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James D. Daly an Karl Marx in London. London, Freitag, 16. Juni 1871

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Handschriftenbeschreibung:

Soweit aus der Fotokopie zu ersehen ist, besteht der Brief aus einem Bogen und einem Blatt weißem Papier. Daly hat fünf Seiten vollständig, die sechste Seite zu drei Vierteln beschrieben. Schreibmaterial: schwarze Tinte.

in russischer Übersetzung: *Первый Интернационал и Парижская Коммуна 1871–1971. Москва 1972. S. 519–524.*

In der Sprache des Originals wird der Brief hier erstmals veröffentlicht.

Absender: James Daly
Schreibort: London
Schreibdatum: 1871-06-16

Empfänger: Karl Marx
Empfangsort: London

| 2 Ellen Cottages, Warner R^d
Camberwell S. E.
June 16th 1871

Dear Sir,

Will you permit me to submit to you a few reflections which have occurred to me while reading (which I did with great interest & attention) the **address**^a of the **International**^b a copy of which you kindly sent me?

First of all it occurs to me that it is a little too strong in tone—not perhaps for the feelings on your side, but for the tender stomachs of those who do not see things as you (I mean the **International**^c) see them, and who are perhaps disposed to judge more harshly of you than you deserve. In short there is too much name calling in it, which is injudicious & in bad taste. I have watched with great pain the growth of this tendency towards abusive language amongst the French, and in that respect the address is French. They are always crying | that their opponents are of necessity unmitigated miscreants, both in regard to public & private affairs, that “nous sommes trahis encore!”; and if anybody does not agree to the full with them they immediately proceed to demonstrate that his father was a horse-stealer, or worse, his mother a prostitute, he himself drawing a subsistence or obtaining position by the dishonour of his wife, an habitual forger, thief, swindler &^c &^c. This system is impolitic, injurious, mischievous, and has a tendency to enfeeble

& corrupt a people or a cause. Having first demonstrated that they are scoundrels all round they end by the feeling that they are, & acting as they suppose every one else to be doing. It is better to “assume a virtue if we have it not”, & even to be lenient with hypocrisy for the sake of virtue.

Of the facts stated, & conclusions drawn from them, in the [address](#)^d, I am not able to say much, not having kept such a close observation on public men, or studied political changes so deeply as the talented author of the able address, but what most interested me in it was the list at the end of page 18 describing the political constitution of Commune(?)ism. It is the first time I have been able to find a clear(?) statement of the sort of | government the Communists aimed at. I like it very much in some respects. It would avoid the nuisance & sham of general elections, and would keep the central authority in close & constant intimacy with the nation. But I am not so sure that it would be wise. Nations sometimes—often—are seized with a momentary passion, and in this case there would be no check upon it. The popular impulses of the moment would be unrestrained[.] Then is there not the danger of a split up into numberless little republics? The causes which lead to the civil war in the United States would, it seems to me, be multiplied & intensified a hundred fold. The Commune of Lyons, or Marseilles, or Paris, would refuse to be ruled by a majority—perhaps a bare majority—on some exciting question; and we should witness new denunciations of “the rurals”, “reactionists”, “conservatives” &^c &^c (some name of reproach for a disliked majority), with fresh insurrections like the late one in Paris, civil war, and either the tearing of France into rags, or the reestablishment of Caesarism. It would be the history of Ancient Greece over again; it might be a glorious history but it would be a short one assuredly, for a [Pericles](#)^e or a [Philip](#)^f would be inevitable.

I am greatly disappointed in one thing—the omission from the [address](#)^g of any statement as to the social, or economic views & theories of your party. I have, so to speak, hungered & thirsted for information on that point for a long time and can get no satisfaction, no information, no knowledge of a definite scheme.

I have been fed with such vague & windy words as “the tyranny of capital”, “the emancipation of the proletarian”, “the right to eat”, but have naturally gone away from the banquet empty and dissatisfied. I worried our friend [Reinhardt](#)^h for substantial food, but (though I believe he took some trouble in the matter) he could only give me stones & wind-bags, and at length he gave me up with the terrible declaration that I was an unredeemable “bourgeois” for whom there was no hope of ultimate salvation. Is there no text-book or gospel of the social phase of Communism, which one could lay a hold of, study accept or refute? I have from youth been a believer in the economic science as discovered by [Adam Smith](#)ⁱ & developed by [Ricardo](#)^j, [Mill](#)^k &^c, and it is a science though possibly imperfectly known. The Communists may know other branches of the science, but they should not be silent on the subject, if they are not afraid. Let us have “More Light”.

I am, Dear Sir, very sincerely yours
J. D. Daly.

| P. S.

There are two points which I did intend to touch upon in my letter, but it ran to such a length that they were “crowded out” both from the letter & my mind. They are briefly these: I think it is a grand mistake for the [International](#)^l to assume the responsibility for every act committed by the Paris Commune and to justify & excuse all it did & all it intended to do. The [address](#)^m is a full official confirmation of what was only a char(?)ge before, viz: that the Paris insurrection was its work and a specimen of the sort of thing to be expected from it. The [Pharasees](#) [Pharisees](#) will afflict you for it.

The other point is this.—Do you think that it was quite fair to light up the flames of civil war in France & plunge Paris into the furnace of a terrible insurrection, for the sake of certain badly defined political and social theories? In America people who have uncommon notions form themselves into a society, raise capital, buy land away in the wilderness, build towns, cities &^c

any try their experiments without troubling anyone & at no ones expense but their | own. In England a similar plan is pursued with such restrictions as the limited supply of land necessitates. It is rather hard I think that something of the sort was not done in France instead of the country being well nigh ruined in the attempt to realise communist notions. It is not right that I should set my neighbours corn-rick on fire merely because I want to roast my own particular egg. I hope the **International**ⁿ will give serious attention to the masses of men & women to be sent out to New Guinea. It is a splendid opportunity of experimenting on Communist theories, & I do not think that M. **Thiers**^o will have (or long have) the power or will to prevent any such experiment. The crowds sent to the island must be left practically free there, & they can found a new order of social & political life which will effectually demonstrate a great & interesting problem, or bring it to areductio ad absurdum.

Erläuterungen

- a) [Zotero Link für: address](#)
- b) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- c) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- d) [Zotero Link für: address](#)
- e) Perikles (um 490 v. Chr.-429 v. Chr.)
- f) Philippos II. (um 382 v. Chr.-336 v. Chr.)
- g) [Zotero Link für: address](#)
- h) Reinhardt, Richard Julius (1820-1898)
- i) Smith, Adam (1723-1790)
- j) Ricardo, David (1772-1823)
- k) Mill, John Stuart (1806-1873)
- l) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- m) [Zotero Link für: address](#)
- n) Internationale Arbeiter-Assoziation (IAA) / International Workingmen's Association (IWA) / Association Internationale des Travailleurs (AIT)
- o) Thiers, Adolphe (1797-1877)

Kritischer Apparat