

Algiers 1882: The Last Journey of Marx

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I. Why Algiers

In 1882, Marx's bronchitis was becoming chronic and his doctor, Mr. Donkin, suggested that a period of rest in a warm place was advisable for a complete recovery.¹ The Isle of Wight had not worked. Gibraltar was ruled out because Marx would have needed a passport to enter the territory, and as a stateless person he was not in possession of one. The Bismarckian empire was covered in snow and anyway still forbidden to him, while Italy was out of the question, since, as Friedrich Engels put it, "the first proviso where convalescents are concerned is that there should be no harassment by the police."²

With the support of Dr. Donkin and Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law, Engels convinced the patient to head for Algiers, which at the time enjoyed a good reputation among English people who could afford to escape the rigors of winter.³ As Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx later recalled, what pushed Marx into making this unusual trip was his old obsession: to complete *Capital*.⁴ She wrote that

His general state keeps getting worse. If he had been more egoistic, he would have simply allowed things to take their course. But for him one thing stood above all else: devotion to the cause. He wanted to see his great work through to the end and therefore agreed once more to make a journey to recover his health.⁵

Marx left for the Mediterranean on 9 February, stopping on the way at Argenteuil, a Parisian suburb, where his eldest daughter Jenny Marx Longuet lived. When his health did not improve, he decided after scarcely

one week to continue alone to Marseilles, having persuaded Eleanor that it was unnecessary for her to accompany him. To Engels he confided, “Not for anything in the world would I have the girl think she is to be sacrificed as an old man’s ‘nurse’ on the altar of family.”⁶

After crossing the whole of France by train, he reached the great Provençal seaport on 17 February. He immediately obtained a ticket for the first ship bound for Africa,⁷ and the next day, on a windy wintry afternoon, he was in the harbor queuing up with other passengers to go on board. He had a couple of suitcases crammed with heavy clothing, medicines, and a few books. At 5:00 p.m., the steamer *Said* left for Algiers, where Marx would stay for 72 days. This was the only time in his life that he spent outside Europe.⁸

II. Resisting the Disease in the Algerian Capital

After a stormy 34-hour crossing, Karl Marx reached his destination on 20 February. The next day he wrote to Engels, and a week later he recalled that his “*corpus delecti*” had been “frozen to the marrow.” He found an ideally situated room, with a port view, at the Hôtel-Pension Victoria, in the Upper Mustapha zone. It was a “magical panorama,” which allowed him to appreciate the “wonderful combination of Europe and Africa.”⁹

The only person who knew the identity of the newly arrived polyglot gentleman was Albert Fermé, a justice of the peace and follower of Charles Fourier, who had landed in Algiers in 1870 after a period of imprisonment on account of his opposition to the Second Empire. He was the only real company Marx had there, serving as his guide on various excursions and attempting to satisfy his curiosity about the new world.

As the days passed, however, Marx’s health did not improve. He was still troubled by the bronchitis, and an uncontrollable cough kept him awake at night. The unusually cold, damp, and rainy weather—it was the worst winter for ten years in Algiers—also favored another attack of pleurisy. “The only difference between my clothing in the Isle of Wight and my clothing in the city of Algiers,” he wrote to Engels, “is that in the villa I have up till now simply replaced the rhinoceros greatcoat with my light greatcoat.” He even contemplated moving 400 kilometres further south, to

the village of Biskra on the edge of the Sahara, but the poor physical conditions dissuaded him from such a taxing journey. He therefore embarked on a lengthy period of complicated treatment in Algiers.

Dr. Charles Stephann, the best in the city, prescribed sodium arsenate during the day and a codeine-based opiate syrup to help him sleep at night. He also ordered Marx to reduce physical exertion to a minimum and to abstain from "real intellectual work except some reading for [his] distraction." Nevertheless, on 6 March the cough became even more violent and brought about repeated haemorrhaging. Marx was therefore forbidden to leave the hotel and even to engage in conversation: "rest, solitude and silence" were now "duties incumbent on [him] as a citizen."¹⁰ At least, he wrote to Engels, "Dr. Stephann, like my dear Dr. Donkin [in London], does not forget—the cognac."¹¹

The most painful treatment proved to be a course of ten vesicatories, a therapy popular at the time that used agents to blister the skin in order to release subcutaneous toxins. Marx managed to complete these with the help of a young pharmacist. Little by little, by repeatedly painting his chest and back with collodion and opening the resulting blisters, Mr. Maurice Casthelaz succeeded in drawing off the excess fluid from his lungs.

Not surprisingly, Marx began to regret his chosen destination: as he wrote to Paul Lafargue, "from the moment of [his] departure for Marseilles" there had been "the finest weather in both Nice and Menton," two other possibilities he had considered.¹² In the second half of March, he confided to his daughter Jenny: "in this foolish, ill-calculated expedition, I am now just arrived again at that standard of health when I possessed it on leaving" London. He also told her that he had had his doubts about travelling such a long way, "but that Engels and Bryan Donkin fired each other mutually into African furor, neither one nor the other getting any special information" about the weather that year.¹³ In his view, "the thing was to inform oneself before starting on such a wild goose chase."¹⁴

On 20 March, Marx wrote to Lafargue that the treatment had been stopped for the time being since there was no longer "a single dry place either on [his] back or [his] chest." The sight of his body reminded him of

“a kitchen garden in miniature planted with melons.” To his great relief, however, his sleep was “gradually returning”: “someone who has not suffered from insomnia cannot appreciate that blissful state when the terror of sleepless nights begins to give way.”¹⁵

On the other hand, Marx’s breathing was more labored as a result of the nocturnal drawing of blisters, the need to remain bandaged, and the strict ban on scratching. Having learned that the weather in France had been “wonderful” since his departure from London, and bearing in mind the initial prediction of a rapid cure, he wrote to Engels that “a man ought never [to] delude himself by too sanguine views!”¹⁶ Clearly there was “some way to go to *sana mens in sano corpore*.”¹⁷

Marx’s suffering was not only bodily. He felt lonely and wrote on 16 March to his daughter Jenny: “Nothing could be more magical than the city of Algiers, unless it be the countryside outside that city [...]; it would be like the Arabian Nights—given good health—with all my dear ones (in particular not forgetting my grandsons).”¹⁸ And on 27 March he added that he would have liked “by magic” to have Johnny, the eldest, there too—“to wonder [...] at Moors, Berbers, Turks, negroes, in one word this Babel and costumes (most of them poetic) of this oriental world, mixed with the ‘civilized’ French etc. and the dull Britons.”¹⁹

To Engels, a comrade with whom he was used to sharing everything, he wrote of “an occasional bout of profound melancholy, like the great Don Quixote.” His thoughts kept returning to the loss of his life-companion: “You know that few people are more averse to demonstrative pathos; still, it would be a lie [not] to confess that my thoughts are to a great part absorbed by reminiscence of my wife, such a part of my best part of life!”²⁰ One distraction from the pain of mourning was the spectacle of nature around him. Early in April he wrote that there was “wonderful moonlight on the bay,” and he could “never stop feasting [his] eyes on the sea in front of [his] balcony.”²¹

Marx also suffered from the enforced lack of serious intellectual activity. Since the start of the trip, he had been aware that it would be “a time-wasting operation,” but he had eventually agreed to it when he realized that the “accursed disease” also “impairs one’s intellect.”²²

He told Jenny that "any working" was "out of the question" in Algiers—even "the correction of *Capital* for a [third German] edition."²³ As to the current political situation, he limited himself to reading the telegraphic reports of a small local paper, *The Little Settler* [*Le Petit Colon*], and the only workers' sheet received from Europe, *The Equality* [*L'Égalité*], about which he noted sarcastically that "you can't call it a newspaper."²⁴

Marx's letters of Spring 1882 show that he was "eager to be again active and to drop that invalid's stupid métier,"²⁵ "a pointless, arid, not to say expensive, existence."²⁶ To Lafargue he even said he was so busy doing nothing that he felt close to imbecility²⁷—which suggests a fear on his part that he was no longer capable of taking up his usual existence where he had left off.

This progression of unfavorable events did not allow Marx to get to the bottom of Algerian reality, nor—as Engels foresaw—was it really possible for him to study the characteristics of "common ownership among the Arabs."²⁸ In 1879 he had already taken an interest in the land question in French-ruled Algeria, in the course of his studies in ethnology, landed property, and precapitalist societies. In that circumstance, Marx had transcribed from Maksim Kovalevsky's *Communal Landownership: Causes, Course and Consequences* that the "individualization of land ownership" would bring huge benefits to the invaders, but it would also favor the "political aim" of "destroying the foundation of this society."²⁹

On 22 February 1882, an article in the Algiers daily *The News* [*L'Akhbar*] documented the injustices of the newly crafted system. Theoretically, any French citizen at that time could acquire a concession of more than 100 hectares of Algerian land, without even leaving his country, and he could then resell it to a native for 40,000 francs. On average, the *colons* sold every parcel of land they had bought for 20-30 francs at the price of 300 francs.³⁰

Owing to his ill health, Marx was unable to return to these problems; nor was the article in *The News* brought to his attention. But his permanent desire for knowledge did not fade even in the most adverse circumstances. After exploring the area around his hotel, where housing reconstruction was

under way on a vast scale, he noted that “although the workers engaged in this activity are healthy people and local residents they go down with fever after the first three days. Part of their wages, therefore, consists of a daily dose of quinine supplied by the employers.”³¹

III. Reflections on the Arab World

From the southern rim of the Mediterranean Marx made a number of interesting observations in his sixteen letters,³² some of which display a still partly colonial vision. The ones that really stand out are those dealing with social relations among Muslims. Marx was profoundly struck by the bearing of the Arabs: “even the poorest Moor,” he wrote, “surpasses the greatest European comedian in the art of wrapping himself in his hood and showing natural, graceful and dignified attitudes.”³³ Noting how their social classes mixed, he wrote to his daughter Laura Lafargue in mid-April that he had observed a group of Arabs playing cards, “some of them dressed pretentiously, even richly, others in, for once I dare call it blouses, sometime of white woollen appearance, now in rags and tatters.” For a “true Muslim,” he commented,

such accidents, good or bad luck, do not distinguish Mahomet’s children. Absolute equality in their social intercourse, not affected; on the contrary, only when demoralized, they become aware of it; as to the hatred against Christians and the hope of an ultimate victory over these infidels, their politicians justly consider this same feeling and practice of absolute equality (not of wealth or position but of personality) a guarantee of keeping up the one, of not giving up the latter. (Nevertheless, they will go to rack and ruin without a revolutionary movement.)³⁴

Marx also marveled at the scant presence of the state:

In no town elsewhere, which is at the same time the seat of the central government, is there such *laissez faire, laissez passer*; police reduced to a bare minimum; unparalleled lack of embarrassment in public; the Moorish element is

responsible for this. For Muslims there is no such thing as subordination; they are neither “subjects” nor “citizens” [*administrés*]; no authority, save in politics, something which Europeans have totally failed to understand.³⁵

Marx scornfully attacked the Europeans’ violent abuses and constant provocations, and not least their “bare-faced arrogance and presumptuousness vis-à-vis the ‘lesser breeds,’ [and] grisly, Moloch-like obsession with atonement” with regard to any act of rebellion. He also emphasized that, in the comparative history of colonial occupation, “the British and Dutch outdo the French.” In Algiers itself, he reported to Engels, his friend the judge Fermé had regularly seen in the course of his career “a form of torture [...] to extract confessions from Arabs, naturally done [...] (like the English in India) by the ‘police.’”

When, for example, a murder is committed by an Arab gang, usually with robbery in view, and the actual miscreants are in the course of time duly apprehended, tried and executed, this is not regarded as sufficient atonement by the injured colonist family. They demand into the bargain the “pulling in” of at least half a dozen innocent Arabs. [...] When a European colonist dwells among the “lesser breeds,” either as a settler or simply on business, he generally regards himself as even more inviolable than handsome William I.³⁶

Marx returned to the theme in another context when he told Engels of the brutality of the French authorities toward “a poor, thieving Arab, a poor, multiple assassin by profession.” Shortly before his execution, he learned that “he wasn’t going to be shot but guillotined! This, in defiance of prior arrangements!” Nor was that all:

His relatives had expected the head and body to be handed over to them so that they could sew the former to the latter and then bury the “whole.” Which it is not! Howls, imprecations and gnashing of teeth; the French authorities dug their heels in, the first time they had done so! Now,

when the body arrives in paradise, Mohammed will ask, “Where have you left your head? Or, how did the head come to be parted from its body? You’re not fit to enter paradise. Go and join those dogs of Christians in hell!” And that’s why his relations were so upset.³⁷

Along with these political and social observations, Marx’s letters also include material on Arab customs. In one, he told his daughter Laura a story that had greatly appealed to his practical side:

A ferryman is ready and waiting, with his small boat, on the tempestuous waters of a river. A philosopher, wishing to get to the other side, climbs aboard. There ensues the following dialogue:

Philosopher: Do you know anything of history, ferryman?

Ferryman: No!

Philosopher: Then you’ve wasted half your life!

And again: The Philosopher: Have you studied mathematics?

Ferryman: No!

Philosopher: Then you’ve wasted more than half your life.

Hardly were these words out of the philosopher’s mouth when the wind capsized the boat, precipitating both ferryman and philosopher into the water. Whereupon, Ferryman shouts: Can you swim?

Philosopher: No!

Ferryman: Then you’ve wasted your whole life.

And Marx added to Laura: “That will tickle your appetite for things Arabic.”³⁸

After more than two months of suffering, Marx’s condition improved and he was at last able to return to France. First, however, he had a final surprise for Engels: “Apropos; because of the sun, I have done away with my prophet’s beard and my crowning glory but (in deference to my daughters) had myself

photographed before offering up my hair on the altar of an Algerian barber.”³⁹ This would be the last snapshot of him. And it is utterly unlike the granite profile to be found on the squares of “actually existing socialism,” which the régimes of the day ordered to represent him. His moustache, rather like his ideas, has not lost the color of youth—and his smiling face, for all life’s trials and disappointments, still appears kindly and unassuming.⁴⁰

IV. Final Note: A Republican in the Principality

Bad weather continued to pester Marx. During his “last days in Africa,”⁴¹ his health was sorely tested by the arrival of the sirocco, and the crossing to Marseilles—where he landed on 5 May, on his sixty-fourth birthday—was particularly rough. As he wrote later to Eleanor: “A violent storm [...] turned [his] cabin into a veritable wind tunnel.” And once at their destination, the steamer did not actually enter the harbor, so that the passengers had to be taken off by boat, spending “several hours in a cold, draughty customs-hall-cum-purgatory until the time came for them to depart for Nice.” These tribulations, he quipped, “more or less threw [his] machine out of gear” and “precipitated [him] into the hands of an Aesculapius” as soon as they reached Monte Carlo.⁴²

The trusted Aesculapius was Dr. Kunemann, an excellent doctor from Alsace who specialized in lung diseases.⁴³ It was discovered that the bronchitis had become chronic and, to Marx’s “horror,” that “the pleurisy had returned.”⁴⁴ All the moving around had done further damage, and Marx used his customary literary references to joke about it with Engels: “‘Fate’ would seem on this occasion to have displayed an alarming consistency—almost, one might say, as in the tragedies of Amandus Müllner,” where “fate” does indeed play an important role in human existence. Another course of four vesicatories was therefore necessary, and these took place between 9 and 30 May.

Since he had to get better before continuing on his way, Marx spent three weeks in the principality of Monaco. His descriptions of the atmosphere there mix shrewdness with social criticism: for example, he compared Monte Carlo to Gerolstein, the imaginary statelet in which

Jacques Offenbach set his opera *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* (1867). Marx went a few times to the reading room at the famous casino, which offered a good selection of international newspapers. But he told Engels that his “*table d’hôte* companions at the Hôtel de Russie” and, more generally, the public in the city were “more interested in what goes on in the Casino’s gaming rooms.” His letters from this period alternate between amused observations about people he came across—e.g., “a son of Albion, sulky, ill-tempered and bewildered [...] because he had lost a certain number of yellow boys, whereas he had been absolutely intent on ‘copping’ the same”—and mordant comments such as: “he couldn’t understand that not even British boorishness is able ‘to bully’ fortune.”⁴⁵

The most trenchant description of this alien world was offered to his daughter Eleanor, in a letter written shortly before his departure:

At the *table d’hôte*, in the cafés, etc., almost the only topic that is talked or whispered about is the roulette and the *trente et quarante* tables. Every now and again something is won, as for instance 100 francs by a young Russian lady (wife of a Russian diplomat-cum-agent) [...], who, in return, loses 6,000 frs, while someone else can’t keep enough for the journey home; others gamble away the whole of large family fortunes; very few take away a share of the plunder—few of the gamblers, I mean, and those that do are almost without exception rich. There can be no question of intelligence or calculation here; no one can count with any probability on being favoured by “chance” unless he can venture a considerable sum.⁴⁶

The frenzy in the air was not confined to the gaming rooms or the evening hours; it pervaded the whole city and entire day of those who visited it. For example, there was a kiosk right next door to the casino.

This is daily adorned with a placard, not printed, but handwritten and signed with the initials of the quill-pusher; for 600 francs he will provide, in black and white, the secret of the science of winning a million francs with a 1,000. [...]

Nor, or so it is said, is it by any means rare for people to fall victim to this confidence trick. Indeed, most of the gamblers, both male and female, believe there is a science in what are pure games of chance; the ladies and gentlemen sit outside the said Café de Paris, in front of, or on the seats in, the wonderful garden that belongs to the casino, heads bent over little [printed] tables, scribbling and doing sums, while one of them may earnestly expound to another “‘what system’ he prefers, whether one should play in series,” etc., etc. It’s like watching a bunch of lunatics.⁴⁷

In short, it became clear to Marx that “the economic basis of Monaco-Gerolstein is the casino; if it were to close tomorrow it would be all up with Monaco-Gerolstein—the whole of it!” Without it not even Nice, “the rendez-vous in the winter months of the quality and of fortune-hunters alike, could continue to subsist as a fashionable centre [...]. And withal, how childish is the casino by comparison with the Bourse!”

After the last in the series of vesicatories, Dr. Kunemann discharged Marx and gave him permission to continue his journey. But he did advise him to stop off “in Cannes for a day or two” to allow the wounds to “dry out,” after which he could move on up to Paris. Once in the exclusive French resort, Marx drew a balance-sheet of his time on the Côte d’Azur:

I have spent an entire month vegetating in this lair of aristocratic idlers or adventurers. Nature superb, in other respects a dreary hole; [...] no plebeian “masses” here, apart from the hotel and café waiters, etc., and domestics, who belong to the *Lumpenproletariat*.⁴⁸

The weather continued to do its worst and to weigh heavily on him. During the three days in Cannes, there was an exceptionally “strong (if warm) wind and eddies of dust,” talk of which filled “the Riviera’s local press.” Marx responded with self-irony, joking to Engels that “Nature, too, can evince a certain philistine humour (after the manner, already humorously anticipated in the Old Testament, of the serpent feeding on dust, cf. the dusty diet of Darwin’s worms).”

In the same letter, Marx dwelled on the doctor's final recommendations: "to eat well and amply even if it goes against the grain, and 'accustom' oneself to so doing; [to] drink 'decent' stuff and go for drives, etc. [...] [to] think as little as possible, etc." He could not fail to remark that "having followed these 'directions,' I am well on the way to 'idiocy,' and for all that have not rid myself of the bronchial catarrh. A consoling thought for me is that it was bronchitis that sent old Garibaldi to his 'eternal rest.'" In any case, he was convinced that "at a certain age it becomes completely indifferent how one is 'launched into eternity'"⁴⁹

On 7 June, some four months after his departure from London, Marx was finally in a position to take the train back to his daughter's house in Argenteuil. He advised her not to bother about his arrival—"Till now, I have always found that nothing has done me more harm than people, at the station, waiting for me"—and not to tell any of the comrades, even Lafargue, that he was expected. He still needed "absolute quietness,"⁵⁰ and, as he said to Engels too, "he felt it [was] still necessary [...] to have as little 'intercourse with people' as possible."⁵¹ The giant was weary and felt he was close to the end of the road. The words he wrote to Jenny were much the same as those of any other mortal: "By 'quietness' I mean the 'family life,' 'the children's noise,' that 'microscopic world' more interesting than the 'macroscopic.'" ⁵²

Karl Marx died nine months after this letter, on 14 March 1883. A few days later, Engels wrote to Friedrich Sorge, the comrade who had become secretary of the International Working Men's Association after it moved to the United States in 1872:

Mankind is the poorer for the loss of this intellect—the most important intellect, indeed, which it could boast today. The movement of the proletariat will continue on its course but it has lost its focal point, the point to which Frenchmen, Russians, Americans and Germans would automatically turn at moments of crisis, on every occasion receiving clear, indisputable advice such as only genius and consummate expertise can give.⁵³

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Notes

¹ Sections of this article are based on Marcello Musto, *The Last Years of Karl Marx: An Intellectual Biography* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020).

² Friedrich Engels to Eduard Bernstein, 25 January 1882, MECW 46:186-87. In his view, "Italy [could] hold out fewer guarantees than anywhere else—save, of course, Bismarck's empire."

³ See Gilbert Badia, "Marx en Algérie," in Karl Marx, *Lettres d'Alger et de la Côte d'Azur* (Paris: Le Temps des Cerises, 1997), 17.

⁴ See Marcello Musto, *Another Marx: Early Manuscripts to the International* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), and *Marx's Capital after 150 Years: Critique and Alternative to Capitalism*, ed. Marcello Musto (London-New York: Routledge, 2019). Marx started to write his critique of political economy in 1857; see Marcello Musto, "Marx's Life at the Time of the *Grundrisse*: Biographical Notes on 1857-8," in *Karl Marx's Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy 150 Years Later*, ed. Marcello Musto (London-New York: Routledge, 2008), 147-61.

⁵ Eleanor Marx, in Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels* (Frankfurt: Insel-Verlag, 1973), 577-78.

⁶ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 12 January 1882, MECW 46:176. On Eleanor Marx and her special relationship with her father, see Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx* (London: Verso, 2018); Chushichi Tsuzuki, *The Life of Eleanor Marx, 1855-1898: A Socialist Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Eva Weissweiler, *Tussy Marx: Das Drama der Vätertochter* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2002); and Rachel Holmes, *Eleanor Marx: A Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

⁷ See Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 17 February 1882: "No question of passports and such like. Nothing is entered on the passengers' tickets save Christian and surnames" (MECW 46:200).

⁸ The trip to the Algerian capital has not received much attention from Marx's biographers. Even Jacques Attali, himself born in Algiers, devoted only half a page to it in his *Karl Marx, ou l'Esprit du monde* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 410; despite some inexactitudes about Marx's stay, he notes that he

was ignorant of the Oran uprising between Summer 1881 and Spring 1883. Marlene Vesper's *Marx in Algier* (Bonn: Pahl-Rugenstein Nachfolger, 1995) traces with great precision all the events that Marx witnessed at first hand during his visit to Algiers. Also of interest is René Gallissot, ed., *Marxisme et Algérie* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1976). The novel by Hans Jürgen Krysmanski, *Die letzte Reise des Karl Marx* (Frankfurt: Westend, 2014), was originally intended as the screenplay for a film on Marx's stay in Algiers, but was never produced because of a lack of funding.

⁹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 1 March 1882, MECW 46:213-14.

¹⁰ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 16 March 1882, MECW 46:219.

¹¹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 1 March 1882, MECW 46:215.

¹² Karl Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882, MECW 46:221. He added: "But there was this insistent idea—for which I was not responsible—of the African sun and the wonder-working air out here!"

¹³ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 16 March 1882, MECW 46:218.

¹⁴ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 27 March 1882, MECW 46:224. He added, "Between us: Though in the Isle of Wight the weather was unfavourable, but still my health improved so greatly that people wondered. [...] at London, on the contrary, Engels' excitement [...] in fact has upset me: I felt, I could no longer stand it; hence my impatience to get from London away on any condition whatever! People may kill someone out of real most sincere love; with all that nothing more dangerous in such cases for a convalescent!"

¹⁵ Karl Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882, MECW 46:221-22.

¹⁶ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 1 March 1882, MECW 46:215.

¹⁷ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 28-31 March 1882, MECW 46:226.

¹⁸ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 16 March 1882, MECW 46:219.

¹⁹ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 27 March 1882, MECW 46:225.

²⁰ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 1 March 1882, MECW 46:213, 215.

²¹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 4 April 1882, MECW 46:229.

²² Karl Marx to Pyotr Lavrov, 23 January 1882, MECW 46:184.

²³ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 27 March 1882, MECW 46:225. In October 1881, the publisher Otto Meissner had asked Marx to make any necessary corrections or additions to Volume One of his magnum opus in

preparation for a new edition. On the making of *Capital* see Marcello Musto, "The Writing of *Capital*: Genesis and Structure of Marx's Critique of Political Economy," *Critique*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (2018), 11-26.

²⁴ Karl Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882, MECW 46:221; MEW 35:293.

²⁵ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 6-7 April 1882, MECW 46:230; MEW 35:298.

²⁶ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 20 May 1882, MECW 46:210; MEW 35:65.

²⁷ See Paul Lafargue to Friedrich Engels, 19 June 1882, in Frederick Engels, Paul Lafargue, and Laura Lafargue, *Correspondence, Vol. 1, 1868-1886* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), 87.

²⁸ Cf. Friedrich Engels to Eduard Bernstein, 22-25 February 1882, MECW 46:210-11. Lafargue was later certainly exaggerating when he said that "Marx has come back with his head full of Africa and the Arabs; he took advantage of his stay in Algiers to devour its library, it seems to me that he has read a great number of works on the condition of the Arabs." Paul Lafargue to Friedrich Engels, 16 June 1882, in Engels, Lafargue, and Lafargue, *Correspondence*, 83. As Badia has pointed out, it is much more likely that Marx was unable to "learn much about the social and political situation in the French colony," although his "letters from Algiers testify to his many-sided curiosity," in Gilbert Badia, "Marx en Algérie," in Karl Marx, *Lettres d'Alger*, 13.

²⁹ Karl Marx, "Excerpts from M.M. Kovalevskij [Kovalevsky], *Obschinnoe zemlevladienie. Prichiny, khod i posledstviya ego razlozheniya* [Communal landownership: The causes, course and consequences of its decline]." In Lawrence Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Sources, Development and Critique in the Writings of Karl Marx* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 412.

³⁰ See Marlene Vesper, *Marx in Algier*, 33-34, which reproduces passages from the article "The Concessions" in the local daily.

³¹ Karl Marx to Paul Lafargue, 20 March 1882, MECW 46:220. Marx added that "the same practice can be observed in various places in South America."

³² This total refers only to his surviving correspondence. In reality, Marx wrote more letters, including some to his daughter Eleanor, but these have been lost over time: “He wrote me long letters from Algiers. Many of these I no longer possess, since at his request I sent them on to Jenny and she gave only a few back to me,” Eleanor Marx, in *Gespräche mit Marx und Engels*, 578.

³³ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 6-7 April 1882, MECW 46:231-32.

³⁴ Karl Marx to Laura Lafargue, 13-14 April 1882, MECW 46:242.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 238.

³⁶ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 8 April 1882, MECW 46:234.

³⁷ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 18 April 1882, MECW, 46:246-47.

³⁸ Karl Marx to Laura Lafargue, 13-14 April 1882, MECW 46:243.

³⁹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 28 April 1882, MECW 46:249.

⁴⁰ Marx himself said that, although he had not had “one day of complete repose” in the eight weeks before the photograph, he was “still putting a good face on things,” *ibid.* Engels was very happy with what his friend had told him. “He had his photograph taken in Algiers,” he wrote to August Bebel, “and is looking quite his old self again.” Friedrich Engels to August Bebel, 16 May 1882, MECW 46:259. Cf. Vesper, *Marx in Algier*, 130-35.

⁴¹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 8 May 1882, MECW 46:253.

⁴² Karl Marx to Eleanor Marx, 28 May 1882, MECW 46:267.

⁴³ Cf. Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 5 June 1882, MECW 46:272.

⁴⁴ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 20 May 1882, MECW 46:262. Marx did not write to his daughters of this development, since “it would alarm them unnecessarily,” *ibid.*, 264.

⁴⁵ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 8 May 1882, MECW 46:254.

⁴⁶ Karl Marx to Eleanor Marx, 28 May 1882, MECW 46:268.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 269. The English engineer Joseph Jagers did discover a way of breaking the bank—not by any scientific system, however, but simply by studying a mechanical dysfunction. In 1873, he realized that one roulette wheel was more unbalanced than the others, so that it came up with nine numbers more often than others. He managed to win one and a half million francs, before the casino became aware of the defect and repaired it without difficulty.

⁴⁸ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 5 June 1882, MECW 46:272.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 274.

⁵⁰ Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 4 June 1882, MECW 46:271.

⁵¹ Karl Marx to Friedrich Engels, 5 June 1882, MECW 46:274. The literary reference here is to a work by Adolph von Knigge, entitled precisely *On Intercourse with People* (1788).

⁵² Karl Marx to Jenny Longuet, 4 June 1882, MECW 46:272.

⁵³ Friedrich Engels to Friedrich Sorge, 15 March 1883, MECW 46:462-63. On the contemporary relevance of Marx, see *The Marx Revival: Key Concepts and New Interpretations*, ed. Marcello Musto (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

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