "With respect to the time and kind of representation," Weydemeyer awaited "the proposals of the various workers' organizations which would advocate the calling of such a congress."<sup>59</sup> But this gathering did not materialize.

But the autumn elections of 1854 left no doubt that the process of political realignment among the parties of the American bourgeoisie had already begun. The former "Free Soilers" (who had called themselves "Free Democrats" in the 1852 campaign), the anti-Nebraska Democrats, and numerous former supporters of the Whig Party in the North began to come together. This new group was not yet known everywhere as Republicans. Its strength lay among the immigrant population of the Middle West; on it depended its political future.

Hence it had to take into account the social and political demands of these newcomers to America.<sup>60</sup>

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REACTIONARY NATIVISM

The year 1855 began with a powerful counter-attack by the slaveowners and reactionaries against the newly emerging progressive and democratic social forces. This counter-attack was directed especially against the European immigrants, who were the bulwark of the freedom-loving aspirations of the people. Marching under the banner of nativism or the so-called American or Know-Nothing Party, reaction stopped at no slanders or brutal action to violate the rights of the immigrants as well as to persecute them.

They sought to blame the immigrant workers for the worsening of conditions on the labor market. But they thereby achieved the opposite of their desires. The immigrant workers moved further away from their isolationism and turned more vigorously than ever toward the general American trade union movement. True, the nativists succeeded in inflicting a setback to the German-American organizations: many German clubs which had shown signs of definite growth declined perceptibly. But at the same time the nativists strengthened the will and tendency to political collaboration between the German-Americans and the growing progressive movement in America.

Up to now the American Workers' League had managed to prolong its existence, more as a society for mutual aid and social recreation than as a fighting labor organization. The attacks of the nativists forced it into a struggle for its very existence. Weydemeyer was still active in the Central Committee of the group. At the outset of 1855, the following trade union bodies of German workers still belonged to the Central Committee: the shoemakers, lead-polishers, cabinet-makers, tailors, cigar-makers, printers, varnishers, machinists, and makers of surgical instruments. Weydemeyer felt that the time had come

to raise the question of the organizational form of the League. Under existing conditions, for the League to continue as an organization of German workers was no longer justified; in that form it no longer had any significant influence, nor could the problems of labor be separated from those of the struggle against slavery and nativism.

To win this struggle co-operation of all progressive forces was necessary. A certain section of the bourgeoisie was preparing the ground for this co-operation in the Republican Party.

In his contacts with English-speaking workers, Weydemeyer realized that the trade unions alone could be the rallying point for all the forces of the working class. So in January 1855 he proposed to the Central Committee that it concentrate on building the trade unions.<sup>61</sup> He felt that the interests of labor could no longer be advanced within the exclusive framework of the German workers' societies. On the contrary, he saw that this isolation not only kept the German workers from participating in the political and social struggles of the entire people but also fostered petty-bourgeois tendencies and special interests. Thus in April 1855, members of the Workers' League proposed the formation of a secret military organization to guard against nativist attacks, and they considered this the solution of the tasks facing the Workers' League.<sup>62</sup>

Weydemeyer was not willing to devote his time to idle pursuits which did not help the working class. There was no longer any time to argue against petty-bourgeois individualistic attitudes, for events in the United States were pressing for vital decisions. In the face of the unity shown by the reactionaries and slaveowners, there was only one thing for the American working class to do: close ranks in the trade unions. Only such a move could make the working class a significant social force in the political realignment then occurring in the United States, only in that way could labor influence the platform of the Republican Party. Trade union unity alone could guarantee the American workers the place they deserved in the

struggle for political and social rights and make them conscious of their strength as a class.

That was Weydemeyer's conviction. In February 1855 he declared that once again he was ready to conduct lectures in order to bring about the essential unification of the trade union movement. But in the Central Committee the attitude was becoming more and more uncertain. Petty-bourgeois views gained ground and kept the members from joining the broad movement of the American workers. Weydemeyer finally decided not to waste any more time in fruitless sessions of the Central Committee. He turned to more important work, devoting himself to an intensive study of America's economic development. Thus he hoped that through his articles and lectures, workers would begin to learn and understand the need for unity.<sup>63</sup>

## IV POLITICAL REALIGNMENT

At the beginning of 1856, financial difficulties forced Weydemeyer to leave New York and go to Milwaukee, where he took a position as a surveyor and notary. The events of 1855 and the political reform movement which was gaining momentum in the anti-slavery fight, as shown by the elections of 1856, had paralyzed the German-American workers' movement in New York. Nevertheless, with Weydemeyer's departure, the German-American workers of New York lost a man who, in every situation since 1852, had been their most reliable adviser and leader.<sup>1</sup>

### WEYDEMEYER IN MILWAUKEE

In Milwaukee Weydemeyer found himself in a center of German settlers. Their numbers were increasing as was their influence on the political development of the country. In 1856 the German-language press in the Middle West was in a position to become a decisive factor in the political realignment of the country.

The meeting of the editors of twenty-five Illinois newspapers, including the most important German-American papers in Decatur, Illinois, on February 22, 1856, "for the purpose of arranging for the organization of the Anti-Nebraska forces in this state in the coming political contest," was of far-reaching significance. George Schneider, editor of the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, proposed a resolution against the activities of the nativists. In the ensuing discussion, Abraham Lincoln, who was present at the conference, lent his support to the pas-

sage of this resolution. And when in the election year of 1856 the newly consolidated Republican Party formulated its platform, this resolution against nativism was not forgotten. On May 29, 1856, it was accepted at the first Republican convention in Illinois, in Bloomington, where Schneider again represented the German-Americans, and it was adopted on June 18, 1856, in Philadelphia, at the great People's Convention which nominated General John Frémont as the Republican candidate for President.<sup>2</sup>

Since his arrival in America, Weydemeyer had always sought to make the German-American press an instrument of social progress serving the interests of the people; and he had fought against that part of the American press which served political or business interests for financial reasons. Once in Milwaukee, he established connections with George Schneider and became a regular contributor, particularly on economic questions, to the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, leading German-American paper in the Middle West. Convinced that free labor could not develop so long as slave-labor prevailed within the nation's economy, he strove above all in his writings and speeches to explain to the German settlers the economic background of the leading political questions of the day. His articles were reprinted in other German-American papers as well.<sup>3</sup>

Weydemeyer's educational work among the German-Americans became a vital factor in mobilizing them for the election campaign. True, this campaign did not achieve victory for the anti-slavery forces, but it was successful in that it aroused the masses and gave the anti-slavery movement a mass basis. The American people now grew conscious of its political strength.<sup>4</sup>

### WEYDEMEYER'S LECTURE TOUR

As a result of their participation in the election campaign and their triumph over the nativists, the community life of the German-Americans acquired a new impetus. Despite the unfavorable economic conditions of the period, the thirst for

enlightenment increased among the people. A demand arose for clarification of the events of the day. It expressed itself not only in independent efforts by the German-Americans to establish schools but especially in the growth of study and lecture groups. In the winter of 1856-57, lecture series were held in almost every large city in the United States with a sizable number of German-Americans attending. Particularly significant was the series of scientific lectures in German, which were held in the Mercantile Library in New York.<sup>5</sup> The Mercantile Library Association, an institution for popular education founded in the 1820's, reached an extraordinarily high level. In its lecture series it proposed as its goal "to obtain not only the most eminent literary ability, but to select, as far as possible, subjects of interest and importance, as the high character of our Institution enables us."<sup>6</sup>

To achieve this high aim, the Mercantile Library entered directly into contact with leading scientists of Europe. In the winter of 1855-56, the Association for the first time established connections with the German-American lecture society. The series of lectures it sponsored in the winter of 1856-57 in cooperation with the German-American lecture society had as lecturers leading German-Americans in the intellectual and social field. Friedrich Kapp dealt in three lectures with the role of the German-Americans in the American Revolution. Dr. A. Jacobi, one of the defendants in the Cologne communist trial, spoke on medical science. Weydemeyer was chosen to discuss economic problems.<sup>7</sup> His lecture took place on January 9, 1857, and he came expressly from Milwaukee to New York to deliver it. His subject was "Economic Relations in the South." It was by no means an academic theme; on the contrary, it became in the course of 1857, after the inauguration of President James Buchanan, a central issue in the political fight.

Weydemeyer's series of articles in 1859 in the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* proves that this lecture in 1857 was not the only occasion on which he expressed his opinion on this question. Unfortunately, we have no other documentary evidence con-

cerning other articles and lectures in 1857. But, it is clear—and Kapp in his history of slavery in the United States confirms this point—that the arguments and data presented by Weydemeyer achieved widespread recognition among the American public. The entire German-American press dealt with this theme. *The Impending Crisis of the South*, by Hinton Rowan Helper of North Carolina, which appeared in 1857, treated extensively the economic factors underlying the slavery question; and it gave rise to a vigorous two-months' discussion in the halls of Congress on the issue of slavery.<sup>8</sup>

The opinion gained ground that the uprooting of slavery was the decisive question in America's social, economic, and political future. By his clear-cut analysis of the economics of slavery, Weydemeyer made a contribution in enlightening the German-Americans who exerted influence in the growing anti-slavery coalition.

#### THE ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE COMMUNIST CLUB (1857-58)

In the autumn of 1857, the United States suffered a severe economic crisis which brought unemployment and misery to the American working class. Almost daily demonstrations of the unemployed could be seen on the streets of New York; and groups marched with petitions and resolutions to City Hall. The German-American workers, most of them recent immigrants, were particularly hard hit as they were unable to get public assistance. Hence they felt compelled to stage special demonstrations.<sup>9</sup> The cry for bread was mingled with the call for organization, for unity among the workers to achieve their demands and make their power felt.

Weydemeyer's friends in New York, former members of the Communist League, paid close attention to the situation. They recognized the need of forming an organization capable of enlightening the workers and giving proper guidance to their struggle. The Rhinelander Albert Komp discussed the matter with several acquaintances and also corresponded with Weyde-

meyer who was in Milwaukee. As a result of these discussions, the Communist Club of New York was founded on October 25, 1857, at a meeting at 148 Fulton Street. F. Kamm became chairman, Komp vice-chairman, and Fritz Jacobi secretary. The main task of the Communist Club was to win support for some of the principles outlined in paragraph 1 of its constitution:

"The members of the Communist Club reject all religious faiths, in whatever shape or form they may be presented, as well as any point of view which is not based on immediate perception of the senses. Equality of all human beings—irrespective of color or sex—is their belief, hence they strive above all to do away with so-called bourgeois property whether inherited or acquired in order to substitute for it a reasonable share in the national and spiritual riches of the earth, accessible to everyone and corresponding as much as possible to the needs of everyone. The undersigned pledge themselves in the present state of society to uphold these views to the best of their ability and to lend moral and material aid to one another."<sup>10</sup>

Even though this club was no mass organization, it played a prominent part in the American labor movement from its very inception. It sought above all to strengthen the ties based on common interests, between the American and European labor movements. From Milwaukee Weydemeyer did all he could to aid the Communist Club by broadening its contacts. On February 28, 1858, he sent Karl Marx a detailed report on the American labor movement and informed him that Komp, the vice-chairman of the Communist Club, would write directly to him in London. From a letter of Marx to Engels it appears that Komp wrote Marx at the same time. These letters from the United States were closely studied by both Marx and Engels.<sup>11</sup>

The chairman of the Communist Club, Kamm, had taken part in the 1848-49 revolutionary movement in Bonn, Germany, where he had been a member of the executive commit-

tee of the Democratic Club and had met Karl Marx. On December 10, 1858, he wrote to the latter sending him the constitution of the Communist Club and informing him that the organization had thirty members and counted on Marx's collaboration.<sup>12</sup> The Club also communicated with J. P. Becker in Geneva, a veteran of the uprising in Baden who was now busy striving to rebuild the German labor movement and who took a leading part in forming the German section of the First International.

The Communist Club lost no time in getting in touch with other Communist refugees in the United States in order to draw them into its work. Among these were the journalist, Otto Reventlow, in Cincinnati, and the musician, Albrecht, in Philadelphia, through whom the Club carried on an exchange of letters with Cabet's Icarian co-operative community in Nauvoo, Illinois.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE NEW GENERAL WORKERS' LEAGUE

Discussions and demonstrations among the jobless in the autumn of 1857 pointed to the need for a new mass organization of the workers. In New York a workers' executive committee was formed to prepare a mass meeting and lay the basis for a new General Workers' League. This meeting took place on December 2, 1857, in New York. The newly founded organization brought together persons with widely divergent points of view on the solution of the social question.

Sebastian Seiler, a veteran Communist of the 1840's who had taken part in the Brussels Conference of 1846, had participated actively in the preliminary work of the executive committee and had adopted a clear stand against the illusions of the utopian socialists. Nevertheless, the platform of the revived General Workers' League adopted at this December mass meeting, limited itself to a general formulation of the rights of man and labor, without advancing concrete immediate demands. The Workers' League declared in vague terms that it sought to be the party of the workers, since the

bourgeois parties could not achieve the workers' demands. This lack of clarity weakened its capacity for action. In the very first months of 1858, various tendencies developed within the Workers' League, each interpreting the platform according to its own views.

From the beginning, the clearcut position of the Communist Club stood in contrast to the confused social views of the League. Above all, the Communist Club used its influence in insisting that the anti-slavery struggle had to be recognized as a main task of the working class. The Club campaigned vigorously against a "Socialist Cultural Club" and against a group led by W. Banque which, by founding a weekly paper, *Der Arbeiter*, (*The Worker*) sought to take over the leadership of the League and pretended to be "an outgrowth of the school of Citizen Karl Marx," although it did not even reject slavery. Quarrels finally led to the expulsion of these groups from the League. *Der Arbeiter*, beginning publication on March 27, ceased to appear after its seventh issue on May 8.

Nevertheless, the General Workers' League was not won over to the clearly formulated ideas of the Communist Club, even though many friends of the Club joined it, including Friedrich Anueke who became a member in Newark. The League started a weekly organ, *Sociale Republik*, the first number of which appeared on April 24, 1858, under the editorship of Gustav Struve. Although the paper showed a real desire to bring together all progressive forces, it did not demonstrate sufficient clarity in its treatment of the political and social problems of the day.

#### THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT

Weydemeyer did not enter into direct relations with the leading forces of the new General Workers' League in New York. During the pre-Civil War years he was active in workers and sports clubs of the Middle West, especially in Milwaukee and Chicago. Years later, the results of his efforts were still

felt. In discussions, lectures, and articles he deepened the workers' understanding of basic economic questions. In this he found himself in agreement with his friends in the Communist Club in New York. They worked together to give the labor movement a firm foundation. Their efforts went hand-in-hand with attempts by the London International Committee to strengthen the loose ties of the international labor movement by forming an international association with affiliated groups in various countries.

The International Association was a forerunner of the International Workingmen's Association or the First International. It was founded in London in August 1856 on the occasion of a meeting called by an International Committee commemorating the French Revolution. This Committee, headed by the Chartist leader, Ernest Jones, included the following organizations: the French society *Commune Revolutionnaire*, the German Communist Society, the Society of Polish Socialists, and the Society of English Chartists. It was formed for the purpose of mutual aid in working for "a democratic and social republic." Its initial resolution stated:

"These societies pledged themselves to use every means in their power to urge the citizens of all countries to organize national socialist and revolutionary societies, and to bring them together into one organization, so that international propaganda may benefit from the uniting of all these individual groups. . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Naturally, the Communist Club in the United States followed this proposal with close attention and participated in the organization of sections of workers in the International Association.<sup>15</sup>

By the beginning of 1858 these efforts had already reached the organizational stage in several American cities such as New York, Boston, Cincinnati, and Chicago, so that on April 22 an international meeting was held in New York to agree on aims and further organizational steps to be taken. The fifth resolution of this meeting declared:



"We recognize no distinction as to nationality or race, caste or status, color or sex; our goal is but reconciliation of all human interests, freedom and happiness for mankind, and the realization and unification of a world republic."<sup>16</sup>

The well-known Abolitionist, William Lloyd Garrison, greeted this resolution in a letter written on April 29 to the Boston club, in which he said: "Our fatherland is the world; all men are our countrymen."<sup>17</sup>

A manifesto of the International Central Committee in London, dated June 24, 1858, made special mention of the extraordinary spread of the movement for the International Association in the United States. This manifesto asserted:

"The broad movement for the International Association, which has recently assumed growing proportions in the United States, is really noteworthy. In New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, etc. freedom-loving men of all nationalities have joined to form a union which has strength enough to help freedom one day triumph throughout the world."<sup>18</sup>

Weydemeyer and his friends in the Communist Club took the point of view that the activities of the International Association should be of genuinely practical and political significance rather than couched in idealistic phrases and appeals, and expressed solely in meetings and revolutionary anniversaries. Above all, the Communist Club participated fully in organizing German-Americans in the International Association. A. Komp, vice-chairman of the Club, assumed the post of secretary in a committee working toward that end. At a mass meeting called by this committee on Sunday, June 13, 1858, the German-speaking group officially decided to join the International Association. In its constitution this group recognized as its main task:

"The uniting of all partisans of the Revolution who advocate the change of existing state and social relationships as well as freedom and equality for all the inhabitants of the

earth. We preach revolution in the interest of unlimited progress."<sup>19</sup>

Komp was then named secretary of the American Central Committee of the International Association; and the meeting also made preparations for the first public event of the Association in the United States. Representatives of all nationality groups agreed with the proposal to call a meeting on June 23 to commemorate the "June days" of the Paris 1848 Revolution. The organizing committee was made up of delegates from the International Association, the Communist Club, and the General Workers' League. At this gathering, the opening address was made by F. A. Sorge, representative of the Communist Club, who discussed the historic significance of the June massacre of the workers in Paris. According to a report in the *Sociale Republik* (*Social Republic*) of June 26, 1858 (Vol. I, No. 10), Sorge declared:

"It was the principle of equal rights for all men to live humanly and enjoy life which called the June fighters to the barricades. It was communism which lifted its head in the fight against special interests; and even though it was defeated it was not conquered. . . ."

Representatives of other national groups also spoke, including Kamm, the chairman of the Communist Club, who traced briefly the historic development of communism.

The favorable organizational results of this initial activity made it necessary to call a general meeting on June 27 in the Steuben House in New York City. Komp was re-elected as secretary. An organization was formed based on ward societies, called decuries, and new elections held for a central committee. According to reports in the *Sociale Republik*, which had opened its columns to news items and announcements from the International Association, it appears that these so-called decuries were formed in the 4th, 5th, 7th, and 20th wards in New York City. The decurie in the 20th ward was especially active, and throughout the summer of 1858 its weekly announcement said:

"The decurie of the 20th ward meets regularly every Tuesday evening at 8:00 p.m. at 519 8th Avenue, and invites all free men who support our efforts, so that we may take the necessary steps to cope with the great political events which sooner or later will occur on the continent of Europe. We must be prepared and keep alive the consciousness both here and abroad that, so long as the sun of freedom has not arisen over our former fatherland, we in America cannot hope to see the deeply entrenched evils uprooted."<sup>20</sup>

This group was still publishing announcements in 1859 in the *Sociale Republik*, when most of the other groups had all but disappeared.

Hermann Meyer, one of Weydemeyer's most faithful collaborators, became secretary of the Communist Club. The Club had won a reputation for itself as a center of enlightenment. In the course of 1858 it had built up an extensive library of writings on history and political economy which was at the disposal of all members and friends of the organization.<sup>21</sup> Both the Communist Club and the International Association did effective work, which was all the more necessary since political developments throughout the world, for example, events in Italy, gave rise to confused ideas among many bourgeois democrats. So much effort was spent on international meetings of protest and sympathy that the danger arose of neglecting practical day-to-day work on domestic issues. At the beginning of 1858 a group of liberals had formed an International Society in New York, which limited itself exclusively to sympathy gatherings. In April 1858 a torchlight parade was prepared for the Italian patriot and revolutionary, Felice Orsini, who had attempted to assassinate Napoleon III, and on September 22 a banquet was held in memory of the proclamation of the first French Republic.<sup>22</sup> In 1859 this International Society became a Garibaldi committee.

In December of that year a proposal was made to the International Association that it aid financially the *Neue Zeit* (*New Times*), the organ of the German Workers' Society in London

for which Marx wrote.<sup>23</sup> The International Association again appeared before the public on February 24, 1859, holding an impressive meeting in honor of the February Revolution of 1848, at which all the national groups appeared in a body together with representatives of the Communist Club.<sup>24</sup>

#### WEYDEMEYER AND MARX IN 1859

At the outset of 1859 Karl Marx achieved "a scientific victory" for the working class. After many preliminary studies and works, Marx published *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, a fundamental analysis of bourgeois economy. The *Critique of Political Economy*, which Marx later developed more fully in *Capital*, caused economists of all tendencies many a headache. The results of the Marxian study created an irrefutable system of social analysis, and at the same time provided the labor movement with a significant weapon in its struggle.

In his brief preface Marx said:

"In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. . . ."<sup>25</sup>

Marx wrote this preface in January 1859, when after persistent efforts by Ferdinand Lassalle, the Berlin Duncker publishing house expressed its willingness to publish the *Critique of Political Economy* as an experiment. In 1858 Marx had neglected all his correspondence because of the pressure of

work; but right after finishing his work, one of the first letters he sent was addressed on February 1, 1859, to Weydemeyer in Milwaukee. For him as well as for the labor movement it was vital that people in the United States learn of his book and take steps to distribute it widely. On this point Marx wrote tersely to Weydemeyer:

"I treat all political economy in six books. . . . I hope to gain a scientific victory for our party. But it must show whether it is numerous enough to buy sufficient copies to ease the 'scruples of conscience' of the bookdealers. A continuation of the project depends on the sale of the first volumes. . . ."26

Weydemeyer needed no further explanations. He recognized the value of the long-awaited work and did not even wait a day to set in motion the machinery for the success of the book. On March 27, 1859, he was in a position to report to Marx on his initial successes:

"Immediately after getting your letter I set everything in motion to convince Herr Duncker that your work can count on a wide distribution. The number of subscribers on our continent will undoubtedly never be large enough to assure an entire edition. But they will have an even greater effect on the morale of the book-dealers, since I know that the latter attach much importance to orders from here."<sup>27</sup>

Weydemeyer added that he had received reports of over 85 orders from New York and over ten from Chicago, and that he was counting on still more from Chicago. Concerning Milwaukee, where he obtained but six orders, Weydemeyer commented ironically:

"The German newly rich—and society here is in the main composed of them—are much too conceited. In general, life among these pretenders is dull."<sup>28</sup> In New York the Communist Club actively solicited orders, and Komp reported to Marx on April 24, 1859, on his successes.

Marx welcomed these efforts by Weydemeyer and his friends. In a letter to Lassalle, Marx contrasted this interest in the

United States with the probably deliberate ignoring of the work in the German press. As he wrote:

"In America the first volume has been extensively discussed by the entire German-American press, from New York to New Orleans. I only fear that it is considered too theoretical by the working class public there."<sup>29</sup>

Events in 1859—the Italian war, Napoleon III's arrogant adventures, and the attitude of Prussia—produced a political climate which Marx felt required his full attention right after the completion of his *Political Economy*.

The Italian struggle for independence had produced a vigorous movement in Europe and America. The right of peoples to national unification and independence became a crucial political issue of the day, mobilizing all democratic and freedom-loving forces against power politics. True, there were wide differences of opinion in the democratic movement, particularly concerning the role of Louis Napoleon who had won many admirers in the ranks of the liberal bourgeoisie; there were also differences of opinion concerning the role of Austria and especially Germany.

In their writings on these events, Marx and Engels furnished a guiding principle to a resolute democracy, a principle which today has lost none of its validity. They proceeded from the principle that: ". . . the independence of Poland, Hungary and Italy is not only a right of these countries but represents the true interests of Germany and Europe."<sup>30</sup> Weydemeyer and his friends were helpful in getting Marx's and Engels' writings on this issue published and distributed. First of all, there were the articles in the *New York Tribune* written by Marx and Engels "according to a common plan and a prior agreement." They were devoted to a refutation of the "Central European Great Power theory" and also to a fight against the idea held by many democrats that the continuation of Austrian rule over Italy was in the interests of Germany. At the same time the *New York Tribune* published Marx's series of articles "from Berlin," which he wrote especially for the German-American

readers of that paper and of the German-American press. Concerning this series he wrote to Lasalle on March 28, 1859:

"Since the sudden change in Prussia, I have had the private pleasure of writing from time to time as a 'Berlin correspondent.' And my 'inner' connections with the fatherland of the Hohenzollerns has enabled me to judge relations there with great sureness. There are many Germans among the subscribers to the *Tribune*. Moreover, the German-American papers, which are legion, reprint the articles. In them it is important to give local color in the rare articles I write from 'Berlin,' in order to continue my polemic with the Prussian state in the *New World*. . . ."<sup>31</sup>

Weydemeyer followed these articles in the *New York Tribune*,<sup>32</sup> and was aware of the use the German-American press made of them. At any rate Marx and Engels considered it essential that Weydemeyer receive everything they had written and that he be informed of all discussions and events, since they could be sure that he would put them to good use. In a letter to Engels, May 18, 1859, Marx reminded him to send Weydemeyer immediately a few copies of his pamphlet, *Po and Rhine*, which had just been published by Duncker in Berlin. Of the Engels booklet Marx said that "for the first time it makes it possible for the Germans to interest themselves with good conscience in the liberation of Italy." On July 18, 1859, Engels, in turn, reminded Marx that it was "urgent" to send Weydemeyer the data and publications dealing with the activities of Karl Vogt, an agent of Napoleon III.<sup>33</sup>

But in that eventful year of 1859 Weydemeyer not only labored to spread the ideas of his London friends; he also made his own literary contributions. He considered his main task to be an analysis and explanation of the economic causes of events in the United States. That year he wrote a series of six articles on the tariff question, which appeared in the *Chicago Illinois Staats-Zeitung*. This series, Friedrich Kapp wrote in his *History of Slavery in the United States of America*, published in New York in 1860, represented "a very well written

and valuable piece of work," which he "had used very often and at times quoted verbatim."<sup>34</sup>

In this series Weydemeyer offered a political and historical picture of the economic struggles in the United States, in the course of which the tariff fight occupied a central position from 1816 to 1846. He showed that the struggle of the factory interests against those of the cotton planters was the economic basis of the fight against slavery. According to Weydemeyer, "in 1828 the tariff agitation began to occupy the same place that the slavery issue had in 1859." (Kapp, p. 177.) In a brief characterization of the then prevailing economic relations, Weydemeyer demonstrated that this fight for the tariff in 1828 had to lead to the fight against slavery. In Weydemeyer's words as quoted by Kapp:

"The conflict between the North and South could be concealed for some time by means of a compromise; but it was too deeply rooted to allow of permanent reconciliation. Violently suppressed from the political domain, it arose in the economic field against the will of the politicians themselves and thus the struggle resumed. This contradiction—we cannot emphasize this point too strongly—is based on the differences in the forms of labor and the monopoly which American cotton still has on the world market. Slavery excludes any industrial development, as well as any scientific and industrial progress in agriculture, and is based solely on the production of staples, using human labor power in its crudest form and utilizing the crudest tools."<sup>35</sup>

In Weydemeyer's opinion, the reason for the growing political influence of the South and the intensified efforts to safeguard and extend slavery as an institution in the United States was the increasing importance of cotton exports for the American balance of trade. But he also showed that the economic effects of this policy were "the increase of speculation as an inseparable component of any prosperity," and that the saturation of the market shook this economic system and mobilized the social forces which were pitted against this

system. In the "return to a protective tariff," after "bankruptcy had gripped the country and brought it to a state of financial and commercial desolation," Weydemeyer saw the weapon of struggle for industrialism against the slave economy. And the success of the former would alone create new possibilities for the development of free labor as well as furnish the prerequisite for the working class to insure its social and political rights.

At that time the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung* in Chicago was the most widely circulated German-language paper in the country. Therefore it may be assumed that Kapp was not the only one to make use of Weydemeyer's articles. It undoubtedly attracted attention in many circles, including workers' groups.

Weydemeyer was beginning to feel unduly cramped in his political activities in Milwaukee. A letter to Marx as early as March 27, 1859, indicates that he was already seriously considering moving to a better field of activity. In this letter he described his life in the middle West as a wretched ordeal. He declared that the crisis had caught him in a most unpleasant fashion before he had established himself; he was trying to earn his living as a land surveyor. Recently he had lectured on the tariff issue at the *Turnverein* before an audience consisting mainly of workers. But his audience was such that he lost all desire to lecture again. He had been invited the following week to Chicago and he was going to see if things were better there.<sup>37</sup> Weydemeyer's visit to Chicago brought him in personal contact with the Chicago Workers' Society.

#### WEYDEMEYER IN CHICAGO

The Chicago Workers' Society, formed in 1857 as a German-American workers' organization, had quickly developed into one of the most powerful of the German-American labor organizations.<sup>37</sup> At the conference of the General Workers' League which was held on January 21, 1859, in New York, the Chicago Workers' Society opposed the tendency to keep the

workers isolated from all other political movements. It adopted the decision "to vote for the party which in its principles comes nearest to those of the Workers' League."<sup>38</sup> At the beginning of February 1859 the Homestead Act was adopted in Congress, with all Republican congressmen except one voting for it. This contributed greatly to the fact that the Republican Party received not only the sympathy of the working class but also active support from many workers' organizations and trade unions.<sup>39</sup>

The Chicago Workers' Society succeeded more than any other in maintaining connections with the Republican Party movement in a manner that served the interests of labor; hence it acquired no small significance in the political movement. When on January 31, 1860, the New York executive committee resigned with a statement that it no longer felt itself able to fulfill its duties, the Chicago Workers' Society undertook the task of acting as the central organization of the German-American workers' societies.<sup>40</sup>

The Chicago Workers' Society turned to Weydemeyer and invited him to Chicago so that he could lend his active support there. He was all the more eager to accept the invitation when the Society proposed to found a labor paper on a workers' cooperative basis, and had him in mind as editor.<sup>41</sup> Weydemeyer was now hopeful of realizing his life-long desire to have a workers' daily paper, thus giving the German-American labor movement in the United States a permanent instrument of education and guidance. With his customary enthusiasm he plunged into the work. The first thing he did was to write to Karl Marx on March 17, 1860, to make sure that the paper would get his collaboration and that of his other European friends. The letter he wrote is not extant, but from letters which Marx wrote to other friends concerning collaboration on Weydemeyer's paper, it is clear that he considered Weydemeyer's undertaking an important one and set great store by it. On April 9, 1860, Marx wrote to Lassalle:

\* Its membership in 1865 is given as 1,000 and its library owned 3,000 volumes. In 1859, the membership must have been as high, if not higher.

"My old friend, J. Weydemeyer, has given up his job as deputy-surveyor in the State of Wisconsin at the invitation of the American 'Workers' League' (an organization with branches throughout the United States), which has moved its headquarters from New York to Chicago (Illinois). There Weydemeyer will take over the editorship of a daily paper founded by a workers' co-operative. Chicago is becoming more and more the center of the American Northwest, where German influence predominates. Weydemeyer has invited me to obtain correspondents for the paper, which I have done here, in Paris, and in Switzerland. I am inviting you to become German correspondent (with, if possible, two articles weekly). No thought of payment. But very important for our party work. Weydemeyer is one of our best people. If, as I hope, you agree to it, begin at once and send your letters to J. Weydemeyer, care of the Chicago Workers' Society, Box 1345, Chicago, Illinois."<sup>42</sup>

Lassalle did not want to promise regular articles because of other work he was doing, but in a letter which Marx received in London on April 16, 1860 he declared:

". . . But it is something else to send Weydemeyer an article from time to time, if there is some special reason for it. That I intend to do even if the occasion does not seem too urgent. But I would like him to send me beforehand four to six numbers of his paper."<sup>43</sup>

At the same time Marx took the opportunity to write to J. P. Becker in Geneva on April 9, 1860. He proposed that the latter write regular articles for Weydemeyer's publication, stating that he considered it an important political task.<sup>44</sup> In London Marx was in touch with George Eccarius, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and other friends.<sup>45</sup> On April 29, 1860, Weydemeyer thanked Marx for his efforts with "joyful surprise" at the "extensive arrangements" the latter had made. He added that he had not counted on such strong support; at the same time he stated that he counted especially on Lassalle's reports on

the industrial transformation in Germany, since "the Germans in America still think in terms of the petty-bourgeois Germany of yore. They do not realize that in the so-called period of reaction, Germany has been more completely transformed than in the entire period of revolution."<sup>46</sup>

Marx was unflagging in his efforts for Weydemeyer. His letters of May 8, June 14, and July 16, 1860, contained numerous editorial comments and proposals. Unfortunately not a single copy of Weydemeyer's *Stimme des Volkes* (*Voice of the People*) has so far been located to discover how many contributions from Marx and his friends appeared in it. We learn, however, from a letter of July 17, 1860, from Marx to Engels, that Eccarius who was in poor physical condition and lived with Marx, wrote an article a week for Weydemeyer and received three dollar per article.<sup>47</sup>

As the political situation sharpened and the 1860 elections approached, activity in the two main political parties was intensified.

As representative of the Workers' Society, Weydemeyer took part in the so-called Deutsches Haus Conference, called at the initiative of the German-American societies and held in Chicago on May 14-15, 1860, just before the Republican National Convention in that city. This conference agreed on the German-American demands to be put forward at the Republican National Convention as a basis for German-American support in the election. Today there is evidence to show that this Deutsches Haus Conference had decisive influence in naming Abraham Lincoln the Presidential candidate of the Republican Party.<sup>48</sup> The conference resolution, signed among others by Weydemeyer, again emphasized:

"1. That, while we firmly adhere to the principles of the Republican Party as they were laid down in the Philadelphia platform of 1856, we desire that they be applied in a sense most hostile to slavery.

"2. That we demand full and effective protection at home and abroad of all the rights of all classes of citizens irrespective of their origin.

"3. That we favor the immediate passage by Congress of a Homestead law by which the public lands of the Union may be secured for homesteads of the people, and secured from the greed of the speculators."<sup>49</sup>

This resolution circulated widely among the German-Americans in the election campaign.

During the Lincoln campaign, the *Stimme des Volkes*, lacking a sufficiently strong financial and organizational basis as compared with the big Republican papers, could not win too wide a hearing. On July 5, 1860, Weydemeyer wrote to Marx that he had to give up the paper as a daily and had turned it into a weekly. A few weeks later, on August 11, he informed Marx that he had resigned as editor of the *Stimme des Volkes*.<sup>50</sup> In a letter of August 27, 1860, from Marx to Engels, it is intimated that Weydemeyer's resignation was caused by his associates who for financial reasons wanted to sell the paper to a political party. He specifically names the language-teacher Julius Standau, who had accompanied Weydemeyer as a delegate to the Deutsches Haus Conference. In Marx's words:

"His colleague (Standau) will make the paper a profitable affair by selling it to a political party. At last Weydemeyer has come to realize that he is too honest for American journalism."<sup>51</sup>

The best representatives of the German exiles of 1848 now began to feel more and more disillusioned with the behavior of the American press. In a pamphlet by the German-American journalist, Eduard Pelz, *The Press in the United States*, which first appeared as a series of articles in the *Chicago Telegraph*, the commercialization of the press was held responsible for the fact that "unscrupulous hirelings and speculators" were usually chosen as editors.

#### THE LINCOLN CAMPAIGN IN 1860

In his letter of August 27, 1860, to Engels, Marx had informed him that Weydemeyer wished to return to New York

as a "surveyor." And as a matter of fact, Weydemeyer did return to New York. There Weydemeyer was once more among his friends of the Communist Club and in the midst of the workers as their friend and adviser. He was a diligent worker for the Union cause. In the bitter electoral struggle for a new president Weydemeyer joined the ranks of the New York workers as a simple fighter, not striving after titles or posts but deeply concerned with the victory of freedom and democracy. During the day he followed his profession as an engineer and surveyor in the construction of Central Park, rubbing shoulders with the workers as a worker, not as a "boss." In the evening he went to meetings of the trade unions and the Communist Club.

The unions had become the backbone of the labor movement. They had developed beyond the stage of mutual aid societies and now represented more and more the social interests of the working class. Hence the friends of the slaveholders sought increasingly to prevent the unions from joining in the Lincoln campaign, pointing out that the South would consider the election of Lincoln a provocation and this would lead to such a falling off of business relations between the North and the South that an economic crisis with mass unemployment would inevitably follow. These friends of the slaveholders did not stop at anything in their attempts to convince the trade unions that Lincoln meant economic crisis, not social progress; they even resorted to the arbitrary withholding of orders for goods and the shutting down of factories.

But in economic matters Weydemeyer could not be misled; and in him the unions found a worthy champion who exposed the intentions of the employers. The following incident in the garment industry in October 1860 shows how Weydemeyer was able to help the tailors inflict a decisive defeat on the employers.

The big clothing houses had begun systematically to fire workers and curtail production on the pretext that the South, fearing a victory for Lincoln, refused to place orders. The majority of the tailors were at that time German-Americans



who lived in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. The employers were determined to cure them of their pro-Lincoln sentiments. The tailors were invited to a mass meeting in Williamsburg, allegedly called by "hungry poverty-stricken tailors," in the following words:

"The tailors of Williamsburg, most of whom live in the 16th ward, are beginning to feel the anti-union activity of the Republicans. While at this season of the year they should be working full time, the big dealers in clothing materials in New York, for whom most of them work, have either lowered their wages or what is even worse thrown them completely out of work because the demand, especially from the South, has perceptibly decreased.

"Those who are affected consider this not without reason as the first signs of a general panic, which will inevitably occur in the event that Lincoln is elected."<sup>52</sup>

But the tailors' union was vigilant and recognized the designs of the employers masked as "hungry poverty-stricken tailors." The union got in touch with Weydemeyer and a few days before the scheduled meeting, a leaflet appeared, entitled "An Address to the Republican Germans in Williamsburg." This ran in part:

"German fellow-citizens! Stand by Lincoln and freedom and do not be intimidated into voting for the Fusion ticket. The lackeys of the slave power tell you that there is so little work now because the firms that work in the clothing industry for the South are fearful of the election of Lincoln. They lie! Some of them are withholding work because they expect less markets this year and do not wish to put in large stocks of supplies—for the bad harvest in the South has restricted trade. Others are not giving out work simply because they want to force you to obey their orders to vote for the Fusion Party. That is why they are not giving you any work before the election, to make you believe that all work will stop if Lincoln is elected. What a stupid trick! . . ."<sup>53</sup>

This leaflet attracted widespread attention. The employers, furious, sent in numerous letters to the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* signed by so-called "hungry poverty-stricken tailors" and protesting the "tissue of lies."

Although election meetings for both major parties were very frequent during October 1860, the one held on October 30 in Williamsburg by the "hungry poverty-stricken tailors" was a significant event for the workers of New York. It proved to be a triumph for the workers, and a triumph for Lincoln.

Since their leaflet left no doubt as to the real purpose of the "tailors' mass meeting" organized by the employers, the hall was filled with workers who came early to rebuff the "New York fire eaters," as the employers were called. The meeting demonstrated vigorously against the steering committee proposed by the "fire eaters," "and demanded that real, not fake tailors take over the meeting. The employers were unable to take the floor, and the tailors' union conducted the meeting, making it an impressive pro-Lincoln manifestation. Weydemeyer made the main speech of the evening on economic problems: the tariff and labor issues; and he pointed out that the election of Lincoln would encourage social progress. However, the police report of the meeting shows that foes of Lincoln did not just let matters rest there. The report stated:

"A Herr Weydemeyer spoke in pro-Republican terms and asserted that the present temporary lay-offs in the large firms were only a means of influencing the tailors to vote for the Union ticket. The gentleman's remarks were received with loud applause. Just as the meeting was about to adjourn, a number of members of the Union League, Number 1 and 2, rushed into the hall to drive the Germans out. The latter left the place within a short time, whereupon the victors organized a meeting of their own. The Germans who had been driven out went to the *Turnhall* where they were given police protection to prevent a repetition of the above incident."<sup>54</sup>

The police report failed to mention that the tailors reacted to this provocation by summoning all the people in attendance



to a new meeting. Some went to the *Turnhall*, others returned to the original hall where the Union Leaguers were attempting in vain to carry through their "tailors' meeting." And when the meeting was reopened, it again became a pro-Lincoln demonstration at which Weydemeyer again spoke.

A few days before the election, on November 5, another gathering of the German-American tailors' union took place in New York, at which the economic situation was again thoroughly discussed and a resolution was unanimously adopted in favor of the election of Lincoln.

In reports of Lincoln election meetings held by German Republican clubs and trade unions, the names of other members of the Communist Club were also frequently mentioned.<sup>55</sup> The Republican platform of May 17, 1860, was widely distributed at these meetings in a German translation published by the *New York Demokrat*. This platform contained a point that the Republican Party would "oppose any change in the Naturalization Law," and this item appeared in bold, heavily underlined letters.

The Chicago Workers' Society, with which Weydemeyer continued to be in contact, was especially active in demanding labor representation in framing laws. It asked every Republican candidate to state his position on this question, specifically with regard to an improved lien law and better labor legislation, a demand which received many satisfactory replies. A special committee of the society dealt with these issues and sent speakers to Republican election rallies.<sup>56</sup>

The American workers had learned that they had to enter the political field in order to insure social gains. They now realized that this was a way of defending their economic interests, and that they could not afford to abstain from participation in politics unless they meant to be debased to the level of supine tools. They saw that democracy could be assured only if the masses entered into politics.

The election of 1860 became a people's movement in support of Lincoln. The historic significance of this election lay in the fact that in voting for Lincoln the people voted for free labor.

As early as 1853 Weydemeyer had advocated in *Die Reform* that the workers should participate in political life and carry out independent political action in elections in accord with their social needs. In the 1860 Lincoln campaign, Weydemeyer helped bring this about, thereby playing a considerable role in convincing the workers to vote for Lincoln.

## V THE CIVIL WAR

After the victory of Lincoln at the polls, the threat of secession in the South and the efforts of the friends of the slaveholders in the North left no doubt that the victors could not rest on their laurels. On the contrary, it was now vital to safeguard this triumph of the people against the forces of reaction and their underhanded intrigues. It was vital that the American people prevent any threat or provocation from nullifying the victory.

### THE FIGHT AGAINST CONFUSION IN 1861

Three days after the election, on November 10, 1860, the German paper that was nearest to the labor movement, the *New Yorker Demokrat*, for which Weydemeyer had written as early as 1852, expressed in an editorial the tasks facing the progressive forces:

"We have taken part in the campaign not as party adherents, not for self-seeking reasons, but because the Republican Party is closest to our point of view and because we consider its victory a guarantee that still greater victories for the cause of humanity can be achieved in the future. It is therefore our special task to see to it that what has been achieved with our help is not again undone but is built up still more; if reactionary elements in the party of reaction intend to do that, we must form a counterweight to them and press forward to further gains."<sup>1</sup>

Weydemeyer and his friends in the Communist Club could

hardly have found their point of view better expressed. The weekly meetings of the Club, which Weydemeyer regularly attended, became public classrooms for the instruction of the enlightened portion of the labor movement. Other workers' organizations and trade unions likewise presented demands to the government for the carrying through of democratic principles. On February 12, on his journey to Washington following the election, Lincoln was greeted in Cincinnati by a delegation representing two thousand members of German workers' societies. The chairman of the delegation declared in a speech:

"You earned our votes as the champion of free labor and free homesteads. . . . We firmly adhere to the principle which directed our votes in your favor."<sup>2</sup>

Answering the German workers' societies in Cincinnati, Lincoln said:

"I agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that the working men are the basis of all governments. . . . I hold that while man exists it is his duty to improve not only his own condition, but to assist in ameliorating the condition of mankind; and therefore, without entering upon the details of the question, I will simply say that I am for those means which will give the greatest good to the greatest number."<sup>3</sup>

Marx followed actively the situation in the United States and gave invaluable advice to Weydemeyer and his friends in the Communist Club; at the same time, Weydemeyer participated in the discussions which engaged Marx in Europe. These disputes were of equal significance to the labor movement in America. There was, for instance, the Karl Vogt affair which also stirred up a tempest in the United States, since the paid propaganda of Vogt subsidized by Napoleon III was nothing but an attempt to foster power politics and to win public opinion specifically in the United States.

Karl Vogt realized that if his propaganda was to succeed, it was essential to discredit Marx and his friends and belittle their political activity. In 1859, he published a pamphlet against

Marx filled with slanders against the latter, including a calumny often directed against labor leaders that he lived "on the sweat of the workers." The Berlin *National-Zeitung* (*National Gazette*) printed Vogt's pamphlet and went even further, accusing Marx of living on "blackmail, police-spying and counterfeit money." The Berlin prosecuting attorney refused to allow Marx to file suit against the *National-Zeitung*, "because it was not in the public interest." He was even denied the right to sue for personal slander.

In his pamphlet *Herr Vogt*, which Marx published in London in 1860, he presented the truth about Vogt, his intrigues and his slanders. Among the documents in this brochure is a letter from the foreign editor of the *New York Tribune*, Charles A. Dana, in which the latter handsomely acknowledges Marx's collaboration on his newspaper. This pamphlet, published by Marx at his own expense, was widely read. A splendid political, legal and personal justification of Marx, it became an effective instrument in the hands of his friends for gaining support and recognition of his work. This pamphlet also provided Weydemeyer with excellent material for his own activities.

In such periods of political crisis, which in most cases also meant a worsening of living conditions, the two wives, Jenny Marx and Luise Weydemeyer, poured out their hearts to one another in letters. The few letters that have come down to us are valuable documents, giving us not only information about the intimate personal relations of the two families but also about their political relations and their struggles to make both ends meet. More even than in the letters of the two husbands, they bore witness to the intimate collaboration and the mutual confidence which underlay the work of each. One such letter, from Mrs. Marx to Mrs. Weydemeyer, dated March 11, 1861, tells of their worries and efforts at the beginning of that year:

"How could it ever be possible for such old party comrades and friends, to whom fate has given just about the same

joys and sorrows, the same sunny and stormy days, ever to draw apart from one another, despite the years and the ocean which has separated us?"<sup>4</sup>

Thus Mrs. Marx writes to her friend in America. And she continues:

"I can imagine only too well how you must have suffered in the last period. I can visualize all of your struggles and worries and deprivations for I have often gone through the same things."<sup>5</sup>

Since both wives shared their husbands' cares, this letter also contains a detailed account of Marx's action in the Karl Vogt affair. It goes on to say:

"I am terribly pleased that you liked the book. Your judgment about it coincides almost verbatim with the judgment of all our other friends. . . . I am curious to know whether there will be the same silence in America [as in the European press]. That would be too much to swallow, since they open their columns to all sorts of useless lies and slanders. Maybe your dear husband can do a little to distribute the book."<sup>6</sup>

#### WEYDEMEYER IN MISSOURI

Weydemeyer did not have much time to distribute the *Herr Vogt* pamphlet. With the attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, armed struggle between the North and the South became inevitable. Since the people in the North were at first under the illusion that the capture of the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia, would be easy, Weydemeyer and his friends in the Communist Club considered it vital to point out the real seriousness of the situation. In the course of May and June, however, the opinion gained ground in the North that to strike a decisive blow at the rebels, the so-called border states, Missouri, Kentucky, and West Virginia, first had to be held.

To hold Missouri meant to secure the Mississippi line, the

key strategic position in the West. Events in Missouri thus became of decisive significance for the course of the Civil War. A later statement by General Ulysses S. Grant shows what the rapid conquest of Missouri meant for the entire war effort of the North. Grant told John Russell Young:

"There was some splendid work done in Missouri, and especially in St. Louis in the earliest days of the war. If St. Louis had been captured by the rebels it would have made a vast difference. . . . It would have been a terrible task to recapture St. Louis, one of the most difficult that could have been given to any military man. Instead of a campaign before Vicksburg, it would have been a campaign before St. Louis."<sup>7</sup>

A few months after the outbreak of the Civil War, Weydemeyer chose Missouri as the place where he felt he could best utilize his talents in the struggle against slavery, and he devoted all his energies to this theater of the war. He remained in Missouri until 1866, when a cholera epidemic laid him low.

Missouri was a border slave state, and Governor Claiborne Jackson did his best to take the state out of the Union into the Confederacy. The anti-slavery sentiments of the people of St. Louis, especially the many German-Americans there, prevented him from doing so. The attack of May 10, 1861, on the rebel camp near St. Louis, named Camp Jackson after the Governor, which was carried out by newly formed volunteer Union regiments, including the *Turner* (sports clubs) of St. Louis led by Franz Sigel, put an end to the uncertain situation in Missouri. Governor Jackson fled to southern Missouri where he joined with the rebel general, Sterling Price, and laid plans to reconquer St. Louis. In this city, General Lyon together with Franz Sigel and other officers sought to organize the Union Army.<sup>8</sup> The rebels tried to deliver a decisive blow in Missouri, before the Union Army which lacked arms and equipment was ready to go into action. The moment was critical for the Union adherents in Missouri.

In this situation John C. Frémont, just back from Europe, was made Commander-in-Chief of the Department of the West

with St. Louis as his headquarters. On July 9, 1861, when Frémont was named to this command, he was still in New York. His first move was to seek arms and capable military specialists in New York to prosecute the struggle in Missouri. He preferred Europeans who had gained valuable military experience in the 1848-49 battles. Among those who placed themselves at Frémont's disposal was Joseph Weydemeyer.<sup>9</sup> In view of his experience as an artillery officer and land surveyor, Weydemeyer was attached to Frémont's staff of technical aides. \*

When on July 22 news of the Union defeat at Bull Run reached New York, Frémont left the city that same evening together with the picked staff of experts, including Weydemeyer. The party arrived in St. Louis on July 25. There they found that both money and arms were lacking to raise the necessary army. In the Confederate camp, on the other hand, there was jubilation and the certainty of victory. Confederate Lieutenant-Governor Reynolds addressed the people of Missouri on July 31, 1861, in the following words: "The sun which shone in its full, midday splendor at Manassas [Bull Run], is about to rise upon Missouri." Frémont had already found it necessary to report to Lincoln on July 30:

"I have found this command in disorder; nearly every county in an insurrectionary condition, and the enemy advancing in force by different points of the Southern frontier."<sup>10</sup>

In this situation Weydemeyer began his military career in America. He was one of the group that believed that St. Louis had to be held as a base of operations for the North, as the nerve center between the East and West. "Had the taking of St. Louis followed the defeat of Manassas, the disaster might have been irretrievable"—it was with this guiding principle in mind that Frémont initiated measures to accelerate the construction of fortifications which General Lyon had begun.<sup>11</sup> Weydemeyer was active in building these fortifications. Unlike many others on Frémont's staff, he performed efficiently the jobs entrusted to him. Paymaster P. M. Febiger placed Weyde

meyer on his payroll from September 23 to October 12, 1861, among the 42 officers taken on by Frémont, as an artillery captain.<sup>12</sup>

Frémont's command did not last long. After the defeat at Wilson's Creek on August 10, 1861, the group around the conservative professional politician Blair began their agitation to declare Frémont incompetent and to remove him from his command. The order for his removal reached Frémont on November 2 while he was with his men in the field near Springfield. On November 18 the St. Louis newspapers carried a proclamation of General McClellan ordering all officers recruited by Frémont to be demobilized. The German-American troops, which were very numerous in Missouri, showed open indignation at this move; and the officers had all they could do to quiet them.<sup>13</sup> Weydemeyer was among those affected by the decree of November 18, yet he had given such sterling proof of his activity that he was immediately promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and asked to command a second volunteer artillery regiment. He assumed this post on November 28, but his new rank was made retroactive to October 12, 1861.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE FIGHT AGAINST THE CONFEDERATE GUERRILLAS

The organization of the first and second artillery regiments, which began in September and was accelerated in October 1861, came about because of the special character of the war in Missouri. The terrain gave the enemy excellent opportunities to wear down large bodies of troops and to threaten St. Louis from various sides with light flying detachments. It was a war of nerves and harassment and it was of the utmost necessity to hold the heights around St. Louis with light artillery. As early as October, when Frémont made a successful stab as far as Springfield in southern Missouri, guerrilla warfare began in northern Missouri. Questioning of prisoners

showed that the Confederate Army carried out its guerrilla warfare in a planned and systematic manner.<sup>15</sup>

After Frémont's recall the rebel General Price remained for months undisturbed in South Missouri, so that the flying detachments were able to menace the northern part of the state without putting themselves in danger. Thus Frémont's successor, Major-General H. W. Halleck, realized that he had to attack Price in the south. Franz Sigel's attack led on March 7, 1862, to the victory at Pea Ridge, thereby greatly relieving the situation in Missouri. After this battle the Union Army was able to send reinforcements from Missouri to other theaters of war.<sup>16</sup>

There still remained, however, the guerrilla threat, against which Weydemeyer organized a full-scale campaign. Above all it was essential to protect from guerrilla attacks the line of communications with Springfield. Along this route in the Carrant River Valley, Coleman's bands operated against the Union Army's transports. In the summer of 1862, Weydemeyer took command of the forces against Coleman's bands. He established headquarters first in Houston, then in Salem. Divisional headquarters was Rolla. On July 29 the divisional command in Rolla received the first report about successes in beating back Coleman's men. A detachment of two cavalry companies and half a section of a light artillery company sent out from Houston on July 25 surprised one of Coleman's patrols in a forest near Mountain Store and destroyed it. In the course of this operation prisoners were taken and questioned. This led to the discovery of Coleman's main camp. Two attacks on the latter sufficed to repel the Coleman detachment, leaving eight killed, twenty wounded, and seventeen prisoners.<sup>17</sup>

Weydemeyer was still not satisfied for he knew that Coleman would again gather his forces to the South. Therefore Weydemeyer transferred his own headquarters further south to Salem and extended operations as far as the Carrant River Valley. Weydemeyer himself in a report to Rolla dated August 29, 1862, told of his successful operations from August 24 to

August 28, as a result of which the enemy forces were destroyed, communication lines were assured, and the general military situation in Missouri was consolidated for the Union.<sup>18</sup>

This successful liquidation of guerrilla activity in Missouri raised the question of the treatment of the local inhabitants who had fought on the side of the guerrillas. Reintegrating them into the life of the Union caused many worries to the general staff.

As a result of the prevailing unclarity on this question there were no uniform instructions. Every commander dealt with the problem on his own, and often these prisoners were shot out of hand. This led Weydemeyer to discuss the question in detail in an exchange of letters with his divisional chief, Colonel J. M. Glover. He did not see it solely from the military but viewed it also from the human and political point of view. Glover had learned to respect Weydemeyer not only as an officer but also as a friend. After the incidents at the end of August, 1862, involving the shooting of some prisoners from Coleman's bands who had escaped from the guards and been recaptured, Weydemeyer made a personal investigation of the matter. He concluded that a distinction had to be made between those of good faith who had been misled and those who had consciously engaged in criminal acts. He took the view that many settlers and their sons who had been persuaded to join in guerrilla activity had done so without consciously realizing what it meant. He felt that most of them, once they were told the true state of affairs, would be sincerely ready to take their place again as citizens of the Union. In many of these individuals Weydemeyer noted open disappointment at the false promises and misrepresentations of the rebels. Colonel Glover agreed completely with Weydemeyer's point of view; and to a certain extent he counted on Weydemeyer to prevent assaults on prisoners and to carry out a correct policy toward the inhabitants of Missouri who had recognized their mistake.<sup>19</sup>

His untiring fight against the guerrilla bands sent Weydemeyer to the hospital toward the end of 1862. Since the big

task of securing Missouri militarily for the Union was already accomplished, Weydemeyer was transferred to the garrison in St. Louis which, as the main base of all operations in the West, still needed capable military men.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE STRUGGLE TO SAFEGUARD DEMOCRACY

In 1863, political rather than military events brought Missouri, and specifically St. Louis, to the forefront. The anti-slavery forces felt that their first task was to abolish slavery there and thus insure political and social progress in the state. From 1861 on, there arose a difference of opinion between the Lincoln Administration and the staunch Missouri Republicans, including most of the German-Americans, on the question of the abolition of slavery. After the successful military operations of 1862, the so-called Radical Republicans felt that the time had come to emancipate the slaves in Missouri. In this way they were supported by many officers and soldiers in Missouri. On October 16, 1862, Colonel B. Gratz Brown sent an open letter to the *Missouri Democrat*, in which he declared:

"At the present time the cause of freedom in Missouri is only obstructed by those who think more of converting the interest which a few thousand slaveholders claim in a very precarious species of property, than they do of reviving the industries that support more than a million of non-slaveholders. . . . We should unite in petitioning the President to embrace Missouri in the terms of his proclamation of January 1st, 1863."

This letter, published as a pamphlet, was widely read.<sup>21</sup>

When the St. Louis municipal elections at the beginning of 1863 gave the Radicals a majority, the conservatives led by Governor Gamble sought to circumvent all moves by the Radicals by calling a state convention. This state convention issued an Emancipation Proclamation, according to which the slaves would not be freed before July 4, 1870, and thereupon adjourned *sine die* on July 1, 1863. A meeting called in St. Louis by the Radical advocates of emancipation demanded the

calling of a new state convention. Such a gathering took place on September 1 with a majority for the friends of emancipation. A platform was adopted which, among other things, was in favor of: "Denouncing the military policy pursued in the State, and the delegation by the General Government of the military power to a provisional State organization, the whole tendency of which is to throw back the people under the control of the pro-slavery party, and by reactionary influences to paralyze the Federal power in suppressing the rebellion, to prolong a reign of terror throughout a large section of the State, and extend aid and comfort to those who are meditating hostility to the national authority in other States."<sup>22</sup>

Collaboration existed between Governor Gamble and Major-General Schofield, as a result of which both the Federal troops in Missouri and the state militia were under Schofield's unified command and held in readiness to put down all attempts to foster freedom.<sup>23</sup>

That was the situation in St. Louis at the time Weydemeyer's term of service with the Second Missouri Artillery Regiment expired. He was mustered out on September 21, 1863.<sup>24</sup> Since he could not immediately find a military post corresponding to his abilities, he devoted himself again to political and journalistic activity. He collaborated extensively with the two progressive German-American papers in St. Louis, the *Westliche Post* (*Western Post*), edited by Theodore Olshausen and D. Hertle, and the *Neue Zeit*, founded in 1862 by George Hillgaertner as an organ "to foster general emancipation, welfare and education of the people."

Weydemeyer became a member of the editorial board of the *Neue Zeit* which had been founded when the *Anzeiger des Westens* (*Western Reporter*), edited by Boernstein, campaigned for Blair against the progressive Republicans of Missouri. The *Neue Zeit* set itself the dual task of struggling against the professional politicians who sought to rule Missouri and of making the will of the people prevail. Both in makeup and content it soon surpassed the other German-American papers.

Its editorials gave a clear political line and cogent explanations of both domestic and foreign policy. This publication, of which, unfortunately, few copies have come down to us, was Weydemeyer's best instrument in helping to clear up the political dissatisfaction that had arisen among the Republicans and workers generally. It contained no insulting attacks and slanders against the Lincoln administration. Weydemeyer simply allowed the facts to speak for themselves. Every necessary war measure was given effective support. It was thanks to the *Neue Zeit* that the German-Americans, who were originally for Frémont and against Lincoln in the election campaign of 1864, finally supported the latter.<sup>25</sup>

In the course of these political disputes in 1863, a convention was held in Cleveland, Ohio, on October 18-21, in order to found an "organization of Radical Germans." Among the delegates were many friends of Weydemeyer, including F. A. Sorge from the New York Communist Club and representatives of the Chicago Workers' Society. Their resolutions of support for the "emancipationists who have been so furiously persecuted in Missouri" proceeded from "the fundamental principle" that "more than any previous period, the present time compels us to recognize in the proclamation of equality of human rights in the Declaration of Independence . . . the fundamental law of Republican life."

In these discussions throughout 1863 the labor movement, paralyzed by the military events of 1861-62, again came to the fore with its slogan of "free labor." By 1864 the trade unions and other workers' organizations were strong enough to speak out about events and to take a stand on the forthcoming elections. On July 15, 1864, the Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association replied to the numerous attacks directed against the labor movement with an open letter, in which it was clearly asserted:

"We are now engaged as a nation in fighting the battle of Democracy against Aristocracy and Tyranny. The petty attempts of demagogues to narrow down our great contest into



a mere struggle for office, or for some favorite political idea, cannot blind us to the grander nature of our struggle. We are today fighting for democratic government against the combined forces of Aristocracy in the South—which believes that all laborers should be slaves—and the advocates and agents of Monarchy in Europe who believe in the ‘divine rights of kings.’

“All the influences and interests of the advocates and friends of tyranny and aristocracy, in the Old World as well as the New, are today arrayed in the effort to destroy the only democratic government in the world.”<sup>26</sup>

In the border state of Missouri this fight to ensure democracy against the conniving of conservative politicians found its most typical expression. In 1864 the contest in Missouri took the form of a struggle of the working class for democracy against aristocracy and an economic system of favoritism. German-Americans of St. Louis, including Weydemeyer, took a leading part in this struggle.

In the Missouri state elections, there were only two parties, the Conservatives and the Radical Unionists. The issue between these two parties was that of favoring or opposing democratic government and laws—and this issue was fought out in the daily political and social life of Missouri as well as at the polls. It was even of far-reaching significance for the military situation in Missouri. The policy of the Conservatives led by Governor Hall, directed mainly against the Radicals, provided fertile soil for the activity of the rebels and the Copperheads in Missouri. The conflict between Conservative Governor Hall and General Rosecrans of the Department of the West, who sympathized with the Radicals, played into the hands of the Confederate forces. When a militia was recruited to protect the state against guerrilla attacks, the governor made every effort to exclude the Radicals, the most resolute and energetic fighters against slavery. The militia in the control of Copperheads and Conservatives gave the rebel guerrillas every leeway against adherents of the Union. This situation grew more critical as the elections approached.

On August 4, 1864, the *New York Tribune* devoted an editorial to the Missouri problem, declaring:

“It may safely be asserted that, during the past few weeks, it has in no other State of the Union been more dangerous to be pointed out as an unconditional Union man than in Missouri. . . .

“It has had under its ‘Conservative’ Governors—Gamble and Hall—a militia which has played directly into the hands of the guerrillas, and without the aid of which the insubordination of the last few weeks would never have assumed so destructive a character. . . .”<sup>27</sup>

All the friends of true democracy had their eyes on Missouri: the Missouri Radicals formed the vanguard of the so-called Radical Republicans of the North. It was they who gave rise to sentiments of dissatisfaction with the behavior of the Lincoln administration, resulting in the Radicals calling their People’s National Convention in Cleveland on May 30, 1864, before the official Republican National Convention in Baltimore, to nominate Frémont as their candidate for the presidency.<sup>28</sup> When, however, it soon became evident that the split between Lincoln and the Frémont-Republicans redounded to the benefit of the Copperheads and that the latter were consciously exploiting the split to promote confusion, the most influential Radicals, Weydemeyer included, sought to bring about unity in the interests of democracy. And the initiative for this unity move came from Missouri.

Of the two leading German-American papers in St. Louis, the *Westliche Post* was at first not disposed to make concessions in favor of Lincoln. But as early as June 1864 Weydemeyer’s paper, *Die Neue Zeit*, called upon all adherents of the Union, whether partisans of Lincoln or Frémont, to vote solidly for the Radicals’ slate and their candidate for Governor, Fletcher, in view of the fact that the Conservative slate was composed of all the anti-Union elements in Missouri. On July 2, 1864, the *New York Tribune* reported from St. Louis an agreement between the *Missouri Democrat* and the *Neue Zeit* to support

all Radical candidates on the state ticket, regardless of their position in the national elections with respect to Lincoln or Frémont. Thus Weydemeyer helped to make a start in unifying all the democratic forces in Missouri.<sup>29</sup>

The more clearly the German-Americans, especially the Missouri Radicals, realized that disunity could only benefit the Copperheads and Conservatives, and the more openly the Conservatives revealed themselves in daily life as favoring the cause of slavery and intensified their persecutions of the friends of the north, the more did these efforts for unity by Weydemeyer and others make headway. Finally on September 22 Frémont announced in a letter that he was withdrawing his candidacy since "the presidential question has, in effect, been entered upon in such a way that the union of the Republican Party has become a paramount necessity."<sup>30</sup> When this letter became known, its contents caused rejoicing among the friends of the Union in Missouri, as a correspondent of the *New York Tribune* reported from St. Louis on September 24. At the same time he confirmed that "the leading Germans of this city who were friendly to Frémont advised his withdrawal."<sup>31</sup>

Weydemeyer, who had begun his military career for the Union in 1861 under Frémont, was undoubtedly one of these "leading Germans." It was his paper, the *Neue Zeit*, that had initiated the campaign to unite all democratic forces. He was among those who recognized the political and social significance of the fight against slavery, and who thus set as their main task victory in that fight.

#### THE FORMATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKINGMEN'S ASSOCIATION

The European working class as well as the American workers saw in the safeguarding of democracy in the United States a guarantee of social progress and of a successful struggle against aristocracy and tyranny throughout the world. The British textile workers were directly affected by the shortage of cotton brought about by the Civil War. The Palmerston government

as well as most of the English aristocracy and bourgeoisie went out of their way to favor Confederate agents; and there arose a real danger of British intervention on the side of the slaveholders.

But the English workers held rallies and meetings in a vigorous campaign against their government and for the triumph of democracy in the United States. The economic significance of the Civil War gave it its international social significance, making it the concern of the international labor movement. And in the course of the conflict the latter created a new body for international co-operation.<sup>32</sup>

In a proclamation issued at the end of 1863, the London German Workers Educational Society declared:

"The British working class has earned immortal honor before history in that it has by its enthusiastic mass meetings defeated repeated attempts of the ruling class to intervene on the side of the American slaveholders, although the continuation of the Civil War in America means terrible hardships and privation for a million British workers."<sup>33</sup>

Authorship of this proclamation has been attributed to Karl Marx. From the outbreak of the Civil War, Marx and Engels had followed events in the United States with the closest attention. In their correspondence as well as in their literary and political activity the Civil War appeared as a decisive event in world history. In a letter to Engels dated October 29, 1862, Marx emphasized:

"Events in America are world-shaking and in all history there is nothing more despicable than the British attitude toward the Civil War."<sup>34</sup>

It was in large measure due to their advice and prodding that as the British government and ruling classes increased their aid to the Confederacy, the working class intensified its support of the North and exerted its efforts for the triumph of democracy in the United States. In this democratic movement there developed an international class solidarity which

assumed an increasingly organized form in various international meetings and declarations.

Weydemeyer in St. Louis was well aware of this trend in the international labor movement and of the efforts of Marx and Engels in that direction. Undoubtedly they strengthened him in his attempts to bring about unity of all democratic forces in the 1864 presidential election. After the formation of the International Workingmen's Association in September 1864 in London, it became necessary to guide and develop the new organization. Weydemeyer was one of the first to receive Marx's draft of an Inaugural Address, on November 27, 1864, with a comment by Marx: "The newly formed International Workingmen's Committee, in whose name it has been issued, is not without significance. . . ." <sup>35</sup>

The new International Workingmen's Association initiated its activity with more meetings in favor of the Union. And soon Weydemeyer and his friends in America learned that their activity in the election campaign had been approved by the International Workingmen's Association. The General Council of the latter agreed on November 29 to a proposal by Marx that a message of congratulations be sent to Lincoln. This address, sent to President Lincoln by way of Charles Francis Adams, American Ambassador in London, ran in part:

"The workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes." <sup>36</sup>

This address, the first public statement of the International Workingmen's Association, received widespread notice. In the New York Communist Club it was vigorously discussed, since several members did not wholly approve of the endorsement of Lincoln. But Weydemeyer approved all the more of the address since Lincoln in his reply, which came to the General Council in London on January 31, 1865, agreed with the point of view of the International Workingmen's Association and confirmed that: ". . . the United States regard their cause in the

present conflict with slavery-maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature, and they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the workingmen of Europe that the national attitude is favored with their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies." <sup>37</sup>

#### COLONEL IN THE 41ST INFANTRY MISSOURI VOLUNTEERS

Even before the elections, on September 17, 1864, Weydemeyer again entered the Union Army. As a result of the confused political situation in Missouri in the summer of 1864, not only had Confederate guerrilla activity increased to a threatening extent, but the state was menaced by a new rebel invasion. <sup>38</sup> By conquering Missouri, the rebels sought to compensate for their defeats in other war theaters. Faced with this situation and with the refusal of the state militia to fight, General Rosecrans was forced to organize new Union regiments without delay, and he appealed especially to veterans of the war. Recruiting for the 41st Infantry Missouri Volunteers Regiment began in August 1864. Weydemeyer immediately placed himself at the disposal of the military authorities. On September 16 the regiment was completed and the very next day Weydemeyer took over command as Colonel. <sup>39</sup>

The months of September, October, and November were spent in strenuous military training, to make the men a match for the advancing army of General Price. On October 15, Price was in the heart of Missouri. But the danger to St. Louis was materially lessened by the increasing strength of the Union Army. On December 28, 1864, Weydemeyer received command of the first sub-district of St. Louis, which extended far beyond the city limits of St. Louis up to Herrmann, passing across territory that was threatened by the guerrillas. At times, Weydemeyer had troop units of ten different regiments under his command. His task consisted of guarding the territory, watching over main highways and bridges, erecting fortifications at important points, and keeping his men in a perpetual state of

alert for defense. Order No. 23, which he issued to the officers of the detachments under him in accordance with instructions from departmental headquarters, was designed: "To aid in selecting the positions and planning the defenses of the works necessary to secure the military posts, railroad stations, and bridges where troops are stationed in this sub-district."<sup>40</sup>

From various orders of the day it is clear that there was splendid co-operation between Weydemeyer and the officers and men under him. One of the questions that arose in his dealings with individual units assigned to him to build bridges and forts was the question of using pro-Confederate people for forced labor. He was careful not to allow any injustices to arise in his use of such misled citizens and agreed with the order which put an end to the use of such individuals as forced laborers. His military command was broad in scope, and in the first months of 1865 demanded a good deal of solid organizational work.<sup>41</sup>

Frederick Engels, who followed the technical-military as well as the political aspects of the Civil War and who had written many articles on the subject for the *Wiener Presse* (*Vienna Press*) the *Allgemeine Militaerzeitung* (*General Military Gazette*) in Darmstadt, and the *Volunteer Journal for Lancaster and Cheshire* in Manchester, exchanged letters with Weydemeyer during this period in which he discussed the military-strategic aspects of the war. He drew on Weydemeyer's practical experience to inquire more closely into the strategy employed. On November 24, 1864, Engels wrote to Weydemeyer: "Your war over there is really one of the most powerful experiences one can live through."<sup>42</sup>

In his letters of January 20 and April 24-30, 1865, Weydemeyer criticized some of Engels' judgments on military matters. In the course of this Engels-Weydemeyer correspondence, during which Engels also devoted much study to the organization of the Prussian army, Engels wrote his pamphlet *The Military Question in Prussia and the German Workers Party*. In this booklet Engels gave the German working class detailed material on the disputes on the military question which were

then beginning to develop between the feudal party and the liberal bourgeoisie. Engels sent it to Weydemeyer on March 10, 1865.<sup>43</sup>

#### NEW TASKS IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

On June 28, 1865, Colonel Weydemeyer received the command to muster out his regiment. After demobilizing his officers and men, he himself left the service on July 11.<sup>44</sup>

The end of the Civil War, terminating in a victory over the slave states, now placed before the working class the task of safeguarding victory and democratic reconstruction, a task that was rendered immeasurably more difficult by the assassination of Lincoln. Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, was greeted on May 13, 1865, by Weydemeyer's friends in London, notably the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, in the following terms:

"Yours, Sir, has become the task to uproot by the law what has been felled by the sword, to preside over the arduous work of political reconstruction and social regeneration. . . ."<sup>45</sup>

These words expressed hopes, the realization of which necessitated above all the rebuilding of the American labor movement. The rise in the cost of the necessities of life brought about by the war and the simultaneous decline in the value of money forced the workers to carry on a fight to maintain their living standards. The demand for higher wages and shorter working hours became the motivating force of a new social movement.<sup>46</sup>

As early as February 1, 1865, Marx had sent word to Engels that Weydemeyer was active in distributing the Inaugural Address of the International Workingmen's Association and had sent him the *Daily St. Louis Press* containing Weydemeyer's editorial about the Association together with excerpts from the "Address."<sup>47</sup> From a remark which Engels made in his letter of May 3, 1865, to Marx, it is clear that Weydemeyer and his

friends were also trying to build branches of the Association in the United States.<sup>48</sup>

At this juncture Weydemeyer realized that while as a result of the war the Communist Club had interrupted its activity, the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle, who had sought to ally the labor movement under his influence with Bismarck, had gained in influence in the German-American labor movement. At the end of 1864, on the occasion of the publication in some American papers of a "Republican protest" against Lassalle's agitation by one Karl Blind who had been involved in the Karl Vogt scandal, Weydemeyer had asked Engels for an estimate of Lassalle who had died that year. Engels in his letter of November 24, 1864, characterized Blind's behavior as self-inflated sound and fury. As for Lassalle, he declared that his loss would in no sense be as great as that of Wilhelm Wolff, their mutual friend who had died in England on May 9, 1864. Marx also informed Weydemeyer on November 27, 1864, that he should oppose Blind, however "without identifying me with the aspects of Lassalle's agitation which I dislike."<sup>49</sup>

On March 10, 1865, Weydemeyer received a thorough-going explanation of the role of Lassalle from Engels. The latter said among other things: ". . . We learned that Lassalle was much more deeply involved with Bismarck than we had ever known. . . ." And Engels left no doubt in Weydemeyer's mind that he should direct all his energies toward preventing the "alliance of the labor movement with reaction," a course which Lassalle had initiated.<sup>50</sup>

Yet in the very same letter Engels had good news to report about the development of the International Workingmen's Association: "The International Association in London is getting on famously. . . . Only the German Lassalleans refuse to come in. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

Since the Lassallean cult was deeply rooted among the German-Americans, Weydemeyer had to contend with similar difficulties in the United States. On October 29, 1865, a Lassallean General German Workers' Society was formed in New York. F. A. Sorge learned of this through a notice in the

newspapers at about the same time that Weydemeyer found out about it. The society also entered into contact with the General German Workers' Society in Germany. The members of the Communist Club returning from the war now entered into relations with the society in New York and tried to carry on propaganda among its members.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, a German section of the International Workingmen's Association had been formed in Switzerland under the leadership of J. P. Becker, and soon its influence grew among the German-American workers.<sup>53</sup> Weydemeyer's efforts for the Association in the United States were greatly aided by the fact that the preliminary conference of the International held on September 25-29, 1865, in London, which was to prepare for the projected first international congress in Geneva in 1866, again concerned itself with the United States. The Conference finished its deliberations with an Address to the People of the United States, repeatedly expressing the hopes which the working class placed in the United States. This Address ran in part:

"Citizens of the great republic! . . . Today you are free, cleansed by your sorrows. A brighter future looms for your glorious Republic and teaches the Old World that a government of the people and by the people is a government for the people and not for a privileged minority. . . .

"We exhort you as brothers in a common cause to shatter every fetter on freedom, and your victory will be complete."<sup>54</sup>

The successful activity of the International Workingmen's Association also made it easier to lessen the influence of the Lassalleans in the United States. When the German section extended from Switzerland into Germany, its propaganda took on much wider proportions. It was able to publish a monthly organ of its own, *Der Vorbote* (*The Forerunner*), edited by J. P. Becker, and this was of considerable importance for the German-American workers. Through this paper, the life of the Association in Europe, its declarations and decisions were brought more closely to the German-American workers than had previously been the case with the other British and

French papers. Among other things the German section had written a memorandum for the preliminary London Conference, which contained a popular explanation of the tasks and aims of the Association and which was widely distributed. Marx's work in London also helped to popularize the tasks of the Association; among other things, his lecture "Value, Price and Profit" on June 26, 1865, before the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, presented as a refutation of the economic theories of John Weston, helped to deepen the outlook of the Association. Thus the members of the Communist Club in New York brought the General German Workers' Society closer and closer to the International Workingmen's Association, and from the end of 1866 they were able to determine its political line.<sup>55</sup>

Weydemeyer in St. Louis was able to bring under his influence the Chicago Workers' Society, which had also fallen under the sway of the Lassalleans. In Eduard Schlegel, a former Lassallean, Weydemeyer finally found a genuine exponent of his own point of view.<sup>56</sup>

In Geneva, Becker, who was preparing the first international congress of the Association, counted on the support of the workers' societies and other friends in the United States. On March 20, 1866, he asked Hermann Jung, a member of the General Council in London, for the address of the General German Workers' Society in New York, and at the same time he received the assurance once more that *Der Vorbote* was reaching America regularly.<sup>57</sup>

In April 1866 it was agreed to hold the congress of the International Workingmen's Association in September instead of June, in order to permit more thorough-going preparations.

#### LAST YEARS OF WEYDEMEYER'S LIFE

The state elections in Missouri in November 1864 broke the power of the Conservatives. Under the Radical Governor Fletcher, Missouri became one of the most progressive states on the side of the Union. The German-Americans who had

taken a vital part in safeguarding democracy in Missouri now took a leading role in developing a democratic state administration.

Weydemeyer, who had resumed his activity as an editor of the *Neue Zeit* in Missouri was elected County Auditor in St. Louis. In this office he sought to clear up the tax arrears of the war profiteers, mainly Copperheads and Conservatives, and to carry through democratic reforms in the tax laws. He took office on January 1, 1866. He handled the question of tax arrears so successfully that the Report of the State Auditor of the State of Missouri to the adjourned session of the 24th General Assembly 1866-67 praised the actions of the St. Louis County Auditor.<sup>58</sup>

In the closing years of the Civil War and immediately thereafter, the trade union movement expanded considerably. Almost every branch of industry saw the development of trade unions which did not merely limit themselves to local activity but extended far beyond state boundaries to include whole branches of industry. According to *Fincher's Trades' Review*, a pro-labor weekly, there were in December 1863 altogether 79 local trade union organizations embracing 20 various crafts; by December 1864 the figure had risen to 270, located in 16 different states and covering 53 various crafts. And by November 1865, there were 300 local unions in 61 different trades. This growth in trade union organization was the result of industrial expansion during the Civil War which went hand in hand with the worsening of living conditions for the workers. The cost of living rose by about 70 percent while wages rose only 30 percent. Closer-knit co-operation had become a vital issue for the workers, a question of safeguarding their standard of living and of asserting their position in society.

In 1865, shortly after the close of the Civil War, twelve representatives of different trade unions met in Louisville, Kentucky, to discuss their situation. It was here that the plan to summon a National Labor Congress in 1866 was born. Among those who for years had attempted to unify all trade union and labor organizations was an outstanding union leader, William

H. Sylvis, head of the Molders Union. On March 26, 1866, William Harding, a coachmaker from Brooklyn, and several other trade union representatives, met with Sylvis in his New York office to set a date for the National Labor Congress. The call, addressed to all labor organizations and urging them to send delegates to Baltimore, Maryland, on August 20, 1866, ran in part:

"The agitation of the question of eight hours as a day's labor has assumed an importance requiring concerted and harmonious action upon all matters appertaining to the inauguration of labor reforms and it is essential that a national congress be held to form a basis upon which we may harmoniously and concertedly move in its prosecution."<sup>59</sup>

In the past few years the trade union movement had made powerful forward strides in St. Louis, the city where Weydemeyer resided. The newly organized St. Louis unions took an active part in efforts to form a National Labor Union. Their representative, Claffin of the Carpenters Union, had participated in the Louisville meeting in 1865 which had launched the idea of a National Labor Union. Moreover, the workers of St. Louis had two newspapers, the *Industrial Advocate* and the *Daily St. Louis Press*, friendly to their cause. Obviously, Weydemeyer had a hand in the lively activity of the St. Louis labor movement, although concrete details as to the exact nature of his efforts are lacking. The fact that he wrote for the *Daily St. Louis Press*, indicates that he supported this attempt to unify labor nationally.

Another indication of his support lies in his close connections with the German Workingmen's Association in Chicago, which was represented in the movement for a National Labor Union by Eduard Schlegel. The German-language Chicago paper, *Die Reform*, highly praised at the National Labor Congress, must have numbered Weydemeyer among its contributors.<sup>60</sup> All the evidence tends to show that Weydemeyer was also familiar with the *Workingmen's Advocate*, a paper started

in Chicago by the printer, A. B. Cameron; and that he was personally acquainted with William H. Sylvis.

On August 20, 1866, the first National Labor Congress opened in Baltimore, Maryland. That same day Joseph Weydemeyer at the age of 48 died in St. Louis, victim of a cholera epidemic that had been raging for weeks. The man who for fifteen years had tirelessly fought for the American working class and furnished it with an indispensable weapon in its struggle, the teachings of Marx and Engels, passed away on the very day on which national co-operation among American workers in the fight for social and political demands became a reality.

The *New York Tribune* devoted an editorial to the Baltimore National Labor Congress in its August 21, 1866, issue. Declaring that it was an event far more significant than the convention of the Republican Party, held shortly before in Philadelphia with President Andrew Johnson present, it went on:

"Should the only result of this meeting be an expression of the heretofore unrepresented intelligence of our workingmen, we shall deem that the Convention has accomplished a good work."<sup>60</sup>

When the convention adjourned, the *Tribune* declared that it marked "an era in our history."<sup>61</sup>

Weydemeyer's Chicago friend, Eduard Schlegel, had vigorously demanded on the convention floor that the working class cut loose from the bourgeois parties—and he was elected by acclamation vice-president of the National Labor Union. The gathering passed the following resolution:

"Considering that the history and laws of the past have shown that we cannot place the slightest confidence in the promises and fine words of the existing political parties, in so far as the interests of the industrial classes are concerned—be it therefore resolved: that the time has come for the workers in the United States to break loose from all party fetters and



form their own national Labor Party, the aim of which shall be the passage of an eight-hour law."<sup>62</sup>

Two weeks later in Geneva, Switzerland, on September 3, 1866, the International Workingmen's Association at its first international congress formulated similar demands.

German Workers' Societies in Chicago, New York, St. Louis and elsewhere were not only the first sections of the International Workingmen's Association in the United States, they were also active groups in the National Labor Union. The result was that both organizations remained in close contact with each other. F. A. Sorge in his series of articles: "The Labor Movement in the United States," asserted that the successful activity of the Workers' Societies in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee was the fruit of many years of labor by Weydemeyer in those cities.<sup>63</sup>

Weydemeyer's son, Otto, carried on his father's worthy tradition in the American section of the International Workingmen's Association. In 1876, his name was among those signing the final declaration of the Association. In 1877, Otto Weydemeyer made the first English translation of a popular edition of Volume I of Karl Marx's *Capital*.

The simple parting tribute which the *Illinois Staatszeitung* paid on August 22, 1866, to its veteran collaborator, the pioneer of Marxism in the United States, is a fitting summation:

"They [Weydemeyer's deeds] assure him for all time an honorable place among the champions of freedom for all peoples."

## APPENDIX

### WEYDEMEYER'S PREFACE TO *THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE\**

Karl Marx<sup>\*</sup> has published a series of articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* entitled *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*, in which he sketches the revolutionary developments and the present situation in Germany.† In similar fashion he describes the situation in France in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*. The more vital and decisive is the role which France is destined to play in the European revolutions, the more important is it to give a correct appraisal of its relations of forces. Only in that way can the ground be cut from under the feet of those leaders of petty bourgeois democracy disappointed by the events of December 2, 1851, who raise their voices in heart-rending jeremiads and continually prostitute themselves before the outside world. France is and remains the land of revolutionary energy, and, although our Germany has wrested first place from France in intellectual and theoretical development, the latter country remains the center of gravity of revolutionary development. A literary camp follower, a certain Herr Telling, boasting in unseemly fashion of his university degrees from Berlin and Vienna, a former Vienna correspondent of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which Karl Marx published in Cologne, has recently had the audacity to assert that the articles published by Marx in the *Tribune* are a plagiarism of letters he had written earlier. After he had

\* This preface was written by Weydemeyer as an introduction to the publication of Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in Weydemeyer's paper *Die Revolution* (see pp. 39-43 of the present volume).

† The published correspondence of Marx and Engels later revealed that these articles were written by Engels (see Frederick Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter Revolution*, New York, 1933).

vainly peddled his slanderous pamphlet around all the German papers, he finally got the entree he wanted in Herr Karl Heinzen's sheet. That Karl Marx, both by the originality of his views, the result of deep and comprehensive studies, as well as by the classicism of his language stands far above the general run of political writers, is conceded even by his opponents. I would consider it below his and my own dignity to devote even a syllable to answering such a charge. But I deeply regret that I have not space enough in these pages to analyze a little more closely the activity of Karl Heinzen, a most loud-mouthed journalist who, like Falstaff, cravenly avoids meeting his opponents on the battlefield of argument when he cannot demolish his adversaries with his customary blustering and bellowing, and then bravely keeps on writing. I propose to devote my attention to this matter in the next issue. Herr Heinzen measures with his own standards the great men of his own party; but the journalist of a party always furnishes a more fitting criterion by which this party is judged.

J. Weydemeyer

New York, May 1, 1852

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- BANYA, JOHANN (1817-1868), Hungarian journalist and an international spy.
- BAUER, BRUNO (1809-1882), one of the leaders of the Young Hegelian movement in Germany.
- BECKER, HERMANN (1820-1885), member of the Communist League; later became Mayor of Cologne and member of the Prussian Upper House.
- BECKER, JOHANN PHILIPP (1809-1886), active from 1832 on in the democratic movement in South Germany; participated in the uprising in Baden; while in exile in Geneva reorganized the German labor movement.
- BEUST, FRIEDRICH (1817-1899), former Prussian officer; editor of the *New Cologne Gazette*; an exile in Switzerland.
- BLAIR, FRANCIS PRESTON (1821-1875), Republican member of Congress from Missouri; helped to save Missouri for the Union.
- BLIND, KARL (1826-1907), a democrat; editor of the *Karlsruhe Gazette*; participated in the Baden uprising; a political exile to London.
- BOERNSTEIN, HEINRICH (1805-1892), German publicist; founder of the *Paris Forward*; an exile in America where he was editor of the *St. Louis Western Reporter*, German language paper; fought in the Civil War.
- BROWN, BENJAMIN GRATZ (1826-1885), took part in founding the Republican Party in Missouri; a colonel in the Civil War; elected to the State Senate in 1863, later governor of Missouri.

- BUCHANAN, JAMES (1791-1868), fifteenth president of the United States.
- BUERGERS, HEINRICH (1820-1878), member of the editorial board of the *New Rhenish Gazette*; one of the leading defendants in the Cologne Communist trial; in the 1860's, however, became a National Liberal.
- CABET, ETIENNE (1788-1856), French utopian Communist; author of *Voyage en Icarie*.
- CLUSS, ALOPIL, member of the Communist League; friend of Marx and Engels; engineer at the U.S. Navy Yard, Washington, D.C.
- DANA, CHARLES ANDERSON (1819-1897), follower of Fourier; managing editor of the *New York Tribune* and later the *New York Sun*.
- DANIELS, RONALD DR. (1819-1855), physician in Cologne; member of the Communist League; intimate friend of Marx and Engels; defendant in the Cologne Communist trial.
- DULON, RUOOLPH (1807-1870), clergyman in Bremen; took part in the democratic movement in 1848; editor of the *Bremen Daily Chronicle*; founder and preacher of the "Free Community" in New York.
- DUNCKER, FRANZ GUSTAV (1822-1888), founder of the reformist Hirsch-Duncker trade unions; published Marx's book, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.
- ECCARIUS, J. GEORGE (1818-1889), tailor; member of the Communist League; general secretary of the First International.
- ENGELS, FREDERICK (1820-1895), co-founder with Marx of scientific socialism; Marx's life-long friend and closest collaborator.
- FEUERBACH, LUDWIG (1804-1872), German materialist philosopher; enjoyed great authority among Young Hegelians; influenced Marx and Engels during their early intellectual development.
- FLETCHER, THOMAS CLEMENT (1827-1899), jurist; after 1856 active member of the Republican Party; promoted to

- brigadier-general in the Civil War; Governor of Missouri in 1865-1869.
- FOURIER, CHARLES (1772-1837), leading theoretician of French utopian socialism.
- FREILIGRATH, FERDINAND (1810-1876), German revolutionary poet; collaborator on the *New Rhenish Gazette*.
- FREMONT, JOHN CHARLES (1813-1890), explorer; major-general in the Union army during the Civil War; Republican candidate for presidency in 1856.
- FROEBEL, JULIUS (1805-1893), radical publicist and veteran of the 1848 Revolution; later entered the Prussian diplomatic service.
- GARIBALDI, GIUSEPPE (1807-1882), fighter for freedom and national liberation of Italy; enjoyed great popularity in the United States.
- GRANT, ULYSSES SIMPSON (1822-1885), commander of the Union armies in the Civil War; won fame especially as a result of his conquest of Richmond; eighteenth president of the United States.
- GRUEN, KARL (1817-1887), publicist; one of the leading theoreticians of "true socialism" (see Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*).
- HALLECK, HENRY WAGER (1815-1872), West Point graduate; writer on military affairs; major-general in the Civil War in the Union army.
- HARNEY, GEORGE JULIAN (1817-1897), Chartist leader; friend of Marx and Engels.
- HEGEL, FRIEDRICH (1770-1831), great German classical philosopher; Hegel gave a new impetus to science by his development of the dialectical method.
- HEINZEN, KARL (1809-1880), democratic publicist; editor of several German-American newspapers.
- HILLGAERTNER, GEORG (1824-1865), born in the Rhenish Palatinate; in 1849 civil commissar in the provisional government of the Palatinate; from 1852 on, a journalist in America; in 1862 founded the *New Times*, German language paper, in St. Louis.

- JACKSON, CLAIRBORNE FOX (1806-1862), governor of Missouri in 1860; tried to get Missouri to join the South in 1861.
- JACOBI, ABRAHAM (1830-1919), physician in Cologne; member of the Communist League; one of the defendants in the Cologne Communist Trial; after his release from custody emigrated to the United States where he continued his activities as a doctor and writer.
- JACOBI, FRITZ, lawyer; participated in the uprising in Baden; came to America in 1852; in 1857 was vice-president of the Communist Club in New York; killed in the Civil War in 1861.
- JONES, ERNEST CHARLES (1819-1869), Chartist leader, lawyer, and poet.
- JUNG, HERMANN (1830-1901), watchmaker; member of the General Council of the First International.
- KAMM, FRIEDRICH, active in 1848-49 with Carl Schurz in the democratic movement in Bonn; chairman of the Communist Club in New York in 1857; died in 1867.
- KAPP, FRIEDRICH (1824-1884), democratic historian and political figure; later member of the Reichstag.
- KELLNER, GUSTAV, veteran of the Revolution of 1848; publisher of the *Hornet* in Kassel, Germany; published *Die Reform* in New York.
- KINKEL, GOTTFRIED JOHANN (1815-1882), poet and democratic political figure.
- KOCH, EDUARD FRIEDRICH IGNAZ, born in 1820 near Hildesheim, Germany; a German Catholic priest; participated in the uprising in Baden and the Palatinate; after 1851 speaker of the "Free Community" in New York; journalist.
- KOMP, ALBERT, representative of the firm of G. Vom Baur and Co. in New York; friend of Weydemeyer and founder of the Communist Club.
- KORFF, HERMANN, former Prussian officer; distributor of the *New Rhenish Gazette*; emigrated to America.
- LASSALLE, FERDINAND (1825-1864), German lawyer and Socialist; one of the founders of the German labor move-

- ment; writer and orator; exerted sectarian and reformist influence; involved in dealings with Bismarck.
- LIEBKNECHT, WILHELM (1826-1900), co-founder with August Bebel of the German Social-Democratic Party.
- LUENING, OTTO, born 1818; publisher of the *Westphalian Steamboat*; follower of the so-called "true Socialist" movement.
- LYON, NATHANIEL (1818-1861), fell in battle as a general on August 10, 1861, near Wilson's Creek.
- MARX, JENNY (VON WESTPHALEN), (1814-1881), wife of Karl Marx.
- MARX, KARL (1818-1883), founder of scientific socialism.
- MAZZINI, GIUSEPPE (1805-1872), Italian bourgeois-radical statesman.
- MCCLELLAN, GEORGE BRINTON (1826-1885), general in the Union Army; Democratic candidate against Lincoln in 1864.
- MEHRING, FRANZ (1846-1919), Marxist historian; co-founder of the Communist Spartacus League in 1918.
- MEYER, HERMAN (1821-1875), veteran of the Revolution of 1848; friend of Weydemeyer; founded a German section of the First International in St. Louis.
- MEYER, JULIUS, representative of so-called "true Socialism" in Westphalia; died in 1867.
- OLSHAUSEN, THEODOR (1802-1869), member of the provisional government in Schleswig-Holstein in 1848; emigrated to America in 1851; in 1860 became publisher of the *Western Post*, German language paper in St. Louis; returned to Europe in 1865.
- ORSINI, FELICE (1809-1858), Italian revolutionary; involved in an attempt to assassinate Napoleon III; executed.
- PALMERSTON, LORD HENRY JOHN TEMPLE (1784-1865), British Tory prime minister.
- PRICE, STERLING (1809-1867), Governor of Missouri in 1852; in 1861 entered the service of the Confederacy as commander of the Missouri state troops.

- REMPPEL, RUDOLPH, a Westphalian "true Socialist."
- ROESER, PETER GERHARDT (1814-1865), cigar-maker; member of the Communist League.
- ROSECRANS, WILLIAM STARKE (1819-1898), major-general in the Union Army during the Civil War; displayed great ability as a strategist.
- SCHAPPER, KARL (1813-1870), one of the founders of the London Communist Workers Educational Society; member of the Communist League.
- SCHNEIDER, GEORGE (1823-1905), journalist in the Palatinate until 1848, participated in the uprising there; after 1851 editor of the *Illinois State Gazette* in Chicago, which he made into the most popular German language daily paper in the Middle West.
- SCHOFIELD, JOHN McALLISTER (1831-1906), West Point graduate; mustering-out officer for Missouri in 1861; later Major-General in Missouri.
- SCHURZ, CARL (1829-1906), took part in the 1848 Revolution in Germany; later prominent American statesman.
- SEILER, SEBASTIAN (about 1810-1890), member of the Communist League; after 1849 lived in London and the United States.
- SIGEL, FRANZ (1824-1902), revolutionary in Baden; major-general in the Union Army during the Civil War.
- SMITH, ADAM (1723-1790), English economist; author of *The Wealth of Nations*.
- SORGE, FRIEDRICH ADOLPH (1828-1906), participant in the Baden uprising; emigrated to the United States; one of the early Marxist leaders and general secretary of the First International when the headquarters were moved to the United States in 1872.
- STANDAU, JULIUS, language teacher; veteran revolutionist during the 1830's and 40's; acquaintance of Engels; co-editor of the *Voice of the People* in Chicago.
- STRUVE, GUSTAV (1805-1870), writer; one of the leaders of the revolution in Baden.
- VOGT, KARL (1817-1895), scientist; member of the Frankfurt

- National Assembly; later exposed by Marx as an agent of Napoleon III.
- WEITLING, WILHELM (1808-1871), founder of working class utopian communism in Germany in the early forties.
- WESTON, JOHN, carpenter; follower of Robert Owen, member of the General Council of the First International; see Karl Marx, Introduction to *Value, Price, and Profit*.
- WILLICH, AUGUST (1810-1878), former Prussian lieutenant; leader in the Baden uprising; member of the Communist League; distinguished himself as a general in the Union Army during the Civil War.
- WOLFF, WILHELM (1809-1864), language teacher in Silesia; member of the Communist League; co-editor of the *New Rhenisch Gazette*; an intimate friend of Marx and Engels; Marx dedicated the first volume of *Capital* to him.
- YOUNG, JOHN RUSSELL (1840-1899), American journalist; editor of the *New York Standard* (1870-72); accompanied General Grant in 1877 on his trip around the world.

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