

**KARL MARX:  
BIOGRAPHICAL  
MEMOIRS**

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Karl Marx: Biographical Memoirs by Wilhelm Liebknecht

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**WILHELM LIEBKNECHT**

**KARL MARX:  
BIOGRAPHICAL  
MEMOIRS**



# Karl Marx

## Biographical Memoirs

BY

WILHELM LIEBKNECHT

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*Translated by* ERNEST UNTERMANN

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*FOURTH THOUSAND*



CHICAGO  
CHARLES H. KERR & COMPANY  
264 E. KINZIE STREET  
1908

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Copyright, 1901

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

In my translation I have endeavored to preserve as much of the delightful freshness and racy strength of Lieb knecht's style as I could without doing violence to the spirit of the English language. If I have succeeded in saving enough of the charm of the original to make the reader forget that he is reading a translation I shall be well awarded for my exertions. For I shall then feel that the English-speaking comrades, while coming closer to Marx through Lieb knecht, are brought nearer to Lieb knecht by me. What better recompense could I find?

I am indebted to Comrades A. M. Simons and Charles H. Kerr for valuable suggestions.

E. UNTERMANN,

Switzerland, Florida, December, 1900.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

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"Better is the enemy of Good" is an old commonplace, but like most commonplaces, it nevertheless contains a truth, behind which I retire for shelter in presenting the following little book. A hundred times I have been asked to write about Marx and my personal relations to him, but I have always declined to do so. And declined from—how shall I call it?—a certain holy awe—or how shall I express myself more correctly?—from reverence of Marx. Noblesse oblige. And a Marx imposes weighty obligations. Could I do him justice? Had I the ability? Had I the time? Under the continually growing pressure of work I was condemned to haste, to superficial working. And a eulogistic daubery, with Marx for its object, that would be an insulting lack of respect.

But I was being pressed harder and harder; my hesitation was met by the arguments, that a quickly executed sketch need not necessarily be a eulogistic daubery; that I should be able to say a good many things about and of Marx that nobody else could say; that anything bringing Marx nearer to our workers, to our party, would

be valuable; and that in a case where there was only a choice between an incomplete publication of the sort that I alone could offer, or nonpublication of what I was able to say, the former surely deserved preference—even though it were only the lesser of two evils.

And finally, I had to admit this myself. In the meantime, Engels also has died; the only one who was associated nearly as much and as intimately as myself with Marx, the man and his family, during the London exile up to the beginning of the sixties. From the summer of 1850 until the beginning of the year 1862, when I felt a longing to return to Germany, I was almost daily and for years nearly all day in the house of Marx, forming a part of his family. Of course, many others besides myself found admission there. For naturally the house of Marx—consisting before he moved into the cottage of Maitland Park Road, of a modest floor in modest Dean street, Soho Square—was a pigeon-loft, where a multitude of various Bohemian, fugitive and refugee folk went in and out, little, great and greatest animals. It was furthermore the natural center of all settled comrades. True, a settled abode was a very elusive possibility. In London it was extremely difficult to obtain a secure livelihood, and the hunger drove

most of the fugitives into the country or to America, providing it did not make short work by giving to the poor devil of a fugitive, if not an abode, at least a permanent place in a London graveyard. I lived through it, and I was, with the exception of the faithful Lessner and the no less faithful Lochner, who, however, could only come less frequently, the only one of the London "community" who, during the whole time—with only a short interruption to be mentioned later in the sketches—frequented the house of "MOHR"\* (negro)—the nickname of Marx—like a member of the family. Under these circumstances, one cannot help learning and seeing more than others.

Marx, the man of science, the editor of the "Rheinische Zeitung" (Journal of the Rhine), one of the founders of the "Deutsch-Franzoesischen Jahrbuecher" (German-French Annals), one of the authors of the Communist Manifesto, the creator of "Capital"—this Marx belongs to publicity, he stands forth before the whole world, the target of criticism, challenging critique, not hiding the smallest wrinkle to the searching eye—were I to attempt writing about this Marx, then I should be guilty of a reckless

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\*The coal black hair, mustache and beard of Marx earned this nickname for him.—Translator.