

THE DOUBLE LIFE OF FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Roy Whitfield



Friedrich Engels in 1839, aged 19.

'The Condition of the Working Class in England' remains one of the most powerful and influential accounts of British society during the industrial revolution in general, and Manchester in particular. It was written by Friedrich Engels, best known as friend and collaborator of Karl Marx, from material collected while staying in Manchester during 1842-4. Published at Leipzig in 1845 the book was, with the exception of a dedication to 'The Working Classes of Great Britain', entirely in German; an English translation did not become available in this country until 1892. Although during this century Engels' book has become well known to local and national historians and to a wider public, many aspects of his life in Manchester still remain obscure.

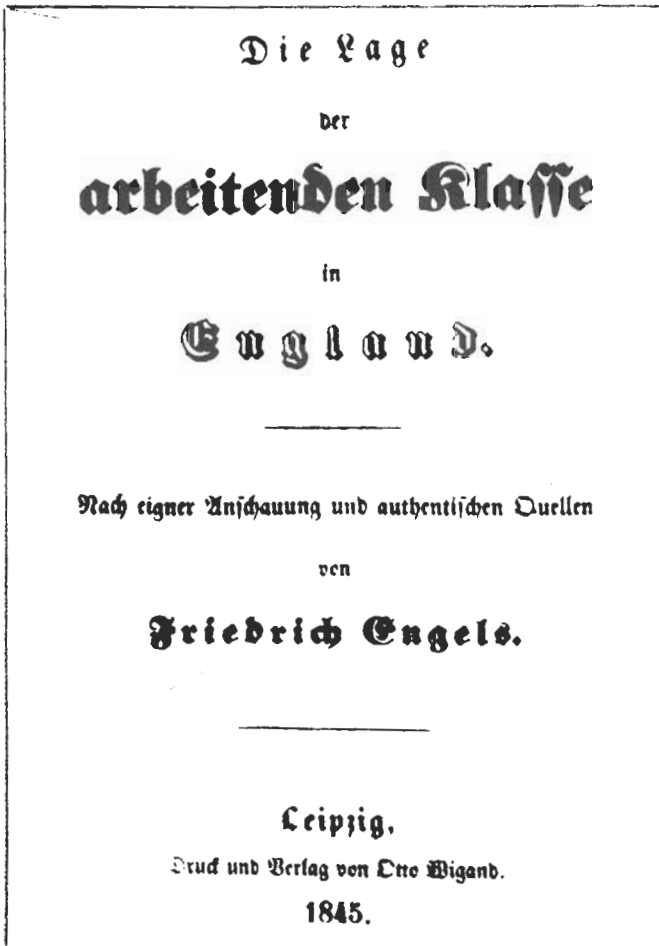
After his death in 1895, almost forty years elapsed before the appearance of the first major biographical study written by Gustav Mayer and published in Germany in 1934.¹ This provided some information about Engels' life in Manchester during 1842 to 1844 and between 1850 and 1870 but elementary questions were unanswered. Later still the publication of the Marx-Engels correspondence provided the basis for a more detailed investigation of Engels' life and activities in Manchester. This resulted in Mick Jenkins' *Frederick Engels in Manchester* (1951) and in 1957 a similarly titled work by W.O. Henderson & W.H. Chaloner.² Following the publication of a new translation of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1958, historians debated fiercely the reliability of Engels as a witness of industrial capitalism.³ Grace Carlton's study *Friedrich Engels: The Shadow Prophet* appeared in 1965. In the 1970s a full scale biography was published by W.O. Henderson⁴ whilst Steven Marcus

provided a detailed and imaginative interpretation of the Manchester evidence contained in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.⁵

These studies clarified the main aspects of Engels' personality and life in early and mid-Victorian Manchester. In these years it was evident that Engels' life in Manchester was marked by a dualism — in public he was a middle-class businessman living in 'official' lodgings, a member of various clubs and the Cheshire Hunt; in private he was a revolutionary writer, a journalist and friend of Karl Marx, and sharing, when possible, an 'unofficial' home with Mary Burns and her younger sister, Elizabeth (Lydia). The entry to this 'unofficial' area was provided initially by the search for the house numbered 252 Hyde Road, Manchester, from which Engels had addressed a letter to Marx in December 1862. Nothing more was intended than to discover its location and to photograph it if it still remained in place. However, the unexpected facts revealed by an examination of the early Poor Rate Books and Street Directories led to a continuation of the search back and forth in time and place using, additionally, census returns and local newspapers, until a complete picture was established of aspects of Engels' personal life which had not hitherto been fully explored.

When Engels arrived in Manchester in November 1842, it was his father's intention that he should be fully occupied in completing his training for a career in the cotton industry and in safeguarding the Engels' interest in the Ermen & Engels mill at Weaste, Salford, whose construction some years earlier had been facilitated by the injection of Engels' family capital. At the same time — and illustrating the dualism that characterised his years in Manchester — the young Engels pursued his own interest by making contact with various working-class leaders, Chartists and trade unionists. He frequented the recently opened Hall of Science at Campfield, Deansgate and met many of the leading figures of Owenite socialism including the secularist John Watts and the printer and Chartist James Leach. He travelled to Leeds to meet George Julian Harney, then sub-editor of the *Northern Star* the most widely read Chartist newspaper, who later observed that Engels was 'a slender young man with a look of almost boyish immaturity who spoke remarkably pure English and said that he was keenly interested in the Chartist movement'.⁶ In Manchester Engels also began his investigations into the housing and factory conditions of local working-class people by personal encounters, reading official reports and by visits. In this he was assisted by Mary Burns, a young mill-worker of Irish parentage whom he had met soon after his arrival. She acted as his informant and guide through the warrens of the squalid working-class streets behind Deansgate, the Little Ireland area near Oxford Road and the Irish Town district close to Rochdale Road, all of which it would probably have been unsafe to enter unaccompanied. It was this evidence which provided the basis for some of the most memorable sections of his book.

Although substantial parts of *The Condition of the Working Class in England* are based upon 'what I have



Dust-jacket of the first edition of *The Condition of the Working Class in England*.

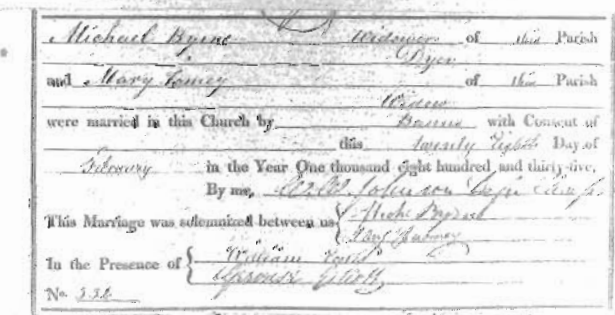
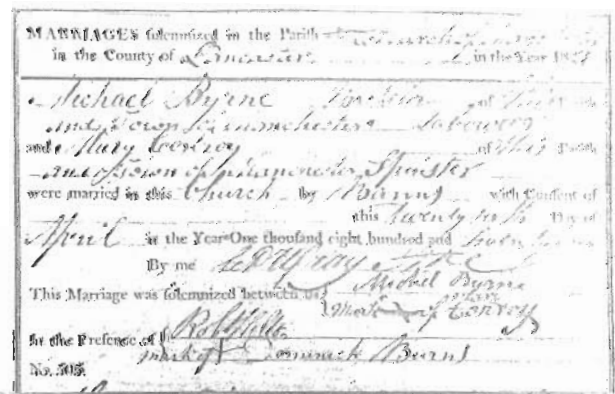
seen and heard myself'. Engels rarely puts in specific personal details and none of his personal correspondence of that period has survived, so that it is not known where he lived in Manchester. The only clue is given in his book where he stated that 'There was a calico printworks not far from my lodgings where work went on far into the night. When I got home the building was still lit up'.⁷ An examination of Pigot & Slater's Manchester Directory (1843) lists over 150 firms under this trade heading though only three had printworks within Manchester. In view of Engels' lodging in Great Ducie Street, Strangeways, when he returned to Manchester in 1850, and the proximity of this address to the Ermen & Engels offices at No.2 Southgate, Deansgate, one is tempted to speculate that the printworks referred to in this passage is that of Heald, Wilson & Co. in Strangeways, and that Engels was lodging in the vicinity.

Mary Burns has also proved difficult for historians to trace. She was unlikely to have been, 'short, dumpy and badly formed, decidedly ugly in the whole development of the figure' as were the girls in the Victoria Mill at Weaste.⁸ It seems that Engels met her in 1843 and for twenty years she was his wife in all but name until her sudden death aged forty in January 1863. To identify the Burns family was a lengthy business. The only documentary evidence of her parentage is provided by the marriage certificate of Engels and her younger sister Lydia of September 1878 which names her father as 'Michael Burns, dyer'. This was a valuable clue inasmuch as it meant that other records could be searched; in this case the marriage registers of Manchester Collegiate Church (now the Cathedral) were revealing. A 'Michael Byrne' was identified who had two marriage records, the first in 1821 and the second as a widower in 1835, each

with a recognisably identical signature. Subsequently baptismal records of children of these marriages — in St. Mary's and St. Chad's, placed the Byrne (Burns) family in the Deansgate area. From a variety of sources; the various church registers, the Poor Rate Books and census returns the basic facts about the Burns family emerged. Michael Burns (Byrne) married Mary Conroy on 26 April 1821. There were four children of whom only the first, Mary, and the last Elizabeth, survived infancy. The family lived first in a cellar at 24 Eltoft Street for which a rent of 2s.6d. a week was paid. Later they moved to other addresses, all in the same area of Deansgate. Mary Burns then, had first-hand knowledge of Police District 13 the area on the western side of Deansgate between Quay Street and Bridge Street of which Engels was to write so scathingly.

When his first wife died Michael Burns married Mary Tuomy on 28 February 1835 and of three children of this marriage only the first survived. Neither Mary nor Elizabeth, children of the first marriage were living with the family now in Thompson Street, Deansgate at the time of the 1841 Census. In the belief that Mary Burns was probably his main informant on such matters one is tempted to read into various passages of Engels' account, descriptions of situations which could relate directly to the Burns' household and to the Irish in general — the filth, the overcrowding and the addiction to drink.⁹ Equally Engels' comment on the propensity of young people to leave their parents when they were earning sufficient to become independent, may have been inspired by Mary's experiences.¹⁰

Mary Burns was fourteen-years-old in 1835; she had probably been working in a cotton mill since the age of nine and her father had remarried. Perhaps because of friction with the stepmother and the drunkenness of the father both girls emancipated themselves by leaving home. The 1841 Census records a Mary Burn, female



Michael Byrne's marriage certificates (1821, 1835) showing the same signatures.

servant, aged twenty, living in the home of a master painter at 305 Deansgate. There is an Elizabeth Burne, aged fifteen, at 70 Faulkner Street, also a domestic servant. In all the legible 1841 census returns for Manchester and Salford these two servants came closest to matching the identities of the two sisters. In later years both sisters acted as housekeepers for Engels and also supervised rented apartments so they must have gained experience for this work after leaving the parental home. It is difficult to resist the thought that it was Mary's own experiences upon which Engels was drawing when he wrote that 'a girl who has worked in a mill from her ninth year is in no position to understand domestic work whence it follows that female operatives prove wholly inexperienced and unfit as housekeepers. They cannot knit or sew, cook or wash, are unacquainted with the most ordinary duties of a housekeeper...' ¹¹ If this speculation is correct, it throws a light on the sturdiness of character of Mary Burns that she was able to rescue herself and her sister from the morass of District No. 13 by the exercise of initiative and her native ability. She must also have possessed a very attractive personality. She held Engels' devoted affection in their twenty-year attachment and Karl Marx referred to her as 'very good natured and witty'. ¹²

Engels left Manchester in August 1844 and Mary stayed behind. He returned with Marx for a few weeks in the summer of 1845, using Chetham's Library to consult the works of early English economists. Mary returned with him to Brussels, staying a year before coming back to England. Engels spent the next years in writing and revolutionary agitation. In 1847-8 he and Marx drew up the *Communist Manifesto*. When revolution broke out in Germany, he fled to France to escape arrest. He returned to Germany in 1849 as military adviser to the insurgents in the Wupper valley but after the defeat of the uprisings by the Prussian army, he took refuge in Switzerland and finally rejoined Marx in London in November 1849. A year later largely through financial necessity, he was persuaded to accept his father's offer of a clerical post in

the office of Ermen & Engels and he returned to Manchester in November 1850.

The chief source of information concerning Engels' addresses and activities in Manchester from 1850 until his departure in 1870 is his correspondence with Marx in London and the volumes of the *Marx-Engels Werke* contain more than 1,300 letters of the two friends. However at various points in the correspondence it becomes clear that the writers are using veiled language, understandable to each other but not to an outsider. Both Marx and Engels suspected that their mail was being subjected to surveillance by the English authorities acting in collaboration with the Prussian police whose spies kept checks on the activities of political refugees. After the house search and arrest of a communist friend, Dr. Roland Daniels, in Cologne, Daniels wrote to Marx warning that it could also happen in England. Unfortunately for the historian, Marx wrote on 16 June 1851 to suggest that Engels burn some letters and safeguard the important items. By October 1852 the two were arranging more secure ways of corresponding with each other — Marx was to write to 'our old friend James Belfield, Golden Lion, Deansgate, the envelope inside (marked) "F.E." nothing more'. ¹³ Such precautions underline the dualism of Engels' life in Manchester where on one level he was operating in the public world of commerce; associating with business colleagues; a member of the Athenaeum, the Albert Club and the Schiller-Anstalt, a keen attender of Charles Halle's Gentlemen's Concerts; and on another level he was working with Marx on the formulation of revolutionary concepts, which looked forward to the displacement of industrial capitalism. This duality was further deepened by his personal attachment to Mary Burns, and the need he felt to separate their lives from those of his middle-class acquaintances.

Leading this dual life also entailed stresses on Engels' financial resources. In Manchester he had to meet the cost of his own lodgings, as well as supporting Mary Burns and her sister. In addition he was sending payments regularly

Parish or Township of		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of	
Whittham		Collegiate Ch		Manchester					
Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1861	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of	Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether Blind, Deaf, and Dumb		
54 Great Ducie St 71	Elizabeth Jones	servant	spin	21	General Servant	Manchester, Liverpool			✓
	James Hurst	He	man	47	agent	Ireland			✓
	Ferdina Hurst	Wife	man	24		do			✓
	Jane Hurst	Daughter	W	16		do			✓
	Chas Hurst	son	96	14	Scholar	do			✓
	William Hurst	son	96	12	do	do			✓
	James Hurst	son	96	8	do	do			✓
	Henry Hurst	Servant	96	6		Manchester, Manchester			✓
	Henry Hurst	son	96	4		Ireland			✓
	Ferdina Hurst	Servant	96	1		Manchester, Manchester			✓
	Luiza Federman	Servant	96	22	House Servant	Ireland			✓
	Henry de Francis	Servant	96	22	do	do			✓
64 Great Ducie St 49	Isabella Nathan	Head	spin	51	Wearing House Keeper	Yorkshire, Rothwell			✓
	John Nathan	son	96	26	Woolcomber, Clogger	do, Rothwell			✓
	Henry Nathan	do	96	24	Clogger, Wristle Dealer	do, do			✓
	Thomas Nathan	Widow	96	16	Wristle Dealer, Scholar	do, Rothwell			✓
	Charles Vincent	Widow	96	20	Salesman (Woolcomber)	Liddon, London			✓
	Frank Vincent	do	96	18	Servant	Germany			✓
65 Great Ducie St 69	David Edmondson	Head	spin	57	Retired Callender	Yorkshire, Leeds			✓
	Frances Edmondson	Wife	spin	57		do, Barnsley			✓
Total of Houses		Total of Persons		11		11		11	

Extract from 1851 Census enumerator's returns showing Engels at 70 Great Ducie Street.

to London so that Marx could continue his work on the analysis of industrial capitalism. After Engels' return to Manchester, Marx's wife, Jenny, addressed a letter to him, on 19 December 1850 at 70 Great Ducie Street. The 1851 census of 30 March, shows that Engels and another male lodger were boarding at this address in Strangeways with Mrs. Isabella Tatham and her family of two adult sons and a younger nephew. Writing to Marx on 29 January, Engels refers to her as 'the old witch of a landlady' after subjecting her to 'some sharp cross-examination' when she had misplaced one of Marx's earlier letters — a further instance of Engels' sensitivity about the security of his mail.

There is evidence from Engels' letters dating from Spring 1853 that he was intent upon moving from Great Ducie Street. A letter dated 4 March 1853 stating that 'a reform of my personal expenses becomes urgent' provides a motive. A later letter, dated 26 April is somewhat enigmatic. It invites Marx to visit him but for the first time mentions 'my house' rather than lodgings. It is no clearer however by 1 May 1854 when Engels confided to Marx, 'I have gone round with him (Heise) more than anyone and, because the philistines have discovered my life with Mary and an end must be put to the matter, have even rented a house next door to him but have not yet removed'. (Heinrich Heise was a German refugee who had come to Manchester from London where he was an associate of Marx.)

In an attempt to establish more precisely where Engels was living it was necessary to have recourse to sources which might mention him. A prolonged search through the Poor Rate Books for Chorlton-on-Medlock revealed a Frederick Mann Burns, occupying 17 Burlington Street from April 1853 and also that the same person rented a newly built house, 27 Cecil Street in 1854 but had vacated it by July 1855. Slater's *Manchester Directory* for 1855 also lists a Frederick Mann Burns, traveller, at 27 Cecil Street, Chorlton-on-Medlock. If this was, as will be argued later, a pseudonym of Frederick Engels, how could these moves have solved the financial problems mentioned in the letter of 4 March 1853? Once again it was possible to find a tentative answer from sources, this time from the *Manchester Guardian* advertisement columns. On 23 April 1853 there appeared an advertisement: 'A gentleman can be accommodated with apartments in Burlington Street, Greenheys, by a family not accustomed to keep lodgers and where there are no children; terms 12 shillings a week; with partial board one guinea'. Another similar advertisement in the same paper, specifically for 17 Burlington Street, appeared on 17 December, 1853. The 8, 15 and 29 April 1854 issues carried advertisements: 'One or two gentlemen could be accommodated with a front parlour lighted with gas and one or two bedrooms and bathroom at 27 Cecil Street, Greenheys'. If this information is linked to the letters quoted earlier what seems to have happened was that instead of moving from Great Ducie Street to cheaper lodgings Engels attempted to resolve his financial problems by giving up lodgings altogether and renting the house 17 Burlington Street using an assumed name. Here Mary Burns and her sister acted as housekeepers with the additional responsibility of maintaining part of the house as apartments for one or two lodgers. This house was located about fifty yards from Oxford Road and just beyond where the Moberley Tower is sited today. Unfortunately his business acquaintances — 'the philistines' — discovered Engels' domestic arrangements and to rid himself of this embarrassment he rented a new and rather larger house at Cecil Street close to Denmark

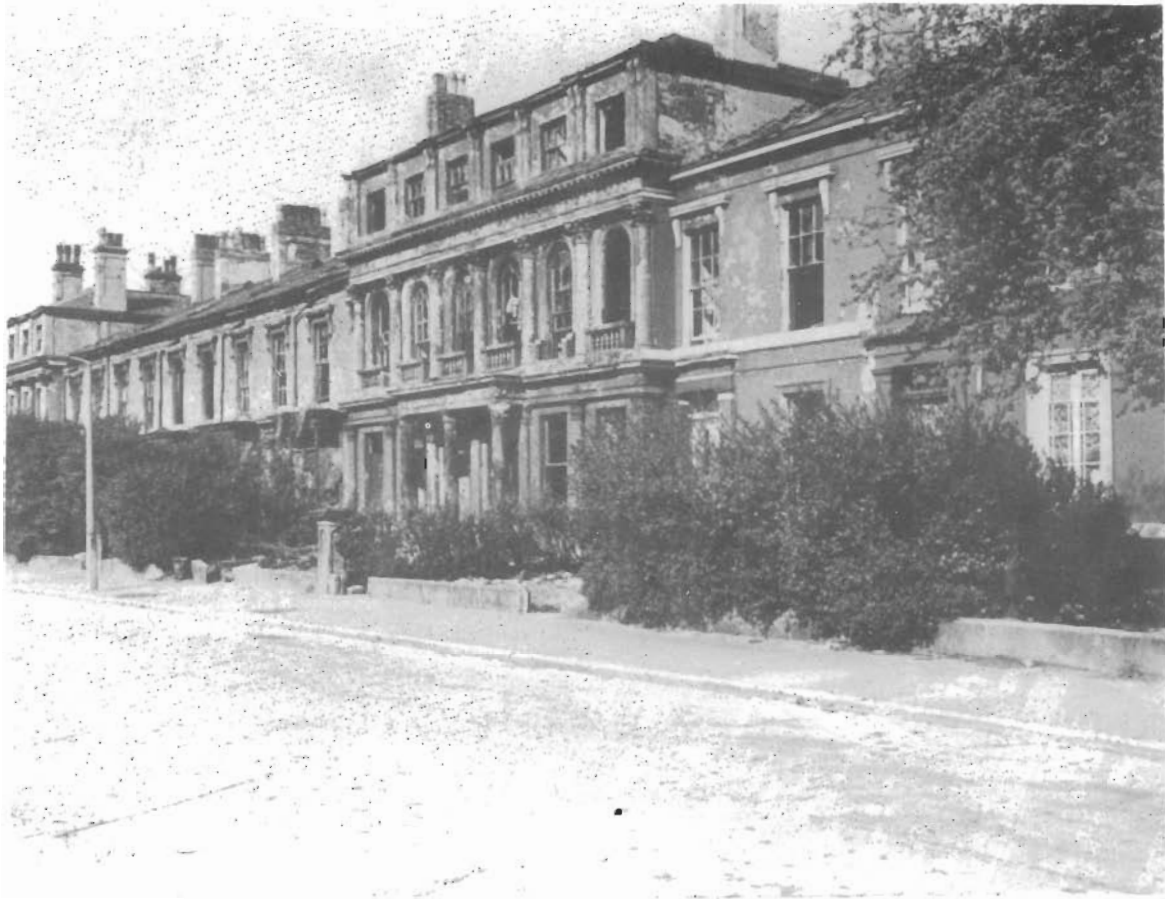
Road and Whitworth Park, where again the Burns sisters could let the front rooms as apartments and so help reduce his financial problems.

The Moss Side Poor Rate Book shows that in June 1855, Frederick Mann Burns was the occupant of Willow Bank, Moss Side — an address which later became Grove House, 374 Moss Lane East, situated between Maine Road and Upper Lloyd Street. He rented this double-fronted three-storeyed villa until the middle of 1859. There are no *Manchester Guardian* entries advertising apartments at this specific address but there are a number at various dates naming Moss Grove which could be relevant, asking respondents to "apply at the printers".

Meantime changes were happening at Ermen & Engels. After Peter Ermen had retired in 1853 the partnership between Godfrey Ermen and Engels senior had been renewed. Under a nine-year contract running from June 1855, Engels the younger benefited considerably. From £263 per annum in 1855 his income rose to £1,059 by 1859. This helps to explain those moves detailed earlier, ending with his occupancy of the villa in Moss Side. He was from now on, also able to afford to maintain lodgings where his business colleagues could be received. In his letter to Marx of 30 April 1858, he mentions this address, 'I will see that a bed in my house is free ... come immediately to No.6 Thorncliffe Grove, Oxford Road'. In this case, 'my house' would be Grove House, Moss Side, where Marx would be accommodated but he was first to proceed to Engels' official lodgings at 6 Thorncliffe Grove.

In fact when he left Burlington Street for Cecil Street in 1854, Engels had provided himself with 'official' lodgings in Walmer Street in Rusholme, before moving two years later with his landlord, Charles Lee, to the newly built 6 Thorncliffe Grove. This remained his address for the next eight years when on 29 October 1864, the *Manchester Guardian* carried this advertisement, 'A gentleman who leaves his lodgings after ten years' residence wishes to recommend them to others. For further particulars apply at 6 Thorncliffe Grove, Oxford Road'. (This address no longer exists but the site of the house and Engels' residence there, is commemorated by a blue plaque on the end wall of Aberdeen House, one of the Whitworth Park blocks of University of Manchester students' accommodation). From there Engels moved only a short distance to fresh lodgings at 58 Dover Street close to Oxford Road which was the address from which Marx wrote letters in January 1865 while staying with Engels. Two years later in January 1867, Engels moved across the road to 25 Dover Street where he shared apartments with his great friend Samuel Moore.

However this was only one of Engels' residences. Where were the Burns sisters after Engels had left Grove House in mid-1859? In a letter to Marx dated 28 February 1862 during the Lancashire Cotton Famine Engels was still indicating that he had to be careful with his money, 'I live nearly all the time with Mary so as to save money. Unfortunately I cannot manage without (private) lodgings if I could I would live with her all the time'. By December his letter of the 30th was addressed from 252 Hyde Road. His pseudonym was now Frederick Boardman — the Ardwick Rate Book has this name at the Hyde Road address. This was confirmed by the 1863 directory entry which has 'Mary Boardman' as the householder. She died suddenly on January 7 of that year 'of heart disease or a stroke' according to Engels. That Engels was using this pseudonym is quite clear when confirmed from other sources. The Chorlton-on-Medlock Rate Books for 1863 and 1864 have this name at 4 Tennant Street which was the address Engels used when



Cecil Street, Greenheys. Engels rented No. 61, the house to the left of the two large houses in the centre, from 1866 to 1868.

he wrote to Marx on 2 September 1864. There is also Marx's own and previously puzzling postscript to his letter of 27 May 1862. 'Meine Grusse an Mrs. Bortmann and sister'.

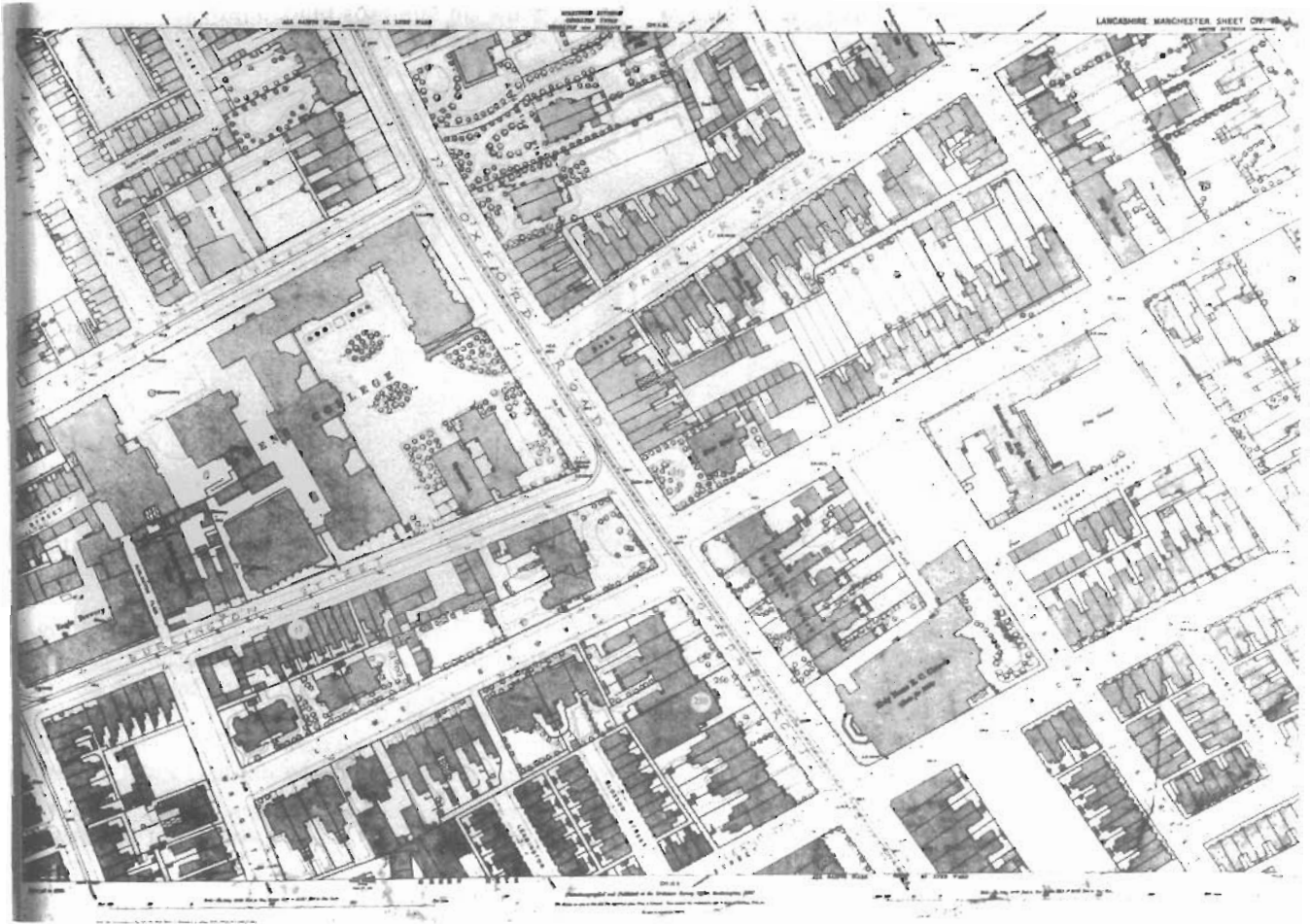
Once Engels' pseudonym was established it became possible to check further to discover his movements during this period. Two sources confirm that a Frederick Boardman lived at 7 Rial Street, Hulme. Slater's *Manchester Directory* (1861) has him as 'bookkeeper' and Hulme Rate Books show him as paying a rent of 3s. 11d. from the summer of 1859. The 1861 census enumerator's returns have at the Rial Street address. Mary Boardman, wife, aged 38, born in Manchester. She is entered as a 'commercial traveller's wife! Elizabeth Byrne her sister, aged 34, was recorded as living there also. Engels was meantime being registered half-a-mile away at Thorncliffe Grove. This description of Mary Boardman also provides a link with the Frederick Mann Burns, traveller, of 27 Cecil Street mentioned earlier and recorded in Slater's *Manchester Directory* (1855). The change of pseudonym from Burns to Boardman coincided with the removal from a middle-class to a working-class district and seems intended to cover his tracks. The two-up two-down, terraced house typical of thousands built for working-class habitation was a far cry from his Moss Side villa. Perhaps Engels was economising so that he could continue to help Marx. It is also possible that Mary was not able to manage housekeeping and supervise the apartments as well. But this can only be speculation.

After Mary's unexpected death, her younger sister Elizabeth, supervised the household. By May 1863 they had moved to Tennant Street and in August moved again to 86 Mornington Street, Stockport Road, Chorlton-on-Medlock, from which address Engels wrote to Marx on 2 September. 'We have left our house in Tennant Street and since a fortnight ago we have been five hundred yards

away in a somewhat larger house with two sitting rooms downstairs. Elizabeth Burns is named as occupier of 86 Mornington Street in the following years' Rate Book but the Manchester directories refer to her as Mrs. Lydia Burns.

In 1869 Engels was planning to withdraw his capital from the cotton firm and to retire from the business life to which for nearly twenty years he had sacrificed so many of his earlier ambitions. On 4 April he wrote to tell Marx so and by 1 July 1869 he had withdrawn from his partnership with Ermens. Once done there was no need to maintain the double life he had kept up for so long and the future years would be that much less complicated. But evidence of this dualism remained — it is known that after Marx died, Engels went through their correspondence and destroyed many letters referring to himself. Between 1853 and 1863 the volumes of *Marx-Engels Werke* contain 403 letters from Marx but only 185 from Engels. These were the years between the removal from the lodgings in Strangeways and the final settlement in Mornington Street. It seems clear that his purpose was to remove all references to his personal life with Mary Burns and to the methods he had employed to try to disguise his dual existence during his years in Manchester.

The other major destruction of material referred to in this account has occurred within the last twenty-five years with the demolition of every house Engels rented or where he lodged. Mainly they were situated within the inner ring beyond the city centre which in recent times has been subject to wholesale demolition and subsequent redevelopment. Post-war extensions of Manchester University buildings in the Chorlton-on-Medlock area, clearance and redevelopment in Hulme, Ardwick and Longsight have removed all traces of these properties so that today not a single one remains. Only a few public



This map shows Burlington Street where Engels rented accommodation in 1853 and Dover Street where he had rooms from 1865-69.

buildings such as Chetham's Library, still stand largely unaltered as reminders of Engels' association with Manchester. At Weaste the towering chimney of the factory alongside the M602 motorway between Eccles and Salford dominates the area but the buildings within the site have been extended or rebuilt and only a small portion of the original Ermen & Engels mill of 1837 remains.

The picture of Engels which emerges from this investigation is of someone who put steadfast loyalty to his convictions, to a communist cause and to his intimate friends before everything else. His family was middle-class, factory owning, royalist, religiously orthodox. But from his early years Engels developed radical beliefs which placed him in conflict with his family, his upbringing and his class. He arrived in Manchester in 1842 with a dual purpose — to satisfy the wishes of his father but also to increase his understanding of the lives of working people in a new industrial society where social revolution through the strength of the Chartists seemed imminent. In 1850 he returned to Manchester as a revolutionary emigre and as he never acquired British naturalisation, it was necessary for him to secure his position here by the constant exercise of caution. His return to the distasteful world of business was the price he accepted in order to support Marx financially for the sake of the advancement of the communist cause. During his Manchester years, the continuation of that cause was paramount, to which other matters were subordinated. His business relationship with the Ermens lacked mutual trust and cordiality and when Engels' father died in 1860, Godfrey Ermen would have liked to force the son out of the business. Not until 1864 was a partnership agreement

finally concluded and only then did Engels feel that his financial position was more secure. His role as a businessman required him to socialise with the 'philistines'; his membership of the Cheshire Hunt; the part he played in the social and cultural life of the German community in Manchester at the Albert Club and the Schiller-Anstalt; all these formed one part of his activities in Manchester during the 1850s and 1860s.

His other life revolved around his collaboration with Karl Marx and the sharing with other friends in Manchester his communist ideas and revolutionary convictions. There was also his home life with Mary Burns, a relationship which was central to his Manchester years and which helps to account for his secretive and peripatetic lifestyle. Unlike the Marx-Engels relationship, historians have tended to show less interest in that between Engels and Mary Burns. Yet, leaving aside its evident romantic dimension, it is hard to resist the idea that Engels' views on the Irish and on marriage and the relationship between the sexes were developed without discussion with Mary Burns. For example, Engels' study *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) with its condemnation and rejection of the male-dominated institution of bourgeois marriage and its support of proletarian marriage with its more democratic relationship between the sexes take on a fresh significance when placed in the context of his relationship with Mary Burns. Engels, however, was unable to reconcile the public and the private aspects of his life in Manchester. To him they were incompatible; they could exist only in separation and it was necessary to erect an insulation between these two worlds. As the frequent moves to new lodgings and houses confirmed or suggested in this



Friedrich Engels in 1891, aged 71.

investigation indicate, this was not entirely successful but it did provide a temporary if leaky solution until Engels withdrew from the Manchester business world in 1869.

In September 1870 Engels finally left Manchester and settled in London at 122 Regent's Park Road and where today a blue plaque commemorates his residence. It was there that he married Lydia Burns by special licence as she lay on her deathbed. 'To please her, Engels married her legally...' as Eleanor Marx wrote.¹⁴ Lydia died some hours later on 12 September 1878 and lies buried in St. Mary's (Roman Catholic) Cemetery, Kensal Green. It was Eleanor Marx too, who on the celebration of Engels' seventieth birthday, paid tribute to his 'absolute selflessness'... 'In Marx's lifetime he used to say "I played second fiddle and I think I have attained virtuosity in it and I am glad that I had such a good first fiddle as Marx"'. Today Engels is the conductor of the orchestra but he is just as modest, unpretentious and unaffected as if, as he himself said, he were second fiddle'.¹⁵

In 1895 Engels moved to 41 Regent's Park Road where he died on 5 August of the same year. Cremation was coming into vogue at that time and Engels left instructions in his will that he should be cremated and his ashes cast into the sea. Some of his German comrades were reluctant to give up the idea of a grave and a suitable monument but there was sufficient support for compliance with the terms of his will and after cremation at Woking, his ashes were scattered in the English Channel some miles offshore from Eastbourne which had been Engels' favourite seaside resort. The death of the man who had written one of the most eloquent and powerful critiques of society in early Victorian Manchester and who had lived much of his adult life in the 'shock city of the industrial revolution' went largely unnoticed by the city's press. Engels was unlikely to have been concerned by such an absence. As Grace Carlton one of his biographers has observed, 'Engels wanted no material memorial and he looked for nothing but oblivion. His memorial would be Marxism, his immortality the triumph of Communism'.¹⁶

NOTES

A full length study of Engels' life in Manchester by Roy Whitfield will be available in the Spring. Roy Whitfield *Frederick Engels in Manchester* is published by The Working Class Movement Library, Jubilee House, 51 Crescent, Salford, M5 4WX, price £4.80.

1. G. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels* (1934).
2. W.O. Henderson & W.H. Chaloner, 'Friedrich Engels in Manchester', *Memoirs and Proceedings of the Manchester and Literary Philosophical Society* 98(1957) 13-29.
3. W.O. Henderson & W.H. Chaloner, (eds) *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1958).
4. W.O. Henderson, *The Life of Friedrich Engels*, 2 vols. (1976).
5. S. Marcus, *Engels, Manchester and the Working Class* (1974).
6. *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, (Moscow) p.175, pp.192-3.
7. F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, (1958 ed) p.220.
8. F. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, (1969 ed) pp.191-2.
9. F. Engels, (1969 ed) p.124.
10. F. Engels, (1969 ed) pp.172-3.
11. F. Engels, (1969 ed) p.175.
12. Marx to Engels 8 January 1863 *Marx-Engels Werke* (Berlin, 1956) vol.30, p.310.
13. *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (Berlin, 1927) vol.I, p.210. Subsequent references to Marx-Engels correspondence are drawn from this source and *Marx-Engels Werke*. Further references can be found in R. Whitfield (1988).
14. Eleanor Marx to Karl Kautsky 15 March 1898. Kautsky Papers DXVI 489.
15. Eleanor Marx-Aveling, *Marx and Engels through the Eyes of their Contemporaries* (1972) p.211
16. G. Carlton, *Friedrich Engels: the Shadow Prophet* (1965) p.227.