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## Karl Marx an Paul Lafargue in Paris. Manchester, Mittwoch, 2. Juni 1869

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| Manchester, 2. June, 1869

My dear Paul,

You can, of course, dispose of my name as you like. Still, there are some objections. In the first instance, what you want, is work which, for the present, I am unable to perform, while Engels<sup>a</sup> still suffers from an inflammation of the eyes which for some time is sure to debar him from writing. Of course, if a very urgent question arose, we should address yourselfes ourselves to the Renaissance<sup>cb</sup>, but this could be done without my name figuring amongst his(?) its rédacteurs. A merely nominale co-editorship would prove of no possible avail. However, my most serious objection is of an exclusively private nature, and I leave it to your discretion to decide the case. The intended paper will probably involve you and friends in judicial conflicts with the government, and your father<sup>e</sup>, becoming sooner or later aware of my name figuring among the rédacteurs of that paper, would be likely to draw the conclusion that I had pushed you to premature political action and prevented you from taking taking the steps necessary (and which I am continu<sup>l</sup>ously urging you to take) to pass your medical examinations and establish you professionally. He would justly consider such presumed influence on my part as running counter to our express mutual engagement.

As, to the misgivings of Le Petit<sup>gf</sup>, they are altogether unfounded. To make ready for an invasion of France, Prussia would, under the most favourable circumstances, want instead of 8 days at least one month. But the circumstances are now anything but favourable to her.

There exists, in point of fact, no German unity. It could only be founded by a German Revolution, sweeping away the Prussian dynasty, which was, is, and must always be, the man-servant of the Muscovite. It is only by the overthrow of “Prussia” that Germany can become really centralised.

Prussia has not merged into Germany. It has, on the contrary, conquered a part of Germany, and treats it—the directly annexed provinces as well as those pressed into the Northern German confederation—as a conquered land. Hence the greatest disaffection prevails in her new acquisitions. In case of an offensive (not defensive) war against France, Prussia would be forced to employ a large part of its army for the purpose of keeping down these provinces, the more dangerous since her means of communication with France, such as railways, telegraphs etc run through them, and the Prussian lines of retreat from the Rhine pass through them. As to the military contingents raised | from Hanover, Schleswig Holstein, Saxony, Kurhessen, Nassau etc, they could not be relied upon, and would prove a source of weakness instead of strength.

Apart from these provinces, either directly annexed or pressed into the Northern German Confederation, there is Southern Germany (Baden, Württemberg, Bavaria, Hessen-Darmstadt) numbering 9 millions. Here the popular masses are Anti-Prussian to the core. In case of a war against France, Prussia would, therefore, have to detach another part of her army in order to make sure of that part of Southern Germany which—on a long-stretched line—borders upon France.

And last, not least, Prussia would be bound to concentrate a strong army of observation against Austria. Do not forget that the Hapsburg Dynasty is sorely smarting under the recent humiliations and losses inflicted upon it by the Prussian upstart. Admit even the quite absurd hypothesis, that the Hapsburg Dynasty was ready to condone for the past, it would still be unable to support Prussia. The Austrian Emperor<sup>1</sup> has no longer any control over international affairs. The Hungarian Diet has now to decide, and it would decide for France against Prussia. So would the Vienna Diet. Thus, however friendly the apparent attitude of the<sup>2d</sup> Vienna Cabinet might be, Prussia could and would not rely upon it, but find herself always obliged to detach a strong army of observation against the army which Austria would be sure to concentrate in Bohemia.

Hence you see de prime abord that of the seemingly formidable | military power of Prussia was<sup>3</sup> a very large part would not be available against France, but, on the contrary, would have to be frittered away in different directions.

Prussia would have no ally except Russia who is disabled not able to dispose of her army on a sudden emergency. Before her contingents could was had been mobilised and had entered Prussia, the whole campaign would have been decided.

The xxxx(?)<sup>4</sup> idea that Prussia, under such circumstances, would venture single handed, as she must do, upon an invasion of France, and revolutionary France too, is really pure(?) grotesque incorrect.

I have till now considered only the strictly military and diplomatic aspect of the question, but there is not the least doubt that in case of a Revolution in France, Prussia would have to act now as in 1848. Instead of throwing her forces abroad, she would be forced to absorb them in expeditions à l'intérieur.

If, in 1848, the movement in Germany paralysed Prussia the Prussian Government, what would the case be now, when the popular masses in Prussia and the other parts of Germany, are much more developed, and, simultaneously, the Prussian government as well as the other German governments have ceased to be absolute and been weakened by the trammels of a mock constitutionalism?

As to the German working classes, they are, in my opinion, better organised than the French ones. Their ideas are more international than in any other country. Their atheism is more pronounced than in any other country. Their predilections<sup>5</sup> for France, is general.

Prussia can do nothing -it<sup>6</sup> inthe<sup>7</sup> case of a French Revolution. (One workingmen's representative in the North German Diet recently threatened them with the approach of a French Rev.) Only in

the case of an Imperialist Invasion of “Fatherland”, Prussia would become a dangerous antagonist of France.

Adio

Old Nick.

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## Erläuterungen

- a) Engels, Friedrich (1820-1895)
- b) Gemeint ist das später gescheiterte Zeitschriftenprojekt „La Renaissance<sup>de</sup>“. Siehe u. a. P. Lafargue an J. Marx, Anfang 1869 u. Erl.
- c) La Renaissance
- d) La Renaissance
- e) Lafargue, François (1806-1870)
- f) **Auguste Blanqui<sup>h</sup>**.
- g) Blanqui, Auguste (1805-1881)
- h) Blanqui, Auguste (1805-1881)
- i) Franz Joseph I. (1830-1916)

## Kritischer Apparat

- 1) über der Zeile eingetragen
- 2) über der Zeile eingetragen
- 3) Tilgung durch Streichung
- 4) Tilgung durch Streichung
- 5) Tilgung durch Streichung
- 6) Tilgung durch Streichung
- 7) Tilgung durch Streichung