

**MARX STUDIES: VALUE, MATHEMATICS,
DIALECTICS, INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY
THE NEW EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE**

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**MARX IN THE YEARS OF *HERR VOGT*: NOTES TOWARD
AN INTELLECTUAL BIOGRAPHY (1860–1861)**

The most recent volume of the *Marx–Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²) contains the complete correspondence of Karl Marx from 1860 to 1861, a chapter of his intellectual biography that has been all too little explored. These years saw the preparation of the polemic, *Herr Vogt*, the drafts of *Capital*, the newspaper articles for the *New York Tribune* and for *Die Presse*, as well as studies based on vast readings. It was also the time of health problems and of the profound poverty which made his future uncertain.

1. *The Editorial Vicissitudes of Marx's and Engels' Works*

Despite the enormous diffusion and wide success of their writings, there is still no complete and scientific edition of the works of Marx and Engels. The first reason for this paradox has to be the incomplete and fragmentary nature of Marx's work, of which, excluding the journalistic articles written in the 15 years between 1848 and 1862, the published works were relatively few when compared to so many that were only partially written, or to the imposing mountain of research he undertook. Marx himself bore witness to this when in 1881, close to the end of his life, questioned by Karl Kautsky regarding the opportunity to edit a complete edition of his works, he replied that "these would have first of all to be written" (Kautsky, 1955, 32). Second, the publication of the two authors' works was influenced by the vicissitudes of the workers' movement, which all too often, rather than favoring the publication of their texts, impeded it.

The first attempt to publish all the writings of Marx and Engels goes back to the 1920s, when David Borisovich Ryazanov, the well-known scholar and expert on Marx, as well as director of the Marx–Engels Institute in the

recently formed Soviet Republic, started publishing them in their original language in the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA). However, due to the Stalinist purges, which even targeted the Institute's scholars — Ryazanov himself was removed and condemned to deportation in 1931 — the project was interrupted in 1935, and of the 42 volumes originally foreseen only 12 (in 13 bound books) were printed. Also in the Soviet Union, from 1928 to 1947, the first Russian edition was published — the *Sochineniya* (complete works). Despite the title, this edition contained only some of the writings; but with its 28 volumes (in 33 bound books), it was in its time the quantitatively most substantial collection. The second *Sochineniya*, in turn, appeared between 1955 and 1966 in 39 volumes (42 bound books).

From 1956 to 1968, on the initiative of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the 41 volumes (in 43 bound books) of the *Marx-Engels Werke* (MEW) were published in the German Democratic Republic. This edition, however, was compromised by the kinds of introductions and notes which, conceived on the model of the Soviet edition, gave the readings a “Marxist–Leninist” orientation. Nevertheless, it was the basis of numerous analogous editions in other languages.

The project of the “second” MEGA, which set out to reproduce the writings of the two thinkers faithfully, and with an ample critical apparatus, was born in the 1960s. However, the publication of the volumes, initiated in 1975, was interrupted, this time as a result of the collapse of the “socialist” bloc of countries.

In 1990, with the aim of completing the historical–critical edition, several institutes in Holland, Germany and Russia formed the International Marx-Engels-Stiftung (IMES). After a difficult period of reorganization, in which new editorial principles were established, and after the change of publishing house, from Dietz Verlag to Akademie Verlag, the *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe*, the so-called MEGA², began to appear in 1998. This undertaking takes on great importance when one realizes that a considerable part of the manuscripts, of the voluminous correspondence and the vast amount of extracts and annotations, which Marx normally compiled from the texts he read, is still unpublished.¹ The complete project, with the participation of scholars working in Germany, Russia, Japan, the United States, the Netherlands, France and Denmark, is divided into four sections. The first comprises all the works, articles and drafts, with the exception of *Capital*; the second consists of *Capital* and all of its preparatory work from 1857 on; the third contains the letters; the fourth comprises extracts, annotations and marginalia. At this time, of the 114 projected volumes 52 (12 of them after the change of publishing house in 1998) have appeared, each of which is

1 For more information see Musto, ed., 2007.

divided into two separately bound parts – the text and the apparatus, which contains the indices and many supplementary notes (see detailed information at <http://www.bbaw.de/vs/mega>).

2. *Marx's and Engels' Correspondence*

The volume in question here — *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²), Dritte Abteilung, Band 11: *Briefwechsel Juni 1860 bis Dezember 1861*, edited by Rolf Dlubek and Vera Morozova with the participation of Galina Golovina and Elena Vashenko (Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2005, 2 vols., 1467 pp.) — is the most recent published. It includes a part of the correspondence between Marx and Engels that they maintained throughout their lives, as well as that between themselves and the many people with whom they were in contact. The total number of extant letters in this correspondence is enormous — more than 4,000 written by Marx and Engels, of which 2,500 exchanged directly between them, and 10,000 written to them by third parties. There are, moreover, another 6,000 no longer extant, but of which there is certain proof of their former existence. Following the new editorial guidelines adopted by MEGA², all the letters rigorously adhere to chronological criteria and the volumes are no longer divided, as they had formerly been, into two separate parts, one containing the letters written by Marx and Engels and the other those written to them.

The text under consideration here presents correspondence from June 1860 to December 1861, the period of the tortuous developments related to the publication of *Herr Vogt* and to the violent encounter between the latter and Marx. Of the 386 letters preserved, 133 are from Marx and Engels and 253 are those written to them — among these are 204 published for the first time. Of the first 133, 95 are letters exchanged between Marx and Engels (73 written by Marx to Engels and 22 from Engels to Marx) — but from the reconstructed correspondence we know that at least 17 letters from Engels to Marx have been lost). There are 11 letters written by Ferdinand Lassalle to Marx.

3. *Herr Vogt*

Representative of the left in the National Assembly of Frankfurt during 1848–1849, Carl Vogt was, at the time, professor of natural sciences in Geneva, where he lived in exile. In the spring of 1859, he published the pamphlet *Studien zur gegenwärtigen Lage Europas* (Studies on the Present Situation in Europe), which articulated a Bonapartist foreign-policy outlook. In June of the same year, an anonymous flyer appeared, which denounced the

intrigues of Vogt in favor of Napoleon III, especially his attempts to bribe some journalists to furnish philo-Bonapartist versions of contemporary political events. The accusation — which was later shown to be the work of Karl Blind, German journalist and writer who had emigrated to London — was taken up by the weekly *Das Volk*, which counted Marx and Engels among its contributors, and by the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*. This induced Vogt to file a lawsuit against the German daily, which could not rebut the charge due to the anonymity in which Blind wished to remain. Although the libel suit failed, Vogt was the moral victor in the whole affair. Thus, in publishing his account of the events — *Mein Prozess gegen die Allgemeine Zeitung* (My Case Against the *Allgemeine Zeitung*) — he accused Marx of having inspired the plot against him as well as of being leader of a band that lived from blackmailing those who had participated in the revolutionary uprisings of 1848, specifically threatening to reveal the names of those who had not paid them to be silent.²

Besides having an echo in France and England, Vogt's published account was quite successful in Germany and created a sensation in liberal newspapers: "the jubilation of the bourgeois press of course knows no bounds" (M-E5/31/1860; ME41, 17).³ Berlin's *National-Zeitung* published a summary in two long editorials in January 1860, and Marx consequently sued the newspaper for libel. However, the Royal Prussian High Tribunal rejected the complaint, declaring that the articles did not exceed the limits of allowed criticism and did not constitute an offense. Marx's sarcastic comment on the judgment was: "like the Turk who cut off the Greek's head without intending to hurt him" (Marx, *Herr Vogt*; ME17, 271).

Vogt's text skillfully mixed real events with others wholly invented, so as to plant doubts regarding the real history of emigration among those who were not acquainted with all the events. In order to protect his own reputation, Marx therefore felt obliged to organize his defense, and so he began, at the end of February 1860, to gather material for a book against Vogt. He adopted two paths. Above all he wrote dozens of letters to militants with whom he had political relationships during and after 1848 with the aim of obtaining from them all possible documents regarding Vogt.⁴ Beyond this,

2 In 1870, among the documents in the French archives published by the republican government after the end of the Second Empire, proof was found that Vogt was on the payroll of Napoleon III. The latter, in fact, remitted 40,000 francs from his secret fund to Vogt in August 1859. See *Papiers*, 1871, 161.

3 Reference format, here and hereafter: the in-text reference reads "Marx to Engels, May 31, 1860, in Marx-Engels *Opere*, Vol. 41, page 17. Subsequent references will be to the MEGA² and the *Opere*, in that order.

4 On the importance of these letters as a means of political communication between the revolutionary militants of 1848-1849, and to comprehend the conflict between Marx and Vogt from a general perspective — that is, not only from Marx's own point of view, which is the main purpose of the present essay — see Jansen, 2002, which examines the politi-

in order better to illustrate the politics of the principal European states and to reveal the reactionary role played by Bonaparte, he carried out vast studies on the political and diplomatic history of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.⁵ The latter is doubtless the most interesting part of the work and — along with the section reconstructing the history of the Communist League — the only part that still has value for the contemporary reader. At any rate, as was always the case with Marx, his studies greatly increased the size of the book, which “grew in my hands” (M–E12/6/1860, MEGA²III/11, 250; ME41, 135). Moreover, the time needed to complete the work kept increasing. In fact, although Engels urged him — “for once be at least a little superficial so that you can finish in time” (E–M6/29/1860, *ibid.*, 72; 83) — and wrote to Jenny Marx: “we always do the most stupendous things but we always do them in such a way that they never get published in time and it all winds up being in vain. . . . I implore you to do everything possible so that something gets done, *but immediately*, in order to find a publisher and finally have the work ready” (E–Jenny Marx8/15/1860, *ibid.*, 113, 164) — Marx decided to finish it only in November.

Marx had wanted to entitle the book *Dâ-Dâ-Vogt* (M–E9/25/1860, 180, 108) to evoke the similarity of views between Vogt and the Bonapartist Arab journalist Dâ-Dâ-Roschaid, a contemporary. The latter, in translating Bonapartist pamphlets into Arabic on order of the Algerian authorities, had defined emperor Napoleon III as “the sun of beneficence, the glory of the firmament” (cf. Marx, *Herr Vogt*, ME17, 180) and to Marx nothing appeared more appropriate for Vogt than the epithet of “German Dâ-Dâ” (*ibid.*). However, Engels convinced him to opt for the more comprehensible *Herr Vogt*.

Further problems involved the book’s place of publication. Engels strongly urged publishing the book in Germany: “at all costs we have to avoid printing your work in London. . . . We have a lot of experience with emigré literature, always without success, always money thrown away and then we get angry” (E–M9/15/1860, MEGA²III/11, 158; ME46, 103). Nevertheless, since no German publisher became available, Marx had the book published in London by Petsch, and, what is more, this was only made possible by a collection made to pay its expense. Engels commented that it would

cal motivations behind Vogt’s support for Bonaparte II. The essay also includes an appendix, consisting of letters written by Vogt as well as others addressed to him. Likewise interesting, since they are free of the conventional and often doctrinal interpretation by Marxists, are the writings of Grandjonec and Pelger, 1990; Lommels, 1990; 1998.

5 This research resulted in the six notebooks containing passages from books, journals and newspapers of widely varying orientations. This material — designated *Vogtiana* — showing the way in which Marx used the results of his studies in his own writing, is still unedited and will be published in volume IV/16 of MEGA².

have been “preferable to print it in Germany and we would absolutely have to succeed in doing so[:] a German publisher . . . is much more able to put an end to the *conspiration du silence*” (E–M10/5/1860, *ibid.* 196, 114).

Rebutting Vogt’s accusations occupied Marx for an entire year, obliging him completely to neglect his economic studies which, according to his contract with the Berlin publishing house of Duncker, would have had to continue with the sequel to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, published in 1859. As far as is known, the frenzy that drove him during this affair also infected those who were closest to him. His wife Jenny found *Herr Vogt* a source of “endless pleasure and delight”; Engels declared the work to be “certainly the best polemical work [he had] written up to that point” (E–M12/19/1860, *ibid.*, 268, 143); Ferdinand Lassalle greeted the text as “a magisterial thing in every way” (Lassalle–M5/19/1861, MEGA²III/11, 321); finally, Wilhelm Wolff said “it is a masterpiece from beginning to end” (Wolff–M12/27/1860, *ibid.*, 283).

In reality, in order to be understood today with all of its references and allusions, *Herr Vogt* requires ample commentary. Further, Marx’s principal biographers unanimously consider this work to have been a notable waste of time and energy. Recalling how various acquaintances of Marx had tried to dissuade him from undertaking this work, Franz Mehring affirmed how “one would have hoped that he would have listened to these voices, [since] it blocked . . . his great life’s work . . . due to the costly waste of energy and time without any real gain” (Mehring, 1972, 295). Of the same mind, Karl Vorländer wrote: “today, two generations later, it is reasonable to doubt if, in this miserable affair which lasted a year, it was worth the effort to waste so much spiritual labor and so much money to write a small work of 191 pages crafted with so much wit, with sayings and quotations from all of world literature (Fischart, Calderón, Shakespeare, Dante, Pope, Cicero, Boiardo, Sterne, and from Middle-High-German literature), to hurl against the hated adversary” (Vorlander, 1948, 209–210). Nikolaevsky and Maenchen-Helfen also reproached him: “Marx had employed more than a year to defend himself, by way of a libel suit, against the attempt to put an end to his political life. . . . only toward the end of 1861 was he able to resume his work on economics” (Nikolaevskii and Maenchen-Helfen, 1969, 284). And for David McLellan the polemic against Carl Vogt “was a clear example of [Marx’s] ability to spend a great deal of energy on topics of very little importance and to waste his talent on invective” (McLellan, 1976, 317). Francis Wheen asks: “to respond to the slander published in the Swiss press by an obscure politician like Carl Vogt, was it really necessary to write a 200-page book?” And he noted that “the economic notebooks lay closed on his writing desk while their owner distracted himself with a spectacular but unnecessary quarrel . . . a violent riposte which, in its length as well as its enraged tone, surpassed

by far the original libel to which it intended to reply” (Wheen, 2000, 145, 204, 207).

The most striking aspect of this writing is the massive use Marx makes of literary references in his arguments. Alongside the authors already mentioned by Vorländer, Marx fills the stage of this work with, among others, Virgil, various figures from the Bible in Luther’s translation, Schiller, Byron, Hugo and, of course, his beloved Cervantes, Voltaire, Goethe, Heine and Balzac.⁶ However, these citations — and the precious time employed to insert them into the text — did not simply respond to Marx’s wish to demonstrate the superiority of his culture as against that of Vogt, nor to an attempt to make the pamphlet more enjoyable to the readers through satire. They reflect two essential characteristics of Marx’s personality. The first is the great importance he attributed throughout his life to style and structure in his works, even in the minor or merely polemical ones, such as *Herr Vogt*. The mediocrity of the great bulk of the writings with which he clashed in so many battles, their inferior form, their uncertain and ungrammatical construction, their illogical formulations and the presence of many errors always aroused his indignation.⁷ Thus, alongside the conflict over content, he inveighed against the intrinsic vulgarity and lack of quality in his adversaries’ works and wanted to show them not only the correctness of what he wrote but also the best way of doing it. The second typical characteristic, evidenced throughout the imposing preparatory work for *Herr Vogt*, is the aggressivity and unrestrained virulence which he directed at his primary adversaries. Whether they were philosophers, economists or political militants, and whether they were called Bauer, Stirner, Proudhon, Vogt, Lassalle or Bakunin, Marx wanted in essence to destroy them, demonstrate in every way possible the groundlessness of their concepts, compel them to surrender by making it impossible for them to object to his assertions. Thus, under this impulse, he was tempted to bury his antagonists under mountains of critical arguments, and when he was seized by this fury to the point of making him lose sight even of his project of critique of political economy, then he no longer contented himself “only” with Hegel, Ricardo or with citing historical events, but made use of Aeschylus, Dante, Shakespeare and Lessing. *Herr Vogt* was a kind of fateful coincidence of these two components of his character. A short circuit caused by one of the most glaring examples of the literary slovenliness

6 In this connection, see the reflections of Prawer (1978, 263): “In *Herr Vogt* Marx is incapable of treating any political or social phenomenon without referring to a work of world literature”; and his indication that this text can be studied as “an anthology of the various methods adopted by Marx to incorporate literary allusions and quotations into his polemics” (260). The considerable importance of literature in Marx’s work and the highly learned cultural background of his critical theory is increasingly drawing scholarly attention. In this connection, see the recent book by Francis Wheen (2006).

7 On this point, see once again the brilliant observations of Prawer, 1978, 264.

so loathed by Marx, and by his will to destroy the enemy who, through lies, had threatened his credibility and attempted to sully his political history.

With this book Marx hoped to create a sensation and did everything to get the German press to speak of it. However, the newspapers and Vogt himself paid absolutely no attention: “the dogs . . . want to kill the thing with silence” (M-E5/22/1861, MEGA²III/11, 325, ME46, 162). Also, “the publishing of a French reworking of it, very abridged, which was being printed” (M-E5/16/1861, *ibid.*, 476, 188) was blocked when the volume was the target of censorship and included in the list of prohibited books. During the lifetimes of Marx and Engels no other edition of *Herr Vogt* appeared, and only short selected passages were reprinted.

4. *Against Poverty and Illness*

Contributing to the delay of Marx’s work and terribly complicating his personal situation were his two eternal sworn enemies: poverty and illness. This period, in fact, was one in which Marx’s economic situation became truly desperate. Besieged by the claims of his many creditors and with the constant shadow of injunctions by the *broker*, the judicial official, on his door, he complained to Engels: “I don’t know how I will be able to get out of this, because taxes, schools, my house, the grocer, the butcher, God and the devil do not want to give me a moment’s respite” (M-E6/29/1861, 333, 164). At the end of 1861 the situation became even more desperate, and to survive, aside from being able to count on the constant help of his friend — to whom he showed immense gratitude “for the extraordinary acts of friendship” (M-E2/27/1861, 380, 177) — Marx was obliged to pawn “everything except the walls of the house” (M-E10/30/1861, 583, 217). To his friend, as always, he wrote: “how my soul might rejoice at the fiasco of the Decembrist financial system, so long and often predicted by me in the *Tribune*, if I were free of this meanness and could see my family not overwhelmed by all this misery!” (M-E11/18/1861, 599, 222). And when, at the end of December, he sent him his New Year’s greetings, he said, “if this [year] is the same as the one just ending, for my part I’d rather be in hell” (M-E12/27/1861, 636, 237).

The disheartening financial problems were promptly accompanied by health problems, to which the former contributed. The deep depression which affected Marx’s wife Jenny for many weeks, made her more vulnerable to contracting smallpox with which she was taken ill at the end of 1860, with serious risk to her life. Throughout the whole illness and convalescence of his companion, Marx was constantly at her bedside and only resumed his own activities when Jenny was out of danger. During this period, as he wrote Engels, work was completely out of the question: “the only activity which can allow me some tranquillity is mathematics” (M-E11/23/1860, 229, 124), one

of the great intellectual passions of his life. Moreover, a few days later he added that a circumstance that had “greatly helped [was] a severe toothache.” After extracting a tooth, the dentist had by mistake left a chip in his mouth, which gave him a face that was “swollen and painful along with a half-closed throat.” And how did this help him? Well, this is how. Marx in fact said stoically: “this physical discomfort greatly stimulates the capacity for thinking and abstraction, since, as Hegel said, pure thought or pure being or *nothing* are the same thing” (M–E11/28/1860, 236, 128). Despite these problems, these weeks afforded him the opportunity to read many books, among them Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, printed just one year previously. The comment in the letter Marx sent to Engels was destined to provoke discussions among armies of scholars and socialist militants: “although carried out in a grossly English way, here is the book which contains the historical–natural foundations of our way of seeing things” (M–E12/19/1860, 271, 145).

Following this period, that is to say at the beginning of 1861, Marx’s condition worsened due to an inflammation of the liver which had affected him in the preceding summer: “I am being tormented like Job, though I am not God-fearing” (M–E6/18/1861, 319, 160). In particular, being bent over caused him great pain and he was forbidden to write. Thus, to overcome the “appalling condition which made [him] incapable of working” (M–E6/22/1861, 325, 162), he took refuge again in literature: “in the evening for relief [I read] Appian’s *Civil Wars* in the original Greek. A highly valuable book. . . . Spartacus appears in it as the most superb fellow in ancient history. A great general (not a Garibaldi), of noble character, a *real representative* [original in English] of the ancient proletariat” (ME2/27/1861, 380, 176).

5. *And in the Meantime “Economics” Waits. . .*

Having recuperated from his illness by the end of February 1861, Marx repaired to Zalt-Bommel in Holland to seek a solution to his own financial difficulties. There he received help from his uncle Lion Philips, businessman and brother of the father of the future founder of the lamp factory, the ancestor of one of the world’s most important producers of electrical equipment, who agreed to advance him 160 pounds sterling from his future maternal inheritance. From here, Marx clandestinely went to Germany where for four weeks he was Lassalle’s guest in Berlin. The latter had repeatedly urged him to promote, together with him, the founding of a “party” organ, and now, with the decreeing of amnesty in January 1861, the conditions were present for Marx to get Prussian citizenship, which had been annulled after his 1849 expulsion, and to move to Berlin. However, Marx’s

skepticism about Lassalle prevented the project from ever being seriously considered.⁸ Back home from his journey, he described to Engels the German intellectual and militant in these terms: “Lassalle, blinded by the esteem he enjoys in certain learned circles for his *Heraclitus*, and in another circle of spongers for his good wine and food, naturally does not realize that he is discredited among the broader public. And then there is his arrogance, his ensnarement in the ‘speculative concept’ (the young man even dreams of wanting to write a new Hegelian philosophy squared), his being infected by the old French liberalism, his prolix pen, his importunity, his tactlessness, etc. Lassalle, if kept under strict discipline, could be useful as one of the editors. Otherwise he will only jeopardize things” (M–E5/7/1861, MEGA²III/11, 460, ME46, 180–181). Engels’ judgment was no less sharp when he criticized him: “this man is incorrigible” (E–M2/6/1861, *ibid.*, 347, 171). In any case, Marx’s request for citizenship was quickly rejected, and since he never had himself naturalized in England, he remained stateless for the rest of his life.

Marx’s correspondence supplies entertaining accounts of this German sojourn, which helps us to understand his character. His hosts, Lassalle and his companion Countess Sophie von Hatzfeldt, did their utmost to organize for him a series of activities, which only his letters show how deeply he detested. From a brief account of the first days spent in the city, we see him up against high society. On Tuesday evening he was among the audience at a “Berlin comedy full of Prussian self-congratulation, all in all a loathsome business.” On Wednesday he was obliged to be present at three hours of ballet at the opera — “a really mortally boring thing” — and, what is more, “horribile dictu” (M–Antionette Philips3/24/1861, 404, 642), “in a box very near to ‘good Wilhelm’s” (M–E5/10/1861, 470, 186), the King in person. Thursday Lassalle gave a luncheon in his honor, at which some “celebrities” were present. Anything but cheered by the occasion, by way of example of the regard in which he held his co-diners, Marx gave this description of his neighbor at table, the literary editor Ludmilla Assing: “she is the most ugly creature I have ever seen in my life, with a brutal Jewish physiognomy, a thin rather protruding nose, eternally smiling and tittering, always speaking a poetic prose, continually trying to say something extraordinary, feigning enthusiasm and spraying saliva on her listeners during her spasms of ecstasy” (M–Antoinette Philips3/24/1861, 404, 642). He wrote to Carl Siebel, Rhenish poet and distant relative of Engels: “I’m being bored to death here. I am being treated like a kind of salon lion and am obliged to see many gentlemen and ladies ‘of genius.’ It is terrible” (M–Siebel4/2/1861, 419, 646).

8 For more information on Marx’s stay in Berlin, see the recent article by Rolf Dlubek (Dlubek, 2005).

Later he wrote to Engels: “Even Berlin is nothing more than a big village,” and he could not deny to Lassalle that for him cosmopolitan London exerted “an extraordinary attraction,” although he admitted that he lived “like a hermit in this gigantic hole” (M–Lassalle5/8/18661, 464, 656). And thus, after having passed through Elberfeld, Bremen, Cologne, his own Trier, and then again through Holland, he arrived home on April 29. Awaiting him was his “Economics.”

As we recalled, in June 1859, Marx had published the first installment of *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* and was intending to follow it with a second installment as soon as possible. Notwithstanding the optimistic announcements he was accustomed to issuing on this subject — in November 1860 he wrote to Lassalle: “I think the second part can appear by Easter” (M–Lassalle9/15/1860, 161, 615) — due to the events recounted here two years were to pass before he was able to return to his studies. Besides, he was profoundly frustrated by his situation and complained to Engels in July: “I am not going forward as quickly as I would like, because I have many domestic problems” (M–E7/20/1861, 542, 212); and again in December: “my writing proceeds, but slowly. In fact, it was not possible quickly to resolve such theoretical questions in the midst of such circumstances. And consequently it will turn out to be much more popular and the method much more concealed than in the first part” (M–Lassalle12/9/1861, 616, 230). In any case, in August 1861 he resumed work on his book with great diligence.

Up to June 1863, he wrote the 23 notebooks — 1,472 pages in quarto — that made up the *Theories of Surplus Value*. The first of the three phases of this new version of the “Economics,” that corresponding to the first five notebooks of this group, runs from August 1861 to March 1862. These treat the transformation of money into capital, a topic dealt with in the first volume of *Capital*. Unlike the *Theories of Surplus Value*, published by Kautsky from 1905 to 1910, albeit in a revised edition often departing considerably from the originals, these notebooks were ignored for more than a century. They were published for the first time only in 1973, in Russian translation, as a supplementary volume (number 47) of the *Sochineniya*. The version in the original language, for its part, only appeared in 1976 in (MEGA²II/3.1, 1976).

6. *Journalism and International Politics*

The last phase of 1861 is also that during which Marx resumed his collaboration with the *New York Tribune* and wrote for the Viennese liberal daily *Die Presse*. Most of his correspondence in this period centered around the Civil War in the United States. In this war, according to Marx, “the struggle

played out between the highest form of popular self-government ever realized up to now and the most abject form of human slavery known to history" (Marx, 1961, 327). This interpretation makes clear, more than anything else can, the abyss that separated him from Garibaldi who had refused the offer from the U. S. Union government to take up a command post in the army, because he felt that the war was only a power conflict and did not have to do with the emancipation of the slaves. Regarding this viewpoint and the attempted initiative at reconciliation between the two sides, Marx commented to Engels: "that ass of a Garibaldi made himself ridiculous with his letter to the *yankees* on a concord" (M-E6/10/1861, MEGA²III/11, 493, ME46, 190). In his articles, moreover, Marx analyzed the economic impact of the American conflict on England, specifically examining the development of commerce, the financial situation, as well as the opinions running through English society. As regards this point, an interesting reference is also contained in a letter to Lassalle: "of course all the official English press is for the *slaveholders* [English in original]. These are exactly the same people who bored the world with their philanthropism directed against the slave trade. But: cotton, cotton!" (M-Lassalle5/29/1861, *ibid.*, 480, 658).

Finally, as always in the letters to Lassalle, Marx developed various reflections regarding one of the political themes on which he lavished his greatest attention in those days: the violent opposition to Russia and its allies Henry Palmerston and Louis Bonaparte. In particular, Marx made an effort to clarify to Lassalle the legitimacy of the convergence in this battle between their "party" and that of David Urquhart, a Tory politician with romantic views. Concerning the latter, who had the audacity to republish, for anti-Russian and anti-Whig purposes, Marx's articles against Palmerston, which had been published by the official organ of the English Chartists, he wrote: "he is certainly a reactionary from the subjective point of view . . . which does not at all prevent the foreign-policy movement he leads from being *objectively revolutionary* . . . just as to you, it makes no difference to me if, for example in a war against Russia, your neighbor fires on Russians for nationalist or revolutionary reasons" (M-Lassalle6/1 or 2/1860, 19, 596). And again: "for the rest it goes without saying that in foreign policy phrases like 'reactionary' and 'revolutionary' are not helpful" (M-Lassalle6/1 or 2/1860, 20, 597).

Finally, the first known photograph of Marx dates back to 1861.⁹ The image shows him standing with hands leaning on a chair in front of him. His thick hair is already white, while his dense beard is jet black. His resolute look does not betray the bitterness of the defeats he suffered and the many difficulties that gripped him, but rather the steadfastness that charac-

9 This is datable to the month of April; see MEGA²III/11, 465.

terized him throughout his life. And yet, unease and melancholy touched even him who wrote in the same period the photograph was taken: “in order to mitigate the deep discontent caused by my situation, which is uncertain in every sense, I am reading Thucydides. At least these ancients always remain new” (M–Lassalle5/29/1861, 481, 658). Even restricting ourselves to his letters, how can we today help from feeling the same way about that great classic of modernity, Karl Marx?

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THE GERMAN DEBATE ON THE MONETARY THEORY OF VALUE: CONSIDERATIONS ON JAN HOFF’S *KRITIK DER KLASSISCHEN POLITISCHEN ÖKONOMIE*¹

Philology, the “love of the word,” is an academic discipline that threatens to turn the texts collected in critical editions into intellectual playgrounds. For the important task of trying to arrive at as coherent an understanding of a text as possible — by considering everything its author has written — always trails a certain danger in its wake: it can all too easily become an academic exercise in textual criticism and commentary. When what is at stake is critical social theory, this variant on “art for art’s sake” is especially risky: it can transform scientific critique into contemplative scholarship. That said, critical social theories must also, in view of the rich textual *corpus* now at our disposal, run the risks of philology.

Marx’s *oeuvre* offers philologists several different avenues of attack. Thus it has not only appeared in different editions (in Germany, both the MEW — *Marx-Engels-Werke*, as well as the second edition of the MEGA, *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*), but also in divergent translations across the globe. Moreover, it presents us with an open-ended theory that, if Althusser is right, can be broken down into different stages. Even the last of them, according to Althusser, attempts to formulate a critique of political economy that is not always theoretically coherent, and is on the whole extremely complex (cf. Althusser, 1996, 27). As for the propagandistic simplification and textual canonization

1 Jan Hoff, *Kritik der klassischen politischen Ökonomie: Zur Rezeption der werttheoretischen Ansätze ökonomischen Klassiker durch Karl Marx*. Cologne: Papy Rossa, 2004.