



Revolution and Counter-Revolution

Karl Marx

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These articles were written in 1851-1852, when Marx had been about eighteen months in England. He was living with his wife, three young children, and their life-long friend, Helene Demuth, in two rooms in Dean Street, Soho, almost opposite the Royalty Theatre. For nearly ten years they had been driven from pillar to post. When, in 1843, the Prussian Government suppressed the *Rhenish Gazette* which Marx had edited, he went with his newly-married wife, Jenny von Westphalen, to Paris. Not long after, his expulsion was demanded by the Prussian Government—it is said that Alexander von Humboldt acted as the agent of Prussia on this occasion—and M. Guizot was, of course, too polite to refuse the request. Marx was expelled, and betook himself to Brussels. Again the Prussian Government requested his expulsion, and where the French Government had complied it was not likely the Belgian would refuse. Marx received marching orders.

But at this same time the French Government that had expelled Marx had gone the way of French Governments, and the new Provisional Government through Ferdinand Flocon invited the “brave et loyal Marx” to return to the country whence “tyranny had banished him, and where he, like all fighting in the sacred cause, the cause of the fraternity of all peoples,” would be welcome. The invitation was accepted, and for some months he lived in Paris. Then he returned to Germany in order to start the *New Rhenish Gazette* in Cologne. And the *Rhenish Gazette* writers had very lively times. Marx was twice prosecuted, but as the juries would not convict, the Prussian Government took the nearer way and suppressed the paper. Again Marx and his family returned to the country whose “doors” had only a few short months before been “thrown open” to him. The sky had changed—and the Government. “We remained in Paris,” my mother says in some biographical notes I have found, “a month. Here also there was to be no resting-place for us. One fine morning the familiar figure of the sergeant of police appeared with the announcement that Karl ‘et sa dame’ must leave Paris within twenty-four hours. We were graciously told we might be interned at Vannes in the Morbihan. Of course we could not accept such an exile as that, and I again gathered together my small belongings to seek a safe haven in London. Karl had hastened thither before us.” The “us” were my mother, Helene Demuth, and the three little children, Jenny (Madame Longuet), Laura (Madame Lafargue), and Edgar, who died at the age of eight.

The haven was safe indeed. But it was storm-tossed. Hundreds of refugees—all more or less destitute—were now in London. There followed years of horrible poverty, of bitter suffering—such suffering as can only be known to the penniless stranger in a strange land. The misery would have been unendurable but for the faith that was in these men and women, and but for their invincible “Humor.” I use the German word because I know no English one that quite expresses the same thing—such a combination of humor and good-humor, of light-hearted courage, and high spirits...

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