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Karl Marx, *[Against Strike Breaking]*¹⁹

Some time ago the London journeymen tailors formed a general association to uphold their demands against the London master tailors, who are mostly big capitalists. It was a question not only of bringing wages into line with the increased prices of means of subsistence, but also of putting an end to the exceedingly harsh treatment of the workers in this branch of industry. The masters sought to frustrate this plan by recruiting journeymen tailors, chiefly in Belgium, France and Switzerland. Thereupon the secretaries of the Central Council of the International Working Men's Association published in Belgian, French and Swiss newspapers a warning which was a complete success. The London masters' manoeuvre was foiled; they had to surrender and meet their workers' just demands.

Defeated in England, the masters are now trying to take counter-measures, starting in *Scotland*. The fact is that, as a result of the London events, they had to agree, initially, to a 15 per cent wage rise in Edinburgh as well. But secretly they sent agents to Germany to recruit journeymen tailors, particularly in the Hanover and Mecklenburg areas, for importation to Edinburgh. The first group has already been shipped off. The purpose of this importation is the same as that of the importation of Indian coolies²⁰ to Jamaica, namely, *perpetuation of slavery*. If the Edinburgh masters succeeded, through the import of German labour, in nullifying the concessions they had already made, it would inevitably lead to repercussions in England. *No one would suffer more than the German*

¹⁹ This article was prepared on behalf of the GC in April of 1866, after some Scottish capitalists had recruited German and Danish tailors to replace striking local ones. The GC sent two representatives (Haufe and Lessner) to Edinburgh who were able to persuade them to break their contracts and return to their countries of origin. Karl Marx (see note 1) compiled this short text for the German press. It appeared on 13 May 1866 in *Der Bote vom Niederrhein* under the title *A Warning*, and may be found in the GC, I: 367–8.

²⁰ A term used at the time to refer to Asian labourers.

workers themselves, who constitute in Great Britain a larger number than the workers of all the other Continental nations. And the newly-imported workers, being completely helpless in a strange land, would soon sink to the level of pariahs.

Furthermore, it is a point of honour with the German workers to prove to other countries that they, like their brothers in France, Belgium and Switzerland, know how to defend the common interests of their class and will not become *obedient mercenaries of capital* in its struggle against labour.