

Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class

Steven Marcus



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Friedrich Engels' first major work, The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844, has long been considered a social, political, and economic classic. The first book of its kind to study the phenomenon of urbanism and the problems of the modern city, Engels' text contains many of the ideas he was later to develop in collaboration with Karl Marx. In this book, Steven Marcus, author of the highly acclaimed The Other Victorians, applies himself to the study of Engels' book and the conditions that combined to produce it.

Marcus studies the city of Manchester, center of the first Industrial Revolution, between 1835 and 1850 when the city and its inhabitants were experiencing the first great crisis of the newly emerging industrial capitalism. He also examines Engels himself, son of a wealthy German textile manufacturer, who was sent to Manchester to complete his business education in the English cotton mills.

Touching upon several disciplines, including the history of socialism, urban sociology, Marxist thought, and the history and theory of the Industrial Revolution, Engels, Manchester, and the Working Class offers a fascinating study of nineteenth-century English literature and cultural life.

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