

## **WAS KARL MARX A BLACK MAN?**

BY HERBERT W. VILAKAZI

His fellow-students had conferred upon him the nickname "Der Mohr." American boys would probably call him "Nigger."

—Theodor Cuno, a friend of Karl Marx  
in his "Reminiscences" of Karl Marx

About three or four years ago, at an annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Houston, Texas, I mentioned to a friend, a black anthropologist, that I intended one day to write an article stating that Karl Marx was, in fact, a black man.

My friend looked at me open-mouthed, half-pleased and half-shocked, and said, "What!" He then turned around, actually pulled two friends nearby (we were at a reception) and, with a smile on his face, said: "You know what? Herbert says he is going to write an article stating that Karl Marx was black." This was immediately followed by laughter; and, to make the point quite clear, my friend took a step toward me, stretched his arm toward my face, felt my forehead with his open hand, and asked, "Are you all right, Herbert?" This, of course, was followed by more laughter.

A reaction of this type, from one's colleagues, can do more than just unsettle one momentarily: it can frighten one to silence, or force one to use very impotent language in discussing the major issues of our time, leaving such issues unclear, except for the standing orthodox view. Indeed, I would long ago have been

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frightened to silence concerning many issues had I not accepted the fact that was taken for granted by the great Marxists of the past, that the people with the least inclination to accepting new truths and conclusions about society and history are precisely "learned" people.

Now, then, what about Karl Marx's "racial" make-up? The evidence I have seen over the years regarding Marx's looks is enough to convince me that, *according to the criteria of racial classification used by the common person in the United States of America*, Karl Marx would be classified black. What evidence is this? First, let me call your attention to the fact that a number of black students, having looked at the photograph of Marx inside a textbook, have come to me to inquire whether Marx was white or black, "because," as one student put it, "he does not look that white to me."

The thesis of Karl Marx's "Negroid ancestry" is not new. It was stated many years ago by J. A. Rogers, the greatest scholar to date on the black race. In his book, *Nature Knows No Color Line*, he wrote: "Karl Marx, who bore a strong resemblance to Frederick Douglass, undoubtedly came of this Negroid stock. His nose was broad, his hair frizzly and his color so dark he was called the 'Moor.'"<sup>1\*</sup>

Alas! we live in a world which has been so heavily fed with racism, that we find it extremely difficult to accommodate such a statement into our store of accepted truths. Let me point out that when, at the same annual meeting of anthropologists mentioned above, I remarked to my friends and colleagues that J. A. Rogers had actually written about Marx's "Negroid ancestry," a very distinguished, old, black anthropologist dismissed the authority of J. A. Rogers with the assertion that Rogers played tricks with photographs, making people actually look black, when in fact they were white. Later on, of course, this observation was repeated to me by one of the participants in the discussion, citing the authority of the distinguished, old, black anthropologist who had first uttered it. Listening to all this was both depressing and dismaying to me. What a disheartening and unfair disparagement of the monumental scholarship of J. A. Rogers! Again,

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\* Notes will be found at the end of the article.

this shows the power over us of the racist distortion of historical truth.

Rogers based his remarks on Marx's physical appearance, on the description of Marx given by L. Schwarzschild, in his biography of Marx titled *The Red Prussian*. Informing us of the discussions the young Karl Marx used to have with his future father-in-law, Schwarzschild, in the original German, offers a description of Marx beginning with his eyes: "They were dark eyes on a dark face, and the hair was pitchblack [*perschwarz*], the nose somewhat broad, and the whole appearance justified the nickname 'Moor' which his father had given him."<sup>2</sup>

Now, the only word used by Rogers, which is not used by Schwarzschild, is "frizzly," referring to Marx's hair. Keep in mind that Rogers only based his description of Marx on Schwarzschild's sentence; his was not a literal translation of the latter's statement. However, he could have based his choice of "frizzly" on the description of Marx's hair offered by others. Indeed, there are other descriptions by people who actually knew Karl Marx.

One of the most striking descriptions of Marx's appearance by someone who knew him, a description that is bound to shake, if not destroy, the standing orthodoxy about Marx's whiteness, is the one that was offered by Theodor Cuno, an Austrian who had fought along with Marx and Engels for the working class, and later emigrated to the United States. Cuno attended the International Working Men's Association, which was held in The Hague. There, he met Marx and Engels for the first time. This is his description of Karl Marx: "Marx was sitting behind Engels. I recognized him immediately with his *big wooly head*. *His complexion was dark*, his hair and beard were grey."<sup>3</sup> Elsewhere, in the same description, Cuno refers to Marx's "bushy hair."<sup>4</sup> Then comes what must be a very disturbing conclusion to many people: "His fellow students had conferred upon him the nickname 'Der Mohr.' American boys would probably call him 'Nigger.'"<sup>5</sup>

Wilhelm Liebknecht wrote the following in his book on Marx, whom he knew closely:

I was, with the exception of the faithful Lessner and the no less faithful Lochner, who, however could only come less frequently,

the only one of the London "community" who, during the whole time—with only a short interruption to be mentioned later in the sketches—frequented the house of "MOHR" [negro]—the nickname of Marx—like a member of the family.<sup>6</sup>

Friedrich Engels, the life-long friend and co-worker of Marx, also offered a description of Marx in one of his letters to Kautsky. Leon Trotsky, in a remarkable essay, *On Engels and Kautsky*, refers to that description:

For an oil portrait of Marx which was in preparation in Switzerland, Engels supplied through Kautsky the following color-description of his deceased friend: "A complexion as dark as it is generally possible for a South European to be, without much color on the cheeks . . . mustaches black as soot, tinged with white, and snow-white hair on head and beard. . . ." This description makes clear why Marx received the nickname "the Moor" in his family and intimate circle.<sup>7</sup>

A question one can ask here is, how "dark" is it "generally possible for a South European to be"?

Recently a biography of Marx appeared, written by the American historian and political scientist Saul K. Padover. His description of Marx's appearance will also disturb many people who are secure in the conviction that Marx was a "white man." Padover writes:

Marx was not only hirsute, he was also exceptionally dark, conspicuously exotic among light-skinned people. This may have had something to do with Wyttenbach's impression that he was undisciplined. Marx's swarthinness was such that in later years his intimates called him *Der Mohr* [The Moor].<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the book, the word "swarthy" is used to describe Marx's complexion. On another page, talking about the relationship between Marx and his wife, Jenny, Dr. Padover has the following to say:

Jenny was always to be violently jealous of Karl, an emotion of which he came to be a little fearful and which was to make him more circumspect than he cared to admit. His very swarthinness seems to have been a spur to her passion for him. In one of the letters she wrote as a bride, she called him her "*Schwarzwildchen*," the German word, *schwarz* meaning "black" and *wildchen* "little wild one."<sup>9</sup>

To think back a little on Padover's words, are we not entitled to wonder, what exactly is a person who is "exceptionally dark" and "conspicuously exotic among light-skinned people"?

Now, a few words on the word "swarthy." Perhaps the best way of doing this is by way of Engels' description of Marx very early in their lives. In 1842, Engels wrote a long poem titled "The Triumph of Faith," which contains about eight lines about Karl Marx. In the poem, Engels describes Marx as "*Ein schwarzer Kerl aus Trier.*" Here is an interesting point: the translation of this description of Marx in the official *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels is, "A swarthy chap of Trier. . . ."<sup>10</sup> The German word "schwarzer" is translated as "swarthy."

The use of the word "swarthy" has always puzzled me. Almost all biographers of Marx in English prefer to use that word when they refer to Marx's skin color. This is puzzling to me, because the word "swarthy" does not seem to be common at all among English speakers, at least in the United States. Of course, "swarthy" comes from the German *schwarz*; in Dutch there is *swart*. Both the German *schwarz* and the Dutch *swart* mean "black." Now why is the word "swarthy" used, instead of "black," when referring to Marx's skin color? Padover, for instance, told us earlier that the German word *schwarz* means "black"; however, he himself prefers the word "swarthy" whenever he talks about Marx's complexion, or else puzzles us by telling us that Marx was "exceptionally dark and conspicuously exotic among light-skinned people." One is tempted to suspect a conscious or unconscious bending of language the other way, to avoid providing the reader with grounds for suspecting that Marx may have belonged to the black race.

The travel document issued to Marx on March 4, 1848, by the administrator of public security of Belgium, described Marx's complexion as "tanned."<sup>11</sup> The extent of his "tan-ness" was such, however, that he came back to Paris from a short stay in Algeria "as dark as a chestnut," according to Paul Lafargue in a letter of June 16, 1882, to Engels,<sup>12</sup> and a chestnut is very dark indeed! This is a transformation hardly to be observed among whites, but quite common among light-skinned

black Americans, South African "Coloreds," and many Puerto Ricans.

Perhaps, to help us accept and assimilate this thesis with less discomfort, it may be wise to deal briefly with the question of the *presence of blacks in Europe throughout the known history of man*; and, very briefly, to underline the very important contributions of the members of the "black race" to the intellectual, spiritual, and material history of man. Let us begin here with a significant statement of the great Austrian historian Friedrich Heer:

The Europe of pre-history, of early history, of non-historical history, which is today making its presence anew, was deeply united with Africa . . . and with Asia. Anyone wishing to see this European-African unity in one glance need only compare the figure of Christ the King carved by negroes of the Ivory Coast for the new Cathedral in Coventry with German figures of Christ the King from the tenth to the thirteenth century. . . . He will see that this is all *one world*.<sup>13</sup>

It is also important to stress another point, which is that until the rise of modern nation-states, which is a phenomenon of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries, with their fixed national boundaries and passports, there was throughout the world a constant movement and migration of *whole communities, peoples, and ethnic groups* from place to place, and continent to continent. There is absolutely nothing comparable to it in our time. Today, we move across national boundaries as individuals or individual families; in pre-modern times, we moved as *entire communities*. This was brought about by various factors: conquest, military expeditions, enslavement, drying up of the land for agriculture, search for better grazing pastures for livestock, or, perhaps, population growth.

The result of all these mass migrations was the presence of what we may call representative samples, of various sizes, of all the various races of mankind in all regions of the world. These various samples maintained their separate identities for shorter or longer periods, depending on various economic-historical factors; sometimes they mixed and intermarried, thereby forming in time a new color or racial average. Let me stress, however, that in all this rich historical experience, *there was never a case of*

*racism throughout the world, until the emergence and maturity of the capitalist economy.*

Thus, a representative sample of the "black race" has been present in Europe throughout the known history of humanity. Let us look at some of the evidence. We shall first look at ancient Britain. In the year 98 A.D., the great Roman soldier, administrator, and historian, Tacitus, published a biography of his father-in-law, who had been a governor of Britain for Rome. In this study, there is a curious passage about the people then currently found in Britain. Here is what Tacitus wrote:

Who the first inhabitants of Britain were, whether native or immigrants, is open to question: one must remember we are dealing with barbarians. But their physical characteristics vary, and the variation is suggestive. The reddish hair and large limbs of the Caledonians proclaim a German origin; the swarthy faces of the Silures, the tendency of their hair to curl, and the fact that Spain lies opposite, all lead one to believe that Spaniards crossed in ancient times and occupied that part of the country.<sup>14</sup>

We could even go back and talk about "Grimaldi Man," said to be of the "negroid race," the fossils of which have been discovered all over Europe, particularly in Southern Europe.<sup>15</sup> Thus, a considerable portion of Europe during the close of the Paleolithic was populated by blacks. American white anthropologists have a habit of hotly denying this fact, but, then, we suspect that this is one of those phenomena always noted by W.E.B. DuBois—the nefarious effect of the African slave trade and American slavery on social-historical sciences in the United States.

From here, we can jump to the next large influx of Africans into Europe—the period of the presence of the Moors in Europe, particularly in southern Europe. The average student of history, reading about the Moors or Muslims in Europe during the medieval period, imagines these people only to have been Arabs. Given the racism of the modern epoch, this supposition may be easier to accept. However, we must stress that a considerable portion of the Muslim or Moorish population of that time in Europe was black. We know that:

Seven years after the capture of Gibraltar the Moors invaded France; and conquered or overran most of its southern portion.

They probably went as far as Geneva. Switzerland was then a part of France. . . . They remained in Southern France, however, until 1140, principally in the Camargue on the western Riviera, which is still known as La Petite Afrique (Little Africa).

In 838, they took Marseilles and in 842, Arles. Aided by fellow-Moslems from the East, they captured Sicily in 837. . . . In 846, they invaded Italy. . . . In 982, they defeated the flower of Christendom under Otto II of Germany. Unmixed Negro troops, most of them from Ethiopia and the Sudan furnished a large part of the Moorish or Saracen troops. Thereafter they dominated most of Italy for years and parts of it until the thirteenth century. . . . Gradually they were absorbed into the Italian population even as the Africans brought in by the ancient Romans had been.<sup>16</sup>

J. A. Rogers continues, and tells us:

In the *Chanson of Roland* written soon after they [Moors] invaded France in 718 A.D., they are described (verses 145 and 146) as "blacker than ink with large noses and ears," and with "nothing white except the teeth." They are 50,000 strong and are led by Marganice, Emperor of Ethiopia and Carthage. Their most valiant figure is Abisme (that is, Abyssinian), who (verse 126) is described as "black as melted pitch." In this epic, the Moors are called Sarrazins, a term which was also used for Negroes.<sup>17</sup>

Later on we shall say a few words on the remarkable and indeed decisive effect of the rule of the Moors over Mediterranean Europe. Here, we are just underlining the considerable presence of Africans among the Moors or Arabs. Incidentally, it is very interesting and suggestive that "people born in Africa were called 'Araps' (blackamoors) in Russia up to the nineteenth century."<sup>18</sup>

It is also very important to stress that a considerable number of Africans or blacks came into Europe as Jews. Rogers tells us that "most of the Negro strain in Northern Europe and Russia was taken in by the Jews. . . ."<sup>19</sup> Again, an interesting fact confirming this point is that "if Africans were mentioned in Russian statistical material, it was only as Arabs or Jews."<sup>20</sup> There is also the important point that, originally, Jews could not have been members of the "white race." Tacitus, whom we have already quoted on Britain, wrote that "many assert that Jews are an Ethiopian race";<sup>21</sup> and Rogers adds that "for Romans to have taken them for Ethiopians is clear indication of their color, since the Ethiopians were definitely black to the



Romans."<sup>22</sup> In any case, even if they had not originally been black, having come to Egypt so few, as the Old Testament tells us, and left so many, they must have intermarried with Africans and, racially speaking, disappeared into the black population—since we know from the “father of history,” Herodotus, that Egyptians had “black skins and wooly hair.”<sup>23</sup> In their travels and stays around the world, Jews of course intermarried with other races, with the result that, as Theodor Waitz, the founder of German academic anthropology, put it, “An interesting gradation of all shades down to black is exhibited by the Jews.”<sup>24</sup> Enlarging on the African or “Negroid” strain in Jews, Rogers wrote:

Especially dark were the Jews of Spain and Portugal. . . . The Duchess d'Abrantes, wife of Napoleon's ambassador to Portugal, said that “the Jew, the Negro and the Portuguese could be seen in a single person. . . .”

So dark were the Jews, especially of Portugal and Southern Spain, that many whites thought all Jews were black or dark. . . .

The Eastern Jews who settled in Austria, Poland, and Russia were Negroid, too. Count Adam Gurowski of Poland who visited the United States in 1857 said the Jews of his country strongly resembled American mulattoes. “Numbers of Jews,” he said, “have the greatest resemblance to the American mulattoes. Sallow complexion, thick lips, crisped black hair. Of all the Jewish population scattered over the globe, one fourth dwells in Poland. I am, therefore, well acquainted with their features. On my arrival in this country (America) I took every light-colored mulatto for a Jew.” Considerable Negro strain was found, too, among the Polish Jews in London.<sup>25</sup>

Rogers then adds this interesting side-note:

For years, two New York white dailies, the *News* and the *Mirror*, have been advertising “Kinky Hair—Straightened permanently in one treatment.” The service is for whites, only. The customers are probably Jews. A Negro hairdresser in Harlem once had many of them among her customers.<sup>26</sup>

It is of course very interesting, perhaps ironic, that the main subject of this essay, Karl Marx himself, supplies a small but striking confirmation of this fact in connection not with himself, but with Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle can really be said to have been the founder of the German working-class party, the German Social Democratic Party; and he was accordingly held in

high esteem by the Marxist generation of Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin. He was German, Jewish, and *black*. Karl Marx, in one of his ugly moods, referred to Lassalle as "a Jewish nigger, a greasy Jew from Breslau who was always concealing his wooly hair with all kinds of hair-oil and make up."<sup>27</sup> In a letter to Engels, he wrote this of Lassalle: "It is perfectly obvious from the shape of his head and the way his hair grows that he is descended from Negroes."<sup>28</sup>

I should here say a few words on the reinforcement of the African presence in the Jewish population of Europe as a result of the particularly close and extended relationship between Jews and the Moors in southern Europe during the reign of Islam, particularly in Spain. The noted historian of the Jews, Cecil Roth, tells us that after the rise of Islam as a power in Europe and Africa, "for something over two centuries, the center of Jewish culture and Jewish activities outside Mesopotamia had resided in the Moslem areas of northwestern Africa and southwestern Europe, and the future seemed to be firmly tied to the fortunes of the Arabic-speaking world."<sup>29</sup> The period of Moorish rule, in Spain in particular, is generally referred to as the "golden age of European Jewry." The Moors were strikingly more "civilized" in their relations with Jews than the Europeans had been since the rise of European Christianity.

In consequence, the most important section of Jewry, numerically, geographically, and culturally, became Arabized. They flaunted Arab names, spoke Arabic only among themselves, adopted Muslim intellectual fashions and standards, used the vernacular for their literature and even, to some extent, for their liturgy, and considered Europe, north of the Pyrenees, as an outpost of barbarism.<sup>30</sup>

The historian S. D. Goitein tells us that the "fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries of the Muslim era—corresponding roughly to the Christian tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries—must be regarded as the apogee of Jewish-Arab symbiosis."<sup>31</sup> We must emphasize again, here, that, as in the world of antiquity, so also in the Middle Ages, to talk about "Jews" and "Arabs" meant talking about people a considerable number of whom were Africans, among both Jews and Arabs! It is also important to stress that Africa was the pivot of this symbiosis.

*This "Jewish-Arab symbiosis" in medieval times was a*

*further reinforcement of the African presence in Europe, particularly in southern Europe*—a further reinforcement of what the Austrian historian Friedrich Heer, earlier referred to, called the “unity of Europe and Africa”; and the economic, social, intellectual, and general cultural consequences upon southern Europe were truly astounding. Hitherto inert, Europe suddenly became charged with the dynamism, creativeness, and cosmopolitanism of Muslim Africa and the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> Let us take the simple case of Sicily. Denis Mack Smith, who has written *the* major study of medieval Sicily in English, tells us the following:

Commerce flourished, because Sicily once again had the benefit of a central position in an immense economical commonwealth which stretched from Spain to Syria. So united was North Africa that a chain of watchtowers could flash news from Alexandria to Ceuta in a single day. . . . Caravan routes led to abundant gold in Senegal and in the Sudan and Niger territories, with the result that the Tunisian currency became the soundest in the Mediterranean: so free was commerce that drafts on eastern bankers payable in the west were negotiable in the southern Sahara. Sicily, as a colony of North Africa, shared marginally in this affluence at a time when sea-borne trade in western Europe was slackening. She also shared in the civilization of Kairouan, a great center of religion and scholarship, of beautiful enameled pottery, fine textiles and carpets. . . . The Arabs had learned in the desert the vital importance of irrigation . . . they brought certain hydraulic techniques with them from Persia. . . . In Sicily they planted lemons and bitter oranges. They brought the knowledge of how to cultivate sugar cane and crush it with mills. So far as we know, they introduced the first cotton seeds, the first mulberries and silkworms, the date palm, the sumac tree for tanning and dyeing, papyrus, pistachio nuts and melons, all of which made a fundamental change in the economy. Probably it was due to them that rice was first cultivated here, and they seem to have brought with them a new variety of wheat. They brought with them their religion and laws, their literature, arts, and sciences; and so doing they made Sicily part of a splendid African civilization at the same time as a meeting point between Arabic, East European, and Latin cultures.<sup>33</sup>

When Sicily was conquered by the Europeans, and Africans and Arabs were forced to leave, Sicily declined:

So long as Sicily belonged to the world of North Africa and the Levant she had been rich; but when forcibly attached to western Europe she lost many economic advantages. . . .<sup>34</sup>

*It is more than likely that most of the industrial artisans had been Moslems, and perhaps most of the industrial entrepreneurs too; if so, their departure would by itself explain a decline in the silk and sugar trades.*<sup>35</sup> [Emphasis added]

What of the later Italian industry, particularly the textile industry, whose crucial role as the generator of the "commercial revolution" of the seventeenth century is so well known? Again the role of Africans and Arabs seems to have been decisive. Listen to Philip Hitti, the distinguished historian of the Arabs:

Since the Norman kings and their successors on the Sicilian throne held not only the island but also Southern Italy, they provided a bridge for the transmission of various elements of Moslem culture into the peninsula and mid-Europe. . . . Long after Sicily and the southern part of the peninsula had reverted to Christian rule, Moslem craftsmen and artists continued to flourish, as evidenced by the mosaics and inscriptions of the Palatine Chapel. . . . The first Italian textile workers acquired their technical knowledge and designs from Sicily. By the beginning of the thirteenth century silk weaving had already become the principal industry in several Italian towns, which exported fabrics imitating Sicilian stuffs into various ports of Europe. As in Palermo and Cadiz, so in Venice, Ferrara, and Pisa, colonies of Oriental craftsmen taught the natives and collaborated with them.<sup>36</sup>

The story does not end here. There is a fascinating thread connecting this textile industry of southern Europe, particularly of Italy, with the "commercial revolution" of the seventeenth century in northwestern Europe—the "commercial revolution" which was a prelude to the industrial revolution. From our point of view, there is therefore a thread, fascinating and breath-taking indeed, connecting these "Oriental craftsmen" (Africans, Arabs, and Jews), or "Moslem craftsmen," mentioned by Philip Hitti, on the one hand, and the economic ascendancy of northwestern Europe in the seventeenth century on the other hand—with all the dramatic consequences of that ascendancy with which we are so familiar nowadays. What is this thread?

There is now very convincing evidence from historians, showing that the entrepreneurs, technology, science, *and the workers* of the industries which re-oriented the economy of northwestern Europe, particularly of the textile industry, came to that region from southern, Catholic Europe—from those towns of Italy, Spain, and Portugal whose natives had earned so much

from "Oriental craftsmen." Some years ago, H. R. Trevor-Roper wrote an interesting paper, "Religion, the Reformation and Social Change," in which he shifts our attention, in the explanation of the rise of bourgeois capitalism in northwestern Europe, from Max Weber's "Protestant ethic," to immigrants from southern Europe.<sup>37</sup> Another English historian, Henry Kamen, has argued the case very ably, in his excellent book on the sixteenth century in Europe:

[T]hroughout Europe, it was the refugees, bereft of home and fortune, seeking only the toleration that would allow them to prosper, who promoted the spread of capitalism. In England, in Holland, in Germany, in Switzerland, it was the foreigner and stranger who came to settle and to develop the business which religious strife had forced him to abandon in his own land. . . .<sup>38</sup>

The most notable contributions were made by refugees from what had been the two most advanced regions of Europe both industrially and commercially: Italy and southern Netherlands. The Italian emigrés had directed their footsteps to Switzerland since the early days of the Reformation and it was there, in the German-speaking areas above all, that their influence was greatest. They came principally from Vicenza, Cremona, Locarno and Lucca, and their chief contribution to the world outside lay in the production of textiles. . . . The Italians in Switzerland were responsible for the introduction of new production methods and new fabrics (they brought in mulberry culture). . . .<sup>39</sup>

Textile traders and workers formed over 35 percent of the refugee total in London in the late sixteenth century; by 1635 the proportion had risen to 68 percent.<sup>40</sup>

An American economic historian, R. T. Rapp, has also endorsed this view, in a study which deals in particular with the fate of Venice.<sup>41</sup> Marx and Engels were very aware of this phenomenon, hence their remark, in their discussion of the period of manufacture in Western Europe, about "industry . . . for the most part imported from abroad."<sup>42</sup>

In this movement—within Europe, as well as between Africa, the Middle East, and Europe—of industries, science, and craftsmen, we also see the movements of Jews and Africans. We have already spoken about the considerable number of Jews and Africans who settled in southern Europe during the reign of the Moors, and also about the fact that a considerable number of people known in history as Arabs or Jews happened also to be

Africans. One of these historically important movements was that involving the expulsion of Jews, the Marranos, and the Moors out of Spain and Portugal, as a result of the Inquisition, beginning at the end of the fifteenth century. We should pause here and find out who the Marranos were. We are told that they were

either Jews who had converted to Christianity or the descendants of these converts. They had first appeared in Spain when large numbers of Jews converted to Christianity following the pogroms of 1391 and the restrictive economic legislation of 1412-1415. Until 1449, the "Conversos" or New Christians were deemed to be faithful Christians; they freely intermarried with the nobility, occupied high and respected positions in the state, found their way to the upper reaches of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. . . . After 1449, however, their decline was so precipitous that by 1480 the Inquisition was brought in to regularize and legalize their exclusion from positions of leadership and to confiscate their property. The justification for these steps was the charge that, though professing Christians, the Conversos were crypto-Jews. . . . So long as the New Christians had enjoyed a respected status, they were not identified with the Jews; indeed, they hated the Jews, and the Jews hated them. Once the Inquisition branded them as secret Jews, however, they became identifiable with Jews and Judaism.<sup>43</sup>

Upon their persecution and expulsion from Spain and Portugal, these "infidels" found their ways to different countries: some went back to Africa and the Middle East; some went to Turkey; others to Italy, Flanders, and southern France, as well as to other parts of Europe. Within the Jewish population, this group of tens of thousands from Spain and Portugal is known as the Sephardim; and, most certainly, a considerable number of them were black. "Some of the noblest of the Sephardic families, aristocrats of Jewry, were Negroes."<sup>44</sup> It is most likely that Karl Marx was a descendant of these "Negroid" Jews, who, as Cecil Roth says of an earlier period, were "arabized," and looked so much like the Moors, that the rude Christian warriors could not easily distinguish a Jew from a Moor during the "Reconquest."<sup>45</sup> How else do we explain Marx's "conspicuously" dark complexion, and his "bushy," "wooly" head?

There is an additional, interesting connection between Karl Marx and the "black race." Paul Lafargue, the man who became Karl Marx's son-in-law by marrying his second daughter,

Laura, was a black man. He was born in Cuba, in 1842, but lived all his adult life in France. He became the outstanding founder and leader of the French socialist movement, a leading popularizer of Marxism, and a translator of many of the works of Marx and Engels. He was not only close to Marx's family but also to Engels, from whom he received advice, guidance, and criticism, as a builder of the French socialist movement and as a scholar. The correspondence between him and Engels was deemed so important that it was published in three volumes some years ago.<sup>46</sup> He was also an outstanding scholar, considered by Lenin "one of the most gifted and profound disseminators of the ideas of Marxism."<sup>47</sup> He was constantly referred to by Marx and Engels as a "Negro."<sup>48</sup>

We now have before us a fact, hitherto unheralded, and certainly not uninteresting, in the light of the enormous slander of modern history upon the black race: the founder of Marxism, Karl Marx; the principal founder and organizer of the German working-class party, Ferdinand Lassalle; and the principal founder of French Marxism, as a movement and theory of the French working class, Paul Lafargue, were all of "Negroid ancestry"—were all *black*, to use the contemporary term. We must emphasize, again, that all this was in Europe; and this should not surprise us, as I have tried to prove above, because blacks were present throughout Europe, throughout the course of its history.

#### NOTES

1. J. A. Rogers, *Nature Knows No Color-Line* (New York: Helga M. Rogers, 1952), p. 130.
2. L. Schwarzschild, *Der Rote Preusse* (Stuttgart: Scherz und Goverts-verlag, 1954 edition), p. 23. In the English edition cited by Rogers, the German word "dunklen" is translated as "swarthy," whereas I have used the word "dark." See *The Red Prussian* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 9.
3. Theodor Cuno, "Reminiscences," in *Reminiscences of Marx-Engels*, compiled by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow (no date), p. 209.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. W. Liebknecht, *Karl Marx: Biographical Memoirs* (London: Journeyman Press, 1975), p. 7.

7. L. Trotsky, *Portraits: Political and Personal* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977), pp. 123-124.
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22. *Ibid.*
23. We know from Herodotus that the Egyptians had "black skins and wooly hair" through his descriptions of the Colchians. Herodotus points out that "it is undoubtedly a fact that the Colchians are of Egyptian descent"—and he found incontrovertible evidence for this supposition in the fact that the Colchians had "black skins and wooly hair."
24. Quoted in Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
25. Rogers, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-130.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
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28. *Ibid.*
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32. I know of no European historian of Europe who has expressed as clearly and forcefully the contribution of Moslems (and even *stressed Africa*) as Christopher Dawson has in some of his books. See his *The Making of Europe* (New York: World Publishing Co., Meridian edition, 1956), pp. 137-152; also his *Medieval Essays* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1963).



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