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Zitiervorschlag:

Joseph Patrick McDonnell an Karl Marx in London. Hounslow, Dienstag, 4. Juli 1871. In: Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe digital, hg. v. der Internationalen Marx-Engels-Stiftung, Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin. URL <https://megadigital.bbaw.de/briefe/detail.xql?id=M6184406>

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Lindenberg, Thomas (Bearbeitung)
Lura, Caroline (Bearbeitung)

Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (BBAW) Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe

Handschrift: Handschrift: RGASPI f. 21 op. 1 d. 81/20

Handschriftenbeschreibung:

Soweit aus der s/w-Fotokopie zu ersehen ist, besteht der Brief aus zwei Bogen und einem Blatt Papier. McDonnell hat alle zehn Seiten vollständig beschrieben und drei davon paginiert, die dritte und siebente Seite sind im Querformat beschrieben.

Archivsignatur des Moskauer Marx-Engels-Instituts (IME) auf allen beschriebenen Seiten: „RJ 1a–j“.

Absender: Joseph Patrick McDonnell
Schreibort: Hounslow
Schreibdatum: 1871-07-04

Empfänger: Karl Marx
Empfangsort: London

| Alma Cottage, Cranford
Hounslow July 4th noon

Dear D^r Marx

I was just on the point of posting the accompanying letter when yours of yesterday^a reached me. I had a letter this morning from my friend M^r **Thomas Francis M^cCarthy^b** (late Editor of the **Irishman^c** and People of Ireland) who resides with me at Peckham, in which he tells me that there are several letters awaiting my return but as he expected me back every day he did not wish to forward them here. Fortunately, however, he enclosed your letter of yesterday. I regret very much that I have not been in town and I need hardly say that if I had received any of your letters I would have gone up without delay. I will now go to town and explain personally if | I may have that pleasure. I write this note in case of a disappointment.

Now as to the subjects of your communication. I much admire the caution displayed by your General Council in inquiring into the antecedents of proposed members. I am much surprised, however, to find that falsehoods about myself so very stale and so glaringly malicious, should be still in circulation. I cannot prevent rumours being circulated by unprincipled opponents but I know that these rumours are confined to a very narrow limit and are not even listened to by those who have the most remote knowledge of me. A seven years' career in Ireland from 1861 to 1868 of dreadful self-sacrifice, never failing devotion, imprisonment and toil, satisfied my countrymen at home and in exile that I was worthy of their confidence. | I did not want that confidence, altho I was proud of it, because it brought additional troubles upon me and was finally the cause of my

expatriation. I am compelled to speak of myself here. I am only, however, telling the truth and thousands could say the same about me. The Irishman^d newspaper whose present writers are new men, with whom I am not on friendly terms, devoted a leading article to my case in June 1868 in which my sufferings and great pecuniary losses were recorded. Other Journals described me as a “man whose fidelity has been proved by his sufferings”. However I am digressing. I will now deal with the rumours.

With reference to rumour N^o 1 that I had been a clerk of M^r J J Merriman^e’s my answer is that I have not been his clerk. Shortly after my arrival in England in 1868 I | did some writing for him but I have never since been employed by him in any capacity. I will be happy to meet any one who will prove to the contrary.

Rumour 2 that Merriman^f and I offered the Irish vote for sale to the highest bidder at the last Southwark election. This is false and I would like to meet the man face to face who would dare accuse me having done so. M^r George Odger^g if he is still a member of the Council can say and must know that I did not offer any vote to him for sale and that I was engaged by him in no capacity altho I secured for him many an Irish vote which he would not have had only for me. The Irish intended to nominate me as their candidate but I refused and without solicitation from any one wrote an address to the Irish Electors, part of which appeared in the Daily News^h advising them to vote |⁽⁵⁾ for Odger as the best and working man’s candidate. I am not aware that I profited in any way by my advocacy of M^r Odger’s candidature. Now all I know of M^r Merriman in connection with the affair is, that he took the chair for him on one occasion in Dockhead, and I am fully convinced that I never spoke to him on the subject of the election except on that occasion and that in presence of Odger and his friends. I will be pleased to see any one who will prove to the contrary. I may add, however, that had I taken the advice of some of M^r Odger’s friends (not twenty miles from Lincoln’s Inn Fields(?)) I would have become their dupe. The Irish vote would have been sold and their pockets filled with the gold of the buyer. But they mistook their man. The leading Irishman of the Boro(?) can substantiate my statements.

Rumour 3 seems to imply dishonesty on my part in connection with the Ambulance. I give you my word of honour as an Irishman and a gentleman that I had not nor did I expect either fee or reward for my services in connection with that business. M^r Dalyⁱ can assure you of this. On the contrary I lost by it and my subsequent imprisonment of two months and a half did not add to my wealth. I only received at the office the passage money of every man (8/–) and that had to be paid over to the Steam Boat Company. I would wish to meet with | any one who can show to the contrary. Rumour 4 rests on the authority of O’Donnell^j and accuses me of unfair dealings in connection with the Amnesty funds. Who is O’Donnell? Every Irishman in London knows him to be an unprincipled scribe who writes for pay but never for principle, who praised Fenianism in the “Irishman” and condemned it as damnable in the columns of the Catholic “Tablet”^k. So low does O’Donnell’s character stand here that no decent Irishman would associate with him. He was at no time a member of the Irish movement but at one time identified himself with a faction to which I was strongly opposed. He was then used(?) to crush me by malicious falsehoods in the press and my letters in reply were not published. He was finally given to understand by my friends who were very numerous that if he should repeat his infamous falsehoods, he would find himself in a very | unpleasant position. From that time he never alluded to me in the press. He has not however for twelve months corresponded with the Irishman^l. No man who knows John O’Donnell^m would trust him with anything. M^r Daly knows his character well. I am not aware that he charged me with misappropriation of the Amnesty funds but it makes little matter whether or not as the accounts were audited and found correct by two of the most respected Irishmen in London who were appointed as Auditors at public meeting in the Bouverie St Hall. M^r Thomas Francis M^cCarthyⁿ who edited the Irishman from 1866 to 1869 and who is now in London, can confirm my statements about O’Donnell.

I wish again to say that I have had no business connection with M^r|⁽⁹⁾ Merriman^o since 1868. I have known him formally as chairman of the Amnesty Association to the funds of which he contributed upwards of £ 50. His political opinions and mine are widely different but I respect

him and so do most Irishmen for the efforts—some of which were really disinterested—he made on behalf of the Irish political prisoners. I always speak of a man as I find him and I must here say that the English Democracy did very little for the Amnesty movement and their leaders not much more. The latter—M^r Odger^p—amongst the number subscribed nothing to its funds and did not attend any of its great meetings. And here let me say that I have no ambition to place myself in any leading position in connection with political movements. If I can be of use to any great and good movement like ⁽¹⁰⁾ the **International**^q, my influence and services are at its command.

Under all circumstances I wish you to know that I am prepared at any time to stand the most rigid investigation in every act of my past political career. No man escapes accusation at some time or another but truth and honesty always prevail. I am sorry that I cannot go into detail here but I will do so when I next have the pleasure of an interview.

With very kind regards to you and Madame Marx

I am

Always faithfully yours

Joseph P M^cDonnell

Erläuterungen

- a) Nicht überlieferter Brief von Karl Marx an Joseph P. McDonnell, geschrieben vor dem 3. Juli 1871.
- b) McCarthy, Thomas Francis (-)
- c) The Irishman
- d) The Irishman
- e) Merriman, Josiah John (1824-)
- f) Merriman, Josiah John (1824-)
- g) Odger, George (1820-1877)
- h) The Daily News
- i) Daly, James D.
- j) O'Donnell, John (-)
- k) The Tablet
- l) The Irishman
- m) O'Donnell, John (-)
- n) McCarthy, Thomas Francis (-)
- o) Merriman, Josiah John (1824-)
- p) Odger, George (1820-1877)
- q) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)

Kritischer Apparat