

the back of the letter, after which I shall send you what is needed on Blücher. It's time for the post now.

Warm regards to your wife and children.

Your  
F. E.

What's the position as regards your trip?

Havelock seems to be the best chap in India, and it is a really tremendous feat to have marched 126 miles in a week in that climate, not to mention fighting 5 or 6 engagements. That it would end in a general outbreak of cholera might have been predicted.

I hardly see *The Times* at all here, otherwise I could write to you at greater length about India, but getting hold of newspapers to read here is altogether too difficult.

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## ENGELS TO MARX

IN LONDON

Ryde, 22 September 1857

Dear Marx,

Here is a bit more about Bernadotte at Wagram<sup>206</sup>: On 5 July, when the French attack had been halted—largely as a result of his irresolute conduct—Bernadotte was occupying the village of Aderklaa in the centre, and slightly in advance of the French line. On the morning of the 6th, when the Austrians moved up for a concentric attack, he was out in the open plain *in front of* Aderklaa instead of occupying the village in strength and positioning his front to the rear of it. When the Austrians arrived on the scene he thought this position too hazardous (on the previous day his troops had ultimately suffered severe losses owing to his irresolute conduct) and withdrew to a plateau *behind* Aderklaa, yet left the village *unoccupied*, whereupon Bellegarde's Austrians promptly occupied it in strength.

This endangered the French centre, and Masséna, who commanded it, sent forward a division which recaptured the place

only to be thrown out by d'Aspre's grenadiers. Then Napoleon himself arrived, assumed command and devised a new battle plan, thereby foiling the manoeuvres of the Austrians. If Jomini's account is at all accurate,<sup>a</sup> there can be absolutely no dispute about Bernadotte's blunders on this occasion.

'Army' is finished, so far as the historical side is concerned, up to the French Revolution. I shall now get on with the modern period and questions of organisation generally, with which I conclude, and then, as soon as possible, go back to doing B's so that you can keep on sending stuff, thus putting Mr Dana into a better humour. Meanwhile I have received a little more money and enclose a £5 note. Perhaps you will manage to spend one or two days in Brighton after all; I shall stay here a day or two longer and let you know when I am going there.

*Bugeaud.* Most of this is already implicit in the article 'Algeria'. He was a mediocre general whose victories in Algeria and Morocco are of no great significance. That he conquered Algeria with 100,000 men, adapted his conduct of the war there to the terrain and the enemy, and broke, or rather suppressed, the resistance of the Arabs (not the Kabyles), does not, to my mind, earn him a very high rating, for I don't believe he was responsible for the plans. He was something of a *sabreur*<sup>b</sup> and, on the Tafna,<sup>208</sup> showed not only that he was venal but also that he was irresolute when in a tight corner. With 100,000 men and subordinates such as Lamoricière, Changarnier, Cavaignac, Négrier and Duvivier, who had ten years of warfare behind them, he would not need very much natural ability to achieve something—especially since the French General Staff is *very good*; furthermore, his activity was largely confined to making dispositions (where there's no knowing how much was done *for him* by the staff) and to commanding the reserve, since only individual divisions and brigades were operating at any one spot.

*Bosquet.* On the Alma<sup>209</sup> he led the French right wing in an outflanking movement against the Russian left wing with a determination and speed which earned the recognition of the Russians; he even succeeded in getting the artillery onto the plateau up trackless defiles regarded as impassable. For this he would deserve high praise had he not been facing a numerically very much inferior opponent.—At Balaklava he was immediate-

<sup>a</sup> A. H. Jomini, *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon*, t. 3. Engels' notes on Bernadotte (see this volume, pp. 164-65) were used by Marx in his article 'Bernadotte'.

<sup>b</sup> swashbuckler

ly at hand to help disengage the English right wing, thus enabling the rest of the English light cavalry to withdraw under cover of his troops and discouraging the Russians from advancing any further. At Inkerman,<sup>34</sup> in the early hours of the morning, he was ready to intervene with 3 battalions and 2 batteries, but, his help having been refused, he placed 3 brigades in reserve behind the English right wing (on the Chernaya slope) and at 11 o'clock moved up with 2 of them into the firing line, whereupon the Russians began to withdraw. The English had committed all their troops whereas the Russians still had 16 battalions at their disposal and, but for Bosquet, the English would have been lost. The 16 intact Russian battalions covered the retreat. There could be little question of pursuit in this case, there being no more than 3,000 paces between the battle field and the edge of the plateau. On each occasion, then, Bosquet showed himself quick off the mark, alert, active, in short, an exemplary corps commander—as he did also throughout the time he led the covering corps on the Chernaya slope.<sup>a</sup> Whether he's up to much as a *général en chef* is hard to say; he has a number of qualities and if, as in his case, a man is a first-rate vanguard general, all that remains is for him to prove his *strategic* ability, but for this there was not much opportunity throughout the whole of the Sebastopol campaign.<sup>210</sup>

*Blücher.* During the 1794 campaign in the Palatinate<sup>211</sup> he distinguished himself as an outpost general and light cavalry commander. The best proof of this is to be found in his published diary, still regarded as a classic despite the bad German.<sup>b</sup> He kept the French constantly on the *qui vive*, while providing his headquarters with first-rate intelligence on the movements of the enemy, and he was continually carrying out *coups de main* and surprise attacks, for the most part successfully. At Auerstedt in 1806,<sup>205</sup> when his cavalry charge miscarried, his advice that it be repeated using all available reinforcements was rejected (*this from memory*). His withdrawal to Lübeck and the stubborn stand he put up is one of the few honourable episodes in this affair, though during the course of it his strategic moves were often of the Hussar type. Nor was it his fault that he was finally captured for, like the whole of the Prussian army, he was cut off and had, moreover, the longest detour to make round the rearguard. During the period up to 1813 he was regarded by Scharnhorst and the Tugendbund<sup>212</sup> (being one of its known leaders,

<sup>a</sup> Almost the whole of this passage is reproduced in the article 'Bosquet' by Marx and Engels. - <sup>b</sup> G. L. Blücher, *Kampagne-Journal der Jahre 1793 und 1794*.

Gneisenau remained throughout his life SUSPECT in the King's<sup>a</sup> eyes) as the only possible and suitable leader and was dubbed a hero by them, as Hecker was by Blind and Co.<sup>213</sup> Nor could they have picked on a better man. He was, as Müffling says,<sup>b</sup> THE MODEL OF A SOLDIER while at the same time sharing to the full the intense popular antipathy to Napoleon and the French. Plebeian in his appetites, dialect, turns of phrase and manners, he had a tremendous gift for inspiring the common soldier with enthusiasm. As a soldier he possessed reckless courage, a keen eye for terrain, quickness of decision and enough intelligence to discover for *himself* what was best in more simple situations, and to rely on Gneisenau and Müffling in more complex ones. Of strategy, he had no inkling.

\*'It was no secret to Europe, that Prince Blücher who had now, 1815, passed his 70th year, understood nothing whatever of the conduct of a war; so little, indeed, that when a plan was laid before him for approval, even relating to some unimportant operation, he could not form any clear idea of it or judge whether it was good or bad.'\*

For he was quite incapable of reading a map, a strategical disability he shared with almost half of Napoleon's marshals. On the other hand he had Gneisenau, whom he trusted implicitly. Without Blücher, the campaign of 1813 and 1814 would have ended very differently; no other general of that time could have done what he did—namely, by means of a victory and a skilfully conducted pursuit (Katzbach<sup>c</sup>) weld the most refractory elements (Langeron and York in open rebellion against him) into a homogeneous army<sup>214</sup> capable of anything and with which, on his own responsibility, he could risk marching on Wartenburg and the Saale—militarily a most audacious but politically (because of Bernadotte) an essential move, thereby abandoning all his communications and compelling the sluggish large army (which he had saved in Silesia after the battle of Dresden,<sup>215</sup> by pursuing the French as far as Bautzen so that Napoleon had to turn against him) to chance its arm too at Leipzig.<sup>198</sup> Altogether it was a somewhat rebellious time, and Blücher had agreed with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Army of the North (Bülow, Tauentzien, Wintzingerode) that if Bernadotte made no move they would, on their own responsibility, join up with Blücher. After the battle of Leipzig, Blücher was the only one who applied himself in any way to the pursuit, though

<sup>a</sup> Frederick William III - <sup>b</sup> [F. K. F.] Müffling, *Passages from My Life* (below Engels quotes from p. 225 of this book). - <sup>c</sup> Polish name: Kaczawa.

even this wasn't what it should have been—he was hampered by the presence of the princes. The strategic blunders that were so severely punished in the Montmirail region in 1814 must be laid at the door of Gneisenau and Müffling,<sup>216</sup> while the decision to march on Paris, *coûte que coûte*,<sup>a</sup> which resolved the campaign, must be credited to Blücher. The march on Waterloo in 1815 after the battle of Ligny<sup>217</sup> is another considerable feather in Blücher's cap; here he is almost without equal and no general except Blücher could have spurred his troops on to such EFFORTS—namely, to embark forthwith on the exemplary pursuit to Paris which ranks equally with that from Jena<sup>46</sup> to Stettin<sup>b</sup> as a classic prototype. That Blücher was able to overawe even abler generals is evident from his attitude to Langeron (who had commanded a large army against the Turks and was a cultivated French émigré) and to York, both of whom, for all their initial refractoriness, not only soon submitted to him, but actually went right over onto his side, becoming his best subordinates. *Au fond*<sup>c</sup> Blücher was a cavalry general; that was his speciality and in it he excelled because this is a purely tactical role which does not presuppose any strategic knowledge. He asked a great deal of his troops but they did it, and willingly, and I don't suppose any other 19th-century general save Napoleon and, more latterly, Radetzky, could have exacted from them what Blücher did. It should further be recognised that nowhere and at no time did he lose head or heart, that he was as dogged in defence as he was resolute in attack and that in difficult situations he was quick to make up his mind. *Enfin*,<sup>d</sup> in the 1813-15 war, which was half way to being an insurrectionary war, he was quite the right man and was well complemented by his staff; and such being the case he was a *very dangerous* adversary.<sup>e</sup>

Your  
F. E.

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<sup>a</sup> at whatever cost - <sup>b</sup> Szczecin - <sup>c</sup> Basically - <sup>d</sup> Finally - <sup>e</sup> Engels' description of Blücher here was used in the article 'Blücher' by Marx and Engels.