

Introduction

The extraordinary work that follows was written by the Ukrainian Marxist Roman Rosdolsky (1898–1967) in the spring of 1948, in the centennial year of the revolution with which it is concerned. In spite of the timeliness of its composition, Rosdolsky's monograph could not find a publisher immediately. This was partly due to the postwar chaos and the author's circumstances. Rosdolsky had only recently come to America, where he settled in Detroit, and he wrote his monograph in German. His connections with the new Europe were still very tenuous, and with some connections, being a former Communist in Cold-War America, he had to be quite circumspect in order to avoid deportation. Given, furthermore, the general isolating effect of his very modest means, it is understandable that almost anything Rosdolsky might have written in this period, regardless of topic, would have had difficulties in finding a publisher.

However, *this* book in particular posed a problem. It concerned some embarrassing statements made by Marx and, above all, Engels with regard to East European peoples. During the revolution of 1848–49 Marx and Engels had characterized most of the Slavic peoples (the outstanding exception being the Poles) and other East European peoples (such as the Romanians and Saxons of Transylvania) as nonhistoric, counter-revolutionary by nature and doomed to extinction. The statements, moreover, were saturated with insulting epithets (pig-headed, barbarian, robber) and ominous-sounding threats (a bloody revenge that would annihilate these reactionary peoples). Such sentiments had a particularly nasty ring in the immediate postwar years, in the wake of Nazi brutality in Eastern Europe, and they seemed all the more perverse at a time when Communist parties were taking power in the same East European nations that Engels had written off as counter-revolutionary by their very nature. Exacerbating the ironies and sensitivities was the vehemently anti-Russian animus that permeated these particular passages in Engels' writings, and

Russia, of course, had become in the meantime the fatherland of the proletarian revolution.

The topic, then, was a sensitive one for Marxists. As early as 1934 Stalin had felt the need to suppress one of Engels' articles on Russia ("The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism," 1890),¹ and in the postwar period it was primarily anti-Communists who resurrected Engels' anti-Slavic writings.² In the mid-1970s, for example, the right-wing Russian émigré journal, *Kontinent*, taunted the exiled Ukrainian dissident, Leonid Pliushch, who was then a declared Marxist, with Engels' writings on the "nonhistoric" peoples. "Frederick Engels," according to the editors of *Kontinent*, had been "anticipating Hitler by almost a century."³

Thus the problem of Engels and the "nonhistoric" peoples was a problem that many socialists, consciously or unconsciously following Stalin's lead, preferred to suppress rather than investigate. The manuscript therefore lay in Rosdolsky's desk drawer for three years after its completion, until 1951, when it seemed there would be an opportunity to publish it. By 1951 Rosdolsky had come into contact with a group of fellow Ukrainian emigrants who were publishing a left-wing newspaper in Munich, *Vpered*; in fact, in that very year Rosdolsky had published a brief, moving memoir in *Vpered* on the early activities of the founders of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine.⁴ The *Vpered* group, which included, among others, Vsevolod Holubnychy, Hryhorii Kostyuk, Borys Lewytzkyj, Iwan Majstrenko and Roman Paladiichuk,⁵ suggested that Rosdolsky's study might be published by the Yugoslav Communists, with whom the group had good connections. Lewytzkyj undertook to act as liaison and provided Milovan Djilas, who was then still part of Yugoslavia's ruling elite, with a copy of the manuscript. The Yugoslav Communists did promise to publish the work, but in the end they reneged on their promise; moreover, they did not even return the copy of the manuscript (which in the days before photocopying was a serious matter).⁶ Evidently, the Yugoslavs too, for all their maverick qualities in the Communist movement, found the topic to be too sensitive.

What happened next with the *Vpered* group and Rosdolsky and his manuscript is very characteristic of some of the dilemmas of principle that have plagued the postwar anti-Stalinist Ukrainian left. Some individuals in the *Vpered* group, who had evolved to socialism from left-wing, but extreme, nationalism, were not overly fussy about whose aid they received for a good cause.⁷ Rosdolsky, however, was a revolutionary socialist of the old school,⁸ and he felt very strongly that the left should not, as a matter of principle, cooperate with the enemies of socialism.⁹ This difference in perspective was to lead to a cooling of political, though not personal, relations between Rosdolsky and the *Vpered* group. The political estrangement seems to have been precipitated by Lewytzkyj's next proposition as to who might publish the manuscript on Engels and the "nonhistoric" peoples. Lewytzkyj had contacted Gerhard von Mende of the Institut für Forschungsdienst Osteuropas-Düsseldorf, and the Institut agreed to publish the work. However, during World War II von Mende

had been associated with the German Ostministerium and had acted intermittently as a liaison between the Germans and Ukrainian nationalists; when Rosdolsky learned of von Mende's political past, he categorically refused to have anything to do with such a publisher. "No," he told Lewytzkyj, "Nazis and the cause of national liberation are two different things. I do not agree to such an intermediary."¹⁰ And there the matter of publishing his study rested for over a decade.

The remainder of the 1950s and the early 1960s brought considerable improvement in Rosdolsky's affairs and ended the extreme isolation in which he had found himself earlier. There were political changes that made his life easier: destalinization in the East allowed him to reestablish contact with Polish Communists¹¹ and a slackening of East-West tension allowed him to be somewhat more open about his political views. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, grants from the Austrian government, the Philosophical Society in Philadelphia and the Social Research Council in New York afforded him the opportunity to spend over three and a half years in Europe, primarily in Vienna,¹² and he was able to renew contact with the German-speaking left and left-wing scholarship. In the course of these years he was able to publish a series of articles on Marxist economic theory in *Kyklos* and *Arbeit und Wirtschaft*, articles that were later to form part of his most famous work, *The Making of Marx's "Capital"*; ¹³ he also published a series of interpretive studies and documents on the history of serfdom in Eastern Europe, particularly in his native Galicia;¹⁴ and he published several articles on the history of the revolutionary populist and socialist movements,¹⁵ including one chapter from his monograph on Engels and the "nonhistoric" peoples (the appendix on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and the Jews).¹⁶ In short, by the mid-1960s Rosdolsky was again in contact with left-wing intellectual Europe and had acquired a good reputation for his solid contributions to Marxist theory and history.

The situation had improved to such an extent that by 1964 his most problematic and sensitive work, the monograph that appears on the following pages, could be published as a long article in a thick German yearbook devoted to the history of the socialist movement.¹⁷

The *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* was a relatively obscure place to publish such a ground-breaking study, but even so Rosdolsky's monograph attracted the favourable attention of other Marxist intellectuals. Perry Anderson praised it as "one of the few significant Marxist texts on the national question since the time of Lenin."¹⁸ An anonymous obituary of Rosdolsky originally published in *Quatrième Internationale* said: "This book should be translated into many languages as a classic example of Marxist historiography, a book as honest as it is profound."¹⁹

In spite of the call for the translation of this work into other languages (and *Quatrième Internationale* was not alone in raising the issue),²⁰ the translation which follows is the first into English.²¹ I will not try the reader's patience with an account of the vicissitudes involved in bringing this translation into print, except to quote from one letter I received in 1980 which has the virtue of clearly expressing an attitude that I

discovered to be distressingly prevalent on the English-speaking left: "The work as it stands could (and certainly would) be used by the opportunists to attack Marx-Engels.... In the context of today's struggles his [Rosdolsky's] book can serve only to create confusion in the anti-imperialist movement."²² The book, then, remains sensitive and problematic.

How does Rosdolsky explain the national politics of Engels during the revolution of 1848–49, the summary condemnation of entire peoples, which a later generation of Marxists finds so discomfiting? Before the appearance of Rosdolsky's monograph, the general line of argument adopted by Marxists in explaining Engels' conception of "nonhistoric," "counter-revolutionary" peoples was that the conception was entirely explicable or even justifiable in light of the reactionary conduct of the Austrian Slavic national movements during the revolution.

Rosdolsky demonstrates, with much logical analysis and more than ample documentation, that this explanation not only falls short of the truth, but also conceals some important lessons. He shows that the psychological roots of Engels' erroneous conception lay in an excess of revolutionary optimism. This optimism had at least two fateful consequences. Firstly, Engels and Marx were unwilling to examine critically their revolutionary allies and too willing to believe only the best about them. Yet these revolutionary allies included, as the sole allies of the revolution in East Central Europe, the Polish and Hungarian *nobility*. These allies oppressed peasants not only of their own nationality, but also of other nationalities—Croatian, Serbian, Ukrainian, Slovak, Romanian. The social protest of the latter peasants naturally took on a national form in 1848. (The situation was similar with regard to the German bourgeoisie in Austria and the Czechs and Slovenes.) Engels closed his eyes to the social side of this protest, which would have impugned the reputation of some crucial allies of the proletariat in 1848, and viewed the protest as exclusively national in content. Secondly, Marx and Engels were expecting the *imminent* collapse of capitalism and the advent of the socialist epoch. Therefore they felt that they could abstract from the social antagonism between landowners and peasants, classes that were about to disappear entirely in the new socialist society.

What Rosdolsky argues, then, is that under the influence of their impatience for the socialist revolution Marx and Engels abandoned, with regard to East Central Europe, a cardinal aspect of their own materialist method: the rigorous *class* analysis of historical phenomena. Unable to come to grips with the *class* contradictions of the revolution, with the *class* basis of the Austrian Slavs' counter-revolutionary conduct, Marx and Engels had to explain this conduct by means of something from outside, "exoteric" to, their materialist method. They thus reached back into their Hegelian past and made new use of Hegel's altogether idealist conception

of "nonhistoric" peoples to explain the reactionary behaviour of the Austrian Slavs.

Rosdolsky makes these points very well, and it would not be necessary to summarize them in this introduction, were not such a summary indispensable to an account of the path by which Rosdolsky arrived at such conclusions. These conclusions amounted to a critique of Marx and Engels from the perspective of their own methodological premises.

The origins of the monograph on Engels and the "nonhistoric" peoples go back to the late 1920s. In 1927 Rosdolsky contributed an article to the Soviet Ukrainian journal *Chervonyi shliakh* concerning Engels' knowledge of and attitude towards Ukraine.²³ And in 1929 Rosdolsky wrote his doctoral dissertation on "The Problem of the Nonhistoric Peoples in K. Marx and Fr. Engels,"²⁴ which was the forerunner of the monograph of 1948.²⁵ It consisted of 81 pages, divided into three parts. The first part (pp. 3-17) provided a detailed analysis of how Marx and Engels used the terms *Nation* and *Nationalität* ("nation" and "nationality"). The second part (pp. 18-50) was thematically the direct precursor of the later monograph, i.e., an interpretation of the concept of "nonhistoric" peoples as used by Engels. The third part (pp. 57-80) was an appendix concerning the dispute over the Russian-Polish border during preparations for the Polish insurrection of 1863. The first part of the thesis was never reworked or published, and the third part was only slightly revised before its posthumous publication forty years after it had been written.²⁶ The second part of the thesis, however, was thoroughly revised (we will soon see just how thoroughly) and expanded in 1948 to produce the work translated in the following pages.

In the 1920s Rosdolsky was the chief theoretician of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine.²⁷ This was an autonomous unit within the Polish Communist party, based in the largely Ukrainian-inhabited regions of eastern Poland, Galicia and Volhynia. For this party, the national question was of central importance, and the party was regularly riven by conflict over this issue until 1928-29, when it formally split over its attitude towards the national question in the neighbouring Soviet Ukrainian republic. In the split, Rosdolsky sided with those in the party who opposed Stalinist national policy as applied in Ukraine and who were subsequently expelled from the Comintern. (The entire West Ukrainian party was dissolved by Stalin in 1938, along with the entire Polish Communist party.)²⁸ Thus if Rosdolsky was grappling in the late 1920s with what Marx and Engels had to say about the national question, this was because this issue was of paramount political importance for him and his party.

Furthermore, Rosdolsky had been largely responsible in the early 1920s for agitating within the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party in Galicia and turning that party, which had opposed the Bolsheviks during the civil war,

into a pro-Communist organization.²⁹ In the course of this ideological struggle, Rosdolsky had to attack the older leadership of the Ukrainian social democrats, including their chief theoretician, Volodymyr Levynsky.

Levynsky had also written about the views of Marx and Engels on the "nonhistoric" peoples in a pamphlet originally composed in 1918 in Ukrainian and translated subsequently into French.³⁰ The main political purpose of Levynsky's pamphlet was to discredit the Russian Bolsheviks, who were at war with the Ukrainian national republic. Marx and Engels figured in the pamphlet as precursors of the Bolsheviks; in Levynsky's interpretation, both Marx-Engels and the Bolsheviks denied the national rights of the Ukrainians and other East European nationalities, the former out of a concern for *German* national interests, the latter out of a concern for *Russian* national interests.

It is not surprising that Rosdolsky's works of the late 1920s, both the article on Engels and Ukraine and the doctoral thesis, are full of polemics against Levynsky³¹ (as well as against the Ukrainian anarchists, Mykhailo Drahomanov and Mykhailo Lozynsky, who even more roundly than Levynsky condemned the classical Marxist view of the nationality question in East Central Europe).³² After all, although it required a bitter internal struggle,³³ Rosdolsky eventually supported the Bolshevik, rather than the Ukrainian national, side in the Ukrainian civil war of 1917–20, and in the late 1920s he was concerned to defend Soviet Ukraine against the attacks of Ukrainian nationalists, including nationalists in socialist clothing.

What is curious, however, is that Levynsky is not even mentioned in the 1948 revision (and the polemic with the anarchists has been totally transformed). Moreover, it seems that the 1948 revision has even assimilated, but very critically, some of the contents of Levynsky's pamphlet. Levynsky had devoted considerable space to demonstrating the Hegelian roots of Engels' conception of "nonhistoric" peoples,³⁴ a project that was notably absent from both Rosdolsky's article of 1927 and thesis of 1929 but conspicuous in his monograph of 1948.³⁵ Also, so many passages taken from Hegel's, Lassalle's and Kautsky's writings are common to both Levynsky's pamphlet and Rosdolsky's monograph³⁶ that it is my impression that Rosdolsky was at least unconsciously moved to cite these passages by his reading of Levynsky.

This is not to suggest that Rosdolsky had moved to the anti-Bolshevik position of Levynsky (even a cursory reading of the pages that follow will refute this) or that he found illumination in a thinker of Levynsky's calibre. Rather, I am indicating that Rosdolsky drastically changed his position and examined with more sympathy than before the critiques of the concept of "nonhistoricity" produced by the socialists of the "nonhistoric" peoples themselves. He had developed a new sensitivity.

Further comparison of the monograph of 1948 with the thesis of 1929 reveals such a major difference in viewpoint that the 1948 work can even be considered a polemic against the 1929 work, an "antithesis."³⁷ In the doctoral dissertation Rosdolsky had viewed Engels' position on the "nonhistoric" peoples as essentially sound, based on historical materialism

and justified by the conduct of the Slavic peoples during the revolution of 1848–49.³⁸ The dissertation vehemently denied that any metaphysics were involved in Engels' concept, and, as already mentioned, it did not explore the Hegelian roots of Engels' views. It also excluded any discussion of the complex social alliances of the revolution and of the conflict between reactionary peasants and revolutionary nobles; precisely the peasant question, which figures so prominently in the monograph of 1948, was excluded altogether from consideration. Finally, whole passages from the 1929 work appear in the 1948 work with Rosdolsky's appraisal almost completely reversed.³⁹

To what can one ascribe the striking difference between these texts? Had Rosdolsky found a wealth of new source material in the two decades intervening between the composition of the thesis and the composition of the antithesis? In fact, this does partly, but only partly, explain Rosdolsky's intellectual evolution from the late 1920s to the late 1940s. He spent the 1930s studying the history of the feudal peasantry on the basis of the archives in Vienna and Lviv. By his own account, he "rummaged daily" in the Viennese archives from 1927 to 1933,⁴⁰ and when Dollfuss suppressed the left in Austria in February 1934, he returned to his native Lviv, where he worked with the great Polish social historian Franciszek Bujak in the Chair of Economic History at the University of Lviv.⁴¹ In Lviv in the late 1930s he wrote his major studies on communal agriculture and serfdom in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Galicia⁴² as well as a number of shorter pieces on related topics.⁴³ Thus, by the time Rosdolsky took up the revision of his thesis, he had gained a much deeper appreciation of the class antagonisms that dogged the Austrian revolution.

But this is not the complete explanation for Rosdolsky's change in viewpoint. Between the texts of 1929 and 1948 lay the tragic historical experience of the 1930s and World War II. Since Rosdolsky had originally investigated the problem of Engels and the "nonhistoric" peoples, Europe, and particularly Rosdolsky's native region, had experienced both Nazism and Stalinism. Reminders of this are scattered throughout the text that follows, beginning with the dedication to the "victims of Stalin's terror in Ukraine" and ending with the appendix (added since 1929) on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and the Jews, with its allusion to "the death of millions of Jews in the German gas chambers." Neither historical experience was a matter of mere intellectual reflection for Rosdolsky. The closest friends of his youth, the cofounders of the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, were liquidated almost to a man by Stalin's secret police.⁴⁴ And he was also an involuntary eyewitness to the Nazis' mass murder of the Jews and others, since he himself had been incarcerated in Auschwitz for aiding Jews.⁴⁵ These events of the recent historical past (as well as a new and related concern: the atomic bomb) weighed heavily on his mind in the immediate postwar years.⁴⁶

Deeply concerned over the prospects for humanity, Rosdolsky came to "hope that a new generation will follow for whom, once more, Marx's theory will be a living source of knowledge and the political practice which

this knowledge directs."⁴⁷ His own contribution to the fulfillment of this hope was to work on a renewal of Marxism, a renewal informed by a return to Marxism's methodological premises. The major fruit of this attempt at renewal was his justly famous study of Marx's *Capital* in light of the *Grundrisse* (*The Making of Marx's "Capital"*), but the first fruit of this endeavour was the reinterpretation of Engels on the national question, the "antithesis" of 1948. Here Rosdolsky was not merely correcting his own errors of 1929, nor was he simply dealing with the national question as the recurrent theme of the Ukrainian Marxist tradition, to which he consciously belonged,⁴⁸ but he was reinterpreting a particularly devilish theoretical issue, the national question, whose horrifying *actualité* had just been demonstrated by Hitler's infamous policy towards Jews and other "*Untermenschen*" as well as by Stalin's less well known, and only somewhat less deadly, policies towards non-Russian nationalities in the Soviet Union. What Rosdolsky endeavoured to do in his monograph of 1948 was to clear the way for a correct Marxist understanding of the national question by correcting errors in the Marxist tradition, indeed at the very source of that tradition.

What follows, then, is not only a sensitive and problematic text, but a deceptive one: it investigates a problem that belongs to the past, to the middle of the previous century, but it is primarily meant to tell us something for today.

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Notes

1. I.V. Stalin, "O stat'e Engel'sa 'Vneshniaia politika russkogo tsarizma,'" in *Sochineniia*, vol. 1 [14]: 1934–1940 (Stanford, 1967), pp. 2–10.
2. See, for example, the anthology of Marx and Engels' "anti-Russian" writings selected and edited by Paul W. Blackstock and Bert F. Hoselitz, *The Russian Menace to Europe: A Collection of Articles, Speeches, Letters and News Dispatches* (Glencoe, Ill., 1952).
3. "Ot redaktsii," *Kontinent*, no. 9 (1976): 265.
4. [Roman Rosdolsky], "Do istorii ukrains'koho livo-sotsiialistychnoho rukhu v Halychyni (Pidchasvoienni 'Drahomanivky' 1916–18 r.r.)," *Vpered* no. 3–4 (1951): 11–12. The memoir is reprinted in Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdol'skyi], "Dva spohady," *Diialoh* 10 (1984): 77–83. See also Roman Solchanyk, "Revolutionary Marxism in Galicia before 1918," *East European Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (March 1976): 35–41.
5. Obituaries of Lewyitzkyj and Majstrenko were published in *Diialoh* 10 (1984): 7–12. Some of the more accessible and representative works of the *Vpered* group include: Vsevolod Holubnychy, *Soviet Regional Economics*:

Selected Works, edited by Iwan S. Koropec'kyj (Edmonton, 1982); Borys Lewytzkyj, *Politics and Society in Soviet Ukraine 1953–1980* (Edmonton, 1984); Iwan Majstrenko, *Borot'bism: A Chapter in the History of Ukrainian Communism* (New York, 1954). The English-language periodical *Meta* (Toronto) translated and published a number of articles that had originally appeared in *Vpered*. *Vpered* originated as the organ of the left wing of the Ukrainian Revolutionary-Democratic Party.

6. Borys Lewytzkyj [Levyts'kyi], "Roman Rozdol's'kyi," *Suchasnist'*, no. 5 (89) (May 1968): 117. Conversation with Lewytzkyj, 22 October 1981.
7. See the letters sent by Mykola Tsehlynsky to Rosdolsky in 1955–56. The correspondence is preserved with Rosdolsky's papers at the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.
8. There is an interesting account of the relations between the *Vpered* group and Rosdolsky in the memoirs of Iwan Majstrenko [Ivan Maistrenko], *Istoriia moho pokolinnia. Spohady uchasyntsi revoliutsiinykh podii v Ukraini* (Edmonton, 1985), pp. 398–99. Majstrenko is vague about the political differences between the *Vpered* group and Rosdolsky, but he does imply that Rosdolsky criticized the group from the left. According to Majstrenko, Rosdolsky's politics were out of date: "Politically he got stuck in the 1920s... he looked at things with yesterday's eyes and could not orient himself in the complicated postwar situation."
9. Hence Rosdolsky's sharp exchanges with Z.A.B. Zeman in which Rosdolsky defended Lenin and the Bolsheviks against the charge of taking German money during the First World War. Roman Rosdolsky, "The February Regime" [letters to the editor], *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 October 1966, p. 966; 10 November 1966, p. 1023. See also Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdol's'kyi], "Do istorii 'Soiuzu vyzvolennia Ukrainy,'" *Ukrains'kyi samostiinyk* 20, no. 5 (535) (May 1969): 26–30, and no. 6 (536) (June 1969): 32–35. The latter article is concerned with the Bolsheviks and German funding as a prominent subtheme, but its primary theme is the activities of several Ukrainian nationalist groups, headed by former socialists and sometimes posing as revolutionary socialist organizations, who did indeed take German and Austrian money during World War I. This pointed exposé originally bore the subtitle: "A Historical Textbook for Today's East European Liberation Committees." Bohdan Kordiuk, [Introduction], *ibid.*, 20, no. 1 (531) (January 1969): 31. Lest there be any misunderstanding, I should make clear that the polemical edge of this historical article was *not* directed against the *Vpered* group.
10. Lewytzkyj, "Roman Rozdol's'kyi," p. 117. Conversation with Lewytzkyj, 22 October 1981.
11. Janusz Radziejowski, "Roman Rosdolsky: Man, Activist and Scholar," *Science & Society* 42, no. 2 (Summer 1978): 210. The error which occurs in this article on the same page (mistaken chronology for *Vpered*) is my error as translator, not Radziejowski's.
12. Letter of Roman Rosdolsky to Ivan L. Rudnytsky, 6 October 1966 (copy in the author's possession). The dates mentioned in this letter (1957–60) are incorrect. Rosdolsky spent half a year in Vienna in 1956 and another three years from the summer of 1958 to the summer of 1961. Letter of Emily Rosdolsky to the author, 23 January 1986.

13. On this series of articles and on the background to the writing and publishing of *The Making of Marx's "Capital"*, see John-Paul Himka, "Comments on Manfred Turban, 'Roman Rosdolsky's Reconsideration of the Traditional Marxist Debate on the Schemes of Reproduction on New Methodological Grounds,'" in *Selected Contributions of Ukrainian Scholars to Economics*, ed. I.S. Koropecykj (Cambridge, MA, 1984), pp. 138-47.
14. The foremost work in the series was the two-volume study of Galician serfdom: Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], *Stosunki poddańcze w dawnej Galicji*, 2 vols. (Warsaw, 1962). This work was originally written in 1939 and the plates were already set for publication when the Soviet occupation of Galicia (eastern Poland) led to the book's suppression. The first volume was rewritten before publication in 1962; the second volume consists mainly of documents. Two articles that appeared in English in the early 1950s were based on *Stosunki poddańcze*: R. Rosdolsky, "The Distribution of the Agrarian Product in Feudalism," *Journal of Economic History* 11 (Summer 1951): 247-65; Roman Rosdolsky, "On the Nature of Peasant Serfdom in Central and Eastern Europe," *Journal of Central European Affairs* 12 (1952-53): 128-39. To this series also belongs: Roman Rosdolsky, "Die ostgalizische Dorfgemeinschaft und ihre Auflösung," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 41 (1954): 97-145. This was a German version of a work that Rosdolsky had already published in Polish before the war: Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], *Wspólnota gminna w b. Galicji Wschodniej i jej zanik*, *Badania z Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych*, 27 (Lviv, 1936). Other works in the series were: Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], "Do historii 'krwawego roku' 1846," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 65, no. 2 (1958): 403-20; Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], *Die grosse Steuer- und Agrarreform Josefs II: Ein Kapitel zur österreichischen Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Warsaw, 1961); Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], "Nowe dokumenty do historii zniesienia pańszczyzny w Galicji w 1848 r.," *Przegląd Historyczny* 53 (1962): 119-27.
15. Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], "'Spowiedź' Goslara," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 69 (1962): 932-40; Roman Rosdolsky, "Archivalische Miszellen über Otto Bauer," *International Review for Social History* (1963) (unavailable to me); Roman Rosdolsky, "Karl Marx und sein 'Privatsekretär' Th. Sanders," *International Review for Social History* (1963) (unavailable to me); R. Rosdolsky, "A Revolutionary Parable on the Equality of Men," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 3 (1963): 291-93.
16. Roman Rosdolsky, "La Neue Rheinische Zeitung et les Juifs," *Cahiers de l'Institut de Science Économique Appliquée*, supp. no. 140 (August 1963), series 7: *Études de Marxologie*, pp. 53-71.
17. Roman Rosdolsky, "Friedrich Engels und das Problem der 'geschichtslosen' Völker (Die Nationalitätenfrage in der Revolution 1848-1849 im Lichte der 'Neuen Rheinischen Zeitung')." *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 4 (1964): 87-282. A second edition was published by Olle & Wolter: Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur nationalen Frage: Friedrich Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker* (Berlin, 1979). Although a photographic reprint of the first edition, it contains an excellent introduction by the author's widow, Emily Rosdolsky, who also appended revised notes referring to more recent and accessible editions of works cited in the 1964 text.

18. Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism* (London, 1976), p. 99.
19. "Roman Rosdolsky—A Genuine Marxist Scholar," *Critique* 10–11 (1978–79): 105.
20. In the foreword to his study *Nationalism & Socialism: Marxist and Labor Theories of Nationalism to 1917* (New York and London, 1967), p. ix, Horace B. Davis regretted that Rosdolsky's work was unavailable in English. Borys Lewytzkyj wrote: "It lies in the interests of Ukrainian scholarship and politics for this work to appear in Ukrainian translation." Lewytzkyj, "Roman Rozdol's'kyi," p. 116.
21. Although I have not seen it, there seems to be a Spanish translation published in Mexico: Roman Rosdolsky, *Friedrich Engels y el Problema de los Pueblos sin Historia*.
22. The letter, dated 19 March 1980, is in the author's possession. It was sent by a representative of a left-wing group in Britain that at one point, before reading this particular work of Rosdolsky's, had volunteered to find a publisher for the translation.
23. Roman Rosdolsky [T. Prokopovych], "Fridrykh Engel's pro Ukrainu," *Chervonyi shliakh*, no. 7–8 (1927): 161–86.
24. Roman Rosdolsky [Rosdolskyj], "Das Problem der geschichtslosen Völker bei K. Marx und Fr. Engels," Dissertation eingereicht an der Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität in Wien zur Erlangung des Doktorgrades, Angefertigt unter Anleitung der Herren Professoren: Dr. H. Kelsen und Dr. A. Menzel (Vienna, 1929).
25. Rosdolsky wrote to Rudnytsky on 3 September 1966: "In the main I wrote this work back in 1928, as my doctoral dissertation under the direction of Professor [Hans] Kelsen, but I was only able to publish it now. *Habent sua fata libelli*." (A copy of the letter is in the possession of the author.)
26. Roman Rosdolsky, "Der Streit um die polnisch-russischen Staatsgrenzen anlässlich des polnischen Aufstandes von 1863," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 9 (1969): 157–80.
27. Although Rosdolsky was formally expelled from the party in the mid-1920s, he continued to work in close association with it and to publish in its journals.
28. Rosdolsky's involvement in the Communist Party of Western Ukraine is well covered in Radziejowski, "Roman Rosdolsky," pp. 200–05. On the history of the party, see: Janusz Radziejowski, *The Communist Party of Western Ukraine 1919–1929* (Edmonton, 1983); Roman Solchanyk, "The Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919–1938," PhD dissertation, University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, 1973); Roman Solchanyk, "The Foundation of the Communist Movement in Eastern Galicia, 1919–1921," *Slavic Review* 30, no. 4 (December 1971): 774–94; Roman Solchanyk, "The Comintern and the Communist Party of Western Ukraine, 1919–1928," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 23, no. 2 (June 1981): 181–97. For a good survey of the place of the national question in Soviet Ukrainian Communism in the 1920s, see James E. Mace, *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933* (Cambridge, MA, 1983).
29. Radziejowski, "Roman Rosdolsky," p. 201.
30. V. Levynsky [Levinsky], *L'internationale socialiste et les peuples opprimés* (Vienna, 1920).

31. Rosdolsky, "Fridrykh Engel's," pp. 167, 170, 184. Rosdolsky, "Das Problem," pp. 19, 25, 29–30 note 5, 31 note 7, 72.
32. On the attitude of Drahomanov and his followers to Marx and Engels' position on the East European nationality problem, see John-Paul Himka, *Socialism in Galicia: The Emergence of Polish Social Democracy and Ukrainian Radicalism (1860–1890)* (Cambridge, MA, 1983), pp. 111–12. About Engels' theory of "nonhistoric" and "historic" peoples, Lozynsky wrote: "This 'theory' is so wild, so unjust, it slaps all concepts of freedom, equality and justice in the face so much that it is a shame to waste many words on its refutation." Mykhailo Lozynskyi, *Marks-Engel's-Libknekht pro vidbudovanie Pol'shchi* (Lviv, 1906), p. 15. For Rosdolsky's polemic with the Ukrainian anarchists, see "Fridrykh Engel's," pp. 170 note 1, 174 notes 1–2, 176 note 1, 185 note 1.
33. E[mily] R[osdolsky], "Roman Rosdolsky: Leben, Motive, Werk," in Rosdolsky, *Zur nationalen Frage*, pp. 8–9. See also Solchanyk, "Revolutionary Marxism," p. 39.
34. Levynsky, *L'internationale socialiste*, esp. pp. 5–16.
35. See below, esp. pp. 130–31.
36. Cf. Levynsky, *L'internationale socialiste*, pp. 8–9, 17–18, 19, and below, pp. 135–36, note 29, 136 note 31, 94.
37. It is noteworthy that Rosdolsky seems to have repressed the memory of his article of 1927 on Engels and Ukraine. Below, p. 77, he writes: "The present study [i.e., chapter three of the 1948 monograph] is the first to treat Engels' views on the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) question." Emphasis added.
38. The whole sense of the 1929 dissertation is well captured in this programmatic assertion from the beginning of the second part: "The accuracy of this prognosis [concerning the inevitable national demise of the Austrian and Turkish Slavs, with the exception of the Poles] was not confirmed by history; yet this does not mean that Marx and Engels' politics on the national question in the years 1848–49 were incorrect and that their thesis, 'counterposing entire revolutionary peoples to counter-revolutionary peoples,' rested on an error." Rosdolsky, "Das Problem," p. 18.
39. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 18 ff, 30–31 note 7, 33 note 2, and below, pp. 91–92 note 13, 175–76, note 32, 178 and 186 note 1.
40. Letter of Rosdolsky to Rudnytsky, 6 October 1966.
41. Radziejowski, "Roman Rosdolsky," pp. 205–06.
42. See above, note 14.
43. R. Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], review of Michał Janik, *Zesłanie Jakóba Szeli na Bukowinę* (Cracow, 1934), in *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 4 (1935): 441–48; Roman Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], "Do historii 'Stowarzyszenia Ludu Polskiego,'" *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 50 (1936): 712–26; R. Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], review of Hipolit Grynwaser, *Kwestia agrarna i ruch włościan w Królestwie Polskiem w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku. Studium archiwalne* (Warsaw, 1935), in *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 5 (1936): 214–19; R. Rosdolsky [Rozdolski], review of Hipolit Grynwaser, *Przywódcy i burzyciele włościan. Szkice z dziejów włościan skarbowych w Królestwie Polskim (1815–30)* (Warsaw, 1937), in *Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych* 6 (1937): 356–61.

44. See above, note 4; also Radziejowski, *Communist Party of Western Ukraine*, pp. 192–95.
45. Radziejowski, “Roman Rosdolsky,” p. 206. Rosdolsky left a memoir of his imprisonment in Auschwitz: Rosdolsky, “Dva spohady,” pp. 84–88.
46. Rosdolsky’s state of mind at this time is more fully discussed in Himka, “Comments,” pp. 145–46.
47. Roman Rosdolsky, *The Making of Marx’s “Capital”*, trans. Pete Burgess (London, 1977), p. xiv.
48. Rosdolsky wrote to Rudnytsky on 20 October 1966: “You have very correctly noted that Tsehlynsky had a strong ‘scent’ of ‘populism.’ This is not unusual. All Ukrainian Marxists (although this is a rather wide concept) in one way or another emerged from Drahomanovism, i.e., from populism. (This was our specific Ukrainian ‘local colour.’) Therefore, for all of them the passage to Marxism was bound up with a battle (often a very painful and drawn-out battle) against Drahomanovist traditions. Some rid themselves of these traditions completely; in others (e.g., in the late Tsehlynsky) vestiges of them remained until the very end.” (A copy of the letter is in the possession of the author.) Part of Rosdolsky’s “very painful and drawn-out battle” with his own Drahomanovist traditions was conducted in his works of the 1920s on Engels and the national question. On Rosdolsky and the Ukrainian Marxist tradition, see also Himka, “Comments,” pp. 141–42.

Translator's Preface

This translation was made from the second German edition of Roman Rosdolsky's *Zur nationalen Frage: Friedrich Engels und das Problem der "geschichtslosen" Völker* (Berlin-Vienna: Olle & Wolter, 1979). I have checked all of Rosdolsky's citations against the original sources, since he completed the work without access to proper libraries and often had to rely on notes and memory. This English edition therefore corrects errors still to be found in the second German edition. Where Rosdolsky introduces quotations from Slavic-language sources, I have translated from the original rather than from the German version. When possible, I use and refer readers to standard English translations, particularly of the works of Marx and Engels; however, I have taken the liberty to modify these as necessary to accommodate the context of Rosdolsky's argument, to convey the original more accurately or to accord with stylistic conventions adopted throughout the translation. Following the accepted practice in English-language historical writing, East European place names are given in the language of the country in which the places are currently located; thus Gdańsk, not Danzig, and Lviv, not Lemberg or Lwów (exceptions are places that have well-established English names, such as Warsaw or Prague). I have compiled the Bibliography of works cited which closes the volume. At the suggestion of the author's widow, Dr. Emily Rosdolsky, I have omitted what appeared as Appendix II in the original text; this brief section had dealt with Stalin's statements of the 1930s on theoretical aspects of the national question and had only a tenuous connection to the rest of the monograph. It should be noted that, in a departure from the usage generally prevailing, emphases in quotations usually stem from Rosdolsky himself rather than from the author cited.

I am profoundly grateful to Dr. Emily Rosdolsky for checking and rechecking my translation and offering valuable stylistic and editorial suggestions. What shortcomings still remain are mine alone. I would also

like to thank Dr. Bohdan Krawchenko of the University of Alberta; he encouraged me in this work and facilitated its publication. I am grateful too to those who helped me with the typing: Lydia Dugbazah, Khrystia Kohut, Anhelyna Szuch and Lubomyr Szuch. Anhelyna Szuch also read the entire manuscript and discussed it with me.

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Engels and the “Nonhistoric”
Peoples:
The National Question in the
Revolution of 1848

by Roman Rosdolsky

**Dedicated to the memory of
Mykola Skrypnyk, Oleksander
Shumsky and Karlo
Maksymovych, victims of Stalin's
terror in Ukraine**

Foreword

"Even father Homer nods sometimes."

—Horace, *Ars Poetica*, I, 359

"But you ought on no account to read Hegel as Mr. Barth has done, namely in order to discover the paralogisms and rotten expedients which served him as levers in construction. That is pure schoolboy's work. It is much more important to discover the truth and the genius which lie beneath the false form and within the artificial connections."

—Frederick Engels to Conrad Schmidt, 1 November 1891

The subject of this investigation is the liberation movements of the so-called nonhistoric peoples of Austria in the revolution of 1848–49 as they were represented in the most radical newspaper of the contemporary German left, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and especially in the writings of its chief editor, Frederick Engels.

By peoples "without their own history," Engels understood those peoples who were unable to form a strong state of their own in the past and therefore lacked, in Engels' opinion, the power to achieve national independence in the future. Among such nonhistoric peoples were primarily the Slavs of Austria and Hungary (with the exception of the Poles), i.e., the Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs and Ukrainians (Ruthenians) as well as the Austrian and Hungarian Romanians. These were peoples, then, who stood at different levels of economic and cultural development and whose liberation movements accordingly had to assume divergent forms and varying intensity. We will begin our investigation with the most advanced of these peoples, i.e., the people most affected by modern capitalist development—the Czechs.

Part I

The Nationality Politics of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*: Concrete Aspects

1. The Czechs

Even before the revolution of 1848 Marx and Engels had paid attention to the Czechs. Thus Marx, in his article against Karl Heinzen, mentioned the workers' disturbances in Prague in 1844,¹ and Engels, in two articles written on the eve of the February revolution, referred to the oppositional attitude of the Bohemian estates and even saw it as a threat to Austrian rule in Bohemia.² More germane to our purposes, however, are the concluding arguments of Engels' article, "The Beginning of the End in Austria" (November 1847):

The fall of Austria has a special significance for us Germans. It is Austria which is responsible for our reputation of being the oppressors of foreign nations, the hirelings of reaction in all countries. Under the Austrian flag Germans have held Poland, Bohemia and Italy in bondage.... We have every reason to hope that the Germans will revenge themselves on Austria for the infamy with which it has covered the German name. We have every reason to hope that it will be Germans who will overthrow Austria and clear away the obstacles in the way of freedom for the Slavs and Italians.³

These sentences contain a decisive condemnation of Austria's policy of oppression, though certainly Engels at the time greatly underestimated the difficulties that stood in the way of the enslaved nations' liberation from Austria and (as we shall soon see) could not have had a clear, concrete image of the "freedom for the Slavs," the obstacles to which the Germans were supposed to clear away in the course of their revolution.

Perhaps the most significant position on the Czech problem taken by the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* is contained in Engels' oft-cited article of 17 June 1848, which deals with the Prague uprising of 12 June of the same year:

A new Poznań bloodbath is being prepared in Bohemia. The Austrian soldiery *has drowned the possibility of peaceful coexistence between Bohemia and Germany in Czech blood...* However the rising may end, *a war of annihilation of the Germans against the Czechs is now the only possible solution.*

But why is this so? Why should the uprising, provoked by Windischgrätz and the court camarilla, have—regardless of the outcome of the struggle—such fateful consequences? Why must the Prague revolt—in contrast to the Polish movement that had been suppressed shortly before in the Duchy of Poznań—result in *enmity* between the nations inhabiting Bohemia and even in a “war of annihilation” of the Germans against the Czechs?

The reasons for this certainly are not to be found in the desires of the parties involved, nor are they to be found in the party leaders’ lack of understanding. They had much deeper roots. Engels continues:

But it is the brave *Czechs themselves* who are to be pitied most of all. Whether they win or lose, *their downfall is assured.* They have been *driven into the arms of the Russians* by four hundred years of German oppression, of which the street battles in Prague are but a continuation. In the great struggle between the West and the East of Europe, which will break out in a very short time—perhaps in a few weeks—an unhappy destiny has placed the Czechs on the side of the Russians, *on the side of despotism against the revolution.* The revolution will win, and the Czechs will be the first to be *crushed* by it.

It is the *Germans* again who will bear the guilt for the downfall of the Czechs. It is the Germans who have betrayed them to Russia.⁴

So runs Engels’ lead article. Here too one can perceive the political perspicuity of the author, because in actual fact developments in the next few months did drive the Czech national movement, if not into the arms of the Russians, at least on to the side of the camarilla at Innsbruck, on to “the side of despotism against the revolution.” These developments, however, were not fateful for the Czechs alone; they would prove no less pernicious to the Germans, to the fate of the German revolution.

At this point we take up the second train of thought Engels developed in his article—the “guilt” of the *Germans* for the downfall of the Czechs. Engels continues:

In making their revolution, the Germans had to be punished for the sins of their entire past. They were punished for them in Italy. In Poznań they have once more been burdened with the curses of all Poland. And now there is Bohemia as well.

Even in places where the French came as enemies, they were able to gain recognition and sympathy. The Germans, however, are recognized nowhere and find sympathy nowhere. Even where they come forward as the magnanimous apostles of liberty they are rejected with bitter sarcasm.

And rightly so. A nation which has allowed itself to be used throughout its history as an instrument for oppressing all other nations *must first prove*

that it has really become revolutionary. It must prove this in some other way than through a few semi-revolutions; which have had no other result than to allow the old indecisiveness, weakness and disunity to continue in altered forms....

A revolutionized Germany would have to disown the whole of its past, especially in relation to the neighbouring peoples. It would have to proclaim the freedom of the peoples it had previously oppressed, at the same time as it proclaimed its own freedom.

And what *has* revolutionary Germany done? It has completely ratified the old oppression of Italy, Poland and now Bohemia, too, by the German soldiery....

After all this, are the Germans really asking the Czechs to trust them?

And are the Czechs at fault for their unwillingness to attach themselves to a nation which oppresses and ill-treats other nations while freeing itself?

Are they at fault for refusing to send representatives to an assembly like our miserable, half-hearted Frankfurt "National Assembly," which trembles at the prospect of its own sovereignty?

Are they at fault for disowning the impotent Austrian government, whose indecision and paralysis seems to serve neither to prevent nor to organize the dissolution of Austria, but only to confirm it?"

A remarkable, curious article! We find here, on the one hand, a glowing confession of internationalism, of the revolutionary principle that no people can be truly liberated so long as it continues to oppress other peoples;⁷ but on the other hand, we also find here the conviction that the victory of the revolution itself will end with the *oppression* of the Czechs. On the one hand there is the realization that to continue the German policy of oppression can only turn the Czechs away from the revolution and that the Czechs cannot at all be blamed if they do *not* want to unite with Germany and send deputies to the "half-hearted" Frankfurt National Assembly;⁸ and on the other hand there is the assertion that *even the victory of the Prague insurgents* over the Austrian soldiery would admit as "the only possible solution" a "war of annihilation" of the Germans against the Czechs. And why, we can ask further, by the power of what fated necessity, *must* the Prague uprising have thrown the Czechs into the Russians' arms? Why could not reasonable concessions in the area of national autonomy, language rights and the national school system (the Czechs had not demanded more!) have achieved a "peaceful coexistence" of the two nations? And finally: what sort of "freedom" was being proclaimed for the Czech people when they were only allowed the choice of going under or living together with the Germans *in a German state*? Are not these glaring contradictions?

Today, of course, a hundred years later, it is not difficult to uncover these and other such contradictions in the nationality politics of Marx and Engels. Much more important, however, than tracking down such contradictions in their thought is the comprehension of the actual contradictions in the historical situation itself, contradictions whose expression these politics were: *the immense difficulties that stood in the way of the solution of the national question in the revolution of 1848.* On one

side were the plebeian peoples, only just awakened to a new historical life, without their own national bourgeoisie and working class, as yet scarcely capable of building their own states. On the other side, however, was the German bourgeoisie, which felt as much at home in the Slavic lands of the monarchy as it did in Germany itself, since it inhabited the cities of these lands and commanded their trade and industry. Because of its whole class situation, the German bourgeoisie was as little capable of renouncing its privileged position as the Hungarian or Polish nobility was of renouncing the exploitation and domination of its subjects who spoke a foreign tongue. Losing "national proprietorship" in the Slavic provinces was absolutely unthinkable to this bourgeoisie; in its eyes no revolutionary gains and no political successes would be able to make good this loss. At this time to demand from it absolute renunciation as a *conditio sine qua non* would essentially have meant nothing less than to *make it doubtful that the German bourgeoisie would participate in the revolution at all*.

Nonetheless, in 1847-48 Marx and Engels had advocated turning away from the German policy of oppression; this self-evident corollary of their socialist principles was reflected in their positions on the Italian, Polish and Hungarian questions. But let us not overlook the circumstance that, with these nations, a compromise appeared not only most desirable but also altogether possible; moreover, their national and political viability could not be in doubt. As for the Italian question, there could be no serious boundary conflicts between a revolutionary Germany and the Italian liberation movement; the benefit from this movement's blow against Austrian absolutism would make up for everything. The same held true for the Polish national movement; the Poles seemed extremely important as allies in the anticipated war against Russian tsarism, and this consideration had to take precedence over the question of how to draw boundaries, a much more difficult question in this case than in the Italian case.⁹ And finally, the Hungarians, in the eyes of Marx and Engels, were, so to speak, "natural allies" of the Germans in their struggle against Russia and its "pan-Slavic" vassals—the Slavs; besides, here too there were almost no conflicting territorial claims.¹⁰

It was *another situation entirely* when it came to the Czechs and the Austrian South Slavs. The Czech provinces lay right "in the middle of Germany"¹¹ and had to become—if they formed an independent state—a thorn in the flesh of the future German Reich; and the Yugoslav movement threatened to cut Germany off from the Adriatic Sea.¹² The ruling classes of both regions were "at all times" German, and thus the very existence of the Czech and Yugoslav nationalities impressed the German bourgeoisie in Prague, Brno, Ljubljana, etc., in the same way it had formerly impressed the German aristocracy—as a challenge to German national interests. It must be added, however, that the Czechs and the South Slavs were obviously neither mature nor strong enough actually to establish independent national states and that such states—had they nevertheless been formed—could all too easily fall prey to tsarism and become its "outpost" in Central Europe. Certainly, this danger could have

been averted by guaranteeing wide national autonomy and by granting the Slavs full linguistic, cultural and political rights. But what force, then, could have moved the German bourgeoisie to abandon voluntarily its monopolistic position? In this regard, František Palacký's autonomist programme must appear just as utopian as the later "federalist imperial idea" of Karl Renner.¹³

Here, however, we are touching upon one of the most crucial problems in the Austrian revolution of 1848: the class limitations of the German bourgeoisie in Austria. The restrictions of their class position made it difficult, even impossible, for the German bourgeois to arrive at a compromise, an *Ausgleich*, with the nonhistoric nationalities that Austria oppressed. The way things were then, it necessarily seemed that either the revolution would come to ruin on the nationalities' account or the nationalities would be "crushed" by the revolution. This basic theme, this fatal dilemma, is also reflected in Engels' article, so often praised,¹⁴ which on the one hand comes out decisively *in favour* of the Czechs, but on the other hand equally decisively declares their cause to be *lost*. Instead of offering a concrete programme on the Czech question, the article only lays out the prospect of an inevitable "war of annihilation" of the Germans against the Czechs. (This prospect strikes us today as entirely "fatalist," but it was logically consistent, since Engels presupposed that the Czech provinces had to belong to a strictly centralized German Reich and that the Czechs would have to abandon their efforts to achieve autonomy.) To be sure, in June 1848 the Czech national movement was still at the crossroads; it had not yet gone over to the camp of reaction. And as long as this had not come to pass, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was obliged on principle to take the side of the Czechs and so to remind the Germans again and again of their "guilt" *vis-à-vis* the Czechs and of their obligation to break with the old policy of oppression.

This interpretation is corroborated by numerous reports and articles dealing with the Czech question in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. As early as 29 May 1848 (i.e., even before the uprising broke out), the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* reported on the situation in Bohemia:

Gubernial President Count Leo Thun, in union with other high officials in Bohemia, has decided on the establishment of a provisional government.... So at last Bohemia will possess a powerful, determined government. The Czech party alone is represented in it,¹⁵ and that is good, because it is the only energetic party, the only one that has done anything for the land's liberation while the Germans grieve and lament and from weakness amount to nothing. We shall soon, we hope, separate completely from rotten Austria.¹⁶ All of Prague is in jubilation....¹⁷

And on 25 June the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* wrote:

Every day brings further confirmation of our view of the Prague uprising,... and shows that the insinuations of German newspapers which alleged that the Czech party served reaction, the aristocracy, the Russians, etc., were downright lies.

They only saw Count Leo Thun and his aristocrats, and failed to notice the mass of the people of Bohemia—the numerous industrial workers and the peasants. The fact that at one moment the aristocracy tried to use the Czech movement in its own interests and those of the camarilla at Innsbruck, was regarded by them as evidence that the revolutionary proletariat of Prague, who, already in 1844, held full control of Prague for three days,¹⁸ represented the interests of the nobility and reaction in general.

All these calumnies, however, were exploded by the first decisive act of the Czech party. The uprising was so decidedly democratic that the Counts Thun, instead of heading it, immediately withdrew from it, and were detained by the people as Austrian hostages. It was so definitely democratic that all Czechs belonging to the aristocratic party shunned it. It was aimed as much against the Czech feudal lords as against the Austrian troops.

The Austrians attacked the people not because they were Czechs, but because they were *revolutionaries*.¹⁹ The military regarded the storming of Prague simply as a prelude to the storming and burning down of Vienna.²⁰

(Here the editors refer to a report from Vienna, dated 20 June, that appeared in the *Berliner Zeitungs-Halle*: "The Bohemians are shot down like dogs, and when the time is ripe for a daring deed—the advance against Vienna will begin.")

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* dealt in the same way with the Prague uprising and the Czech situation also in issues 33, 42, 46, 53, 62, 66, 71 and 83. "We recall," it wrote on 3 July 1848, "that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* has from the very beginning interpreted the Czech revolt as a struggle against absolutism."²¹

We read in an editorial (probably written by Engels):

Despite the patriotic shouting and drum-beating of almost the entire German press, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* from the very first moment has sided with the Poles in Poznań, the Italians in Italy and the Czechs in Bohemia. From the very first moment we saw through the machiavellian policy which, shaking in its foundations in the interior of Germany, sought to paralyse democratic energies, to deflect attention from itself, to dig conduits for the fiery lava of the revolution and forge the weapon of suppression within the country by calling forth a narrow-minded *national hatred* which runs counter to the cosmopolitan character of the Germans.²² . . . What deep plot it is to let the Germans under the command of their governments undertake a crusade against the freedom of Poland, Bohemia and Italy at the same moment that they are struggling with these same governments to obtain freedom at home! What a historical paradox! Gripped by revolutionary ferment, Germany seeks relief in a *war of restoration*, in a campaign for the consolidation of the old authority against which she has just revolted.²³

Just as unequivocally as this fine article, two other reports on conditions in Bohemia also reject hatred for the Czechs. In the first of these we read about a German assembly that convened in Ústí nad Labem (Aussig) in Bohemia:

It comes as a surprise when men like the founders of the Union to Safeguard German Interests in the East declare before a whole assembly: "As long as the struggle in Prague continues, there can be no talk of pardon; and if victory will be ours, it must be exploited for the future." What sort of victory, then, is this for the Germans? What conspiracy has been destroyed?... Throughout Germany the prevalent opinion seems to be that the struggle in the streets of Prague has in view, as it were, only the oppression of the German element and the establishment of a Slavic republic.²⁴ We prefer not to discuss the latter, since the idea is too naive[?]; but as to the former, not the slightest trace of national rivalry was noticeable in the battle on the barricades. Germans and Czechs stood together ready for defence.... No offensive word in reference to a German was heard; there was no movement against the Jews, otherwise so hated here.²⁵... Prague's free press has never advocated any other position but the maintenance of Bohemia's provincial independence and equal rights for both nationalities. It knows very well, however, that the German reaction—as in Poznań, as in Italy—is trying to conjure up a mean-spirited nationalism, partly to suppress the revolution inside Germany and partly to prepare the soldiery for a civil war.²⁶

In the second report, dated 23 July 1848, we find the following:

The Germans and the Jews have assumed the same role in Bohemia that their comrades have already played with such success in Poznań.²⁷ The March revolution frightened them from their peaceable existence of usury. Since then, the national independence of the land, in which this swarm of locusts has settled, has step by step provoked a struggle, which by its very nature can only be a struggle of the German reaction against the recent revolution and the achievements of the people. In Poznań it was the Germans and the Jews who greeted the kindly disciplinary measures of General Pfül (von Silver-Nitrate)²⁸ and Hirschfeld (von Shrapnel) as longed-for emissaries of the old "Order" and "Confidence"; in Bohemia it is they who rejoice at the sabre-dictatorship of Prince Windischgrätz as "a true act of justice and general stabilization."

The author goes on to polemicize with the petition of "thirty-six respectable German and Jewish homeowners and industrialists" of Prague; the petition assails the report of the Viennese "Committee of Safety" on the situation in Prague:

The thirty-six clients of Herr Windischgrätz inform the Ministry that the Viennese Committee of Safety is incorrect in its standpoint. "While men of a right state of mind have no doubts about recognizing the events of Whitsun week [i.e., the Prague uprising] as a criminal attack against law and order,...the Viennese Committee of Safety has seen in that struggle a *class struggle*,²⁹ a struggle of the blood-sucked Bohemian proletarians against alien, profit-mad oppressors.... The Germans and Jews [—the correspondent concludes—] have hitherto disparaged the Czech reputation with every imaginable accusation of "mass fratricide" and "treason to the integrity of the Reich." In this memorable address, however, they themselves for the first time unveil their peculiar conception of Christian-Germanic brotherly love and Jewish Reich's-unity. [Sic.] ...From such confessions of beautiful

souls,³⁰ the German people will at any rate be "enlightened" about whom to support in the struggle between the Czechs and the German-Jewish reaction.³¹

So much for the *pro*-Czech sentiments voiced in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in June-August 1848. One can see that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* takes pains to treat the Czech movement as fairly as it is able. It repeatedly defends the Prague uprising and decisively condemns the bombardment of Prague as "a barbarous act, ... which the German people—if it feels worthy of freedom—dare not hesitate to brand as such" (3 July, no. 33); it castigates the German papers "that spew out poison against Bohemia" (no. 66), praises the Czech leader František Rieger (no. 62), derides Windischgrätz's proclamation about the "great Slav conspiracy" at Prague (no. 71) as well as the "abominable fairy-tales" about a "Bartholomew's night" that the Czechs plan against the Germans. Indeed, as we have seen, now and again it goes too far in its Czech sympathies, as when, with much exaggeration and little tact, it declares the Germans and Jews of Prague, etc., to be simply exploiters and "profit-mad" capitalists. And yet one must say that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* has *no concrete program in the Czech question* (the question is exhausted for the paper in the demand for equal rights for both nationalities in the province of Bohemia) and also lacks a clear conception of the significance and content of the struggle of nationalities in Austria. It supports the Czech movement, but simultaneously endeavours to abstract as much as possible from the national content of this movement and to represent it as a purely social and political-democratic movement against Austrian despotism. This is the sense of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* contention that Windischgrätz attacked the people of Prague "not because they were *Czechs*, but because they were *revolutionaries*" (as though one excludes the other), and this is the sense, too, of what its editors wrote in a reply to an allied Italian periodical, *La Concordia*:

In a former issue *La Concordia* expressed the opinion that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* backs any group as long as it is "*oppressed*."³² The paper was led to this not very sensible invention by our judgement of the events in Prague and our sympathy for the democratic forces against the reactionary Windischgrätz and Co. Perhaps the Turin journal has become more enlightened in the meantime about the so-called [*'] Czech*³³ movement.³³

In other words, the fact of national oppression *by itself* in no way obliges democrats to take up the cause of the nationality oppressed; rather, this obligation arises only when the political actions of the nationality in question bear a revolutionary character and therefore lie in the specific interests of democracy; but otherwise the "so-called" national movement could claim no support whatsoever in its defence. It is as if hostility to all national oppression (by which, in fact, a particular aspect of democracy is negated) did not *belong to the very essence of democracy itself* and first had to be tied to special conditions! This, however, is the real sense of the

above-cited declaration of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which thus took a stance of *desinteressement* in regard to the oppressed nationalities, a stance, then, of what is called "national nihilism."³⁴

This stance probably accounts for the grievous error which the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* committed, in its editorial remarks to a report on the proceedings of the Viennese Reichstag on 11 September 1848,³⁵ when it opposed permission to use languages other than German in the Reichstag; this amounted in fact to advocating the single German "language of the state, officialdom and oppression."³⁶ Rieger, "with vigorous Czech indignation[!]," had brought an interpellation before the Reichstag: "There is no state language, no privileged nation, and therefore no privileged language either." The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* offered this comment: "The deputies therefore could speak, make interpellations, etc., in their own tongue. The Reichstag will become a *translating institution*, a *Babel-mixing of tongues*, which will result in the Reichstag's dissolution. *Finis Austriae*." And when the Polish "renegade democrat," Prince Jerzy Lubomirski, said: "What is a right for many cannot be denied others because of difficulties; it would occasion no great delay even if there were translations in thirty languages," the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* added in mockery: "This thirty-fold bagpipe would howl a glorious canon!"³⁷

In other words, not even the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* comprehended (in spite of a casual remark from its Viennese correspondent on the "coercion of language" that was used above all to restrain the Polish-Ruthenian peasant deputies from Galicia)³⁸ that the decision of the Viennese Reichstag to allow the deputies to speak and make interpellations *only in the German language* was a *grave mistake* that in the future would prove the nemesis of German democracy itself. (There sat, indeed, in the Reichstag several dozen Polish, Ukrainian and Romanian peasants who were rendered mute by this decision and degraded to a role of "the reaction's voting herd.")³⁹ It did not understand that what was still possible for the Jacobins during the French revolution in regard to the French patois had to result in Austria in the destruction and defeat of the revolution; that is, it failed to comprehend the very sense and significance of the *nationality question* coming to the fore precisely then in Central Europe.

In this connection it is perhaps not superfluous to take a closer look at what the Jacobins Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac and Henri Grégoire said in the Convention about the struggle against the French patois. In the session of 8 Pluviose 1794, Barère said:

Le fédéralisme et la superstition parlent bas-breton; l'émigration et la haine de la République parlent allemand; la contre-révolution parle l'italien, et le fanatisme parle le basque. Cassons ces instruments du dommage et d'erreur. . . . Il faut populariser la langue [he means the French language], il faut détruire cette *aristocratie du langage* qui semble établir une Nation polie au milieu d'une Nation barbare.⁴⁰

(i.e., in order to overcome the "aristocracy" of a language, one must *suppress* all other languages. What a sagacious argument!)

Half a year later Grégoire demanded "dans une République une et indivisible, l'usage *unique* et invariable de la *langue de la liberté*,"⁴¹ which for him, of course, was a synonym for the *French* language.

And now, for comparison—analogue speeches of the German deputies in the Viennese Reichstag in 1848, speeches that opposed the interpellations of the Dalmatians (Italians) as well as of all the Slavs demanding that "the questions, interpellations, extracts from the proceedings, etc., be translated into their languages." Alois Borrosch, for example, a German from Bohemia,⁴² spoke thus:

We have been sitting for eight weeks and speaking German. If we introduce polyglottism[!], then this first Reichstag will also be the last. No French Republican ever made the absurd demand that the Basques and Provençals be allowed to speak in their own tongues. . . . If we continue to be diverted by such matters, the knout will triumph over us; nationality is very often abused as a means of instigation.

And the radical Ludwig Löhner, admonishing the interpellators to forget about their interpellations, used these telling words: "Let us not forget the *one* language we should all speak, the *language of freedom*, which we need so much." (For Löhner, of course, this was the *German* language.) "The reaction—dreadful absolutism—stands behind this conflict."⁴³

Yes, once again it is Grégoire's "*langue de la liberté*" that we meet—not only in the French revolution of 1789, but also in the German revolution of 1848 and even in the Russian revolution of 1917. And every time, unfortunately, it reveals itself as a *counterfeit* "language of freedom."

How different sounds the speech of the Ukrainian peasant Iosyf Savka, who had scarcely passed out of serfdom. During the language debate in the Viennese Reichstag, he addressed his bourgeois-aristocratic audience thus:

Who is to blame [he cried in broken German] that in Galicia the peasant does not speak German [i.e., cannot speak German]? Just the lords. At all times . . . they have oppressed and burdened us as much as possible. The peasant in Galicia has no housing, no clothing, nothing. The lords in Galicia have tried to take everything away from him. He has nothing to live from and therefore cannot go to school.⁴⁴ So I beg that the high chamber itself understand why we [peasants] have no one who knows the German language.⁴⁵

Far from understanding, the "high chamber," terrified by the raw class language of the peasants, soon removed this discomfiting contemporary from its midst as the Polish democratic deputies urged.⁴⁶ That the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in the Austrian language conflict did not take the side of Savka, but rather took the side of Borrosch and Löhner, can certainly not be entered as a "plus" in its record of revolutionary activity.⁴⁷

Granted, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* error occurred at a time when the relations between the "historic" and "nonhistoric" peoples were already

becoming more and more strained and the contours of the future "Slav-Habsburg alliance" were emerging ever more clearly. At this point all pro-Czech statements completely disappeared from the paper's columns to be replaced by censure and "strong language" that seem most out of place, especially in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. (The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* Viennese correspondent, Eduard Müller-Telling, distinguished himself the most in this respect; we will later get to know him also as an obtuse and repulsive anti-Semite.)

From this point on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* began to mock the Czech leaders who flirted with the imperial court (Palacký, Rieger and others) and to castigate their counter-revolutionary role with an abundant indignation. The paper must not, of course, be blamed for this: these Czech leaders had indeed declared themselves enemies of the revolution⁴⁸ and had to be treated as such. But did not the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* go too far in its righteous anger, did it not leave itself vulnerable in advancing opinions scarcely compatible with the movement and world view it represented?

Already on 6 September 1848 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* Viennese correspondent indulged in a harangue of invective against "Slavic fanaticism" and the "insolence" of the "recently invented [Czech] nationality." "In Austria," he wrote, "nationalities are now growing out of the earth, and the more insignificant, the more shapeless, the more devoid of content they are—the more madly they behave. And because in and of themselves they would necessarily remain without influence, they are conspiring with absolutism against liberty."⁴⁹ On 12 September Müller-Telling remarked in a dispatch: "The Slavs will allow no German ministry to form; they will create instead a ministry of the knout."⁵⁰ On 20 September, however, he wrote: "The Czechs well understand that if the Hungarians and Germans stand together with the liberty-minded Slavdom of the Poles, Ruthenians [?] and so forth, the hegemony they dream of will end in smoke."⁵¹

But these were only, so to say, preludes to the skirmish. The outspoken hostility of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to the Czechs and other nonhistoric Slavs dates from the suppression of the October uprising in Vienna, a defeat applauded and assisted by the leading Czech and Croatian politicians. At the time Marx wrote in a lead article:

In Vienna, it was a whole swarm of nationalities⁵² which imagined the counter-revolution would bring emancipation.... It should not be forgotten that the parliament sitting in Vienna was a congress of peoples [i.e., the constituent Reichstag], and that the representatives of the Slav peoples, with the exception of the Poles, joined the imperial camp with fifes playing and drums beating. The war of the Vienna camarilla with the Reichstag was at the same time the war of the Slav Reichstag with the German Reichstag.... In Austria, the Slav party conquered alongside the camarilla; it will now fight against the camarilla for the spoils of victory.⁵³

And in another lead article (from 31 December 1848) he wrote: "Croats, pandours,⁵⁴ Czechs, *serežani*⁵⁵ and similar rabble throttled German liberty in Vienna, and the tsar is now omnipresent in Europe."⁵⁶

From this point on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* would repeatedly refer to the victory of Windischgrätz and Jelačić over the Viennese insurgents as a victory for "Croatian freedom and order"⁵⁷ and to Windischgrätz himself as "the Wendish itch" (*wendische Krätze*).⁵⁸ "The *base Czech and Ruthenian dogs*," wrote Müller-Telling in the 12 October 1848 issue, "believe they can make a pan-Slavic capital out of Vienna and again deliver it up to absolutism."⁵⁹ Elsewhere in the same issue he reported: "Lieutenant-colonel Urban [commander-in-chief of the Austrian troops in Bukovina] makes use of the *cretinism* of the Wallachians inhabiting northern Transylvania, just as Hurban [a Slovak politician] has made use of the cretinism of the Slovaks and Hanaks [Moravian Czechs]."⁶⁰ We read in a report of the Kroměříž Reichstag (Brno, 26 November):

The *Gypsies, vulgo Czechs*, have brought along all their *national impudencies*.... All the same, the Czechs are quite enraged at the camarilla.... But now, lest the camarilla find itself overwhelmed by Slavdom in mass, it is daily pulling new would-be-nations out of the Slavic hat and is promising each of them everything from God to the Devil. It has thus already divided Galicia and inflamed the Ruthenians to hate the Poles; thus at this moment it is partitioning Croatia.⁶¹

In no. 186, however, Müller-Telling complains:

Only Ruthenians, Czechs and Croats are being appointed to the ministries. This is proof that the more Austria becomes de-Germanized and de-Magyarized, the more Croato-Czecho-Ruthenianized—or, what is the same thing, Russified—it must become. One can see the moment coming when it will once again be necessary, together with the Slavic beasts, to patch up the decayed *Gesamtmonarchie*.⁶²

In a report dated 6 January 1849, he writes again: "The wretchedness of the Czechs is becoming ever greater. The Slavic Linden wants to conjure up again the *old Hussite times*."⁶³ (Also in the secret session of the Kroměříž Reichstag dealing with the extradition of the deputy Kaim, the Czechs according to Telling, were supposed to have "distinguished themselves excellently in their *Hussite ways*."⁶⁴)

But Müller-Telling really goes off the deep end in his letter of 15 February 1849:

What is the Austrian dynasty up to? After sharing with its *bestially idiotic Slavs* in the murder of the Magyars, Italians, Poles and Germans, it now stands once again on the side of the Germans and Magyars so that together with them it might presently enjoy the merry diversion of exterminating those Slavs who were dumb enough to fetch chestnuts from the coals for it.... The *stupidest Slavic asses*, with the exception of Palacký ["the *Czech aurochs* named Palacký," he calls him elsewhere in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*],⁶⁵ are coming to their senses.... *You Czech dogs! The tricky*

Gypsies [i.e., Czechs] perceive that the Germans can take revenge on them for all their [!] bandit-generals' blessings of rope, gunpowder and lead!⁶⁶

That also another Viennese correspondent of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* considered these very same Czechs to be "the stupidest tribe"⁶⁷ should not surprise us.

We are now at the end of our unpleasant anthology.⁶⁸ Certainly, the language of the revolution is not the language of the literary salon and the nursery. Let us not forget: "In those months all of Europe's democracy came to hate the small Slavic nations who, by their alliance with the reaction, did not contribute least to the vanquishment of democracy."⁶⁹ The mode of expression of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* interests us not on account of its "strong language," but rather on account of the intellectual and emotional confusion revealed in this strong language. There is, for example, the use of "*Hussitism*" as a term of abuse, taken from the stock of "ideas" of the German Catholic feudal lords (and in the recent past also hurled at the Czechs by the Nazis). This sort of thing certainly can have nothing in common with the world view created by Marx and Engels; it is, in any event, a regrettable lapse.⁷⁰

However, one must admit that such lapses would surely not have been possible if the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had possessed a clear and correct understanding of Austria's nationality problems in general and of the Czech question in particular, and if it had not wandered off into the labyrinth of the untenable theory that history itself had condemned the "nonhistoric" peoples to a perpetually counter-revolutionary role and therefore to national destruction.⁷¹ We shall soon see the sort of inconsistencies and fallacies that this theory led its authors to embrace. One thing, however, is clear; one can hardly declare whole peoples to be contemptible "relics of peoples," mere objects for the historical assimilation-process, without thereby also opening the door to an arrogant degradation of the achievements and cultural capacities of these peoples; and one cannot with impunity, even "in the interests of the revolution," proclaim a "war of annihilation" against "entire reactionary peoples" (as such).⁷² A "hatred of the Czechs and the Croats"⁷³ motivated by the revolution also produces a simple, nationalistic, ethnic hatred. In this sense the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (in spite of the completely different motives that determined the thought and activities of its editors) deserved its Tellerings.

So much for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* "Czech politics," to which we shall return in connection with Engels' "theory of the nonhistoric peoples." (Only then will it be possible to offer a final verdict.) Here it should only be noted that the attitude of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the Czech question corresponds most closely to the traditional interpretation of the motives and meaning of Engels' and Marx's

nationality politics; because in the case of the Czechs, initially, in the first months of the revolution, the paper tried—in so far as its hazy evaluation of the nationality problems and its already existent scepticism about the viability of the Czech nation permitted—to do justice to the Czechs' striving for emancipation and to defend them against the chauvinistic German bourgeoisie. It was only after the Czech leaders had gone over to Austrian absolutism that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* put forward the slogan of "hatred of the Czechs" as a "revolutionary virtue." It was an altogether different story with the other nonhistoric nationalities of Austria: the Serbs, Croats, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Romanians. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* considered them "wreckage of peoples" even before they had gone over to the reaction, and from the beginning dismissed their independent actions as "reactionary" and "counter-revolutionary." In this regard, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was frequently only the mouthpiece of its allies, Hungarian and Polish aristocratic-bourgeois democracy, whose prejudices and illusions it shared. We will examine this now in the cases of the South Slavs and, especially, the Ukrainians.

Notes

1. "Moralizing Criticism and Critical Morality" (November 1847), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 6:332.
2. "In Bohemia, the estates refuse to pay their taxes of fifty thousand gulden; Austria still wants to enforce payment but needs its troops in the Alps so badly that for the first time since the foundation of Austria it has to give way to the estates and do without the fifty thousand gulden." "The Beginning of the End in Austria," *Collected Works*, 6:534–35; see also "Minutes of Engels' Lecture to the London German Workers' Educational Society on November 30, 1847," *Collected Works*, 6:629. "Will Austria risk a war? We hardly think so. Its finances are chaotic; Hungary is in full ferment, Bohemia is not secure. . . ." "Three New Constitutions," *Collected Works*, 6:542. With regard to these partly very exaggerated and partly incorrect remarks of Engels, see Zdeněk Tobolka, *Politické dějiny Československého národa od r. 1848 až do dnešní doby*, 4 vols. in 5 (Prague, 1932–37), 1:19 ff. Also Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), pp. 163–64.
3. "The Beginning of the End in Austria," 6:535–36. See also Engels, "A Word to the Riforma" (February 1848), *Collected Works*, 6:553: "The trashy rag from the Lech [The *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Augsburg, which is situated on the Lech River] had not only praised to the skies the loyalty of the 518,000 Austrian soldiers to their feeble-minded Ferdinand, but had also claimed that all these soldiers, Bohemians, Poles, Slovaks, Croats, haiduks, Wallachians, Hungarians, Italians, etc., were burning with enthusiasm for German unity and would willingly part with their lives for it, as soon as it should be the will of the emperor! As though it were not precisely the misfortune that so long as Austria exists Germany has to risk seeing its unity defended by haiduks, Croats and Wallachians, as though the unity of Germany so long as

- Austria survives could be anything else but the unity of Germany with Croats, Wallachians, Magyars and Italians!"
4. "The Prague Rising," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), pp. 125, 127.
 5. Engels' emphasis.
 6. "The Prague Rising," pp. 126–27.
 7. "A nation cannot be free and at the same time continue to oppress other nations." Engels, "Speech on Poland (29 November 1847)," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 100.
 8. "The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* is really turning things on their heads," writes Mehring, "when it explains the vehement Czech opposition to the German parliament by the half-heartedness and misery of the Frankfurt National Assembly. For the Czechs this assembly was not too reactionary, but too revolutionary, *at least in so far as it was German*." Franz Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:14.
- This "at least in so far as it was German" is anything but clear. Mehring is completely in the right, of course, when he asserts that the Czechs did not boycott the Frankfurt assembly because it was too "reactionary" for them; but neither did they boycott it because this (alas! so tame) assembly seemed too "revolutionary" for them (there was indeed at that time a radical, democratic faction among the Czechs, too). Why not simply say that the Czechs (and not without reason) feared an *intensification of national oppression* from the Frankfurt assembly, and therefore preferred to stay away from it?
9. That Engels later wavered a great deal on this question is shown in his articles in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1852 as well as in his letter to Marx of 23 May 1851. Gustav Mayer reports Engels' attitude on the Polish question in the 1880s: "Only 'if necessary,'" we read in his biography of Engels, "would he cede to the new Poland a little piece of Prussian Poland as well." *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:462.
 10. "If the frontiers of Hungary and Germany had admitted of any doubt," Engels wrote later in the *New York Daily Tribune*, "there would certainly have been another quarrel there. But, fortunately, there was no pretext, and the interests of both nations being intimately related, they struggled against the same enemies, viz., the Austrian Government and the Panslavistic fanaticism. The good understanding was not for a moment disturbed." *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 60.
 11. Marx, "Herr Vogt," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957–68), 14:507.
 12. See below, p. 139.
 13. "Truly, an imperial idea is in the air! Why should not the monarchy become a united people of peoples, the common shelter of the little[!], that they might be able to exist alongside the great, each in its own way, each in its own orbit free, all equal, under a centuries-old, but now also strictly parliamentary, dynasty?" Karl Renner [Rudolf Springer], *Grundlagen und*

Entwicklungsziele der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie (Vienna-Leipzig, 1906), p. 237. The same monarchist tone is to be found in abundance also in Otto Bauer's *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1924).

14. It is just this article that is most often cited as proof that the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* only turned against the Austrian Slavs after the latter had gone over to the camp of the counter-revolution. Unfortunately, this assertion, as we will soon see, is only a legend.
15. This is incorrect. Both nationalities were represented in Bohemia's "provisional responsible government council."
16. But what then? How did the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* envisage the further destiny of Bohemia? Surely not in the form of an independent Czech state?
17. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 4, 4 June 1848, p. 3, col. 1.
18. See above, p. 1.
19. Emphasis in the original.
20. "The Democratic Character of the Uprising," *Collected Works*, 7:119 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 25, 25 June 1848).
21. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 33, 3 July 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
22. This "cosmopolitan character of the Germans" also belongs to the wide-spread illusions of that (and not only that) time. It is just as true or untrue as Engels' opinion about the "feeling of nationalism, which is very pronounced among the Slavs, as is well known." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 231. Cf. below, p. 188, note 16.
23. "German Foreign Policy and the Latest Events in Prague," *Collected Works*, 7:212 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 42, 12 July 1848).
24. Cf. Mehring's introduction to *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass*, 3:14: "This point of view [the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s on the Czech question] made sense at a time when the German popular assemblies in Bohemia and Saxony greeted Prince Windischgrätz as the defender of German interests and when the democratic historian Wuttke, Robert Blum's right hand in Leipzig, used sabre-rattling phrases to warn against 'untimely humanitarianism' in the exploitation of the victory Windischgrätz had gained."
25. Here the correspondent is probably referring to the anti-Semitic excesses that took place in Prague on 17 and 26 April as well as 1 May 1848. See František Roubík, *Český rok 1848* (Prague, 1931), pp. 220-21. On the strange attitude of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* towards the Jews, see the Appendix to this work.
26. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 42, 12 July 1848, p. 1, col. 1, p. 2, col. 2, p. 1, col. 2.
27. See below, pp. 114, 116.
28. See Mehring's introduction to *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass*, 3: 22-23. [General Pfül used silver nitrate to mark the hands and ears of captured Polish insurgents.—*Trans.*]
29. Correspondent's emphasis.
30. An allusion to an earlier article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.
31. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 53, 23 July 1848, p. 3, col. 1.

32. Emphasis in original.
33. "The *Concordia* of Turin," *Collected Works*, 7:271 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 55, 25 July 1848.)
34. It was just this "nihilism" that characterized the national politics of most workers' parties in the epoch of the Second International. It was first exploded theoretically by Lenin's well-known works on the national question.
35. On this see the stenographic record of the Viennese Reichstag as well as Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, p. 593.
36. Viktor Adler's derisory phrase.
37. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 105, 17 September 1848, p. 2, col. 3, p. 3, col. 1, p. 2, col. 3.
38. *Ibid.*, no. 69, 8 August 1848, p. 3, col. 2.
39. To give these peasant deputies due credit, we should note that in time, in spite of their ignorance of the German language, they nonetheless managed to orient themselves in the debates of the Reichstag and in questions that concerned them (e.g., the question of compensation for feudal duties) they stood up for their *class interests* with remarkable unanimity. See the stenographic record of the Austrian constituent Reichstag 1848–49 as well as the documentary material relating to this Reichstag in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv.
40. "Séance du 8 Pluviôse," *Gazette Nationale, ou le Moniteur Universel*, no. 129, 28 January 1794, p. 520.
41. Henri Grégoire, *Rapport sur la nécessité et les moyens d'anéantir le patois, et d'universaliser l'usage de la langue française* [Paris, 1794], p. 4. See also Mykhailo Drahomanov, "Chudats'ki dumky pro ukrains'ku natsional'nu spravu," *Vybrani tvory*, ed. Pavlo Bohats'kyi (Prague-New York, 1937), pp. 291–93, and Alois Biessle, *Die Bedeutung der französischen Revolution für die Französisierung des Elsass* (Frankfurt a.M., 1933), p. 46.
42. What a narrow-minded German nationalist Borrosch was is best shown in his well-known statement: "To live as a German in Prague and to be a martyr for Germany—these are both the same." Hans Kudlich, *Rückblicke und Erinnerungen*, 3 vols., (Vienna, 1873), 2:15.

Engels once wrote about this same Borrosch: "At that time [1848] Marx met in Vienna with the Prague book-dealer Borrosch, the leader of the German-Bohemian faction in the Austrian National Assembly. Borrosch complained a great deal about the nationality conflict in Bohemia and the Czechs' alleged fanatical hostility towards the Germans. Marx asked him how things stood with the Bohemian workers. 'Yes,' replied Borrosch, 'that is altogether a peculiar matter! Once the workers enter the movement, it [the nationality conflict] stops; there is no more talk of Czechs and Germans, both of them call a halt to everything.'" Victor Adler, *Aufsätze, Reden und Briefe*, 11 vols. (Vienna, 1922–29), 1:46.

One can take Borrosch at his word here. *At that time* (1848) the Czech workers were yet agreeable as far as German-Bohemian politicians of his stamp were concerned, since they still possessed no national consciousness and let themselves be taken in tow by the radical German bourgeoisie. *For this reason* he emphasized and praised the Czech workers' "internationalism," which was so comfortable for the contemporary German-Austrian left. What, however, would the good Borrosch have said some three or four decades later when the Czech workers too were caught up

in the national movement and began to oppose with increasing energy not only their social, but also their national, oppression?

43. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 105, 17 September 1848, p. 2, col. 3, p. 3, col. 1.
44. Here let us note that the very same Polish-Galician nobility, whose alleged liberal and pro-peasant attitude Engels so often stresses, in the Galician Diet in 1840 almost unanimously rejected the interpellation of the Greek Catholic Bishop Ivan Snihursky calling for the extension of the elementary school system in the countryside. "Should we establish schools," cried the estates, "so that the peasants can write up more complaints [against us] to the Austrian officials [cyrkuly]?" S.B., "O prawach włościan w Gallicyi," *Biblioteka Warszawska*, 1843, no. 4, p. 134.
45. Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, p. 592.
46. See below, p. 64.
47. See below, p. 45 (Engels' position on the Hungarian-Croatian language conflict).
48. See the reports of Czech opposition to admitting the Hungarian deputation to the Reichstag session (19 September), the flight of most (but not all!) Czech deputies from Vienna and especially the Czech deputies' declaration of 9 October 1848 against the Viennese rump-Reichstag. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, nos. 112, 114, 117 (1848).
49. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 100, 12 September 1848, p. 2, col. 1. Here we already come across the same judgement on the Austrian nationality struggle that we will find again later in Engels' articles, "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism."
50. Ibid., no. 105, 17 September 1848, p. 3, col. 2.
51. Ibid., no. 112, 26 September 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
52. The abundance and variety of nationality problems in the Austrian revolution of 1848 struck the German democrats and revolutionaries of the time as confusing. They found these problems all too troublesome and undesirable, and therefore spoke in mockery of the Austrian "swarm of nationalities," of "Eastern Europe's confused ravel of peoples" ("Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 239), of the "caterwauling of the Austrian nationalities" ("The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 175), of the "ninety-nine nations and would-be nations of Austria" (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 158, 2 December 1848, p. 2, col. 3), and so on. See also below, note 53, where Müller-Telling speaks of a "hundred nations."
53. "The Counter-Revolution in Berlin," *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 181, 178. In those days the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* pinned great hopes on a conflict between the "Slavic party" and the court camarilla (or even on the Czechs' return to the revolutionary camp). On 6 November 1848 Marx wrote: "The nationalist fanaticism of the Czechs was the most powerful instrument of the Viennese camarilla. *The allies are already at loggerheads.... This is the first symptom of the war which will begin between the Slav party with its hero Jelačić and the party of the pure camarilla with its hero Windischgrätz, which is above all feelings of nationality.*" Marx's emphasis. "The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna," p. 175. And a few days before this Marx (or Engels) had written: "Even the Czech fanatics in Prague, the neophytes of the Slavic Linden, have awakened from their wild

dreams and declared *for* Vienna against the imperial Schinderhannes [Windischgrätz].” “The Latest News from Vienna, Berlin and Paris,” *Collected Works*, 7:498. Even later we still come across similar expectations in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Müller-Telling wrote from Vienna on 8 February 1849: “You can rest assured that we will require no more Frenchmen; the hundred nations of the Austrian *Gesamtmonster* [at that time one frequently spoke of the Austrian *Gesamtmonarchie* (“monarchy as a whole”)] will now become *united* in their highest conviction, and this transformation is overthrowing the government, overthrowing the monster.” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 220, 13 February 1849, p. 2, col. 1. Also *ibid.*, no. 289, 4 May 1849, and no. 291, 10 May 1849, report on “ferment” not only in southern Germany and in Vienna, but also in Prague, as well as on the disappearance of pan-Slavism in Czech intellectual circles; “Czech a niemec gedno tělo” (the Czech and the German are one body)—allegedly, this was what the Czech students were then singing.

Probably the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was not unaware of Bakunin’s preparations for an armed uprising in Prague in the spring of 1849.

54. Not a separate nationality, but rather an Austrian military unit recruited from among the South Slavs.
55. *Serežani* were a type of gendarme on the Austrian military frontier. They wore red caps, coats and mantles—whence the designation “red mantle” so popular in 1848–49.
56. “The Revolutionary Movement,” *Collected Works*, 8:214.
57. “The *Frankfurter Oberpostamts-Zeitung* and the Viennese Revolution,” *Collected Works*, 7:473; “Reply of William IV to the Delegation of the Civic Militia,” *Collected Works*, 7:476; “Appeal of the Democratic Congress to the German People,” *Collected Works*, 7:491.
58. “[The Viennese Revolution and the *Kölnische Zeitung*],” *Collected Works*, 7:497.
59. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 114, p. 2, col. 1.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 3, col. 2.
61. *Ibid.*, no. 158, 2 December 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
62. *Ibid.*, no. 186, 4 January 1849, p. 3, col. 2.
63. *Ibid.*, no. 193, 12 January 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
64. *Ibid.*, no. 233, 29 February 1849, p. 2, col. 2.
65. *Ibid.*, no. 235, 2 March 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
66. *Ibid.*, no. 226, 19 February 1849, p. 3, col. 1.
67. “A democratic, a constitutional Austria... is temporarily complete nonsense, ... which is still supported only by the Czechs, the stupidest tribe.” *Ibid.*, no. 243, 11 March 1849, p. 4, col. 3.
68. We are temporarily here disregarding Engels’ two articles, “The Magyar Struggle” and “Democratic Pan-Slavism.”
69. Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, p. 271.
70. The same, perhaps, is to be said about a poem against the Croats (by an unknown author) cited in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, 5 November 1848: “That horde of miscreants, rogues and vagabonds,
“Croatian riff-raff, abject peasant hirelings,
“That vomit, spewed up by a gluttoned homeland

"For desperate ventures and for certain doom."

"The Latest News from Vienna, Berlin and Paris," 7:499. It is true that in 1848 95 per cent of the Croats were peasants, but even so this hardly justified reviling them as "abject peasant hirelings" and "Croatian riff-raff."

71. "We have explained how such small nations, dragged along for centuries by history against their will, must necessarily be counter-revolutionary...." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 230.
72. "The next world war will not only cause reactionary classes and dynasties to disappear from the face of the earth, but also entire reactionary peoples. And that too is an advance." "Then we shall fight 'an implacable life-and-death struggle' with Slavdom, which has betrayed the revolution; a war of annihilation and ruthless terrorism, not in the interests of Germany but in the interests of the revolution!" Engels, "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 225-26; "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 245.
73. "We reply to the sentimental phrases about brotherhood... that hatred of the Russians was, and still is, the first revolutionary passion of the Germans; that since the revolution a hatred of the Czechs and the Croats has been added to this, and that, in common with the Poles and Magyars, we can only secure the revolution against these Slav peoples by the most decisive acts of terrorism." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 244.

2. The South Slavs

We turn now to the South Slavs.¹ In the previous chapter we already cited some of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s harsh pronouncements on the Croats. These were made in the spirit of "hatred of Croats,"² which revolutionary democracy displayed after the brutal raging of the Austrian imperial troops (a great many of whom were Croats) in conquered Vienna. But we have to ask this question: how did the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* evaluate the South Slavs and their national movement *before* the uprising of October 1848?

We can find information on this topic in several reports, mostly emanating from Pest, that are completely in accord with the Hungarian propaganda then directed abroad. These reports, on the one hand, deny the existence of a South Slavic nationality problem; on the other hand, they claim that all the national interests and needs of the South Slavs are secured thanks to "magnanimous" Hungarian legislation and they regard the South Slavs merely as "rebels" instigated by the reaction, the court camarilla or even Russia.³

Only in the first of these reports do we catch a fleeting glimpse of the actual facts of the case. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s correspondent in Pest wrote the following on 18 June 1848:

The Illyrians have going for them...the mountains, the well trained and brave *graničari*,⁴ the struggle in defence of their nationality and independence, and, finally, the risky alliance with the Danubian Principalities and indirectly with Russia[!]. If, therefore, the king's will, as expressed to them in decrees and proclamations, is unable to settle the matter peacefully,⁵ then Hungary is in a very critical situation, the more so since in an earnest war the Wallachians in Transylvania and the Slovaks and Russniaks⁶ in the north would likewise not remain peaceful.⁷

Expressed here, then, is that same sense of anxiety that caused the "greatest Hungarian," Count István Széchenyi, to write these noteworthy lines in his diary on 12 April 1848: "The Slavs will destroy us. *They hate us—and rightfully so.*"⁸

The report quoted above, however, is the *only* statement of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* which shows some insight into the nationality struggle in Hungary and its perilous significance. Otherwise the paper offers nothing but tendentious anti-Serbian and anti-Croatian reports. On 19 July the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* cited Lajos Kossuth's words in the lower house of the Hungarian Diet "that it is unheard of that a people [he means the Croats] should prefer to give up the most glorious gift of freedom in favour of a small, corrupted, reactionary party and bend under the yoke of absolutism.... They are not after independence; rather they seek to win the Austrian yoke."⁹

On 29 July Müller-Telling reported from Vienna on a reactionary demonstration attended by South Slavs, for Jelačić, during which "*a monstrous Croatian howling*" could be heard. "Jelačić had wanted to celebrate in Vienna the victory over the Germans [?] and Hungarians," but "this typical effort of Metternich to incite peoples against each other has this time, too, completely miscarried."¹⁰

On 9 August we again find in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* a dispatch from Pest entitled, "The South Slavs Supported by the Camarilla," and in the issue of 13 August the (same, perhaps) correspondent relates that the "Illyrian rebels" are supposed to have declared "to a delegate from our Hungarian military forces" "that they will not yield, that, in addition to God, Tsar Nicholas will help them, and they will again conquer all that they possessed before King Stephan."¹¹ (The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* ascribed all possible atrocities to these "rebels"—and to them alone,¹² while making no mention of the hangings by the Hungarian authorities and troops. But one could scarcely expect anything else given the paper's pro-Hungarian slant and its one-sided sources of information.)¹³ The issue of 24 August contains yet another report on the "Instigation to Mutual Hatred among Peoples in the Serbian-Croatian-Illyrian-Austrian Vendée,"¹⁴ while the issue of 6 September offers a "Manifesto of Free Sons of the Croatian-Slavonian Nation" (inspired, of course, by the Hungarian side). The "Manifesto" argues that there is no oppression of the Slavs in Hungary:

The Hungarians had to replace Latin, which the people do not understand, with *their own* language in order to win the people's sympathy. *They permitted us Croats the same[!]*. As soon as the camarilla noticed this, it concluded with its scheming cunning that now the language struggle in Croatia would cease and it would be impossible for it to enslave the people further.¹⁵ [Sic. And this was supposed to be the very reason why it mustered the "Croatian rebels."]

This declaration is striking in its absurdity and naive mendacity. And yet the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* evidently fully accepted information of this sort, as is shown by some of Engels' later statements on the linguistic equality allegedly granted to the Hungarian Slavs by the revolutionary Hungarian government or even by the pre-revolutionary Bratislava (Pressburg) Diet. Thus, in his article against Bakunin (14 February 1849), Engels' only criticism of the Hungarians' nationality policy was that

the Magyars have been *too forbearing and too weak towards the arrogant Croats*, especially since the revolution. It is notorious that Kossuth conceded everything possible to them[?], except that their deputies might speak Croat at the Diet. *And this forbearance towards a naturally counter-revolutionary nation is the only thing the Magyars can be reproached with.*¹⁶

And in his last article in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (19 May 1849), Engels praises the Hungarians and emphasizes that "even before the February revolution, the Diet at Bratislava, under the leadership of Kossuth . . . permitted Croats and Slavonians when dealing with their internal affairs to use their own language."¹⁷ But he forgets to add that that same Hungarian Diet (of 1843-44) forced the Croatian authorities to use the Hungarian language in their communications with Hungary,¹⁸ and in 1848 it passed a resolution to introduce Hungarian as the language of administration even inside Croatia. Wendel tells us:

The Hungarian Diet of January and February 1848 had made vehement statements against the Croats: in historical reality no Croatia existed at all, one had to advance imperiously against the Slavonians, one had to refrain from dignifying the requests of the South Slavs by responding to them. The decision was taken to introduce soon the Magyar language in administration, and the new Hungarian electoral system, bypassing the old unit of Croatia-Slavonia, treated the Slavonic *županije* simply as Magyar *comitates*.¹⁹

This was legislation, then, that "inevitably wounded the Croats most deeply."²⁰ True, the Bratislava language legislation was not entered into the "Articles" of the Hungarians' April Laws, but neither was it expressly rejected. In the first weeks of the revolution, Kossuth restricted himself to directing an address to "our beloved brothers, the Croats," "in which the Croatian language was admitted in the communes, municipalities and comitates, but Hungarian was reserved for legislation and state business."²¹ The Croats, naturally, rejected this demand,²² without thereby achieving any concessions at all from the Hungarians. (And yet the matter at issue was the most *elementary* of all "national rights"—the right to use their own language!) "Only when these presumptuous men found themselves in water up to their chins, only then did the Hungarian Reichstag pull itself together enough for a solemn recognition of the equal rights of all nationalities,"²³ but it was already too late. And *these* were the nationality politics that Engels considered "too forbearing"!

. It was thus only consistent that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* wrote the following on 13 September 1848: "Whoever wants to judge Hungarian-Croatian relations correctly will never err from the standpoint of liberty and independence if he sees in the struggle of any people against Hungary nothing but the camarilla's instigation to make liberty and independence impossible."²⁴ It is obvious that this attitude prevented the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* from evaluating the Austrian nationality problem correctly and justly.

Let us summarize. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s negative attitude vis-à-vis the South Slavic peoples cannot be attributed, as is often the case, to the counter-revolutionary role played by the South Slavs in 1848-49.²⁵ Its causes lay deeper. First, the paper's editors viewed the Hungarians as *allies of the revolution* and therefore believed they had to defend Hungarian interests above all. And second, the paper's attitude was a reaction to the danger—partly real and partly imagined—of *pan-Slavism*, with which the South Slavic movement appeared to be connected. This is clear not only from Engels' two articles on the Slavs reprinted by Mehring,²⁶ but also from other articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* that dealt with the Hungarians and South Slavs and that we must likewise ascribe to Engels.

"The ultimate victory of Hungary," we read in one of these articles (entitled, "The Hungarian Struggle," *Cologne), "depends simply on its ability to wait for [proper] conditions in Germany and to *clarify* for us the character of the idea of *pan-Slavism* exploited by the Russians."²⁷ And elsewhere, in another article dealing with Hungary, Engels writes:

Without doubt it was difficult for the Austrians to decide to appeal to the Russians. It is as clear as day that the Russian invasion must give a brand new impetus to the pan-Slavic movements of the Czechs and South Slavs. These peoples, long accustomed to look up to the tsar as their natural protector and ultimate liberator,²⁸ now have striking proof that Austria has neither the power nor the will to secure their national development; and now for the first time the Russian tsar appears at the decisive moment acting on their behalf, and by this deed he validates the hopes they place in him. As before to the German Serbs,²⁹ so now to the Austrian Serbs, Croats, Czechs, etc., the tsar shows himself as the chief protector of the Slavic nationality. And precisely these Slavic national appetites are just as dangerous for the Austrian "*Gesamtmonarchie*" as the armed uprising of the Magyars. This we have seen again and again.

By means of the Russian invasion of Transylvania³⁰ the tsar took a new step in the direction of realizing pan-Slavism; he proclaimed the alliance of the Russians and the Austrian Slavs and made himself *de facto* sovereign of the Austrian Slavs too. All the others he already holds under his sway: the Poles are his slaves, the Turkish Slavs his vassals; now he also makes his appearance as protector of the Austrian Slavs. Just one more step, and Austria, just as Turkey, will have entirely fallen under his domination.³¹ This is the price that the "*Gesamtmonarchie*" is willing to pay in order to avoid for a few months its defeat by the revolution.³²

One can see now what, in Engels' view, was the function of "the idea of pan-Slavism exploited by the Russians": it exclusively served the expansionist urges of tsardom, and therefore aimed not only at the suppression of Hungary, engaged in a difficult struggle with the South Slavs, but also at the conquest of Austria itself. But if Russian tsardom, with the help of its satellites, and above all the South Slavs, were to advance thus up to the Danube and Vltava and were to become the absolute masters of Central Europe, need not these instruments of tsardom be regarded as the enemies of Germany as well as Hungary?

This idea was developed in a lengthy article, obviously written by Engels, that appeared in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on 21 April 1849. It bore the characteristic title, "The New Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian Robber State."³³ The article discusses the draft of a law prepared by the joint "Croatian-Slavonian Diet Committee" in Zagreb in spring 1849; the aim of the law was to erect a "triune Kingdom of Croatia-Slavonia-Dalmatia" within the framework of the Habsburg state.

"While in Hungary proper," Engels begins,

the imperial and royal *Gesamtmonarchie* has been shaken at its foundations by victorious Magyar arms, in the South Slav lands the national separatist movement is creating ever new difficulties for the Austrian regime. The Croats have now³⁴ contrived the idea of a Croatian-Slavonian-Dalmatian triune kingdom to serve as a centre of gravity for pan-Slavic ventures in the south.... The document [he now discusses the draft of the law] is noteworthy. In it there is no trace of hatred for the Magyars or of precautionary measures against Magyar encroachments, but I dare say that it bears the stamp of *hatred for the Germans*, of protection against *German* encroachments, and of the pan-Slavic alliance *against the Germans*.³⁵ This is what our howling constitutional patriots of the Holy Roman Empire get for enthusing over the Croats! The same hatred and the same mistrust of the Germans also prevail in the Serbian Vojvodina, as we have already reported previously.³⁶

But what was the content of the "noteworthy" law, and how did its authors express their "hatred for the Germans"? Engels continues:

The red-mantled *headhunters'* triunity ["of pandours, *serežani* and *haiduks*"]³⁷ begins its existence at once with *conquests*.³⁸ Apart from detaching all of Croatia and Slavonia from Hungary, it demands the Mura insular region, i.e., the corner of the Szala *comitas* that lies between the Drava and Mura rivers, as well as the Quarnero islands of the Istrian-Dalmatian *Kreis*, i.e., in addition to a piece of Hungary, a piece of *Germany* too.

And then it demands the right: 1) to regulate the internal relations of Croatia-Slavonia with Dalmatia by means of their respective Diets; 2) to regulate its relations to the Serbian Vojvodina by means of a joint agreement; 3) "on the basis of mutual agreement *to enter into more intimate political union* also with the other neighbouring *Slavic* provinces of the Austrian imperial state," i.e., to form inside the imperial and royal *Gesamtmonarchie* a *pan-Slavic separatist league against the Germans* and

Magyars. And this right to separatism is, in the pandour-serežan way of thinking, the primary human right.... That is, our primary, "natural" human right is the revival of the Prague Slav Congress as a legislative authority....

After these conquests and pan-Slavic alliances there follows a solemn declaration: "The triune kingdom has never been a *German* land (*Dieu merci!*), nor does it want to be such nor does it even want to become a part or member of the *German Reich*; and therefore even in the future the triune kingdom, without its express consent, cannot be drawn into any unit that Austria might form with Germany now or in the future."

Such solemn declarations addressed to the *Germans* are deemed most imperative, although—to our knowledge—neither has anyone ever regarded Croatia along with other headhunter territories" as a "German land," nor has Germany for the present the slightest desire to incorporate Herr Otočan⁴⁰ and Herr Serežan into the German Reich.

And not a word in the whole document about the *Magyars*, not a single paragraph that would protect the desired triune robber state against the much lamented Magyar oppression!

One can see, however, what the whole thing boils down to: the ministry [of Felix Schwarzenberg and Franz Stadion] is working for a united, centralized Austria, in which in the long run the Germans—as the most civilized nation—will morally prevail; the pan-Slavic triunity is a thousand times more afraid of this than of the *Magyars*, already considered vanquished. One can also see, furthermore, that the way these robber would-be-nations hate the Germans far exceeds their hatred for the *Magyars*. And yet these robber would-be-nations are considered allies by that patriotic German lady, the *Kölnische Zeitung*!⁴¹

That is [Engels concludes] the blueprint for the new triune Otočan-Pandour-Croatian robber state that they want to set up for us on *Germany's southeastern borders*⁴² if the revolution and the *Magyars* allow it.

Both the tone and substance of the article can only surprise the reader. The "robber would-be-nations"⁴³ and "headhunter territories" are here reproached with a passion for *conquest*, when all they want is to deliver their own ancestral territories (Croatia and Slavonia), which they inhabit in a compact mass, from *foreign domination*. And they are further charged with a "hatred for Germans," because they reject the *supremacy* of the Germans in the projected Austrian federative state and because they also struggle against annexation by the German Reich (how could one blame them in view of the real passion for conquest on the part of the Frankfurt National Assembly?). And *these* reasons seemed sound enough for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to reprove the "howling consitutional patriots" and the "patriotic German lady, the *Kölnische Zeitung*" for the unpatriotic character of their Croatian sympathies. One will grant that such arguments have nothing to do with either the counter-revolutionary conduct of the South Slavs in 1848-49 or the materialist, dialectical understanding of the historical process. On the contrary, they simply represent a concession to the German nationalist way of thinking, inadmissible even then.⁴⁴

Here we must examine Riazanov's (very characteristic) exposition of the standpoint of Engels and Marx on the South Slav question. In the afterword to his publication of Marx and Engels' contributions to the *New York Daily Tribune*, Riazanov was correct to emphasize how "very little interest" the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* displayed "during the years 1848 and 1849... in linking up the German revolution with the Eastern Question" (i.e., the Balkan Slav question).

Their argument for "the war against Russia" always proceeded from the standpoint of the *European* revolution, and they always connected the war closely with a civil war in Germany itself. In justifying their antagonism to Russia they never referred to Germany's special interests in the Balkan peninsula, to the "Germanic mission," to the necessity to protect "German trade" on the mouth of the Danube, and to the need to liberate the "German Danube." They most ardently defended the restoration of Poland in its boundaries of 1772,⁴⁵ the independence of Hungary and the Danubian Principalities,⁴⁶ the unification and independence of Italy, but in their articles we find no trace of the diverse attempts [Riazanov probably alludes here to Lassalle] to connect the interests of the *German* revolution with the Eastern Question. One can make of this fact what one wishes, but the fact remains a fact. Implacable opponents of all feudal restrictions on economic development, they nonetheless never put themselves at the service of capitalism [as did the patriotically minded German social democrats during World War I, against whom Riazanov is indirectly waging a polemic]. Greater-Germans and Republicans, they were convinced that the German republic they had as their goal would, in union with revolutionary Europe, possess and develop such great internal vigour that it required not one inch of *Polish*, *Hungarian*, or *Italian* soil; even less did it have to prove its vitality by colonizing territories hitherto under Turkish rule.⁴⁷

All this is quite correct: Marx and Engels really never did claim so much as a single inch of Croatian, Serbian or Bulgarian soil. (They left this soil to Hungary and—at least temporarily—to the Turks!) But what about *Slovenian* and *Czech territory*? Riazanov is silent on this ticklish point, although no one knew better than he how little prepared were the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to give up so much as a single inch of *these territories*. "One can make of this fact what one wishes, but the fact remains a fact." Of course, it would be nonsense to accuse Marx and Engels on this account of "service to capitalism" or even German imperialism; the contexts and motives, as we will see, were of a much more complicated nature than can be made to fit into such a neat formula. But it is also of no use to keep silent about this "weak side" of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* politics and to wish thereby to extenuate it.

We saw earlier that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* took a negative stance towards the national movement of the South Slavs even before the latter could decide whether they were for or against the revolution. And we

see now that the paper occasionally wielded arguments against them that would have sounded much more natural and less contrived if uttered by the "patriotic German lady, the *Kölnische Zeitung*." In both instances, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was equally far removed from a correct and objective evaluation of the South Slav question and its ramifications. (In particular, the paper failed to recognize that the crux of the matter was the liberation of millions of *peasants* from the yoke of feudalism.)

In conclusion it remains to be mentioned that even later Engels still held to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* conception of the significance and character of the Hungarian nationality struggle. He even credited the paper with the special merit of having "done more than any other to render the Hungarian cause popular in Germany, by *explaining the nature of the struggle between the Magyar and Slavonian races*."⁴⁸ But we do not want to anticipate what we will deal with later—the further development of Marx's and Engels' views on the South Slav question.

Notes

1. On the attitude of Engels and Marx to the South Slav question, see the brochure by Mijo Radošević, *Marxizam, panslavizam i jugoslovenstvo* (Zagreb, 1921), as well as the very instructive, but not entirely error-free, article by Hermann Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," *Slavonic Review* 2 (1923–24): 289–307; also his "Magyaren und Südslawen in den Jahren 1848 und 1849," in *Der lebendige Marxismus* (Jena, 1924), pp. 315–31. Quite inferior and superficial, by contrast, is the article of H. Malcolm Macdonald, "Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and the South Slavic Problem in 1848–9," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 8:452–60. See also the essay about Marx and Engels on the Balkan question in D. Riazanov, *Očerki po istorii marksizma* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 589–603.
2. See above, p. 42, note 73.
3. Since the 1830s the Hungarians never tired of denouncing the national awakening of the Hungarian Slavs as "pan-Slavism" and "tsarist intrigues." The Polish national revolutionaries did the same with regard to the national movement of the Galician Ukrainians. See my article, "Zur Geschichte der tschechisch-polnischen Beziehungen in der ersten Hälfte des vorigen Jahrhunderts," *Prager Rundschau* 8 (1938): 114–40.
4. Inhabitants of the Austrian military frontier, the *graničari* were obliged to perform military service.
5. In the beginning, as long as there was hope for a compromise with the Hungarians, the monarch disdained the Serbs and Croats and summoned them to be obedient to Pest.
6. Carpatho-Ukrainians.
7. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 32, 2 July 1848, p. 3, col. 3, p. 4, col. 1.
8. Cited in Zdeněk Tobolka, *Politické dějiny československého národa od r. 1848 až do dnešní doby*, 4 vols. in 5 (Prague, 1932–37), 1:76.
9. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 49, 19 July 1848, p. 2, col. 2.

10. Ibid., no. 64, 3 August 1848, p. 3, cols. 1–2.
11. Ibid., no. 74, 13 August 1848, supplement 2, p. 2, col. 2.
12. Ibid., no. 103, 15 September 1848, p. 3, col. 1: "The men roasted and women dishonoured by Illyrian Serbs and Croats. . . ." Ibid., no. 232, 27 February 1849, p. 4, col. 1: "The red-mantles [see above, p. 41, note 55] . . . possess an innate talent for severing heads, slitting bellies, dissecting, impaling children, dishonouring women, scalping, roasting and so forth, and they constantly carry on their persons the proper weapons and murderous instruments for the practice of this craft; moreover, they are just as greedy for money as the Jews." [Sic.]
13. In reality a great many atrocities were committed on both sides during the Hungarian-Slavic war of 1848–49. "With and without martial law there was murder, dishonour, burning, destruction and devastation, and one side charged the other with inhuman cruelty." Hermann Wendel, *Der Kampf der Südslawen um Freiheit und Einheit* (Frankfurt a. M., 1925), p. 258.
 That the Hungarians in this respect were hardly more humane than their Slavic opponents is shown by "the Forest of Gallows [in the Serbian Vojvodina], in which, not to speak of the informally executed, 467 'rebels' met their end." There was also the plan hatched (according to the deposition of the Hungarian General Arthur Görgey) by Kossuth "to eradicate root and branch the Serbs of the Banat and to settle the land with Honveds [Hungarian national militia—trans.]." Ibid., pp. 262, 258. It is interesting that these same "fine" ideas were also put forward by the most radical and most left-wing Hungarian politician of the time, Mihály Tancsics, who urged the revolutionary parliament to expel the South Slavs after suppressing their uprising and to divide up their lands among the Szekels of Transylvania. *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 65 vols. (Moscow, 1927–47), s.v. "Vengriia. Istoricheskii ocherk," by A. Bolgar, p. 56. Bakunin reports that at the same time the Slavs had analogous plans. Similar designs were also being considered then by the Austrian generals. Field Marshal Franz Ottinger proposed to Prince Schwarzenberg that the Hungarians be expelled from all comitates on the right bank of the Danube and that these territories be resettled by Germans. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Nachlass Schwarzenberg, K. 10, Nr. 235, Ottinger's letter of 18 June 1849.
14. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 84, 24 August 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
15. Ibid., no. 95, 6 September 1848, p. 2, col. 1.
16. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review), p. 236.
17. "[Hungary]," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 9:455.
18. See Oscar Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1961), pp. 304–05.
19. Wendel, *Der Kampf der Südslawen*, pp. 256–57.
20. Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), p. 555.
21. "We only wish," it says in the address, "that with reference to the legislation and government of the motherland, you use the Hungarian language." Ibid.

22. The Yugoslav political writer Šulek explained the meaning of Hungarian language politics: The Magyars could educate and enlighten themselves through the free use of their own mother tongue, "while we remained stupid; and so they would remain the lords and we the slaves. Thus the old times would return when those who understood no Latin were slaves and beggars. Thus would the old aristocracy return, only this time it would not be composed of several nationalities, but of one—the Magyar nationality." Wendel, *Der Kampf der Südslawen*, p. 259.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 261; also, p. 262: "When Andrassy, named ambassador to Constantinople, advised Foreign Minister Batthyány to issue a proclamation on the protection of Serbian and Croatian liberties and rights, he added that such a proclamation would not oblige the Hungarians to do anything, for if they remained victorious, they could modify everything, and otherwise, they had nothing to lose."
24. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 101, 13 September 1848, p. 2, col. 1 (dispatch from Vienna, dated 7 September).
25. "On the whole, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* treats the South Slav nations and would-be-nations in a summary manner that at first appears strange; one must, however, have a vivid image in one's mind of the miserable role of these nations and would-be-nations in the revolutionary years in order to understand the revolutionary forcefulness that the paper directs against them." Franz Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:76. Nevertheless, in the same "Einleitung," 3:78, Mehring admits that "in regard to the 'uprising of these fellows' [an allusion to one of Engels' letters], i.e., the uprising of the South Slav nationalities, Marx and Engels *always* gave too little attention to its genuine causes and *always* gave too much weight to what were only its potential effects on world politics"; but this cannot be explained *entirely* either by the South Slavs' counter-revolutionary rôle in 1848–49 or by the danger of pan-Slavism which accompanied their efforts at emancipation.
26. That is, the articles "Ungarn" and "Der demokratische Panslavismus," in *ibid.*, 3:233–64. ("The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 213–45.)
27. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 207, 28 January 1849, p. 1, col. 3.
28. This certainly very exaggerated assertion (exaggerated even if one abstracts from the Czechs) is often found in Engels' writings. Thus in his article on the nationalities in Turkey, *New York Daily Tribune*, 7 April 1853, Engels writes: "Whatever may happen, he (the Servian, the Bulgarian, the Bosnian Rayah, the Slavonian peasant of Macedonia and Thracia) looks to St. Petersburg for the advent of the Messiah, who is to deliver him from all evil; and if he calls Constantinople his *Czarigrad*, or Imperial City, it is as much in anticipation of the orthodox Czar coming from the north and entering it to restore the true faith, as in recollection of the orthodox Czar who held it before the Turks overran the country." Engels, "Turkey," in Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: S. Sonnenschein & co., 1897), p. 8.

It is true that the entry into Austria of the Russian army under Paskevich in 1849 had given rise among the Ukrainian peasants of Galicia to a naive faith in the "tsar liberator." This faith had nothing at all to do with nationalism and even less with an Orthodox religious consciousness (the

Galician Ukrainians are—or were at that time—Catholics); instead, it was primarily *socially* motivated. The Galician peasants simply hoped that the legendary tsar (to whom they merely transferred their traditional faith in the Austrian emperor) would *free them from the high-handed rule of the lords* and would divide the lords' lands among themselves—exactly as the *Russian* peasants had expected this sort of “freedom” from every tsar and even from Napoleon! The peasants' faith in the tsar (or emperor) was an inevitable component of the *peasant psychology of that time* and its roots were firmly planted in social conditions. Constantinople and similar “imperial” interests were, of course, matters of indifference to the Slavic peasants, for the most part bonded serfs. This is equally true of the *Russian* peasant of whom Engels wrote in 1852 that he looked on Constantinople as “the true metropolis of his religion and his nation.” *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 58. Most Russian peasants had no idea what Constantinople was and where it could be found.

29. A typographical error. Should it be “the Turkish Serbs”?
30. The article was published on 28 February 1849; at this time Russia's contribution to the suppression of the Hungarian uprising was limited to a single corps, which operated in Transylvania. Austria's invasion by a whole Russian army only followed two months later.
31. This next, decisive step seemed to have been taken when Russian troops, at the request of the court in Vienna, began to surge towards the borders of Hungary to stifle this last “unruly herd” in Europe. Now, thought Engels, it was only possible to prevent the final suppression of democracy by a renewed outbreak of the German revolution and a war of intervention pitting the Western powers against Russia. With the Russian invasion, he wrote on 18 May 1849, the Hungarian war had to change from an internal, Austrian affair into a *European* war. “By becoming a European war, the Hungarian war is brought into reciprocal interaction with all other factors of the European movement. Its course affects not only Germany, but also France and England. The English bourgeoisie cannot be expected to let Austria become a Russian province and it is certain that the French people will not calmly look on while the counter-revolution comes closer and closer to attacking them. Whatever the outcome of the French elections, the army at any rate has declared for the revolution. And the army today is the decisive force. If the army wants war—and it does want it—then war it will be. War will come. Paris is on the threshold of revolution.” “[Hungary],” 9:463.
32. “*Ungarn,” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 233, 28 February 1849, p. 3, col. 1.
33. “*Agram,” *ibid.*, no. 278, 21 April 1849, p. 3, cols. 1–2.
34. The Croatian National Assembly at Zagreb on 25 March 1848 already raised the demand for the administrative consolidation of Croatia-Slavonia with Dalmatia. See Jászi, *Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 368.
35. All emphasis is Engels'.
36. See Engels' article, “Die ungarischen Kriegsnachrichten,” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 249, 20 March 1849, p. 2, col. 1: “One can see the sort of storm clouds gathering in the Serbian Vojvodina for the shipwrecked Austrian *Gesamtmonarchie*. And one can see how right we were to be pointing out for some time how little the camarilla could depend on the Serbs.”

In the article of 28 February 1849, already cited, Engels wrote about the Serbian Vojvodina, which was guaranteed autonomy by the Olomouc Patent of 15 December 1848: "So that one might see how small and mixed in population is the little land of the new Serbian Vojvodina and how foolish are the pan-Slavs' pretensions to manufacture small Slavic states in every nook and corner of Hungary, we offer the following statistical data from Belgrade's *Srbske Novine*: '...By ethnic origin the inhabitants comprise 917,916 Serbs, 26,200 Slovaks, 13,000 Bulgarians, 283,000 Wallachians, 278,400 Germans, 6,160 French and 81,132 Magyars....' Thus this so-called nationally Serbian land has 700,000 Germans, Wallachians, Magyars, etc., to 900,000 Serbs. And the 900,000 Serbs are not even genuine Serbs, but belong to the 'Catholic South Slavs,' i.e., the Schokazen of Sylvania and the Bačka comitas; they are not Serbs at all!" *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 233, p. 3, cols. 1-2.

Thus Engels. The only question is: Why in light of this survey of "the little land" (in which the Serbs, according to the statistical data cited by Engels, constitute an absolute majority of 57 per cent) the Vojvodina should belong precisely to the *weakest* national group, namely the *Hungarians* who make up barely 5 per cent of the population? From the point of view of ethnicity, on which Engels' argument here rests, the Hungarians' "pretensions" appear all the more "foolish"!

37. "Haiduks" were what the Hungarians called the court ushers and bailiffs of the magnates; among the Slavs of the Balkan peninsula, "haiduks" were peasants "who as individuals or in bands took to the mountains and forests to avenge themselves on their oppressors, the Turks." *Der grosse Brockhaus*, 20 vols. (Leipzig, 1928-35), s.v. "Haiduken."
38. Emphasis here and in the rest of this passage is Engels'.
39. If Engels considered even the Quarnero islands "a piece of Germany," then what about the *Slovenian* territories of Carniola, Carinthia and Styria? (Wendel tells us that in 1848 when an interpellation was presented in the Styrian Diet "to permit also the Slovenian language to be used in the proceedings, since a third of the land's population was of Slovenian nationality, the Germans only broke out in hearty laughter." *Der Kampf der Südslawen*, p. 267.
40. An Otočan was an inhabitant of the Otočac region in upper Croatia. (In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Otočac was an important border fortress.)
41. Cf. Engels' polemic against the *Kölnische Zeitung*: "The Vienna Correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung*," *Collected Works*, 8:394-95 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 225, 18 February 1849).
42. Emphasis added.
43. In Engels' article against Bakunin we read: "But couldn't the Austrian South Slavs link up with the Serbs, Bosniaks, Morlaks and Bulgars?... But these people have related to each other for centuries as *rogues and bandits*, and, despite all their racial affinities, their mutual hatred is infinitely greater than that between Slavs and Magyars." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 233.

Similar epithets for the Hungarian and Balkan Slavs are sometimes also found in Marx and Engels' correspondence. In a letter of 18 December 1860, Engels calls the Hungarian Slavs a "robber band." Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke [MEW]*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957-68), 30:127. In a letter of 25

July 1876, he makes sport of "the Serbian liberation army" that had to "return to its robbers' den." Ibid., 34:20. At the same time, Liebknecht's *Vorwärts* also called the Serbian peasants (*reaya*) a "robber mob" and their uprising a "robber campaign." See H[ermann] L[evi], *Zur orientalischen Frage oder: Soll die sozialistische Arbeiter-Partei türkisch werden? Ein Mahnwort an die deutsche Sozialdemokratie* (Zurich, 1878), pp. 53, 36. Here (regrettably) we have to mention that even later the Central and West European workers' movement was not free of the influence of what Wendel calls "the cliché of the Balkan sheep-thieves, a cliché as stupid as it is dangerous." *Der Kampf der Südslawen*, p. 342. "Even in 1912, at the outbreak of the Balkan war, in which pacific Social Democracy rightly saw a prelude to world-war, the highly unhistorical view was put forward that the Balkan States were not fighting to free their oppressed kinsmen, but were mere robbers and peace-breakers. All of a sudden the *status quo* was something respectable, not only for the diplomats, but also for the Socialists, and after the decision, Jean Jaurès lamented the expulsion of the Turks almost in the sentimental tones of a Pierre Loti." Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," p. 303.

44. The other arguments directed against the South Slavs in this article (and in the article "The Magyar Struggle") will be discussed later in connection with Engels' "theory of the nonhistoric peoples."
45. As if restoring Poland "in its boundaries of 1772" (that is, inclusive of Ukraine, Belorussia, etc.) were to be taken for granted! (In neither Riazanov nor Mehring do we find so much as one word criticizing these boundaries; such criticism was left to the anarchists, like Mykhailo Drahomanov and Max Nettlau, and to the social revolutionaries, like Viktor Chernov.)
46. Riazanov forgets to add that Marx and Engels denied the Romanians of Transylvania any right to national existence and treated their homeland as the "natural" possession of the Hungarians.
47. N. Rjasanoff, ed., *Gesammelte Schriften von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels, 1852 bis 1862*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1920), 1:472.
48. *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 76.

3. The Ukrainians (Ruthenians)

We turn now to a nationality that in 1848 (and also for a few decades thereafter) could be considered *nonhistoric par excellence*. These are the Ukrainians or, as they called themselves then, the Ruthenians (*rusyny*) of the Austrian crownlands of Galicia and Bukovina and of northeastern Hungary.¹

Among the nonhistoric nationalities of Austria in 1848, perhaps no other was in so unfavourable a position as the Ruthenians, a people, as the Polish nobles derisively called them, of "priests and peasants."² They differed radically from the Czechs, whose homeland was, economically and culturally, among the most developed regions of the old monarchy. In 1848 the Czechs had not only a numerous urban petty bourgeoisie, but also a strong, nationally conscious intelligentsia that was able to take up the difficult struggle for the preservation of Czech nationality. But even the South Slavs, who culturally and economically were not much less backward than the Ruthenians, were, as nationalities, in a far more favourable situation than the latter. The traditional provincial-estate autonomy of Croatia and Slavonia as well as the rivalry between the native Croatian and Magyar nobility worked in favour of the Croatian movement, while the Serbs could seek support for their national movement in the neighbouring, quasi-sovereign Principality of Serbia. Moreover, the South Slavs, who furnished the soldiers for Austria's military frontier, were considered a very serious military factor in the turmoil of 1848-49 (rightly, as was borne out by their role in the Hungarian war).

What, by contrast, were the Ruthenians of 1848? Nothing more than "shadows of their forgotten ancestors,"³ a mass of illiterate, semi-bonded serfs, who spoke a different language and went to a different church⁴ than the lords of the manor, but who were still submerged in the deepest "nonhistoricity" and who only in their Greek Catholic clergy possessed the

forerunners of a national intelligentsia. Since the mid-1830s, the Ruthenian clergy had come under the influence of Czech and Serbian "awakeners" and desired to revive their own nationality; and in the stormy year of 1848, they came forth with surprisingly mature political and cultural demands. But this was in reality merely an entirely modest beginning; it would not bear fruit until thirty to forty years later. In contrast to the clergy, the popular masses, the peasants, were hardly touched by the national idea in 1848.⁵ Certainly they felt Ruthenian, but only because the landlords and their creatures were Poles, because the landlords, in their ostentatious contempt for the "peasant language" and "plebeian clergy," daily inculcated the difference between themselves and their subjects. The *national* contradiction here was therefore (to agree with Otto Bauer)⁶ merely a *phenomenal form of the social contradiction*; national hatred was only class hatred "transformed." Hence, it would require the unflagging labour of several generations to change the Ruthenian nationality from a mere potentiality into a cultural and political *reality*.

Clearly, a national movement in so early a stage of development as this one inevitably remained completely unknown abroad (except, of course, to learned Slavists). Polish democratic journalism was the first, in 1846-48, to give the Ruthenians a short-lived, and by no means illustrious, "popularity."

We have in mind here the notorious "Galician butchery" of 1846, which for democratic Europe symbolized the ruthlessness and perfidy of the Metternich system and which is frequently mentioned in the writings of Marx and Engels.⁷

In the mid-1840s, Polish secret societies in Galicia (made up chiefly of the landless-gentry intelligentsia and the petty and middle gentry) were preparing a new uprising for independence. This time they hoped to make the Polish cause the cause of the Polish "people" itself. They understood that against the overwhelming superiority of the three partitioning powers, the only insurrection that could hope for victory was one that had the active collaboration of the entire Polish nation, i.e., above all, of its oppressed peasant class. The peasantry, however, would only participate in the struggle if it could expect from the new, resurrected Poland not the maintenance of its slavery, but the *breaking of its chains*. Thus, it was asserted that the indispensable condition for the national revolution was a "social revolution," to be accomplished not *against*, but *with* and *by* the nobility; the landowners had to be induced to renounce voluntarily the hated compulsory labour and other feudal dues, because this sacrifice would enable all social classes to join in a fraternal struggle against the foreign oppressors. (This seemed all the more possible as the productivity of compulsory labour constantly diminished, peasant disturbances erupted in the countryside with increasing frequency and the landowners themselves began to comprehend that the *status quo* was untenable.)

How great, then, was the insurgents' horror when the peasants, whom they had confidently called to arms against Austria on 18 February 1846, did not join the insurgents, but instead attacked them savagely and

drowned the insurrection in the blood of the Polish nobility! One can hardly imagine today the disappointment, rage and despair that then overcame the *szlachta* and especially its democratic faction: They had wanted to make the greatest of sacrifices for the people, but the "people" so basely betrayed the hopes of the "nation"; they had wanted to recognize the peasants as brothers with equal rights, but the peasantry showed itself as Cain. Had ever a nation been subjected to a harsher trial, been offered so bitter a chalice by a cruel providence? They sought an explanation for this dreadful turn of events, and they found it, naturally, neither in the centuries-long hatred that the peasants bore their tormentors and oppressors (was, then, the nobility's zeal for sacrifice not great enough to absolve all the sins of the past?), nor in the insufficient ideological preparation of the rebellion,⁸ but in the treacherous policy of Metternich; well aware of the instability of the Austrian regime in Galicia, Metternich had set the unsuspecting peasants against their landlords and used them as tools for profligate fratricide. So arose the legend⁹ that, *seduced and bribed* by Metternich, the Galician peasants,¹⁰ out of sheer ignorance and rapacity, following their bestial chieftain Jakub Szela, abandoned Poland's freedom to the enemy. (As if the whole wretched past of these peasants had not taught them to hate and mistrust their lords, and as if it first required a Metternich for them to want to throw off their yoke.)

This was the Polish nobility's version of the origins of the "Galician butchery" of 1846. This version—certainly believed in all honesty, as the only version that corresponded to the nobles' psychology—was, of course, ardently spread abroad and readily taken up by the democratic press of France, England and Germany. But here it had to assume another character, so as not to give rise to doubts and scruples; from a spontaneously generated *legend* it turned into a conscious *mystification*. Those who spread the legend abroad sought to convince foreign democrats that the massacre—which took place in *Western* Galicia, i.e., in the *purely Polish* part of the crownland—was not simply the work of peasants, but rather was perpetrated at Metternich's orders by "nationally and religiously fanaticized" *Ruthenian* peasants (who, however, inhabited the eastern part of the crownland!).¹¹

But at this the foreign democrats, enthusiasts of the "liberation of nations," pricked up their ears: "Do you mean to say, then, that there are *several* nationalities in Poland?" "By no means," replied Polish democracy: "As everywhere in Europe, so too in Poland there are various dialects and religious creeds. And so it is that the Ruthenians, who—yes—speak a patois somewhat differing from the Polish language and belong to another church, are nonetheless—when you examine the matter closely—*Poles* as much as we are. It was the great demagogue Metternich who first 'awakened' them to a new 'national' life; in line with his maxim '*divide et impera*,' he was the first to invent the absolutely nonexistent, artificial, 'Ruthenian' nationality."¹²

In this mystified form the Polish noble legend cropped up in Engels' writings in 1849, and from him Karl Kautsky,¹³ Otto Bauer,¹⁴ Iurii

Steklov,¹⁵ Otto Rühle, and recently (1946) Ernst Fischer have partly adopted the legend. (According to all these authors, *Ruthenian* peasants perpetrated the massacre of 1846.)

"In what exactly did Metternich's 'master stroke' consist?" asked Engels (in his article, "The Magyar Struggle," January 1849):

The bourgeoisie and peasants of each nation were restrained by the nobility of that nation and the peasants of every other nation, whilst the nobility of each nation was restrained by their fear of the bourgeoisie and peasants of their own nation. The different class interests, limited national attitudes and local prejudices, in all their complexity, held each group in a position of total reciprocal stalemate and allowed that old rogue Metternich complete freedom of movement. The Galician massacres show how far he had succeeded in inflaming the peoples against each other. In that instance, Metternich suppressed the democratic Polish movement, which had begun in the interests of the peasants, by using the *religious and national fanaticism of the Ruthenian peasants themselves*.¹⁶

And in another passage he writes:

In order to tame their [the Poles'] revolutionary spirit Metternich had already appealed to the Ruthenians, a nationality distinguished from the Poles by a *somewhat different dialect* and in particular by the Greek religion, who had belonged to Poland from time immemorial *and first learned by the agency of Metternich that the Poles were their oppressors*. As if the Poles themselves had not been oppressed just as much as the Ruthenians in the old Poland, and as if Metternich were not their common oppressor under Austrian rule!¹⁷

One can see that Engels took the Polish-aristocratic legend at face value. The Ruthenians to him were essentially a Polish "tribe," while Metternich appears here as a double conjurer, who at will could pull from the air not only social rebellions,¹⁸ but also whole national movements. Only the final argument (that in the old Poland, the Poles themselves were also oppressed) sounds new, but even this stems from the arsenal of Polish democratic journalism of 1846-48, which parried every reference to *national* oppression in old Poland with the stereotyped reply that in old Poland even the Poles themselves—that is, the Polish peasants—suffered from *social* oppression.¹⁹ And the fact that Metternich was the "common oppressor" of the Poles *and* the Ruthenians did not at all prevent the Polish nobility on its part from oppressing, or at least striving to oppress, the Ruthenians; the revolution of 1848 demonstrated this clearly enough. Both arguments are, of course, the most unadulterated sophistry.

The above-cited passages from Engels contain in a nutshell the whole attitude of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* to the Ruthenians and the Ruthenian national question. Surely one cannot reproach the paper for its ignorance of the actual situation in the most distant corner of the

monarchy, in a province of which Westerners had only the vaguest notions;²⁰ all the less is such reproach warranted when we consider that the paper's Polish correspondents, in good or bad faith, sent it for the most part very misleading reports. Still, they did report to the paper on the emergence of the central Ruthenian Council (*Ruska Rada*) with numerous branches in the countryside,²¹ on the establishment of a chair of Ruthenian language and literature at the University of Lviv, on the Ruthenians' demands for the secure development of their nationality, for the elevation and cultivation of their language and for the creation of a separate Ruthenian national guard,²² on the Ruthenians' memorandum to the emperor, from whom they sought the political separation of Ruthenian Eastern Galicia from Polish Western Galicia,²³ and on more of the same sort of topics. Thus even for that time the opinions of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on Ruthenian-Polish relations were all too rash and apodictical, and this must be ascribed less to the paper's lack of information than to its prejudiced receptivity to noble-Polish sources of information.

Because of this, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* often entangled itself in quite curious contradictions. For instance, on 28 October 1848 it reported:

The Pole Józef Ordega [one of the leading Polish democrats] in Paris has sent an article to the *Réforme* in which he provides information about the allegedly Polish regiments that fought against Vienna in the service of the camarilla. In the last few months, namely, the Austrian government has called all discharged Galician soldiers back into service. These are the very same soldiers who were hired in 1846 to perpetrate the slaughter in Galicia.

What the democrat Ordega wrote, as one can see, is a very clumsy piece of mystification, since it was not "hired soldiers" but genuine Polish peasants, who—under the leadership of the above-mentioned "peasant-king" Szela—attacked the landlords in 1846. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, however, provided the following editorial comment to Ordega's report:

It may be superfluous to remark that these soldiers are not Poles, but Ruthenians. After the Polish estate owners in Galicia voluntarily [but under the condition that all forests and pastures should belong to the estate owners alone!] renounced feudal dues, the Austrian regime had no other means to maintain the dissension in Galicia except inciting the Ruthenians against the Poles in the name of *nationality*. The Ruthenians speak a different dialect, their (Greek) religion differentiates them from the Poles and, finally, *they constitute the peasant state proper*.²⁴

The theory of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (which, as we will see, contrasted whole "revolutionary" peoples to whole "counter-revolutionary" peoples) recognized in reality only a uniform, "revolutionary" Polish nation. Since the Polish peasantry as a whole (about 90 per cent of the Polish people) was then "*gut kaiserlich*," i.e., pro-Austrian (or else pro-Russian or pro-Prussian), the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had no choice but to turn these peasants into *Ruthenians* and view the Polish nation as *composed entirely of nobility*.²⁵

The reader has surely noticed that in the above citations from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* the "Ruthenian question" is bound up one way or another with the *peasant* question and the Ruthenian movement appears fundamentally as a *peasant* movement. And this is what it really was; in spite of all its national narrow-mindedness and the petty-bourgeois reactionary character of its intelligentsia leadership, the movement was (and this is reminiscent of 1789) a "still undeveloped revolutionary element"²⁶—the peasantry rebelling against feudalism—announcing itself as a new force in history.

Even the noble-democratic Polish correspondents of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* were dimly aware of this, because on the one hand they represented the Ruthenian movement as an absolute nonentity, a creation of the regime, a soap bubble, but on the other hand they ascribed to this same movement an uncanny influence on the *peasants* and constantly attributed to it the intention of initiating a new "butchery." It would be appropriate here to digress somewhat from our main theme and to direct our attention to the Galician *peasant question* as it appeared during the revolution of 1848–49. By doing this we can illuminate what transpired behind the scenes of the official-parliamentary efforts of the Austrian revolution's democratic spokesmen and also gain an insight into the general "peasant politics" of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (a topic that has not yet been investigated).

The most conspicuous characteristic of all, or almost all, of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s Polish correspondents was an unholy dread of a repetition of the events that took place in Galicia in 1846. This dread, we can say with certainty, dominated the whole thought and feeling of the Polish nobility at that time and perforce reduced to a minimum its revolutionary activity in the revolution of 1848–49.²⁷

This dread—though bound up with all sorts of curious illusions—already emerged clearly into the open in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s first report on the Galician situation (26 May 1848, Lviv). The correspondent reports on alleged "machinations" in Galicia aimed at "inciting the Ruthenian peasants to murder their lords." But, the correspondent consoles himself, "a good spirit seems to have been awakened among the Ruthenian peasants. They too appear to desire solidarity from now on with the Poles." And he waxes prolix and lyrical about a Ruthenian peasant who, "with hands raised to heaven," allegedly said in the Polish National Council: "There were people among us who divided us into friend and foe; but... just as surely as there is a God in heaven, there must be concord on earth between Poles and Ruthenians."²⁸

But this elegiac mood of a heavenly-ordained concord had evaporated by the next report, dated 6 July, which the editorial board of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* prefaced with the following commentary:

We print below a letter we have received from a Polish noble in Lviv; we have not altered a single line of the letter. The reader will easily distinguish the purely factual account from the attempts of a nobleman to explain the

relationships of various classes, which he does not understand, as plausibly as possible.

The reader can here object: The lines you just cited clearly show how critically the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* judged its noble-Polish correspondents! Right. But, unfortunately, this is the *only* passage in which the paper's editors express their scruples about these correspondents' conceptions. And however interesting this passage is, it does not change the entire picture of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* "Polish politics."

What, however, did the nobleman write?

"The situation in Galicia," he laments,

borders on total anarchy. The authorities are powerless and moribund; the land itself is under military rule. *The people are hostile to the landowners*; they mistrust the civil authorities and manifest, without really knowing why, the warmest attachment to the emperor. They side with the military, which also on its part stops at nothing to insure this collaboration when necessary, . . . *as was the case during the atrocities of the year 1846*. The present conduct of the peasants is not the result of their conviction and free will. No, it is artificially summoned up . . . by the finance-sentinels and land surveyors[!], who for so many years have been surveying the whole land.²⁹ Only someone who is familiar with conditions in Poland and in life there, especially life in the countryside, can appreciate what sort of hellish tricks and pretences had to be employed *to make the peasant what he is today*.

Among these "tricks" is the Ruthenian question: "A new means of sowing discord and provoking dissension has been found in the eastern inhabitants of Galicia, the so-called Ruthenians or [!] Hutsuls;³⁰ they [the Austrian authorities—*trans.*] strive by all possible ways to turn [the Ruthenians] away from the Polish cause."³¹

Without a doubt, the nobleman is terrified to the quick by the mood of the peasants and yet he is not in the least capable of understanding this mood. The exact same thing is repeated, however, in *all* the Galician reports of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. Thus a report dated 19 July described a petition from the Polish National Council in Tarnów to the ministry of the interior in Vienna; the petition attributed to the authorities the intention of provoking "*atrocities akin to those of the year 1846*."³² In the 1 August issue we find an alarming report that nearly a thousand "*Ruthenians recte peasants*," armed with scythes, attacked forty-two unarmed Polish national guardsmen in the Galician town of Pidhaitsi; allegedly, the attack almost amounted to a reenactment of the abomination "*that was perpetrated in 1846*." "The somber seed, which the leaders of the Ruthenian nationality have sown," the correspondent concludes from this incident, "has already begun to sprout in Galicia and threatens to produce a bountiful harvest."³³ "*This band of executioners and murdering robbers*," writes another correspondent of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, "who at that time ravaged Galicia, . . . were recruited, instigated and used as tools by . . . Stadion,"³⁴—the same Stadion, that is, "*who invented the Ruthenian nation* and at whose initiative a Ruthenian National Council

(Rada Ruska) was installed in this city [Lviv]."³⁵ "According to information received from all sides," we read in a report from Galicia (24 October 1848) in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, "the bureaucracy is organizing a revolting conspiracy to murder, as in 1846, all the so-called [!] nobility, clergy and everyone else loyal to the good cause."³⁶ And even a correspondent who reports to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* about the unwillingness of Cracow recruits "to fight against Hungary" cannot refrain from remarking: "These precedents will not remain without influence on the peasants of Galicia. . . . They are burning with the desire to wash away the disgrace of 1846 in the blood of Austrian hangmen."³⁷ (With what sort of "desire" the Galician peasants were really burning at that time the reader can easily imagine.)

As though trapped in an enchanted circle, the thoughts of the nobility revolve here around the fatal events of 1846; their thoughts cannot be freed from these events, whose bloody shadows are ever and again conjured up in what appears to be self-torment. And ever and again we find the same denunciations of the Ruthenian national movement, in which the nobility with its sensitive class instinct catches the scent of rebellious peasant slaves; and we find the same impotent attempt "to explain as plausibly as possible" "the relationships of various classes" that they do not understand.³⁸ That the Galician nobility thought this way and had to think this way is only all too understandable; it is less understandable, however, that all these reports found space in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, though they spoke in such a bigoted and unconcealed class language.

Especially significant in this respect is a very curious report that we find also in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and that deals with the well-known leader of the Polish peasants in "the bloody year 1846," Jakub Szela:

Metternich's notorious bandit, the peasant Szela, wanted by all means to be elected deputy to the Reichstag. He failed, however, because another, by the name of Kobyltsia, was elected in his place. Angry at this, Szela wrote a vehement letter to the minister of the interior. In the letter, the following passages, among others, occur: "Have I then earned no decoration?" I had, indeed, been raised to peasant-king in 1846[!],⁴⁰ and I was feared and respected; did I not at that time save the imperial treasury sufficient expensé? Did I not suppress the revolution in Galicia? At that time I was needed, but now I am forgotten, especially now, during the election of deputies. Had I been elected, I would have been able to put something aside from the 302 florins' monthly salary [!] and I could have sat comfortably in the Reichstag. Lukian Kobyltsia, on the other hand, who was elected from the district of Cimpolung, is nothing but a common peasant, who in 1846 attacked the inhabitants of that same place [i.e., the officials of the landed estates], gagged them, crucified them, muzzled them and poured boiling water on their heads, for which he was sentenced to severe imprisonment and fifty lashes. And such a man has been elected deputy!"

(Müller-Telling, whom we have met before, adds at this point: "I will take a closer look at this deputy to the constituent Reichstag tomorrow.")⁴¹

It is probably unnecessary to assure the reader that in this fine story (which, incidentally, made the rounds of all the Austrian and German periodicals) not a single word, except for the names of the two peasants, is true. Szela neither ran for election to the Reichstag nor did he write any such letter to the minister of the interior. The Ruthenian peasant deputy, Kobyltsia, committed not one of the misdeeds that the report ascribed to him during the Hutsul revolt that took place in 1844 (not 1846!) in the Dohopole district in Bukovina, his homeland; if he had, then according to the stern justice of the time, he would have been hanged ten times over. Official documents⁴² know nothing of Kobyltsia's alleged crimes, though they do report on his harsh treatment at the hands of the local landed nobility in 1846.⁴³ The whole story, then, from A to Z, is an invention. The fiction, however, had an extremely transparent purpose: *to compromise the peasant deputies to the Reichstag*, especially Kobyltsia, and thus to create a favourable atmosphere for their expulsion from parliament. This was a continuation of the policy already initiated during the Galician elections to the constituent Reichstag in June and July 1848. In spite of the nobility's lamentations and invective against the bureaucracy, these elections had been conducted to a very great extent in an authentically "Galician" manner, i.e., they were based on electoral chicanery, on defrauding the peasants and on other swindles. (Only in this way could dozens of *landlords* be "elected" in the rural districts of Galicia.) Now the representatives of the Galician nobility in the Reichstag, the so-called "frock Poles," supported by an alliance with the German "left," used all means, even the most dishonest, to drive from the Reichstag the discomfiting and, to them, so hateful peasant deputies, especially the latter's most active spokesmen.⁴⁴ But this was not a matter of democratic declamations—the "frock Poles" were never niggardly with oratory; rather, the matter at issue concerned such concrete things as compensation for the remission of servile dues, the peasants' rights (servitudes) to the forests and pastures usurped by the nobility, the nobles' right of "propination,"⁴⁵ their right to the hunt and so forth. This is where all democratic professions were null and void.

Galician electoral practices and the conduct of Galician peasant deputies in the Reichstag also found an echo, albeit weak, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. We have in mind here not the amusing anecdotes that then circulated about these deputies in Vienna and that contributed in no small measure to their popularity,⁴⁶ but rather the reports of the paper's Lviv and Viennese correspondents, who in spite of their superficiality and bigotry related some interesting things. Thus runs a report from Vienna (28 June) about elections to the Reichstag:

The great majority of districts have clearly expressed their mistrust of the nobility, officialdom and clergy.... An exception... has been the repeated election in Galicia of Greek [rite] clergymen, who are closely connected with the people.⁴⁷

The "nobleman" whom we have already encountered⁴⁸ judged the Galician elections from another viewpoint in his report of 6 July:

The elections to the Viennese National Assembly have for the most part taken place under the influence, however concealed, of the bureaucracy, the leech of the land. The bureaucrats assiduously stimulated mistrust to help them wherever it seemed that the elections would not turn out to their taste.... In many places *peasants* were elected, but only those of whose attachment to imperial absolutism one could be sure; or convicts were elected, who on account of larceny, etc., had served time in prison⁴⁹ and were recently released. In other places, *the peasants did not at all want to take part in the election*; the consequence of this was, with few exceptions, that the elections *turned out well*[!]. Immediately, however, the inevitable intrigues were set in motion to invalidate such legal acts.⁵⁰

So much for the Galician elections. To turn to the peasant deputies in the Reichstag, Müller-Telling writes on 16 August:

Count Stadion⁵¹ believed that he could lead like a bell-wether the eighty or more⁵² *Galician peasants* who sit in the Reichstag and know no German; he trusted that they could be used for his own purposes. Pillersdorf hoped for something similar with the German peasants. Yet, though they speak in different tongues, all of these people have brought with them from their homelands a common sentiment and a common will which serve them as a common language. They all speak the language of democracy and are learning daily, the more they get to know their bell-wether, to speak better. At first the peasant voted at the nod of Pillersdorf and Stadion, but now he visits the clubs and he is instructed in evening sessions with the left, which, though nationally heterogeneous, is united by the one language of democracy. The peasant is so wonderfully instructed that he is beginning to introduce independent proposals and to make speeches...albeit with an untrained tongue.⁵³

To be sure, Telling's enthusiastic description was quite exaggerated; but there was an element of truth in it, as evidenced by the speech (reprinted in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 83) given by the Ruthenian peasant deputy Ivan Kapushchak during the debate over the abolition of feudal dues. Telling reports:

Not only does he not want to *give* compensation [for abolished servile duties], but he wants to *receive* compensation from the landowners and nobility. "The peasants of Galicia," he says, "did 300 instead of 100 days of corvée labour, because the landlord reckoned three days as only one. So who should be paying compensation? The whole week the peasant had to work; on Sunday they threw him into the cattle shed. They used cudgels to cheer him on in his work. And when he begged rest for his weakened wife, he was told: 'Then you take your wife's place in the yoke!' Since the lords themselves say they are making a *gift* of corvée labour, then why do they need compensation?" [Here Kapushchak hits the nail directly on the head.] "The peasant need not thank them at all for this 'gift,' because it was first given

on 12 April of this year, at a time when our noble German brothers came to the defence of our rights. Our thanks properly belong to our German brothers and to the good emperor." (Applause in the centre, hissing on the left.) "We were considered slaves. Three hundred paces from the landlord's house we had to keep still. If we wanted to obtain something from him [the landlord], we had to go to the Jew" (applause in the centre), because we were not allowed into his house. 'The peasant stinks,' he would say. And we are supposed to pay compensation? *The whips they used on our bent bodies—yes! this we can leave them as compensation.*"⁵⁵

One can understand that the Galician "frock Poles" (with a few exceptions)⁵⁶ derived no joy from Kapushchak's speech. But one can also understand how *relative* the distinctions among the parties were at that time if this speech could earn "applause in the centre, *hissing on the left.*" (The hissing was probably not in response to the "imperial" sentiments of the peasant deputy, because all the leaders of the Reichstag left were just as "imperial" in their own speeches.) The Reichstag left was a *bourgeois* left, which had to reckon with the class interests of its noble-Polish allies and which itself cherished the most profound respect for the "property question," even when, as in this case, only feudal property was involved.

In any case, the Galician peasant deputies to the Reichstag in 1848–49 were not at all so *unequivocally and hopelessly reactionary* as is customarily assumed.⁵⁷ Or rather: they were so merely from a political point of view, in so far as their whole class situation made of them not only enemies of the feudal nobility, but also "born monarchists." But even the French peasants were thoroughly monarchist in 1789, and yet the great majority of them were soon to become loyal soldiers in the republic!⁵⁸ If the same thing did not occur during the Austrian revolution of 1848–49, the fault would seem to lie not in the peasantry, but in the revolution itself—in its timidity and fear of "social problems," *in its inability to carry the solution of the agrarian question and the antifeudal movement of the peasants beyond the framework of what was necessary and permissible from the limited perspective of the bourgeoisie.*

This interpretation seems to be contradicted by the fact that in Austria in 1848 the work of liberating the peasants succeeded "better than in any other part of Germany."⁵⁹ Certainly. But it does not follow from this that the work of liberation could not have succeeded *much better yet* and that to judge the Austrian "peasant liberation" we must be content to measure it against the Prussian. On the contrary, when we look at it more soberly, the Viennese Reichstag's "work of liberation" does not at all appear as splendid as bourgeois-liberal historiography is wont to represent it. Yes, the Reichstag did abolish feudal dues, but in doing so it only confirmed "the steps *already practically taken* by the peasantry."⁶⁰ It only made what even absolutism and the feudal nobility considered an *inevitable concession under the circumstances*. By burdening the peasantry and the whole land with an onerous compensation for the landlords, being mortally afraid of any change in landed *property* and leaving the very important question of

the peasants' rights to use forests and pastures to the discretion of absolutism and the feudal nobility, the Reichstag *sinned* grievously against the peasantry and the revolution. In its "work of liberation," then, the Reichstag did the very *minimum* and not the maximum.

However odd it may seem, even the extreme left of the 1848 revolution, whose intellectual leadership was provided by the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, could not gauge correctly the extreme importance of the peasant question in Austria, the extraordinary chances it offered the revolution or the grave dangers it posed. *One looks in vain in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung for an analysis of the Austrian agrarian problem, for a concrete programme on the Austrian peasant question or at the very least for substantive articles and reports treating the question.*⁶¹ It did not even take a stand on the battle fought so tenaciously in the Viennese Reichstag over compensation for feudal dues; *it limited its role to that of a mere reporter.* In regard to the peasant question in Hungary and Galicia, however, by its eulogies of the "revolutionary" agrarian legislation of Kossuth and of the Galician landlords' legendary "zeal for sacrifice,"⁶² the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* became in actual practice the mouth-piece of the aristocratic democracy of these lands.⁶³ Thus, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* hindered, if not precluded, its own ability to understand these agrarian problems.

Only when the revolution was defeated and in Hungary mortally wounded, only then did the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* sporadically put forth the idea of an Austrian "peasant war" that might come to the aid of the revolution and Hungary. (The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* said nothing, however, about how to make the peasant war happen and about what concrete slogans could mobilize the peasants.) Here we have in mind—besides a passing reference by Marx⁶⁴—two notices, most probably written by Engels, that appeared in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, nos. 275 and 283. The first of these again deals with the Ruthenian peasants and the above-mentioned Kobyltsia,⁶⁵ the second with an alleged peasant uprising in Chrzanów in Western Galicia. Here is the first notice:

No word from Transylvania.... But in Bukovina the nation of the Hutsuls, long lost sight of, has re-emerged under the leadership of its peasant-king Kobyltsia. Here, in the most remote corner of the monarchy, a struggle is developing between the peasants and nobility that the implementation of the decreed abolition-law⁶⁶ must provoke throughout Austria. *Kobyltsia is making a direct alliance with the Magyars.*⁶⁷ Listen to what *Bukowina*, which comes out in Chernivtsi, writes about this (4 April [1849]): "The notorious Kobyltsia, with his dangerous agent Birla Myroniuk, has again appeared in the mountains among the (Ruthenian) Hutsuls. He is creating dangerous delusions in the peasant communities. He is inciting them to take hold of the manorial forests and pastures as well as to keep up their refractory behaviour. He will shortly come to their aid with a Hungarian army...." *Good luck to the Austrian peasant war.*⁶⁸

In this notice, then, the same Kobyltsia who earlier (in Telling's report of 6 August 1848) was blamed for all possible and impossible crimes suddenly appears as an ally of Hungary. This time too, however, the account is nothing but a mystification, because Kobyltsia made no alliance whatsoever with Hungary. Instead, he first "armed several thousand peasants for the programme of an equal division of the forests and the transfer of the lords' and government's estates to the peasants."⁶⁹ He did this in his native region in November–December 1848. Afterwards he hid in the Carpathian mountains in Galicia, where the authorities could not lay hands on him until May 1850. After serving a conspicuously trifling term of one month in prison, he was banished to the Romanian part of Bukovina (Gura Humorului), where he died the following year.⁷⁰

But where did *Bukowina's* report originate? Well, once again from the nobility, but this time from Romanian estate-owners,⁷¹ who in contrast to the Polish nobility were loyal to the emperor during the revolution and so could all the more easily denounce Kobyltsia to the government as an "adherent of the Hungarian rebels." The matter at issue was the "manorial forests and pastures," and no nobility treats such matters lightly.

So much for Kobyltsia. While the Hutsul movement which he led was remarkable for its agrarian-communist character as well as for the large territory over which it extended, the same can by no means be said about the so-called "Chrzanów peasant republic."⁷² The latter consisted simply of this: the peasants of several villages in the region of Chrzanów, a West Galician town, fled with wives and children to the woods, either in response to a rumour that some foreign insurgents (Hungarians? Poles?) were approaching or perhaps, as a correspondent from Cracow reported to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on 16 April, to escape recruitment. In spite of all the authorities' efforts at appeasement, the peasants remained in the woods for several days. In this ephemeral episode the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* wanted to see the beginning of a "Polish peasant uprising." On 27 April the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* wrote:⁷³

New support for the Magyars—and right now on the eve of their probable victory of the greatest significance—is provided by the Polish peasant uprising that is developing in Galicia.... Three thousand⁷⁴ peasants have taken to the woods near Chrzanów and set up camp there. There have been attempts to dissuade them without the use of force, but they answered only thus: "We prefer to die here rather than in Hungary. What have the Hungarians done to us?"⁷⁵

This notice is even more fantasy-ridden than the one about Kobyltsia's Hungarian plans, because it takes a simple case of the peasants' behaviour in panic⁷⁶ and turns it into a "peasant uprising," which, to compound the error, it explains as a result of these peasants' (certainly nonexistent) pro-Hungarian sympathies. Both notices are nonetheless interesting, because they show us the illusions that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*

entertained at this point both about the political maturity of the Ruthenian and Polish peasants and about the revolutionary attractive power of the Hungarian noble-bourgeois uprising.⁷⁷ (And surely the second illusion was yet worse than the first.)

Let us conclude with two remarks. We started with an investigation of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* statements on the Ruthenian *national* movement and in the course of this we arrived at a critique of the paper's position on the *peasant* question in the Austrian revolution of 1848–49. This was perhaps unavoidable in the case of a national movement that was still so very restricted to its social core (the peasant question), that was so little capable of developing beyond that core, as was the Ruthenian movement of a hundred years ago. Moreover, this shift in viewpoint has enabled us to treat the national politics of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* from a *new perspective* and to look for the source of its errors in a more deep-seated cause—in its erroneous evaluation (or underestimation) of the *peasant question* in the Austrian revolution of 1848. How important this perspective is for our whole investigation will be shown later on.

In reference to the Ruthenian (or more correctly: Ukrainian) movement as such, however, we would like to call attention to a remark Engels made in a letter to Joseph Weydemayer, 12 April 1853:

As for the former Polish provinces this side of the Dvina and Dnieper, I have not wanted to hear anything about them ever since I learned that all the peasants there are Little Russians⁷⁸ while only the nobles and some of the townsmen are Poles, and that *for the peasant there the restoration of Poland would mean merely the restoration of the old rule of the nobility in full force, as was the case in Little Russian Galicia in 1846.*⁷⁹

Could one wish for a more cogent critique of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* Ukrainian-Polish politics⁸⁰ than this self-criticism from Engels' own pen?

Notes

1. The Austrian Ruthenians or Rusyns (*rusyny, rus'ki*) later renounced their old historic name and took the name "Ukrainians" as a demonstration of unity with the majority of their nationality living in Russian Ukraine (and officially designated as Little Russians). They also changed their name to emphasize the contrast between themselves and the Great Russians, who also referred to themselves as *russkie*. Today it would never occur to a Ukrainian to call himself a Rusyn or Little Russian—testimony to the radical changes that Ukraine has undergone since the mid-nineteenth century. We will be using the old name "Ruthenians," because the correspondents of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, of course, only knew this name and by using it we can avoid the bother of double designations in quotations.

2. Here and elsewhere in this study we are concerned almost exclusively with the *Galician* Ruthenians, since in 1848 only in Galicia was there a Ruthenian national movement worthy of mention.
3. The title of a novel by the Ukrainian writer Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky.
4. Until their forcible "conversion" to the Soviet Orthodox church in 1945, the Galician Ruthenians were Greek Catholics, i.e., they adhered to the Byzantine rite of the Catholic church.

The Greek Catholic church played an interesting role in the national rebirth of the Ruthenians. In *Galicia*, this church proved itself beyond doubt a strong bulwark of the Ruthenian nationality—it was the *peasants'* church, while the Roman Catholic church in Eastern Galicia was the "manorial" church. In the neighbouring *Chelm* region, which did not belong to Austria but to Russia, the Greek Catholic peasants had been converted forcibly to the Orthodox faith in the nineteenth century (such continuity in the practice of Russification!); but the peasants retained their loyalty to the Catholic faith. Therefore, when in 1905 the Russian government permitted conversions to Catholicism, but not to the Greek rite, the peasants of the Chelm region went over *en masse* to the Roman Catholic church and thus *became Poles*, even though they spoke a different language.

5. "What was, for example, the Ruthenian nation? It was millions of rural proletarians, economically and culturally oppressed for centuries, without even the rudiments of a class formation, everywhere the most uniform and most extensive indigence, without its own culture, removed from any culture whatsoever. What did the national idea mean to them, what could it mean? They knew that there were Poles, that the nobleman who bled the life from them was a Pole. They saw the Jewish tavern-keeper, and in Vienna, they knew, lived the good and just emperor, whose soldiers they were and who would gladly help them if he only knew of their need. In relation to all this, they were Ruthenians. Surely they were Ruthenians, and it was nonsensical for the Poles to advance the proposition—credulously repeated by Germans taken up with the romanticism of Poland—that the Ruthenians were the invention of the Austrian regime! But one understands that no *Ruthenian question* really existed in Austria before 1848." Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), p. 486.
6. See his *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1924), pp. 230, 262–63.
7. See Engels' first pronouncement on this "butchery" in his article "The Beginning of the End in Austria": "Although Austria was still able to disperse the Piedmontese, Neapolitan and Romagnese rebels with cannon fire in 1823 and 1831, it was forced to set in motion a still undeveloped revolutionary element—the peasantry—in 1846 in Galicia." In Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 6:532.
8. The noble insurgents believed that to win the peasants as allies it would be enough to go before them on the day of the revolt and solemnly announce the abolition of feudal duties. They forgot that the peasantry was imbued with hatred, built up over centuries, for the nobility and that, especially since Maria Theresa and Joseph II had granted the right to submit grievances against and to sue their landlords, the peasantry had all too frequently learned of cases of fraud, forgery of documents and similar practices of the

nobility. Only persistent and self-sacrificing educational work, only generous and skilful propaganda could, perhaps, have broken through the wall of hatred and mistrust between the peasant masses and democratic nobles; only this might have brought these hostile elements closer together. This was even attempted. But what could be achieved by propaganda that sought to convince the peasants that the *Austrian government* and not the landed nobility was to blame for their misery, that the regime hindered the landlords from renouncing oppression and freeing the peasants? (And it was just in this spirit, with very few exceptions, that the whole propaganda literature of the democrats' secret societies was composed.) So it turned out that this literature, which in any case the illiterate peasants could not read, merely *remained in the noble circles* alone. Thus the nobles used proclamations, songs composed in the "folk style" and other propaganda to convince *each other* of the necessity of a "peasant revolution"! The author of this study has worked through the huge file, composed of two hundred fascicles, of the government archives relating to the activities of the Polish secret societies in Galicia, 1835-47; in the whole file he could find only *three or four* cases in which genuine propaganda among the peasants was reported.)

9. We are using this expression in the sense Franz Mehring uses it in his *Lessing-Legende*: "Thus arose the Lessing cult of the bourgeoisie, and out of it—the Lessing legend. This is not to say that the legend was based on an intentional and planned falsification. Historical legends never arise in that manner; at least in so far as they develop a certain power and tenacity, they are always only the ideological superstructure of an economic-political development." *Die Lessing-Legende* (Frankfurt a. M.-Berlin-Vienna, 1972), p. 36.
10. In his commentary on the articles about Poland in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Mehring says that if it is true that Metternich's system "kept afloat by playing off individual nations against each other and, within individual nations, individual classes," it is "nonetheless foolish to blame Metternich that, when the Polish nobility in 1846 summoned its subjects to fight for national independence, the peasants fell upon the noblemen themselves with a savage fury, burned their manors and shed rivers of their blood. Metternich was much too timid not to take fright himself from such raging flames. One or another subordinate tool of the Habsburg despotism might have fanned the fire, but the opinion of the Polish Junkers—that the peasants were incited against them only through deliberate instigation—is of the same calibre as the opinion that the fight on the barricades in Berlin on 18 March was instigated by a handful of Frenchmen, Jews and Poles or that German social democracy was invented by the Prussian police to stem the otherwise indomitable Progressive Party on its road to victory." *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:36-37.

What Mehring says is on the whole quite true. We must add, however, that so far no historian has yet been able to come up with a bit of evidence corroborating the nobles' version of what happened in 1846, even though since 1918 we have been allowed to draw on the inestimable wealth of documents in the Austrian state archives. One can find, to be sure, statements by subaltern Galician officials, who—*after* the massacre—proposed to use the peasants in this way. In fact, the author of this study has published (in a review of Michał Janik, *Zesłanie Jakóba Szeli na Bukowinę*, in

Roczniki Dziejów Społecznych i Gospodarczych 4 [1935]: 443–44) a relevant memorandum he found in Vienna's Kriegsarchiv; writing just a few weeks after the Galician events, Metternich, the author of the memorandum, does not at all display the timidity that Mehring ascribes to him—he tries to vindicate his policy of tolerating the massacre by arguing that “when a fire breaks out, [I do not] think of anything else but water. Once the hoses are in action, I leave the firemen to do their work. . . .” But even this memorandum only proves what we already knew: that the Austrian regime, far from deliberately taking the role of *advocatus diaboli* in the events of 1846, was really rather surprised by what happened, and just for that reason it eagerly accepted the unexpected assistance of the peasants.

11. Ethnically, Austrian Galicia was made up of two parts: Polish Western Galicia and Ukrainian Eastern Galicia. The San River formed the ethnic boundary line. (This ethnic boundary corresponded, on the whole, to the so-called Curzon Line.)
12. Characteristically, whenever the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) movement grew more powerful, it was always explained away as the “invention” of some “foreign power.” In pre-revolutionary Russia, for example, the Ukrainian nationality was all too readily dismissed as an “invention,” be it of Bismarck, or of the “German General Staff,” or even of the Vatican.
13. *Krieg und Demokratie* (Berlin, 1932), p. 410.
14. *Geschichte Oesterreichs: Eine Anleitung zum Studium der österreichischen Geschichte und Politik*, 2nd, revised ed., Sammlung von Unterrichtsleitungen herausgegebenen von der Zentralstelle für das Bildungswesen der deutschen Sozialdemokratie in Oesterreich, 2 (Vienna, 1913), p. 18.
15. M.A. Bakunin, *Sobranie sochinenii i pisem 1828–1876*, ed. Iu.M. Steklov, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1934–35).
16. “The Magyar Struggle,” in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 216.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
18. The West Galician massacre was accompanied by a general refusal to perform compulsory labour, and sporadically the peasants started to *divide the lords' estates among themselves*; the peasant disturbances lasted into April and May 1846, when military detachments helped quell the unrest.
19. See, for example, Kasper Cięglewicz's anti-Ruthenian brochure, *Rzecz czerwono-ruska 1848 roku* [Lviv, 1848].
20. This is what we read in a report from Vienna: “In Galicia a new nation has been discovered—the nation of the *Hukuls*. The nation is composed of bandits like the *serežani* or better: Saracens[!]. They wear red mantles, pistols, daggers, yard-long knives, etc., just as the latter do. The youthful emperor-by-martial-law [Francis Joseph] with his inevitable calf's eyes has sent them a bandit general to lead them against the Magyars. The so-called Ruthenians are not numerous enough, since in reality they are *only Jews and German officials* [sic]. The *Hukuls*, however, are *pure 1846ers*.” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 196, 16 January 1849, p. 2, col. 3.

The enigmatic “Hukuls” spoken of here are actually Hutsuls, the Ruthenian mountain people of the eastern Carpathians, a romantic and

thoroughly peace-loving folk made up of herdsmen and woodcutters. Even a hundred years ago, as we know from ethnological descriptions, the Hutsuls wore no daggers and no "yard-long knives," and they had nothing at all to do with the massacre of 1846, which they scarcely knew anything about. Already a century ago journalists would occasionally let loose with an excess of fantasy!

Incidentally, we meet these same unfortunate "Hukuls" in an article by Engels (12 March 1849), "Vienna and Frankfurt": "And once again there are Imperial Commissioners in Austria, in Olomouc, while there, just as in Berlin, the Reichstag is being dispersed and a constitution 'by the grace of God' imposed on the people by means of Croats, *serežani*, Hukuls, etc." *Collected Works*, 9:48. The same article in translation is in the first Russian edition of Marx and Engels' works, *Sochineniia*, 31 vols. (Moscow, 1928-48), 7:302; it retains the "Hukuls."

21. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 42, 12 July 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
22. *Ibid.*, no. 132, 2 November 1848, p. 1, cols. 2-3.
23. *Ibid.*, no. 147, 19 November 1848, p. 3, col. 3.
24. *Ibid.*, no. 128, p. 3, col. 3.
25. Hence it was always the Ruthenian, but never the Polish, peasants of Galicia that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* designated as counter-revolutionary. Thus, on 4 February 1849, it wrote about the "Croatian, Ruthenian and Wallachian troops that [by storming Vienna] violated German territory and set fire to the first city of Germany." *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 213, p. 1, col. 2. And on 19 May of the same year, it blamed the defeat of the revolution in Austria "on the imperial army in Italy, on the national desires of the Czechs, Croats and Serbs, and on the stubborn narrow-mindedness of the *Ruthenian peasants*." Engels, "[Hungary]," *Collected Works*, 9:456. For a similar statement, see "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 239.
26. See above, note 7.
27. The Austrian regime, naturally, knew only too well where the Galician nobility was most vulnerable. Consequently, it always played them the same cynical tune, with which Prussian King Frederick William IV also sought to intimidate the members of the Poznań Polish deputation as early as 24 March 1848. "They might notice," was the tenor of his reply to the deputies, "that instead of a sword they take a reed into their hands—a transparent allusion to the gratitude of the 'peasant tenants' to the regime." "Only the Prussian officials," he continued, "protected the Polish landlords in 1846 from outbursts similar to those that occurred in Galicia." To this, certainly, the Polish deputies could only reply that "the *Ruthenian* peasants in Galicia were instigated against the Polish noblemen by the Machiavellianism of the Austrian government." Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass*, 3:19-20. One can easily imagine how this affected the deputies' mood, and how little they could consider appealing precisely to their "peasant tenants" against Prussian brutality!
28. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 15, 15 June 1848, p. 3, col. 1.
29. A reference to the survey of the land to establish the so-called stable land-tax cadaster.
30. See above, note 20.

31. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 43, 13 July 1848, p. 4, col. 1.
32. The Ministry answered that the Tarnów National Council "had nothing to complain about; on the contrary, it should feel obliged to express only thanks for the protection that the government affords it." Ibid., no. 60, 30 July 1848, p. 4, col. 3.
33. Ibid., no. 62, 1 August 1848, p. 4, col. 1.
34. Governor of Galicia; he was, however, installed only a year *after* the Galician massacre took place.
35. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 272, 14 April 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
36. Ibid., no. 141, 12 November 1848 (first edition), p. 3, col. 3.
37. Ibid., no. 291, 6 May 1849 (first edition), p. 3, col. 2.
38. See above, pp. 61–62.
39. Apropos: almost all bourgeois Polish historians of 1848 repeat the nonsensical propaganda, put in circulation by the democrats of that time, that for his "services" to the monarchy Szela had been decorated with a gold medal by Emperor Ferdinand. Unfortunately, one finds this nonsense even in Steklov (Bakunin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4:410) who, to be consistent, also turns Szela into a Ruthenian. Actually, because Szela opposed the resumption of corvée labour, he was arrested in April 1848 and banished to the village of Solca in Bukovina. See Michał Janik, *Zesłanie Jakóba Szeli na Bukowinę* (Cracow, 1934).
40. That is, the nobility and officials gave him this derisory epithet.
41. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 72, 11 August 1848, p. 3, col. 3, p. 4, col. 1.
42. Lemberger Gubernialakten, Untertanssachen, 1844, no. 53,636: "Aufstand der Unterthanen und Anwendung der Militär-Assistenz im Russisch-Kimpolunger Okol." See also Ivan Franko, "Lukian Kobylitsia," *Tvory*, 20 vols. (Kiev, 1950–56), 19:716–52.
43. Lemberger Gb.-Akten, no. 52,044 ex 1846.
44. See above, p. 32.
45. The exclusive monopoly over the production and sale of alcoholic beverages.—*Trans.*
46. "Many anecdotes are currently going around about these politic members of the Reichstag. According to one anecdote, twenty peasant deputies are supposed to have ordered two rooms in a hotel, and, when the clerk explained that there was not enough room for so many beds, they ordered plain *straw*—they would have enough room all right. Others, because the Polish regiment Nassau is stationed here, have lodged themselves in the barracks with their countrymen." *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 37, 7 July 1848, p. 3, col. 1. See also Hans Kudlich, *Rückblicke und Erinnerungen*, 3 vols. (Vienna, 1873), 2:79, where a similar anecdote is recounted.
47. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 35, 5 July 1848, p. 2, col. 2.
48. See above, pp. 61–62.
49. In the eyes of the nobility, every peasant was a "convict"!
50. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 43, 13 July 1848, p. 4, col. 1. In reality, instances of the peasantry's genuine nonparticipation in the elections were quite rare. Very often their "electoral abstinence" amounted to this: the peasant electors would gather and pick one from their midst to serve as a deputy, but—because of a general mistrust of signing documents—they

would not want to affix their signatures to the electoral protocol. In such cases the election was declared invalid, the eighty or more peasants went home, and a new election was conducted. The half dozen or so noble electors would remain at the election site to participate in the new election, which the authorities, as a rule, sanctioned. [But cf. Roman Rosdolsky, *Die Bauernabgeordneten im konstituierenden österreichischen Reichstag 1848–1849* (Vienna, 1976), p. 70.—*Trans.*]

51. After his resignation from the post of Governor of Galicia, Stadion was the leader of the "right" in the Viennese Reichstag.
52. In reality, there were only thirty-nine. (The "left" annulled the mandates of three Galician peasant deputies.)
53. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 82, 22 August 1848, p. 4, col. 1.
54. A reference to the so-called tavern-Jews. Almost every Galician landowner of that time had a Jewish tavern keeper. The tavern keeper was permitted to force on the peasants a certain quantity of spirits monthly or annually and he alone was allowed to trade in the peasants' produce; the tavern keeper, therefore, was the most suitable "middleman" between the landlords and their subjects.
55. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 83, 23 August 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
56. Naturally, there were also sincere *democrats* and *revolutionaries* among the "frock Poles." But even they were unable to rise above their own class standpoint. Thus, for example, the leader of the Polish "left" in the Reichstag, Count Leszek Borkowski, explained his stand on the question of servitudes as follows: "The Galician peasant has few requirements, and working on his own land suffices to meet these. Now corvée labour and other duties have been abolished, and should the privilege to use the forests and pastures... remain, what then will make the peasant work [on manorial estates—*trans.*]? Without doing this he will have all his needs satisfied. The greater part of the nobles' estates will lie fallow, while the grain will perish in the field... I know of only one way to remedy this evil: to introduce the same moral compulsion that is at work in the cities—*need*. In place of the abolished servile relations it would be desirable to have a situation in which the former subjects and the former landlords need one another. Only then can labour and capital go hand in hand for the greatest benefit of all." (Ergo: the peasants have to be robbed of their rights to firewood and pasturage.) *Verhandlungen des österreichischen Reichstages nach der stenographischen Aufnahme*, vol. I (Vienna, [1848]), p. 644.
57. For example, the Polish peasant deputy Jan Sztorc wrote from Vienna to his constituents in the Tarnów district (4 October 1848): "My dear brothers! In response to your letter I must answer you that you owe no one any services or rent, because you are not slaves, but a free, sovereign people... Plow and cultivate the winter grain on my responsibility, and woe to him who gives you trouble. Should perhaps the landlord or anyone else want to take away your land, then band together and knock him down like a dog. You should fear no one, neither the *mandatarius*, nor the district commissioner or district chief, because they are all men just like you, to whom you can speak the truth without mincing words. No one may lay you out on a bench [for a beating] or lock you up as previously, for you are free people. Your friend and people's representative, Joh. Storc." Naturally, Sztorc was immediately denounced by the Polish "National Committee" in

Tarnów as a dangerous "peasant agitator." Lemberger Gubernialarchiv, "Besondere Präsidialakten des Landes-Gouverneurs V. Zaleski," 1848.

58. "I... have referred to the peasant movement that started in eastern France in 1788.... In studying this movement I found clear indications that the rebellious peasants were very often convinced that the king had ordered them to seize the lords' manors.... There were even [falsified] 'charters' and traces of a pretender. Two years later, however, none of this prevented these same peasants of eastern France from standing by their deputies who voted for the execution of the king and for the republic." From a speech by Petr Kropotkin at a gathering of Russian émigrés in Geneva; reported in G. Plekhanov, "G-zha Breshkovskaia i chigirinskoe delo," *Iskra*, no. 38, 15 April 1903, p. 3.
59. Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 43.
60. Ibid.
61. The lone exception is the article, written perhaps by Engels, "The Peasantry in Lower Austria." The author quotes here a sentence from the *Allgemeine Österreichische Zeitung*: "The landlords' law courts, which have been so intimidated since the March days and have forfeited their authority, can do nothing else but submit [to the peasants]." The author adds the following gloss: "That they submit—this is the best thing they can do; that they *must* submit—this deeply pains the romantic. Nonetheless, this 'lawless' situation, which our man grieves over, is a thousand times better than the former 'lawful' situation, in which the peasant, according to the noble foundations of feudalism, was worked harder than cattle thanks to compulsory labour, tithes and so on." "Wien, 6 August," *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 73, 12 August 1848, p. 3, col. 1. See also no. 52, which reports on the "agitation among the peasants in Moravia" against the "high bailiffs—these vampires of the peasants."
62. See above, p. 60.
63. See also the following passage from Engels' article, "The *Kölnische Zeitung* on the Magyar Struggle": "The great Schwanbeck, of course, is even less obliged to know that Hungary is the only country [!?] in which since the March revolution feudal burdens on the peasants have legally and in fact totally ceased to exist." And a second passage: "Let us suppose that the March revolution in Hungary was purely a revolution of the nobility. Does that give the Austrian 'Gesamt-Monarchie' the right to oppress the Hungarian nobility, and thereby [?] also the Hungarian peasants, in the way it oppressed the Galician nobility and, through the latter [Engels' emphasis], the Galician peasants as well?" *Collected Works*, 8:399.

Engels was, of course, simply in error when he referred to Hungary as "the only country" in the monarchy without feudal duties, because in all of Austria, feudal duties had factually ended in March 1848 and, legally, with the decision of the Reichstag in September of that year. But even worse is his strange reproach that the "Gesamtmonarchie" oppressed the nobles and "through the latter" the peasants! This is reminiscent of the argument used by the Galician and the entire Austrian aristocracy when they haggled with the absolute monarchy over taxation: If *you*—the nobility said to the government—demand from *us* higher taxes, then we must press our peasants harder; if we oppress them, therefore, it is *on account of you*; it follows,

hence, that *you* are the real oppressor of the peasants. Another variation of the same tune: When you burden us with village administration and judicial authority, you burden us with the "odium" of oppressing the peasants; it is this odium, therefore, that constitutes the essence of the relations of servitude, etc.

64. In his article, "The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna" (6 November 1848), Marx wrote: "The German [why just "the German"?] country people of Austria are for their part as yet unpacified. Their voice will penetrate shrilly through the caterwauling [!] of the Austrian nationalities." *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 175.
65. See above, pp. 63–64.
66. This refers to the law concerning the redemption of feudal duties passed by the Reichstag and implemented by the absolutist system.
67. Engels' emphasis.
68. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 275, 18 April 1849, p. 3, col. 2. See also *ibid.*, no. 294, 10 May 1849 (supplement), p. 2, col. 3: "In Bukovina the peasant agitator Kobylitsia is arousing ever greater alarm in the government."
69. Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, p. 866. The "arming" of the Hutsuls should, of course, be taken with a grain of salt.
70. Lemberger Gub.-Archiv, Präsidialia, no. 11,223 ex 1851.
71. The nobility in Bukovina was Romanian.
72. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 280, 24 April 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
73. The notice was probably written by Engels.
74. In no. 280 there were only two thousand.
75. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 283, 27 April 1849 (supplement), p. 1, col. 2.
76. At that time, as the documentary evidence shows, such panicky behavior was a common phenomenon, because the peasants were constantly in fear of some sort of mysterious "Poles" (noble insurgents).
77. See also Engels' article on the course of the Hungarian war (dated 19 March 1849): "In short: that the peasants *have* rebelled [in Hungary] is a fact, and that the Austrians will pacify them is a *futurity*." "Military Reports from Hungary," *Collected Works*, 9:117.
78. This is incorrect; in addition to Ukrainians, Belorussians and Lithuanians also inhabited this area.
79. Another reference to the Polish nobility's legend about the events in Galicia in 1846. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 70.
80. The present study is the first to treat Engels' views on the Ukrainian (Ruthenian) question. As odd as this may seem, Mehring in 1903, in his long chapter on the Polish question (*Aus dem literarischen Nachlass*, 3:18–44), which examines Engels' series of articles, "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," *does not have a single word to say about Engels' errors on the Ukrainian question*; this is all the more peculiar when we consider that Mehring took the trouble to correct some altogether trifling historical blunders that Engels let slip into his writings. (He contradicts, for example, the statement that "the freedom of commerce among the three partitions of Poland," which the Congress of Vienna had approved, "never came into being." *Ibid.*, pp. 25–26.) The riddle of why Mehring ignored the

Ukrainian question is easy to solve: Mehring's main informant on Polish history was Rosa Luxemburg, who as is well known, held extremely *doctrinaire* views precisely on the national question. Here is what she wrote after the victory of the October revolution in Russia:

"On all sides nations and *would-be-nations* are announcing their right to form a state. *Rotted corpses* rise from centuries-old graves, filled with new vitality, and '*nonhistoric*' peoples, who have never yet formed an independent state [as though this factor were decisive!], feel a powerful urge to establish a state." And first place among these "rotted corpses" belongs to the Ukrainians, whose national movement strikes her as "*a nonentity, a soap-bubble, the tomfoolery of some dozen professors and lawyers*," "because the Ukraine [supposedly] never formed a nation or a state." Felix Weil, "Rosa Luxemburg über die russische Revolution," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* 13 (1928): 290, 293, 295.

Exactly in the spirit and even the style of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1849! No wonder, then, that Rosa Luxemburg recommended the Russian Bolsheviks (who, in spite of the conciliatory policy of Lenin and Trotsky, were to engage in a costly, three-year civil war on account of the Ukrainian question) to follow a suicidal policy: "to nip separatist tendencies in the bud with an iron hand." *Ibid.*, p. 290. Of course, Luxemburg's grotesquely doctrinaire position had nothing to do with "Polish nationalism," as some of her Ukrainian critics have contended. It shows us, however, that political errors, too, have *their own fatal consistency*, which even great thinkers are unable to avoid. But here we are touching upon a question that we will deal with only later in this study.

4. Other Nonhistoric Peoples

In concluding this part of our study, a few words are yet in order about the other peoples of Austria whom the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* considered "nonhistoric": the Slovaks, Romanians and Transylvanian Saxons.

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* contained only a few notices (mainly from Engels' pen) about the Slovaks. In his article, "The Magyar Struggle" (January 1849), Engels emphasizes the political *indifference* of the Slovak peasantry:

The area exclusively inhabited by Magyars does not even comprise a third of Hungary and Transylvania taken together. From Bratislava onwards, to the north of the Danube and the Tisza, up to the crest of the Carpathians, there live several million Slovaks and a number of Ruthenians.¹ In the south, between the Save, the Danube and the Drave, there live Croats and Slavonians; further east, along the Danube, there is a Serbian colony of over half a million. These two Slav belts are joined together by the Wallachians and Saxons of Transylvania.

The Magyars are therefore surrounded on three sides by *natural enemies*.

But not all these peoples were equally dangerous for the Hungarians. The Romanians, Saxons, Serbs and Croats had risen up against them "*en masse*"; the Slovaks, however, "would be dangerous opponents, in view of the terrain, which is perfect for partisan warfare, if they were less lethargic in character."²

Engels' remark on the whole corresponded to the actual situation. In spite of the Slovak peasants' hostility to the Hungarian nobility, it was impossible to provoke them to revolt against the Hungarians. For this reason, the anti-Hungarian military action undertaken by the Slovak leaders Jozef Miloslav Hurban,³ L'udovít Štúr and others in the summer of 1849 was doomed to failure. Contributing in no small way to the pitiable

outcome of this action were the *different religions* of the Catholic peasantry and the partly Protestant intelligentsia, the bearer of the Slovak national idea. (Seven years later, Engels was to recall this disparity of religion; in a letter to Marx, 7 March 1856, he erroneously identified Slovak Protestantism as the crucial factor that "contributed very significantly to the Slovaks' inactivity against the Hungarians" in 1848-49.)⁴

More remarks on the Slovaks can be found in four of Engels' articles dealing with the war in Hungary (4 and 19 March, 20 and 28 April 1849). Here, however, under the obvious influence of Hungarian propaganda, the Slovaks were now depicted as *pro-Hungarian*.

"In spite of all royal-imperial efforts," we read in the first article, "the Slovaks are nonetheless impervious to any national fanaticism. They alone of all the Slavic peoples of Hungary have decidedly pro-Magyar sympathies."⁵ "Messrs. Štúr and Hurban," says the second article, "are so much the Slovaks' 'trusted representatives' that several times already these same Slovaks have thrown them out over the Jablunka pass into Moravia!"⁶ On 20 April Engels writes: "The *Constitutionelle Blatt aus Böhmen* carried a long article yesterday 'from Slovakia'. . . . In every line one sees the grief over the way the Slovaks cannot at all be goaded into pan-Slavic hatred for the Magyars, grief that the Slovak peasants adhere, in the main, to the party that assures their definitive liberation from feudal duties."⁷ (In Engels' opinion, this party was the Hungarian government.) And finally, in the article from 28 April one finds: "The Slovak peasants, who are grateful to Kossuth for their liberation from feudal duties, . . . are enthusiastic about the Magyars [sic] and support them everywhere with information, fire signals, etc."⁸

This view, to be sure, corresponded as little to the truth as the report of the paper's Galician correspondent, cited in the previous chapter, that the Ruthenian peasants "desire solidarity from now on with the Poles." The view, in fact, corresponded only to the optimistic self-deception of the Hungarian insurgents.

The Romanians are mentioned in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* as rarely as the Slovaks. Here, however, we must distinguish between the Romanians who lived in Austria (chiefly in Transylvania) and those who lived in the so-called Danubian Principalities. The former in 1848-49 stood in opposition to the *Hungarians*, the latter—to the *Russians*. Therefore, of course, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* considered the Transylvanian Romanians to be allies of reaction, while the Romanians of the Danubian Principalities (i.e., in reality, the Romanian nobility of the Danubian Principalities) were greeted as allies.⁹ But since the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* considered a people's counter-revolutionary behaviour to be proof of its incapacity to exist, the one and the same people—the Romanians—figured in the paper's columns, depending on habitat, now as a "long-decayed nation, entirely lacking in active historical forces,"¹⁰ and then as a nationality whose "freedom and independence" had to be defended.¹¹

In conclusion we should also mention the Saxons of Transylvania, who—in the eyes of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*—comprised another “long-decayed nation.”¹² Moreover, they (like the Hungarian Jews) were reproached with wanting to constitute an “exception” by “retaining an absurd nationality in the middle of a foreign country.”¹³ (Anyone who insists on considering Engels and Marx “German nationalists” will find it difficult to explain their opinion on the Transylvanian Saxons.)

Notes

1. Carpatho-Ukrainians.
2. “The Magyar Struggle,” in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 223.
3. See above, p. 34.
4. On 5 March 1856, Marx wrote to Engels: “Apropos the Reformation. Austria had from the very first laid the basis for the Slavic danger, when all the Slavic peoples, except for the Russians, were inclined towards the Reformation. With the Reformation came the translation of the Bible into all Slavic folk dialects and therefore, indeed, the awakening of nationality as well as a close alliance with the Protestant German north. If Austria had not suppressed this movement, the foundations for the predominance of the German spirit would have been built as well as many ramparts against Greek Catholic [here: Orthodox—*trans.*] Russia. Austria has dragged the Germans through all sorts of mire and has prepared the way for the Russians in Germany as well as in the East.” Engels expressed his agreement with this train of thought in his answer of 7 March. He added: “Fortunately, a stronger Protestantism was preserved in Slovakia, . . . and in Bohemia every serious national movement, except for the proletarian movement, will also maintain a strong admixture of Hussite reminiscence so that the specifically national is thus weakened.” Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957–68), 29:25, 30–31.
5. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 237, 4 March 1849, p. 1, col. 2.
6. *Köln, “Die ungarischen Kriegsnachrichten,” *ibid.*, no. 249, 20 March 1849, p. 2, col. 2.
7. “Ungarn*,” *ibid.*, no. 277, 20 April 1849, p. 3, col. 2.
8. “Ungarn*,” *ibid.*, no. 284, 28 April 1849, p. 3, col. 3.
9. See Engels’ articles, “*Bukarest,” *ibid.*, 28 July 1848, and “The *Frankfurter Oberpostamts-Zeitung* and the Viennese Revolution,” in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 7:472–73. Also: “Donaufürstentümer,” *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 240, 8 March 1849, p. 4, col. 1.
10. “The Magyar Struggle,” p. 223.
11. See Engels’ articles cited in note 9.
12. “The Magyar Struggle,” p. 223.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 219.

Part II

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s Theory of Nationality

5. Nations: Revolutionary and Counter-Revolutionary

In the chapter on the Czechs it was suggested that the tasteless pronouncements of Müller-Telling and other correspondents of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the Czechs, Croats, Ukrainians and other East European nationalities derived *partly* from the paper's overall stand on the nationality question, so that in this regard the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* "deserved its Tellerings." We now want to see to what extent the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*'s principal articles on the Austrian nationality problem validate this accusation and also what theoretical conceptions could lead to such errors.

We are concerned here with two of Engels' articles that have already been frequently cited: "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism."

In the latter article we read:

The so-called democratic pan-Slavists were in a difficult dilemma: either abandonment of the revolution and at least partial salvation of their nationality by the Austrian monarchy, or abandonment of their nationality and salvation of the revolution by the collapse of that monarchy. At that time the fate of revolution in Eastern Europe depended on the attitude of the Czechs and the South Slavs; we shall not forget that at the decisive moment they betrayed the revolution to St. Petersburg and Olomouc for the sake of their petty nationalist aspirations!... And one day we shall *take a bloody revenge on the Slavs* for this cowardly and base betrayal of the revolution.... [The only exception was the Poles:] *Because the liberation of Poland is inseparable from the revolution, because Pole and revolutionary have become identical words, the Poles can be as certain of the sympathy of the whole of Europe and the restoration of their nationality' as the Czechs,*

the Croats and the Russians can be certain of the hatred of the whole of Europe and the bloodiest revolutionary war of the whole West against them....

We reply to the sentimental phrases about brotherhood which are offered to us... in the name of the most counter-revolutionary nations in Europe² that *hatred of the Russians* was, and still is, the first revolutionary passion of the Germans; that since the revolution a *hatred of the Czechs and the Croats* has been added to this, and that, in common with the Poles and Magyars, we can only secure the revolution against these Slav peoples by the most decisive acts of terrorism....

[Therefore:] We shall fight "an implacable life-and-death struggle"³ with Slavdom, which has betrayed the revolution; *a war of annihilation and ruthless terrorism*, not in the interests of Germany but in the interests of the revolution!⁴

And Engels concludes his article, "The Magyar Struggle," with these provocative and harsh propositions:

But at the first victorious uprising of the French proletariat,⁵... the Austrian Germans and the Magyars will gain their freedom and *take a bloody revenge on the Slav barbarians*. The general war which will then break out will scatter this Slav Sonderbund, and *annihilate all these small pig-headed nations even to their very names*.

The next world war will not only cause reactionary classes and dynasties to *disappear from the face of the earth*, but also *entire reactionary peoples*. And that too is an advance.⁶

One must surely (especially after the horrifying experiences of our own time) agree with Karl Kautsky that these statements of Engels' can only be read "with extreme amazement" and that they "in many ways indicate not only a completely perverse understanding of the actual situation, but also—and more seriously—an abandonment of the principles on which rest not only internationalist socialism but also—and especially—Marxist thought."⁷ But, as a Russian proverb says: "You can't leave out one word from a song"; those statements demand explanation. Certainly one must not interpret them as Georg Adler, the superficial critic of Marx, did in his time,⁸ nor as Kautsky did again fifty years later;⁹ in their interpretation, Engels advocates nothing less here than the *physical extermination* of the Slavic peoples, the Poles excepted. (It was first our own barbarous age that expressed such inhumanities openly and put them into practice!) What Engels really wished to make "disappear from the face of the earth" were the Slavic *national movements*, the political parties of the Czechs, Croats, etc., and their leadership; it was against these that a "ruthless terrorism" had to be applied. The peoples themselves, the masses of their population, would be subjected by the victorious "revolutionary nations" to a (not altogether peaceful) Germanization, Magyarization and Polonization. Even so, of course, it was bad enough. It appears now that the sallies of Müller-Telling and other correspondents should not be charged to their own account alone, but also to the ideological viewpoint of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* itself. The correspondents' contributions were

just concrete, practical expressions of the "hatred of Slavs" that was at that time elevated to a political principle. To be sure, the "hatred of Czechs and Croats," which Engels and Marx proclaimed at a very critical moment for the last remaining centre of revolution in Europe, the Hungarian struggle for independence, was a hatred on the part of revolutionaries for the national movements that allied themselves with and supported the reaction in Austria. To be sure too, they both believed, on the basis of the general European situation (the ascendancy of Russia) and on the basis of a very one-sided interpretation of Central European history, that the Slavs of Austria had to be considered "necessary" and permanent enemies of every revolution and all progress. All this, however, only explains the motives and the exceptional vehemence of their hatred of Slavs, but it in no way nullifies the fact that they made *entire peoples* the object of this hatred and proclaimed a "war of annihilation" against them.¹⁰

The behaviour of the Russian Bolsheviks seventy years later was altogether different. Under Lenin and Trotsky they did not call for a war among *peoples*, but for a war among *classes*; and for this reason they inscribed on their banner the right of self-determination for every nation, even the smallest. The Russian Bolsheviks too had to fight numerous border states in the civil war of 1918–21. These border states were chiefly "bulwarks" and "outposts" of foreign capital, and therefore the Bolsheviks had to advance against them militarily.¹¹ But the Bolsheviks never felt they had to brand the border *peoples* themselves as "by nature reactionary" or threaten them with a "war of annihilation."¹²

How can one explain this striking contrast between the behaviour of the German revolutionaries in 1848 and the Russian revolutionaries in 1917?¹³ Clearly, this came about because the Bolsheviks, for good reasons, could count on the assistance of the proletariat and peasantry of the border regions, while the German revolutionaries of 1848 (rightly or wrongly) believed they faced an impenetrable wall of reaction in the East of Europe.

Already on the eve of the March revolution Engels wrote: "A German revolution is far more serious than a Neapolitan revolution [January-February 1848]. In Naples there is a confrontation only between Austria and England;¹⁴ in a German revolution *the whole of the East and the whole of the West will confront each other.*"¹⁵

By the whole of the East is meant the gigantic tsardom of Russia, whose power under Nicholas I had just reached its apogee and at whose borders the revolution of 1848 had to come to a halt. The Russian tsar was the natural leader of the counter-revolution, the *de facto* head of the reactionary regimes of Central Europe; and he could be this, because his own empire (in spite of the constant skirmishes between the persecuted peasant-slaves and the landowners) was yet far from a genuine revolution. Therefore the tsardom constituted a mortal threat to every revolutionary development and to all progress in Europe, but especially in Prussia, which (as Bismarck admitted) figured in all European power constellations from 1831 to 1850 as a Russian vassal state. And since Russia—if only to

protect its share of the spoils from the plunder of Poland—could tolerate no revolution on its borders, then all European revolutionaries had to consider a *war against Russia*, in which the West and East of Europe would oppose one another, the surest—indeed, the only—foreign policy that could preserve the revolution.

On 11 July 1848 Engels wrote: "Only a war against Russia would be a war of *revolutionary Germany*, a war by which she could cleanse herself of her past sins, could take courage, defeat her own autocrats, spread civilization by the sacrifice of her own sons as becomes a people that is shaking off the chains of long, indolent slavery and make herself free within her borders by bringing liberation to those outside."¹⁶

In this situation, i.e., from the standpoint of tsarism's threat, it was certainly correct to counterpose "the whole of the West" to the "the whole of the East," democracy and civilization to despotism and barbarism, and therefore also to speak of an "alliance of revolutionary peoples against counter-revolutionary ones" (in so far as the latter referred to the tsarist empire). But this conception was only correct because in the *Russian empire* itself no revolution had taken place nor even could take place as long as 800,000 obedient muzhiks in uniform stood at the command of the Russian tsar. *Up to this point* we must concur with the foreign policy of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

But what about the Slavic peoples of *Austria*, the scene of a revolution marked, in its first few months, by success, with reaction and absolutism exhausted and toppled? Did the *Austrian Slavs* also have to be regarded as primordially reactionary peoples and did they therefore have to be relegated to the "East"? In any case, Engels did not seem to be of this opinion in January 1848, when he wrote about the "freedom for the Slavs" to which the Germans were supposed to "clear away the obstacles,"¹⁷ nor in August of the same year, when—in connection with the expected war against Russia—he came out in favour of "the freedom of . . . Bohemia."¹⁸ Only after the Slavic national parties really went over to the counter-revolutionary camp, which they did after the fall of Vienna, did he radically alter his viewpoint, and only then did he advance the slogan of an alliance of revolutionary peoples against counter-revolutionary peoples.¹⁹

But there is the question, first, whether such a slogan could really do any good in the given circumstances, with the revolution already decisively defeated; and second, whether this slogan corresponded in general to an objective necessity and was not, rather, a mere product of the understandable embitterment over the conduct of "the revolution's traitors, Slavdom"? At first glance the question seems superfluous, since the Slavic parties now stood on the other side of the barricades²⁰ and hence had to be fought without quarter. But was "Slavdom's" apostasy *inevitable*,²¹ and could it never be otherwise, *even in the future*? Our question, then, is: Was the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* nationality policy, which in *Austria* in 1849 counterposed entire "reactionary peoples" to "revolutionary peoples" and on this constructed its whole strategy, justified by the real situation of the *Austrian* revolution? Were, really, the Slavic peoples of *Austria* so

hopelessly backward economically, socially and culturally that they could only act as *counter-revolutionaries* in 1848–49? Or, to get to the essence: Did the *peasant masses* of these peoples have to remain hostile to the revolution no matter what?

It is enough to pose this question to answer it in the *negative*. For one thing, the Slavic peoples of Austria then stood at the most varied levels of development (one has only to compare the Czechs with the Croats to see this), so that one should not try to measure them all with the same yardstick; and secondly, the peasantry of even the most backward of these peoples were, for the most part, engaged in a more or less open revolt against feudalism²²—just as the French peasants had been on the eve of 1789. And if in spite of this the peasantry did not become allies of the revolution, but rather of the reaction,²³ this was less the result of their backwardness than the result of the *class limitations of the German-Austrian bourgeoisie and its noble—Hungarian and Polish—confederates*. In view of this, then, the Slavic peoples of Austria in 1848–49 could hardly be designated hopeless and “by nature” counter-revolutionary.

But here another question comes into play—the question of *pan-Slavism*. Were not the Austrian Slavs of that era “necessarily” pan-Slavic? Did they not have to become, *under all circumstances*, the *outposts* of tsarism in Europe (and this, indeed, because of nationality)? How so? No one has proved the innate hollowness and vacuity of pan-Slavism better than Engels himself, who showed that “the unity of pan-Slavism” could in reality mean only “a mere fantasy or—the Russian knout.”²⁴ If, however, the Austrian Slavs nonetheless flirted on occasion with pan-Slavism, it was not because they were looking to the Russian tsar as their “natural protector” or were thinking about holy Constantinople,²⁵ but rather because they felt oppressed nationally (and socially) and wanted to be rid of their German, Hungarian and Polish ruling classes. Whoever, then, maintains that the Slavs of Austria *had* to be pan-Slavic is saying, in other words, that their domination and oppression by the “old cultured nations” was irrevocable and that even the revolution of 1848–49 could bring about no change in this state of affairs.

Of course, Marx and Engels could not express this conclusion in its brutal, naked form. But neither could they identify the authentic sources of the nationality struggle so fatal to the Austrian revolution. These sources lay, above all, in the class nature of the German bourgeoisie and their noble allies. But such an appraisal—considering the immaturity and weakness of the industrial proletariat in Austria—would have meant nothing less than recognizing the hopelessness of the revolution of 1848. And what genuine revolutionary can bring himself to declare a revolution in which he takes part lost from the start?

So we see that Engels and Marx, in their treatment of the Austrian nationality problem, strayed from reality. They did not seek the explanation for the counter-revolutionary conduct of the nonhistoric Austrian Slavs in the national power struggles caused by the rivalry of “ruling

nations" and "servant nations." They sought it instead *in the Slavic peoples themselves*, in the "counter-revolutionary character" that history forced upon them. This explanation was all the more appealing, since the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* were centralists on principle and opponents of any sort of particularism;²⁶ furthermore, they could rest their case on the historical experience of the French revolution, a remarkable example of the assimilation of small peoples, the fusion of numerous patois with the French language.²⁷ And finally: Did not the nonhistoric peoples of Austria consist primarily of *peasants*, that is, members of a class whose historical role (as we read in one of Engels' articles)²⁸ could only be reactionary, a class whose extinction could be expected already in the near future?

This was the historical and psychological situation from which, in our opinion, Engels' *theory of the nonhistoric peoples* necessarily had to emerge.

Notes

1. Here "nationality" is used in the sense of "statehood."
2. Engels refers here to Bakunin's "Appeal to the Slavs." (See below, chapter eleven.)
3. A quotation from Bakunin's "Appeal."
4. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), pp. 240-45.
5. At that time Marx and Engels were expecting, month to month, the outbreak of a new revolution in Paris.
6. "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 225-26.
7. Karl Kautsky, *Sozialisten und Krieg* (Prague, 1937), p. 107.
8. "So that one correctly understands what Marx [it should be: Engels] was after: he demanded the *extermination* of the Slavic peoples, not just the overthrow of governments." *Die Grundlagen der Karl Marxschen Kritik der bestehenden Volkswirtschaft* (Tübingen, 1887; reprint Hildesheim, 1968), p. 267. On Georg Adler's interpretation of Engels' statement, see also: Franz Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1897-98), 1:374, and Josef Skalák, *Válka světová a marxism* (Prague, 1919), p. 21.
9. "It was proclaimed that, except for the Poles, the Slavs were all by nature counter-revolutionary, and therefore they had to be fought not merely in the present situation, which found them in the camp of the counter-revolution. No, they had to be *exterminated*. Brotherhood with them was precluded; the only thing to do was to fight against them until they were annihilated.
 "This was said a little more than a year after the Communist Manifesto was written, which ended with the words: 'Working men of all countries, unite!'" Kautsky, *Sozialisten und Krieg*, p. 108.

Kautsky's explanation of this contradiction is anything but satisfying. If Marx and Engels, he writes, "in their Slavic policies in 1849 could be driven to such dubious pronouncements, this is the fault neither of the revolution nor of a particular 'Marxist' way of thought, but the fault of the war. The war, Hungary's revolutionary war, brought about these contradictions to their own principles. When the war ended, so too did the contradictions." Ibid. Kautsky writes as if not every revolution entails civil war, and as if civil war were not a war! (Kautsky consistently ignores the main issue, Engels' counterposing of entire "reactionary" and entire "revolutionary" peoples.)

10. It must have been difficult in practice for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* readership to distinguish this "revolutionary hatred" for the reactionary nonhistoric nationalities of Austria from the simple chauvinistic hatred of the German bourgeois and Hungarian and Polish nobles for the nationalities they exploited and oppressed. (Someone like Müller-Telling, as we have seen, was unable to observe this distinction.)
11. A line is missing in the original German edition, so this sentence has been partly filled in by the translator. —*Trans.*
12. This was reserved for Stalin. In World War II Stalin declared not only the Hitler regime and Germany's ruling classes to be enemies of socialism and the Soviet peoples, but he said the same of the whole *German people*. (In this respect, too, Stalin's politics represented a complete departure from the principles of proletarian internationalism.)
13. Nonetheless, Lenin insists that there is no such contrast. Marx and Engels, he says in his principal article on the national question, were "first and foremost for a struggle against tsarism. It was for this reason, and *exclusively for this reason*, that Marx and Engels were opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and South Slavs. A simple reference to what Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 and 1849 will prove to anyone... that Marx and Engels at that time drew a clear and definite *distinction* between 'whole reactionary nations' serving as 'Russian outposts' in Europe, and 'revolutionary nations,' namely the Germans, Poles and Magyars. This is a fact. And it was *indicated at the time with incontrovertible truth*: in 1848 revolutionary nations fought for liberty, whose principal enemy was tsarism, whereas the Czechs, etc., were in fact reactionary nations and outposts of tsarism.

"What is the lesson to be drawn from this concrete example which must be analysed *concretely* if there is any desire to be true to Marxism? Only this: 1) that the interests of the liberation of a number of big and very big nations in Europe rate higher than the interests of the movement for liberation of small nations; 2) that the demand for democracy must not be considered in isolation but on a European—today we should say a world—scale.

"That is all there is to it. *There is no hint of any repudiation of that elementary socialist principle... to which Marx was always faithful—that no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations.* If the concrete situation which confronted Marx when tsarism dominated international politics were to repeat itself, for instance, in the form of a few nations starting a socialist revolution (as a bourgeois-democratic revolution was started in Europe in 1848), and *other* nations serving as the chief bulwarks of bourgeois reaction—then we too would have to be in favour of a revolutionary war against the latter, in favour of 'crushing' them, in favour of destroying all

their outposts, no matter what small-nation movements arose in them." V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 45 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960-70), 22:340-41.

There are two things wrong with Lenin's interpretation. First, he overlooks the fact that Engels and Marx regarded the nonhistoric Slavs not merely as "outposts of tsarism," but also as "would-be-nations" (*Natiönchen*) lacking viability and destined for destruction. And second, the "elementary socialist principle" that "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" held true, as far as Engels and Marx were concerned, *only* with respect to the large, viable, historic nations, and not with respect to the "small relics of peoples which, after having figured for a longer or shorter period on the stage of history, were finally absorbed as integral portions into one or the other of those more powerful nations whose greater vitality enabled them to overcome greater obstacles." Engels, "What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?" (1866), in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The First International and After*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1974), pp. 383-84.

The German right-wing socialist Heinrich Cunow was therefore (formally) correct when he interpreted Engels' statements of 1849 and 1866 to mean the denial of self-determination to the small, "nonhistoric" peoples. See his book, *Die Marxsche Geschichts-, Gesellschafts- und Staatstheorie*, 4th ed., 2 vols. (Berlin, 1923), 2:37-49.

14. England supported the constitutional movement of the Italian bourgeoisie.
15. "Three New Constitutions," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 6:543-44.
16. "German Foreign Policy and the Latest Events in Prague," *Collected Works*, 7:212.
17. See above, p. 23.
18. "German Foreign Policy and the Latest Events in Prague," 7:212.
19. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 227.
20. We know, however, that in Bohemia there was at that time a group of intellectuals who engaged in preparations, under Bakunin's leadership, for an armed uprising against absolutism.
21. As is well known, the Hungarian revolutionary government proclaimed the equality of Hungary's peoples, but *at the last moment*, when Paskevich's troops had already entered Hungary. This was a measure that directly contradicted the intransigent position of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. But would it not have been better if the Magyars had *come to this decision more quickly* and had *abandoned earlier* their unyielding nationality policy?
22. The most active in this regard were the Galician and Slovenian peasants. See the documents of the Austrian Reichstag, 1848-49.
23. This was true, for the most part, also of Austria's German peasantry.
24. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 221.
25. See above, pp. 52-53, note 28.
26. On the eve of the revolution, in November 1847, Engels wrote: "Through its industry, its commerce and its political institutions, the bourgeoisie is already working everywhere to drag the small, self-contained localities which only live for themselves out of their isolation, to bring them into contact with one

another, to merge their interests,...and to build up a *great nation* with common interests, customs and ideas out of the many hitherto independent localities and provinces. The bourgeoisie is already carrying out considerable centralization.... The democratic proletariat not only needs the kind of centralization begun by the bourgeoisie but *will have to extend it very much further*. During the short time when the proletariat was at the helm of state in the French revolution, during the rule of the Mountain party, it *used all means—including grapeshot and the guillotine—to effect centralization*. When the democratic proletariat again comes to power, it will not only have to centralize every country separately but will have to centralize all civilized countries together as soon as possible." "The Civil War in Switzerland," *Collected Works*, 6:372-73.

27. "Marx and Engels, as Rhinelanders, belonged entirely to West Europe, and had never seen the problem of nationalities at close quarters. They had lived in France, where the German Alsatians had willingly submitted, and knew Belgium, where the Teutonic Flemings had no separatist feelings[?]. If, then, such highly developed peoples threw in their lots with nations differing in language and habits, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* found it hard to appreciate the national griefs of the more backward Southern Slavs, the more so as only vague accounts of their movement reached Germany." Hermann Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," *Slavonic Review* 2 (1923-24): 293.
28. "The Communists and Karl Heinzen," *Collected Works*, 6:295.

6. Engels on the Conduct of Austria's Nonhistoric Slavs, 1848-49

In "The Magyar Struggle," Engels characterized the role played by the nonhistoric Austrian Slavs in the revolution of 1848-49:

Apart from the high nobility, the bureaucracy and the soldiery, the Austrian camarilla *only*¹ found support among the Slavs. The Slavs *decided the fall of Italy*, the Slavs *stormed Vienna* and it is the Slavs who are now falling upon the Magyars from all sides. They are led by two peoples: the Czechs, under Palacký, wielding the pen; and the Croats, under Jelačić, wielding the sword.

This is the thanks for the general [?] sympathy displayed by the German democratic press in June for the Czech democrats when they were shot down with grape-shot by the same man, Windischgrätz, who is now their hero.²

This passage can probably only be explained by the polemical ardour of its author. In it, everything is off kilter. For instance, Engels completely overlooks the fact that the Italian affair constituted no page of glory in the history of the German revolution of 1848. He does not mention at all that not only the Viennese Reichstag but also the Frankfurt National Assembly and the Hungarian Diet *supported* Habsburg absolutism in its war against Italy. He seems to forget that it was the Viennese who "in the first days of their newly won freedom were so little unequivocally revolutionary that they volunteered in great numbers and with enthusiasm for Radetzky's army, which was assigned to defeat the Italian revolution."³ He also seems to forget that Grillparzer's bombastic verse dedicated to Radetzky ("In deinem Lager ist Österreich, / Wir andern sind einzelne Trümmer")⁴ was

by no means inspired solely by "the cowardice of the philistines and the servility of the royal-imperial court council,"⁵ but in fact the verse reflected the genuine sentiment of the German bourgeoisie and German intelligentsia in Austria (and also in Germany). Finally, he forgets too that it was precisely the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*—"in spite of the patriotic howling and drum-beating of almost the whole German press"—that repeatedly lashed out against German democracy's "cowardly" conduct *vis-à-vis* Italy.⁶

But it was the Slavs who "*decided*" the fall of Italy! How was it that they decided it? According to Engels: "In Italy, the *tedeschi* [Germans] have for long years borne *alone* the disgrace of counting as oppressors; but, once again, what was the composition of the armies which could best be used for the suppression of the Italian revolutions and whose brutalities could be laid at the door of the *Germans*? *They were composed of Slavs.*"

But here Engels forgets that the German Austrians still constituted the ruling nation in Austria, that the Austrian officer corps was almost exclusively German and that the "nonhistoric" Slavs subjugated by Austria could only furnish the army with peasant cannon-fodder. It is a strange argumentation that looks for the culprit in the instrument and not in those who use the instrument.⁸

The same also holds true for the fall of Vienna. Since Slavs made up the majority of Austria's population, it was only natural that among the rank-and-file soldiers the percentage of Slavs would be higher than the percentage of Germans. Strong contingents of Croatian, Bohemian and Galician troops were indeed deployed in the siege of Vienna.⁹ But how did the *German-Austrian* troops behave at the time? Did they perhaps rebel, refuse obedience to their superiors or support the insurgents in some way? Nothing of the kind. A very few battalions, stationed in Vienna and therefore exposed to the revolutionary propaganda, appeared to waver at times. But otherwise the Upper- and Lower-Austrian, the Carinthian and Tyrolian peasant troops fought just as "*valiantly*" as the "Galician lancers, Croatian and Slovak grenadiers and Bohemian gunners and cuirassiers."¹⁰ (Indeed, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* itself in October 1848 specified which German-Austrian units besieged Vienna.)¹¹ How persuasive, then, can Engels' argument be, especially considering how difficult it is to revolutionize an army? Even the opposition-prone elements of an army with unbroken discipline find it extremely difficult to rebel against their superiors.¹² Why then should we demand from the Slavic peasants in the Austrian army of 1848—recruited for the most part from backward provinces and lacking an elementary education—superior insight and a greater spirit of sacrifice than from the Germans?

If anyone is to blame for the reactionary conduct of these peasant soldiers, then it is above all the ruling classes of Austria's "historic" nations, who strove to keep these peasants in perpetual slavery and ignorance, thus making of them willing tools of the monarchy. (In this regard, nothing is more telling than the behaviour of the Viennese democrats in October 1848; purely out of fear lest a "peasant war" be

kindled in Austria, they refused to summon the peasantry to the defence of Vienna.)¹³ How very correct, then, was the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* when, under the fresh impression of the catastrophe, it ascribed the major blame for the defeat of the October rising to "the miserable German middle class"¹⁴—in spite of the certainly very significant role played in this by "the great alliance of the counter-revolution with the Austrian Slavs."¹⁵

So much for the "guilt" of the Slavic peoples in the subjugation of Italy and the fall of Vienna; Engels' arguments are simply specious. Still, he appears right when he speaks of the Slavs' participation in the suppression of the *Hungarian revolt*; here the Slavs (especially the Serbs and Croats) really were active and enthusiastic participants. But we have already seen (in the chapter on the South Slavs) how the Hungarians themselves—the Hungarian nobility and the emerging Hungarian bourgeoisie—contributed to this fatal outcome by their "traditional" anti-Slavic policy.

In both of his articles, "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism," Engels offered a severe judgment on the historical role of the Slavic peoples; how mild, by contrast, seems his appraisal there of the *Germans'* role:

It has always been said that the Germans were the hired troops of despotism throughout Europe. We are far from denying the shameful role of the Germans in the shameful wars against the French revolution from 1792 to 1815, in the oppression of Italy since 1815 and of Poland since 1772; but *who stood behind the Germans, who used them as their mercenaries or their vanguard? England and Russia...* One thing at least is certain, and that is that three quarters of the armies which by their numerical superiority forced Napoleon back from the Oder to Paris were composed of *Slavs, either Russian or Austrian.*

And what about the oppression of the Italians and Poles by the Germans? A wholly Slav and a half Slav [!] power [i.e., Austria] rivalled each other in partitioning Poland; the armies which overwhelmed Kościuszko contained a majority of Slavs; the armies of Diebitsch and Paskevich were exclusively Slav armies. In Italy... what was the composition of the armies which could best be used for suppression...? They were composed of Slavs.¹⁶

Here, as one can see, even the German mercenaries and the German governments are conceded "mitigating circumstances," since behind them stood "England and Russia"; to some extent, then, they were only instruments in the hands of others. But no one apparently was standing behind the Czech and Croatian peasants forcibly pressed into the Austrian army. No, they probably acted out of pure enthusiasm for reaction, since these were peoples "counter-revolutionary by their very nature."¹⁷ These peoples, moreover, were miracle workers: by allowing Austria to exploit and oppress them, they turned Austria into a "half Slav power"!

A short time before, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* had praised the Prague uprising, which could have raised doubts about the counter-revolutionary nature of the Czech people. How did Engels now interpret that uprising?

We repeat: the so-called democrats among the Austrian Slavs are either rogues or visionaries, and the visionaries, who can find no basis in their own people for these ideas introduced from abroad, have been continuously led around by the nose by the rogues. At the Prague Slav Congress the visionaries had the upper hand. As soon as their fantasies appeared to threaten the aristocratic pan-Slavists, Count Thun, Palacký and their associates, they betrayed the visionaries to Windischgrätz and the black and yellow counter-revolution. Is there not a bitter, striking irony in the fact that this congress of enthusiasts, defended by the enthusiastic youth of Prague, was *dispersed by soldiers of their own nation*, that the visionary Slav Congress was, so to speak, confronted with a military Slav Congress! The Austrian army, the conqueror of Prague, Vienna, Lviv,¹⁸ Cracow, Milan and Budapest: that is the real, the active Slav Congress!"

Here we meet again that same threadbare argument to which the Russian Marxist Iurii Steklov justly replied:

As if one could not with the same irony write about the German soldiers who crushed the revolution in Germany and the French gunners and cuirassiers who first defeated the proletariat and then also the republic in France! Carried away by his enmity towards the Slavic movement, which was so skilfully exploited by the reaction in Austria, Marx [i.e., Engels] failed to notice how unpersuasive his ironic juxtaposition really was.²⁰

And what about the street battles in Prague and "the enthusiastic youth of Prague" who so bravely attacked Windischgrätz's troops? Did these facts mean nothing to Engels? Did they not in some measure compensate for the role of "the active Slav Congress," the Slavs in the imperial uniform? "It is true," Engels admits,

that a small democratic party existed among the more educated South Slavs,²¹ who, while not wishing to give up their nationality [and why should they have?], nevertheless wished to place it at the disposal of freedom. Owing to this *illusion*, the movement succeeded in awakening the sympathies of the democrats of Western Europe as well, sympathies which were entirely justified as long as the Slav democrats fought together with them against the common foe; but the illusion was destroyed by the bombardment of Prague.... The bombardment of a city like Prague would have filled any other nation with an inextinguishable hatred of the oppressors. What did the *Czechs* do? They kissed the rod that had chastised them till the blood came, they enthusiastically took the oath to the flag beneath which their brothers had been massacred and their women violated.

This sufficed to prove "the unprincipled and unclear nature of the fantasies of the Slav Congress" and how lightly one had to take the Slav democrats' illusions. But this was still not enough:

The battle in the streets of Prague was the *turning point* for the Austrian democratic pan-Slavists.... From this event onwards, all the South Slav peoples placed themselves at the disposal of the Austrian reaction, following the precedent set by the Croats.... While the French, the Germans, the

Italians, the Poles and the Magyars were raising the banner of revolution, the Slavs fell in *as one man* under the banner of counter-revolution.

What the democratic pan-Slavists *said* was completely beside the point: "Their democratic assurances mean no more than the democratic assurances of the official Austrian counter-revolution.... *In practice* the re-establishment of South Slav nationality²² begins with the most furious brutality against the Austrian and Magyar revolutions." In reality, the Slavs "*only* rose up to establish their independence in 1848 in order to suppress the German-Magyar revolution at the same time."²³

It is not difficult to appreciate how one-sided Engels' critique here is, how much he is preoccupied with mere facts to the neglect of their causes and how little of an impartial, historicist judgment we can seek in his passionate diatribe. Of course, he is right when he castigates the counter-revolutionary conduct of the Czech and other Slav parties, whom absolutism first used and then kicked aside; he is also right when in this situation he demands not speeches, but actions, from the "democratic pan-Slavists" as proof of their revolutionary convictions. (This aspect of his critique must therefore be sharply distinguished from the rest of its content.) But the issue also had its obverse side: How did it happen that the Slavic parties, after the first months of the revolution, a short period giddy with enthusiasm and sentiments of brotherhood, crossed over to the camp of the counter-revolution? Why did the Czechs, in spite of the humiliation involved, "kiss the rod that had chastised them till the blood came"? And how could the revolutionary democrats have expected any other result if from the first they dismissed as an "illusion" the Slav democrats' efforts to link liberty with the preservation of their nationality and if (here we refer back to Engels) "the only possible solution" to the situation created by the Prague uprising—even if the Czech democrats emerged victorious—was to be "a war of annihilation of the Germans against the Czechs"?²⁴

We would look in vain for an answer to these questions in Engels' two articles. In contrast to his earlier view, he now does not even admit the thought that it was the *Germans* "who have betrayed the Czechs to Russia."²⁵ In his embitterment he simply will not see that the "historic" nations too are much to blame that the nonhistoric Slavs looked to absolutism for protection. He will not recognize that the Sudeten Germans, for example, flirted with the imperial court in the critical months of the revolution (thus differing in no way from the Czechs); trembling for their "national proprietorship," the Sudeten Germans placed more importance on these *national* interests than on the interests of the revolution.²⁶ Completely ignoring such facts, Engels demands from the Czechs and other Slavs an unconditional *renunciation of their nationality*²⁷—as if such renunciation were so simple, and as if the "historic" nations (i.e., their ruling classes) ever had been willing to renounce their national *privileges* let alone their nationality! Furthermore, he reproaches the nonhistoric Slavs on the grounds that for them "*nationality comes before the revolution*"²⁸ and contrasts them to the Poles, "a Slav people to which

freedom is dearer than Slavdom" (but not dearer than Poland), a people that "has in this way already made certain of its future."²⁹ But again: What about the revolutionary "historic nations"? Were they, then, ready in the revolution of 1848-49 to subordinate the interests of *their* nationalities to the interests of the revolution? And would not, indeed, the nonhistoric Slavs have been completely justified if they said: Please, first show us by your own example how this is done?³⁰

From all of this a picture of the Austrian nationality struggles emerges that is totally different from the one presented by the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. That is, on closer examination it appears that the ruling classes of the so-called historic nations in 1848-49 fought not only for their national states, but also for their "national spheres of influence," i.e., for the continued exploitation and oppression of their "slave nations." By contrast, the movement of the nonhistoric Slavs in essence derived from nothing less than a rebellion against the national and social ascendancy of the Hungarian, Polish and German feudal nobility and the German bourgeoisie; in other words, their movement to some extent involved the forces of the future *opposed* to the revolution, while the forces of the past *supported* it. A contradictory picture, yes, but one that only mirrors the *real contradictions of the 1848 revolution*, one that reveals its inner weaknesses, its inability to master the task that history set before it.

We have already explained before why Engels could not see the problem in this way. Most of Austria's Slavic peoples lived in territories that either the Hungarian or the Polish nobility claimed as their "natural heritage," and the Hungarians and Poles were the German revolution's *only allies* in Central and Eastern Europe. How could Engels then have justified the resistance of the South Slav, Romanian, Slovak and Ukrainian peasant masses against the revolutionary Hungarian and Polish nobility without calling this alliance into question? And how could he have done it without *simultaneously* abandoning his (certainly illusory) faith in the social-revolutionary mission of Hungarian and Polish noble democracy, in its ability to lead the "agrarian revolution" in Eastern Europe? But even the question of those Slavic peoples with whom the *Germans* dealt directly was, as we have seen, not so simple to resolve. Possession of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia (where over two million Germans lived) seemed indispensable on economic, geographic and strategic grounds; as for the Slovenes (in contrast to the Serbs and Croats), their political activity was so weak in 1848 that their movement, as it appeared to Engels, could be treated as a *quantité négligeable*. Should the vital interests of the future unified German state have been risked on account of these "scattered,"³¹ "half-Germanized"³² Slavs in whose national future no one in Germany at that time believed? And finally: Which of the nonhistoric peoples of Austria, the Czechs not excepted, could have acted then as an independent revolutionary factor as did the Germans, Poles and Hungarians? And did not the interests of these actively revolutionary peoples take precedence over the vague, ill-defined "pipe-dreams" of the Slavs?

We see now why Engels laid no "blame" on Austria's historic nations—the Germans, Hungarians and Poles—for the Slavs' defection to the camp of the counter-revolution. It remained, however, to explain the phenomenon; but how? Here begins the theoretical "original sin" of Engels' articles on the Slavs.

If the counter-revolutionary conduct of the nonhistoric Slavs in 1848–49 did not simply represent a phenomenal form of the national-political struggles in Austria, struggles inevitably attendant upon the rebirth of these peoples, if it was not caused (or at least partly caused) by the chauvinist tendencies of the historic nations, then it could obviously only be explained by a peculiar *historical immaturity* of these Slavs, by their *counter-revolutionary nature*. And that was exactly Engels' opinion!

"We have explained," wrote Engels in "Democratic Pan-Slavism," "how such small nations, dragged along for centuries by history against their will, *must necessarily be counter-revolutionary*, and how their whole position in the 1848 revolution was in truth counter-revolutionary."³³ For all these peoples, "their next mission is to perish in the universal revolutionary storm. *They are therefore now counter-revolutionary.*"³⁴

We will now look at the historical proof that Engels adduced for his thesis.

Notes

1. Engels' emphasis.
2. Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 223.
3. Karl Kautsky, *Die Befreiung der Nationen* (Stuttgart, 1917), p. 8. See also Frederick Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 60: "It must be stated here, as a proof how far the Metternichian system had succeeded in keeping back the development of the public mind, that during the first six months of 1848, the same men that had in Vienna mounted the barricades, went, full of enthusiasm, to join the army that fought against the Italian patriots. This deplorable confusion of ideas did not, however, last long."
4. "Thy camp alone preserves Austria. We are but scattered fragments." Translation from Arthur J. May, *The Hapsburg Monarchy 1867–1914* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, The Norton Library, 1968), p. 25.—*Trans.*
5. "Einleitung," in Franz Mehring, ed., *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:16.
6. E.g., in an article from 22 June 1848, "The First Deed of the German National Assembly in Frankfurt," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 7:109–10.
7. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 238.

8. The following passage occurs in David Llyod George's *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), 2:514: "The Italian sentiment about the Slavonic populations of Austria was bitter. This antagonism was not without cause. It was the *Croats* who had been used by the Hapsburgs to crush and keep down Italian liberty, to hunt, imprison and execute Italian patriots. Even when Magyar regiments were confounded with Croats, all alike were feared and hated under the same generic name of Croat. Some lines of Clough [the English poet and scholar, 1819–61] have embodied this conviction burned into the Italian heart, that the Croat was the instrument of Austrian tyranny....

"I see the Croat soldier stands,
Upon the grass of your redoubts;
The eagle with his black wings flouts
The breath and beauty of your land."

9. But in the besieging army, which numbered about seventy thousand men, there were also numerous *German* troops. Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), pp. 718, 720, 738, 808, mentions the Lower-Austrian Mengen cuirassiers, no. 6, the German-Bohemian Wellington grenadiers, no. 42, the German battalion Hess, no. 49, the famous German Masters, etc. See also note 11 below.
10. See note 19 below.
11. A report from Vienna dated 5 October 1848: "Do you perhaps believe that *Jelačić's army is composed of Croats* [alone]?... It is the most jesuitical, most abominable Machiavellianism to try to hoodwink public opinion with such fairy tales; those are *German* troops that Jelačić has. His general artillery is German, his engineers and bridge batteries are German, his cavalry is composed of six squadrons of the German Johann dragoons, six squadrons of German Hardegg cuirassiers and eight squadrons of German Kreess chevaliers...; the officers of his general staff all belong to the Austrian army...and every one of them is German." *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 114, 12 October 1848, p. 3, col. 2.
12. As Bakunin wrote in his second appeal to the Slavs (1849): "Most of Europe's standing armies are mere machines in the hands of their commanders; they are fearful, devilish machines designed to keep Europe's peoples under the lash. Did not the Czech soldiers in June raise a parricidal hand against Prague? Did not the Polish soldiers rage against their own brethren in Galicia and Cracow? Did not, after all, the German soldiers join the Croats to bombard and plunder the German capital, Vienna? Is it any wonder, then, that the Russian soldiers are fighting against Slavic liberty?" Václav Čejchan, *Bakunin v Čechách: příspěvek k revolučnímu hnutí českému v letech 1848–1849* (Prague, 1928), p. 199.
13. Witness Franz Schuselka's speech in the Viennese Reichstag: "We... are ready to defend liberty (Bravo), but we must still consider maintaining order to be the priority, lest we call forth the opposite of liberty. Arming the rural population is a *dangerous expedient*, however much we appreciate the country folk's willingness. (Profound silence in the assembly.) In following this course, we have not, however, completely rebuffed the rural population; we have remained in alliance with them." *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 117, 15 October 1848, p. 2, col. 2. The Pole Adam Potocki seconded the brave Schuselka: "When a call to arms is being considered, I cannot help but

- remind you of 1846 [see above, chapter three, p. 61]. We cannot want to provoke any similar scenes." Ibid., no. 123, 22 October 1848 (2nd ed.), p. 3, col. 1.
14. "[The Viennese Revolution and the *Kölnische Zeitung*]" (3 November 1848), *Collected Works*, 7:496. See also the lead article dated 6 November 1848, "The Victory of the Counter-Revolution in Vienna," *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 173–75.
 15. "The Revolutionary Movement in Italy" (30 November 1848), *Collected Works*, 8:103.
 16. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 237–38.
 17. "So far we know only that an Austria shaken to its very foundation was kept in being and momentarily secured by the enthusiasm of the Slavs for black and yellow; that it was precisely the Croats, Slovenes, Dalmatians, Czechs, Moravians and Ruthenians who provided such men as Windischgrätz and Jelačić with *their contingents for the suppression of the revolution* in Vienna, Cracow, Lviv and Hungary...." Ibid., p. 239. This almost reads as if the Austrian army of 1848–49 was composed exclusively of Slavic volunteers.
 18. In the bombardment of Lviv too, which took place on 1–2 November 1848, two battalions of German Masters (Lower Austrians) were involved. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 145, 17 November 1848, p. 3, col. 3.
 19. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 240. A similar passage appears in Engels' work of 1852, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 59: "The Bohemians and Croats called, then, a general Slavonic Congress at Prague, for the preparation of the universal Slavonian Alliance.... But just then another Slavonic Congress was assembling in Prague, in the shape of Galician lancers, Croatian and Slovak grenadiers and Bohemian gunners and cuirassiers; and this real, armed Slavonic Congress, under the command of Windischgrätz, in less than twenty-four hours drove the founders of an imaginary Slavonic supremacy out of the town, and dispersed them to the winds."
 20. Iu. Steklov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, ego zhizn' i deiatel'nost'*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1920–27), 1:242.
 21. In both his articles, Engels uses the name "South Slavs" for *all* Austrian Slavs with the exception of the Ukrainians and Poles: "These Slavs belonged in language and customs to the same stock as the Slavs of Turkey... that of the South Slavs, so called to distinguish them from the Poles and the Russians." "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 218. "At least since Schlözer wrote, it was a sign of ignorance to treat the Czechs as Southern Slavs, as did the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*." Hermann Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," *Slavonic Review* 2 (1923–24): 296.
 22. Here used again in the sense of statehood.
 23. "The Magyar Struggle," pp. 222–23; "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 238–40.
 24. See above, p. 24.
 25. See above, p. 24.
 26. See Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, pp. 756–57.

27. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 242.
28. Ibid., p. 244.
29. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 217.
30. Here we are reminded of Engels' own words (in his pamphlet *Po und Rhein*, 1859): "We can dispense with much that is appended to the borders of our territory and that involves us in matters in which we would be better off not to interfere so directly. But it is the same also for others; *let them give us an example of disinterest or else keep still.*" Cited in Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:86–87.
31. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 221.
32. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 236.
33. Ibid., p. 230.
34. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 217.

7. History against the Slavs: Engels on the Origins and Historic Mission of Austria

One searches in vain in Engels' two articles, "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism," for a factual, historical substantiation of his thesis (that the Slavs were necessarily counter-revolutionary), unless one were to consider such substantiation his reflections on the role of Slavic soldiers in the Austrian army¹ or his contrast of the conduct of the Hungarian and Croatian estates from 1830 to 1848.² He confines himself instead to the very broad generalization that the Austrian Slavs had never in the course of their history been revolutionary and had therefore always been counter-revolutionary:

If the Slavs had begun a new revolutionary history *at any time within the period of their oppression*, they would have proved their capacity for independent existence by that very act. The revolution would have had an interest in their liberation from that moment onwards, and the particular interest of the Germans and Magyars would vanish in the face of the greater interest of the European revolution.

But that did *not* happen *at any time*. The Slavs—let us recall again that we exclude the Poles from all this—were *always* precisely the chief tools of the *counter-revolution*. Being oppressed at home, they were the oppressors of all revolutionary nations abroad, as far as the influence of the Slavs extended.³

Engels' view raises several questions. For instance, how, in light of this, should one interpret the Hussite wars, which Engels himself characterizes as "a Czech nationalist peasant war fought under a religious flag against the German nobility and German imperial suzerainty"?⁴ Is it possible that the Czechs of that time were "tools of the counter-revolution"? Or what about the battle of Kosovo, 1389, where the South Slavs—certainly in the interests of European development as a whole—offered resistance to the formidable Turkish peril? But most importantly: What "revolution" was it that the Slavs "never" joined and for what "counter-revolution" did they serve as the chief tools? Evidently, both of these expressions are used here in a "wider," historiosophical sense: *the whole previous historical process* is interpreted as a struggle between "revolution" and "counter-revolution," which is the same as the struggle between civilization and barbarism, bourgeois society and feudalism, centralization and particularism!

That this is really what Engels meant is clear from his conception of the origins and historical role of the Austrian monarchy, which remains thought-provoking to this day and illustrates very well the strong as well as the weak aspects of Engels' historical analysis. According to Engels, the Habsburg dynasty owed its rise and its power to three factors, three great historical tasks that made the supremacy of the House of Habsburg indispensable for centuries: the struggle against Slavdom, the defence against the Turkish danger and the creation of a large, centralized state in Central and Southern Europe.

From its infancy, the Habsburg state was attended by the struggle against the Slavs. The regions to which Habsburg rule originally extended were precisely

those south German lands which were in direct conflict with isolated Slav tribes or in which a German feudal nobility and German burghers jointly ruled over subjugated Slav tribes. In both cases the Germans of each province needed support from outside. They obtained this support by *associating against the Slavs*, and this association was in fact the result of the unification of the provinces in question under the Habsburg sceptre.

Thus emerged—in continual struggle against the Slavs—German Austria.

The neighbouring Hungarians found themselves in a similar situation:

The Magyars waged the same struggle in Hungary as the Germans in German Austria. The Archduchy of Austria and Styria, a German wedge thrust forward between Slav barbarians, held out its hand across the Leitha to the Magyar wedge, similarly thrust forward between Slav barbarians. Just as the German nobility dominated and Germanized the Slav tribes to the south and north, in Bohemia, Moravia, Carinthia and Carniola, *and thereby drew them into the movement of Europe as a whole*, so also did the Magyar nobility dominate the Slav tribes of Croatia, Slavonia and the Carpathian lands.... The *alliance of the Magyars and the Austrian Germans* was a necessity. All that was lacking was one great event, a fierce attack on both of them, in order to make this alliance indissoluble. This development occurred with the conquest of the Byzantine empire by the Turks. The Turks

threatened Hungary and in the second instance Vienna, and for centuries Hungary was riveted indissolubly to the House of Habsburg.⁵

The defence of the Danube region—and therefore of all of Christian Europe—against the Turks was the second great historical task that fell to the lot of the Habsburg empire:

The Turkish invasion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was the second edition of the Arabian invasion of the eighth century. The victory of Charles Martel was repeated again and again under the walls of Vienna and on the Hungarian plains. The whole development of Europe was threatened again at Wahlstatt by the Mongolian invasion, just as it had been at Poitiers.⁶

In the face of this enormous task, the struggle against Slavdom receded into the background, all the more so now that the Slavic opponents of the Germans and Hungarians were themselves aspiring towards a union of the Danubian lands for protection against the Turks. And again, it was the Austrian monarchy alone that was equal to this task. After centuries of struggle, the Turks too were rendered powerless, and their empire became enervated and feeble. But while Austria was yet engaged in its fight with the Turks, a new historical task had arisen for which it had to be prepared. In order to subdue the Turks, Austria had to cripple the authority of the noble estates and become a modern, centralized state; but this transformation was impossible without encouraging the development of capitalism, capitalist manufactures, commerce and a modern system of transportation. On its part, the early-capitalist development in the Danube region also demanded a state of great size with a unified, centralized administration. In so far as Austria met these requirements it was again progressive and even indispensable, in spite of its relative backwardness and the policy of the Habsburgs, who, once they had weakened the estates politically, became, "more emphatically than any other dynasty, the representative of the feudal nobility against the burghers."

What, however, was the significance of this course of development for the *Slavs* of Central and Southern Europe?

The first consequence was that the Slavic element was forced to retreat from much of its territory and large regions that had originally been Slavic now underwent a complete Germanization (or Magyarization). But this was not all. Because the Germans and Magyars advanced as a wedge, they divided Slavdom "by a zone some sixty to eighty miles wide"⁸ that separated the Slavs of the north from those of the south.

The German element conquered the western part of Bohemia and penetrated on both sides of the Danube beyond the Leitha. The Archduchy of Austria, part of Moravia and most of Styria were all Germanized, and the Czechs and Moravians were thus separated from the Carinthians and Carniolans. In the same way the Magyars entirely cleared out the Slavs from Transylvania and central Hungary as far as the German border and occupied the area, thus separating the Slovaks and some Ruthenian districts (in the north) from

the Serbs, Croats and Slavonians, and subjecting all these peoples to themselves.⁹

(Later we will see what great importance Engels attached to this separation of the Czechs and Slovaks from the South Slavs.)

But graver and more profound consequences attended Germany's and Hungary's historic victory. The Slavs they ruled not only lost their statehood and ruling classes (who in that era were the determining factor of cultural development), but they were also increasingly subjected to the levelling and civilizing influence of their German (and, in part, Hungarian) conquerors. The Germanization of the Slavs made slow but sure progress even in lands with a compact Slavic population; and this process seemed to be merely the continuation and fruition of a task begun in the ninth and tenth centuries. In contrast, however, to the earlier forcible Germanization of the region between the Enns and the Leitha, a region taken at one time from the Magyars, "the Germanization of the Slav lands [now] proceeded on a much more peaceful footing, through migration and the influence of the more developed nation on the undeveloped nation."¹⁰ The German nobility had already begun to Germanize the Slavic tribes, thus drawing them "into the movement of Europe as a whole."¹¹ Much more enduring, however, were the effects of growing capitalist economic development: "German industry, German trade, German education automatically brought the German language into the country."¹² "The class which provided the driving force, the bearer of further development, the burgher class, was everywhere German or Magyar. The Slavs experienced difficulties in producing a national class of burghers.¹³ The South Slavs¹⁴ could only manage this occasionally. And with the burghers, industrial power, capital, was in German or Magyar hands, German culture advanced and the Slavs came under German domination intellectually as well, right down as far as Croatia.¹⁵ The same thing happened, only later and therefore to a lesser degree, in Hungary, where the Magyars took over intellectual and commercial leadership together with the Germans." ("And if the Magyars," Engels adds diplomatically, "remained somewhat behind the German Austrians in civilization, they have made up for this brilliantly by their political activity of more recent times [1830-48].")¹⁶

So it came to pass that for the "scattered and split up" Slavic peoples of Austria "elements capable of life and development had forcibly to be imported by other, non-Slavic, peoples," that their "national historical tradition" died out, their literatures atrophied, and their languages regressed into "mere patois."¹⁷ In short, the Slavs had become mere ruins of peoples "entirely lacking in active historical forces."¹⁸

But what import did Engels attach to these historical events, which historical and especially political literature often interprets as manifestations of "the millennial struggle between Teuton and Slav"? And since a search for consequences motivated his historical excursus, just what consequences for the future did he draw from this delving into the past?

The best answer to these questions is a mordant formulation from one of his articles in the *New York Tribune* (1852):

The history of a thousand years ought to have shown them [the "dying nationalities, the Bohemians, Carinthians, Dalmatians, etc."]...that if all the territory east of the Elbe and Saale had at one time been occupied by kindred Slavonians, this fact merely proved the *historical tendency* and at the same time the *physical and intellectual power of the German nation* to subdue, absorb and assimilate its ancient eastern neighbours; and this tendency of absorption on the part of the Germans had always been, and *still was*, one of the mightiest means by which *the civilization of Western Europe had been spread in the east of that continent*; that it could only cease whenever the process of Germanization had reached the frontier of large, compact, unbroken nations, capable of independent national life, such as the Hungarians, and *in some degree* the Poles;¹⁹ and that, therefore, the natural and inevitable fate of these dying nations was to allow this process of dissolution and absorption by their stronger neighbours to complete itself.²⁰

These lines tell us how we are to understand Engels' excursus into Austrian history. In his mind, unquestionably, the Habsburgs' struggle against the "Slavic barbarians" had been from the first and for a thousand years thereafter not only "historically inevitable," but also "progressive"; it was, as he wrote, "one of the mightiest means by which the civilization of Western Europe had been spread in the east of that continent." In the case of the Germans, this sort of "historiosophy" could, with effort, be defended, since the Germans really were "more civilized" than the Slavs they subjugated. (But by this reasoning, all expansionism and all wars of colonization could be legitimized as being in the interests of civilization; this is especially true of colonial wars, where—as a rule—"less civilized" peoples fall prey to "more civilized" peoples.) Even if we grant the case for the Germans, though, how do we apply this to the *Magyar*-Slavic antagonism? Is it also possible to interpret the Magyars' crusades against the Slavs as the struggle of "bearers of civilization" against "barbarians"? Were not, rather, the Magyars at least equally as barbaric as the Slavic tribes they subdued?²¹ Engels exaggerates here, he strays from historical reality, when he attributes to the Hungarians a "civilizing mission" among the Slavs.²²

Furthermore, Engels repeatedly cites Austria's role as a bulwark against the Turks to underscore how *indebted* the Slavs should feel in regard to Austria and therefore how modest they should be in their present demands:

The South Slavs²³ would have become Turkish without the Germans and, in particular, without the Magyars; a part of them actually did become Turkish, indeed Mohammedan, as the Slav Bosnians still are today. And that is a service for which the Austrian South Slavs²³ have not paid too dearly even by exchanging their nationality for that of the Germans or Magyars.... [At that time] the whole development of Europe was threatened.... And where it was a matter of saving this development, could the decision indeed have depended on a few long-decayed and impotent nationalities, such as the Austrian Slavs, which received their own salvation into the bargain?²⁴

What would have happened to these small and fragmented nationalities, *which have played such a wretched role in history*, if the Magyars and Germans had not held them together and led them against the armies of Mohammed and Suleiman, if their so-called [!] "oppressors" had not fought the decisive battles in defence of these weak semi-nations?²⁵

Bakunin, the "democratic pan-Slavist" against whom these sentences were directed, could have countered Engels by arguing that the Slavs also shared the honour of defending Europe from the Turks. "Certainly," Bakunin could have said, "the Austrian and Hungarian contribution to this defence was a very considerable historical achievement. But, for one thing, have not we Slavs struggled for a thousand years against the Turks also by ourselves, without your aid? Do not *all* the peoples who fought against the Turk—the Poles, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Hungarians, Germans—boast that they were *the* bulwark of Christian Europe, the one that was the 'salvation' of all other peoples? And for another thing, what were you then out to save, first and foremost—the 'weak semi-nations' or your own hides? And finally, is not the *price* that you demand from us quite inflated? Why should the Slavs, for their *erstwhile* 'salvation,' pay with their *life in the present*, with their *nationality*?"

One must admit that Engels' interpretation of the defence against the Turks deserves such a rebuttal. The same holds true, too, for Engels' third and strongest argument. Once again the historical "justification" for oppressing certain nationalities in the past is used to vindicate this oppression for the future:

Was it not a "crime," was it not an "execrable policy" [—Engels is mocking Bakunin—] that, *at a time when great monarchies were a "historical necessity"* throughout Europe, the Germans and the Magyars united all these small, crippled powerless nationalities into a great empire and enabled them to take part in a historical development which would have been entirely foreign to them had they been left to themselves? Naturally, that kind of thing cannot be accomplished without forcibly crushing the occasional sensitive specimen of national plant life.²⁶ But nothing is accomplished in history without force and pitiless ruthlessness, and what indeed would have happened to history if Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon had had the same quality of compassion now appealed to by pan-Slavism on behalf of its decayed clients! And are the Persians, the Celts and the Germanic Christians not worth the Czechs, the Oguliner²⁷ and the *serežani*?²⁸

In Engels' opinion, the same law that made great monarchies a historical necessity during the waning of the Middle Ages also works, and with even more force than before, in the present:

Now, however, as a result of the immense progress in industry, trade and communications, *political centralization* has become a *far more urgent* need than it was in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. *Anything which has yet to be centralized is being centralized now*. And now the pan-Slavists come to us and demand that we should let these half-Germanized [!] Slavs "go free,"

that we should abolish a centralization *which is forced on these Slavs by all their material interests!* . . .

In actuality the Germans and Magyars would be in an extremely pleasant situation if the Austrian Slavs were put in possession of their so-called "rights." An independent Bohemian-Moravian state wedged in between Silesia and Austria, Austria and Styria cut off by the "South Slav republic" from the Adriatic and the Mediterranean, their natural trade outlets, eastern Germany torn to pieces like a loaf gnawed by rats! And all this would be *out of gratitude for the pains the Germans have taken to civilize the obstinate Czechs and Slovenes*, and to introduce amongst them trade, industry, a profitable agriculture and education!²⁹

Thus it is clear, writes Engels with irony, what "immense and terrible crimes against the Slav nation," what national "oppression" of the Slavs, are laid to the charge of the Germans and Magyars: "As far as 'oppression' is concerned, the Slavs were no more oppressed than the mass of the Germans themselves were."³⁰ (As if *social and national* oppression were one and the same thing!) The "crimes," then, consisted of delivering the Austrian Slavs from their original barbarism, saving them from the Turkish danger and—in spite of the Slavs' resistance—making it possible for them to participate in European civilization! "It appears, in short," Engels emphatically concludes, "that these 'crimes' of the Germans and the Magyars . . . *are some of the best and most commendable of the deeds we and the Magyar people can pride ourselves on in the course of our history.*"³¹

These arguments sound so improbable and strange coming from Engels that one would sooner be inclined to ascribe them to the pre-socialist phase of his activity.³² They are, however, the inevitable consequence of his counterposition of entire "reactionary" and "revolutionary" peoples and of his thesis on the "necessarily counter-revolutionary" character of the Austrian Slavs. For it was only this sort of historical construction that lent the latter propositions a semblance of logic. The circle was thereby completed: the Slavs of Austria had no right to national existence because they sided with the counter-revolution in 1848; and they necessarily sided with the counter-revolution because they had already proven themselves incapable of national existence in the past and only the reaction left them any hope of preserving their "imaginary Slav nationality."³³ Thus the past history of the Austrian Slavs had already ridden roughshod over their present and future.

And Engels never tired of repeating this (in his opinion) decisive argument from history:

The time for pan-Slavism was the eighth and ninth centuries, when the South Slavs still controlled the whole of Hungary and Austria and threatened Byzantium. If they could not resist the German and Magyar invasion then, if they could not win their independence and form a stable empire at a time when their two enemies, the Magyars and the Germans, were tearing each other to pieces, how will they do this now, *after a thousand years of subjection and denationalization?*³⁴

When the Germans and Hungarians separated the Czechs and Slovaks from the South Slavs proper and when the Turks "subjugated the Slavs living south of the Danube and the Save," "the historical role of the South Slavs had come to an end *for all time*."³⁵ Three years later Engels declared that pan-Slavism was a "ludicrous [and] *anti-historical* movement, . . . a movement which intended nothing less than to subjugate the civilized West under the barbarian East, the town under the country, trade, manufactures, intelligence, under the primitive agriculture of Slavonian serfs."³⁶ And another three years later (1855), he had this to say: "Panslavism . . . is a movement which . . . would tend to undo *what a thousand years of history have created*; which could not realize itself without sweeping from the map Hungary, Turkey and a large part of Germany."³⁷

Engels appeals, then, again and again to "a thousand years of development," to history, before whose tribunal the Austrian and Hungarian Slavs had forfeited their right of national existence. But does the past really determine to so high a degree the future of a people? Was it not precisely Engels who taught us "in the study of history . . . to admire the *eternal mutations* of human affairs in which nothing is stable but instability, nothing constant but change"?³⁸

Surveying Engels' views on Austrian history, we are struck by how odd, how "un-Marxist," the bulk of his arguments sound today. There is a peculiar blend here of the correct and incorrect, of assiduous analysis of the real historical process and the mere invention of fictive historical constructs. As long as Engels deals with the conditions for the origins and existence of the Habsburg empire, as long as he treats of the historical necessity of the empire (including also the domination of the Austrian "swarm of peoples") in a specific historical period, in short: as long as he restricts himself to the *exposition of actual history*—one may grant his arguments. But it is an entirely different matter when he abandons the standpoint of an objective investigator and becomes instead a public prosecutor, whose task is to convict the delinquents using all the evidence at hand. When this happens, history is introduced as the chief witness for the prosecution, and its testimony is construed to imply much more than it can actually contain. The national aspirations of the Austrian and Hungarian Slavs are now simply dismissed as "antihistorical," the misfortune that befell them is adduced as proof of their "lack of viability" and counter-revolutionary character, and the Germans' and Magyars' policy of subjugating them is either denied or else commended as beneficial. Such arguments have very little in common with genuine historical understanding; in fact, they only betray the embittered partisanship and prejudice of their author.

The justice of this reproach is corroborated also by some of Engels' earlier works which, albeit from different perspectives, treat of the same themes he developed in "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism." Here we are thinking primarily of a remarkable article written a full year before the two articles on the Slavs, i.e., even before the outbreak of the March revolution; it bears the significant title "The Beginning of the End in Austria."³⁹

"On what," he asks here, "does the might, the tenacity, the stability, of the House of Austria rest?" "This chequered Austrian monarchy, scraped together by theft and by inheritance, this organized jumble of ten languages and nations, this planless mishmash of contradictory customs and laws"—how could it have survived to the present?

The answer is this:

When Italy, France, England, Belgium, North and West Germany one after another extricated themselves from feudal barbarism during the latter half of the Middle Ages, when industry was developing, trade expanding, the towns thriving and the burghers acquired political importance, one part of Germany *lagged behind West European development*. Bourgeois civilization followed the sea coasts and the course of the big rivers. The inland, especially the barren and impassable mountainous regions, remained the seat of barbarism and of feudalism. This barbarism was especially concentrated in the *South German and South Slav inland areas*. Protected by the Alps from Italian civilization and by the mountains of Bohemia and Moravia from that of North Germany, these inland countries had the additional good fortune of being the basin of the only reactionary river in Europe. The Danube, far from linking them with civilization, brought them into contact with a much more vigorous barbarism.

Nonetheless,

when the great monarchies developed in Western Europe in the wake of bourgeois civilization, the inland countries of the Upper Danube likewise had to unite in a great monarchy. This was required if only for the needs of defence. Here, in the centre of Europe, *the barbarians of all tongues and of all nations associated under the sceptre of the House of Habsburg*. Here they found in *Hungary a mainstay of solid barbarism*.

And if, in spite of this, "the House of Habsburg supported the burghers against the aristocracy and the towns against the princes," it did so "because this was the only condition on which a great monarchy was possible." It did not at all change the fact that the Austrian state was "from the first the representative of barbarism, of reactionary stability in Europe."

A dozen nations whose customs, character and institutions were flagrantly opposed to one another *clung together on the strength of their common dislike for civilization*.

Hence the House of Austria was invincible as long as the barbarous character of its subjects remained untouched. Hence it was threatened by only one danger—the penetration of bourgeois civilization.

But this *sole* danger was not to be averted. Bourgeois civilization could be warded off for a time, it could be temporarily adapted and subordinated to Austrian barbarism. But it was bound to overcome feudal barbarism sooner or later and shatter the only link which had held the most variegated provinces together.⁴⁰

In this essay Engels discusses the historic role of the "Austrian imperial state" and the conditions out of which that state emerged. But the view of Austria offered here differs widely from that expressed in "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism." True, here too the Habsburg empire—with its German and Hungarian supremacy—is recognized as a thoroughly *necessary* phase in the development of the Danubian lands. But the causes for its emergence are sought above all in geographic and strategic considerations, which had to bring together the "barbarians" of different tongues inhabiting this region, while simultaneously isolating them from the rest of the world. Here there is no mention of any "civilizing mission" of the Germans or of the Magyars (whose country was one of "solid barbarism"); and there is nothing said either about "ruins of peoples," who, so to speak, had to serve as fertilizer for other peoples' cultures.

The contrast becomes more striking when we take a look at the concluding paragraphs of "The Beginning of the End in Austria" (already cited at the outset of this work):⁴¹

We observe the victory of the bourgeois over the Austrian imperial monarchy with real satisfaction.... Herr Metternich can depend on us to shear this adversary later as ruthlessly as Metternich will soon be shorn by him.

The fall of Austria has a special significance *for us Germans*. It is *Austria* which is responsible for our reputation of being the oppressors of foreign nations, the hirelings of reaction in all countries. Under the Austrian flag Germans have held Poland, Bohemia and Italy in bondage.... Anyone who has seen what deadly hatred, what bloody and completely justified thirst for revenge against the *tedeschi* reigns in Italy must be moved to an undying hatred of Austria and applaud when this *bulwark of barbarism*, this scourge of Germany collapses.

We have every reason to hope that the Germans will revenge themselves on Austria for the infamy with which it has covered the German name. We have every reason to hope that it will be Germans who will overthrow Austria and clear away the obstacles in the way of freedom for the Slavs and Italians.⁴²

Irrespective of how one judges the merits of the case Engels makes here, one is struck by the contrast between his views at that time and his views when he wrote "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism" in January-February 1849. Then he advocated (albeit in a very general way) "freedom for the Slavs"; now he roundly rejects this. Then he condemned the oppression of the Slavic peoples; now he argues either that there was no oppression or else that it was a positive good. To be sure, between "then" and "now" lay an entire epoch, lay the defeat of the revolution and the alliance of the Slavic national movements with the court camarilla.

Thus Engels could justly reply to Bakunin: "They are demanding of us and the other revolutionary nations of Europe that we should guarantee an existence without let or hindrance to the centres of counter-revolution situated close by our door, a right freely to conspire and bear arms against the revolution. . . . We would not even think of it."⁴³

From this, however, from the temporary denial of specific national-political aspirations of the Slavic peoples in a specific political situation, it was still a very long way to the denial that these peoples were oppressed or to the rejection even of their viability and future; it only shows how embittered Engels was over the defeat of the revolution and the conduct of the Slavic parties if he let himself be carried away to such dubious statements.

We come to the same conclusion when we compare Engels' two articles on the Slavs with his series of articles "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question." In the course of this debate, which dealt with Prussia's arbitrary partitioning of Poznań in 1848,⁴⁴ the Frankfurt National Assembly heard much eloquence expended on the subject of "German cultural contributions in the East," a phrase meant to cover up the injustice done to Poland. Here, then, was an argument that Engels had to oppose. He did so already in the first article of his series:

The Frankfurt Assembly . . . declared that the seven partitions of Poland⁴⁵ were benefactions wasted on the Poles. Had not the forcible intrusion of the Jewish-German race⁴⁶ lifted Poland to a level of *culture* and a stage of science which that country had previously never dreamed of? Deluded, ungrateful Poles! If your country had not been partitioned you would have had to ask this favour yourselves of the Frankfurt Assembly.

But of what really did the German cultural contributions in Poland consist?

The Slavs are a predominantly agricultural people with little aptitude for urban trades in the form in which up to now they were feasible in the Slav countries. The first crude stage of commerce, when it was still mere hawking, was left to *Jewish* pedlars. With the growth of culture and population the need for urban trades and urban communication made itself felt, and *Germans* moved into the Slav countries. The Germans, who, generally speaking, flourished for the first time in the philistinism [*Kleinbürgerei*] of the imperial cities of the Middle Ages, in the sluggish inland trade conducted in caravan style, in a restricted maritime trade and in the handicraft workshops of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries organized on guild lines—the Germans demonstrated their vocation as the philistines of world history by the very fact that they still to this day form the core of the *petty bourgeoisie* throughout Eastern and Northern Europe and even in America. Many, often most, of the craftsmen, shopkeepers and small middlemen in Petersburg, Moscow, Warsaw and Cracow, in Stockholm and Copenhagen, in Pest, Odessa and Jassy, in New York and Philadelphia, are Germans or of German extraction. . . .

This German immigration, particularly into the Slav countries, went on almost uninterruptedly since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

In Poland this was a peaceful process; "in other Slav countries, such as Bohemia and Moravia, the Slav population was decimated by German wars of conquest, whereas the German population increased as a result of invasion."

But what was the significance of the German invasion for the Slavic lands themselves? Did not the centuries-long influx of German artisans, merchants, intellectuals and so forth inevitably bring about a growing economic and cultural dependence on the Germans? And could Germany not derive from this fact a political "claim" to supremacy in the Slavic lands or to a specific part of Slavic territory, in the case at hand—to the Grand Duchy of Poznań?

Engels answered this question in the negative:

The position is clearest in Poland. The German philistines living there for centuries never regarded themselves as politically belonging to Germany any more than did the Germans in North America; just as the "French colony" in Berlin and the 15,000 Frenchmen in Montevideo do not regard themselves as belonging to France....⁴⁷

But the Germans brought to Poland *culture, education and science, commerce and trades*. —True, they brought *retail trade and guild crafts*; by their consumption and the limited intercourse which they established they stimulated production to some extent. Up to 1772 Poland as a whole was not particularly well known for her high standards of education and science.... The Germans in Poland *prevented the formation of Polish towns with a Polish bourgeoisie*[!]. By their distinct language, their separateness from the Polish population, their numerous different privileges and urban judicial systems, they impeded centralization, that most potent of political means by which a country achieves rapid development.... The German Poles remained at the lowest stage of industrial development; they did not accumulate large capitals; they were neither able to establish large-scale industry nor control any extensive system of commerce.... The entire activity of the German Poles was restricted to retail trade, the handicrafts and at most the corn trade and manufacture (weaving, etc.) on the smallest scale. In considering the merits of the German Poles it should not be forgotten also that they *imported German philistinism and German petty-bourgeois narrow-mindedness into Poland*, and that they combined the worst qualities of both nations without acquiring their good ones.⁴⁸

As we see, this list of the sins of the petty-bourgeois German immigrants in Poland is in the main composed of sins of an imaginary nature,⁴⁹ except for the fact that the immigrants were petty bourgeois and not capitalist entrepreneurs. But no one can give what he does not have, and for Polish conditions these petty bourgeois were "capitalistic" and "progressive" enough. (Otherwise they would not have been invited into Poland in the first place.) But what is of interest to us here is how Engels within the course of one year subjects the same historical facts to

divergent, indeed contradictory, interpretations. This refers not only to the German artisans and shopkeepers "in Petersburg, Pest and Jassy," who are first introduced as wretched philistines and then as eminent bearers of civilization,⁵⁰ but also and most peculiarly to the *Polish Jews*! We will deal later with the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* attitude towards the Jews;⁵¹ here it is enough to note that Engels' series of articles, "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," also contains very unpleasant passages on the (Polish) Jews. This is how he wrote about the practice in official Prussian statistics of 1848, which simply included the Jews of the Grand Duchy of Poznań as part of the *German* population:

The unexpected sympathy and recognition which Polish Jews have lately received in Germany has found official expression [in the report of the Frankfurt Assembly's committee on the Poznań question]. Maligned wherever the influence of the Leipzig fair extends as the very incarnation of haggling, avarice and sordidness, they have suddenly become German brethren; with tears of joy the honest German presses them to his bosom, and Herr Stenzel [who delivered the committee's report] lays claim to them on behalf of the German nation as Germans who *want* to remain Germans.

Indeed, why should not the Polish Jews be genuine Germans? Do not "they, and their children from the earliest years, speak German at home"? And what German at that!

Incidentally, we would point out to Herr Stenzel that he might just as well lay claim to the whole of Europe, one half of America and even part of Asia. German, as everyone knows, is the universal language of the Jews. In New York and Constantinople, in St. Petersburg and Paris, "the Jews, and their children from the earliest years, speak German at home," and some of them even a more classical German than the Poznań Jews.⁵²

Elsewhere in his series of articles, Engels travesties Arndt's well-known song, "So weit die deutsche Zunge klingt, Und Gott in Himmel Lieder singt" (As far as the German tongue resounds, And sings songs to God in heaven):

*"As far as a Polish Jew jabbbers of German a spate,
"Lends at high interest, falsifies money and weight—
"That is the extent of Herr Lichnowski's fatherland!"*⁵³

Certainly the situation was not without its comic aspects—the sudden Jewish sympathies of such dyed in the wool anti-Semites as the Prussian junkers! And it is understandable that Engels could not let this pass without sarcasm. But how did Engels three years later in the *New York Tribune* evaluate the nationality of the Jews of Poland and other Slavic lands? We suddenly find that the same Jews are now in *his* eyes too a "German element" and they serve as proof of the "slow but sure advance of denationalization," i.e., the Germanization of the Slavic East.⁵⁴ In the meantime, as we know, Engels had also changed his opinion on the Polish question,⁵⁵ and the altered political demands led him to see even such subsidiary matters as the problem of Polish Jewry in a different light than he had previously.

What conclusions can we draw from such obvious contradictions? Only this—that *political newspaper articles*, even when they are written by men like Engels and Marx, cannot be expected to contain the same measure of objectivity and exactitude as truly scientific works; and that therefore much of what Engels and Marx wrote about day-to-day political issues not only appears outdated today, but even in their own time it was wrong or at least debatable. Hence these articles can merely contribute to an understanding of Engels' and Marx's *errors* (as well as the situation which was the source of these errors). This, of course, also applies to a great many of their statements on the nationality struggle in Austria, pan-Slavism and so on.⁵⁶ And only if we carefully distinguish the essential from the nonessential, genuine historical understanding from the mere political "utilization" of history, only then can we succeed in penetrating to the real theoretical *core* of their views and arrive at an understanding of their scientific *method*.

Notes

1. See pp. 94–96 of the preceding chapter.
2. The relevant passage is: "From 1830 to 1848 there existed in Hungary alone more political life than in the whole of Germany; the feudal forms of the old Hungarian constitution were better exploited in the interests of democracy than the modern forms of the south German constitutions. And who stood at the head of this movement? The Magyars. Who supported the Austrian reaction? The Croats and Slavonians." "The Magyar Struggle," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, the Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), pp. 219–20. And a few pages later the conduct of "the Croats and Slavonians" serves as the basis for this generalization: "The South Slavs [among whom, as we know, Engels includes not only Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but also Czechs and Slovaks] had *thus* already clearly expressed their reactionary character before 1848. The year of revolution itself exposed this quite clearly." *Ibid.*, p. 222. And in his second article, Engels calls "the arrogant Croats"—again, basing himself on the conduct of the Croatian and Slavonian estates—"a *naturally counter-revolutionary nation*." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 236.

It is true that the Croatian *nobility* was even more backward and bigoted than the Hungarian nobility and therefore feared the latter's modest reforms as an attempt to overthrow the time-honoured feudal constitution. But when Engels *on these grounds* speaks of the "clearly expressed" reactionary character of *all* of Austria's Slavic peoples before 1848 and goes on to designate the Croats "a naturally counter-revolutionary people," he is exaggerating, as he frequently does in both of his articles on the Slavs.

3. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 237.
4. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 218.

5. Ibid., pp. 214–15.
6. Ibid., p. 219.
7. Ibid., p. 215.
8. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 232.
9. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 218.
10. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 235.
11. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 214.
12. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 235.
13. See the passage from Hegel cited in chapter eight, note 29.
14. Once again, this includes the Czechs and Slovaks.
15. We find the same train of thought, though much more precisely put, in Engels' article in the *New York Daily Tribune* of 5 March 1852: "The Slavonians, and particularly the Western Slavonians (Poles and Tschechs), are essentially an agricultural race; trade and manufactures never were in great favour with them. The consequence was that, with the increase of population and the origin of cities in these regions, the production of all articles of manufacture fell into the hands of German immigrants, and the exchange of these commodities against agricultural produce became the exclusive monopoly of the Jews, who, if they belong to any nationality, are in these countries certainly rather Germans than Slavonians. This has been, though in a less degree, the case in all the east of Europe. The handicraftsman, the small shopkeeper, the petty manufacturer, is a German up to this day in Petersburg, Pest, Jassy and even Constantinople; while the money-lender, the publican, the hawker—a very important man in these thinly populated countries—is very generally a Jew.... The importance of the *German element* in the Slavonic frontier localities, thus rising with the growth of towns, trade and manufactures, was still increased when it was found necessary to import almost every element of mental culture from Germany; after the German merchant and handicraftsman, the German clergyman, the German schoolmaster, the German savant, came to establish himself on Slavonic soil. And lastly, the iron tread of conquering armies, or the cautious, well-premeditated grasp of diplomacy, not only followed, but many times went ahead of the slow but sure advance of *denationalization by social developments*." Frederick Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), p. 55.
16. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 219.
17. Ibid., p. 221.
18. Ibid., p. 223.
19. Here, as we see, even Poland's national viability is opened to question. See chapter eight, note 24.
20. *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 86.
21. Wendel remarks on this: "If Engels was right in seeing in the Slav movement a menace of the barbaric East against the civilized West, ... then Poles and Magyars most certainly did not belong to the side of the West. To speak of the Magyar wedge which had been driven into the 'Slav barbarians' was a historical absurdity: for in those days civilization was not on the side of the Magyar nomadic horsemen, but of the Slav agriculturalists whom they displaced." And Wendel points to the fact already established by Franz

- Miklosich that "in the Magyar language all the words for agricultural implements, showing a higher stage of development, are borrowed from the Slav." Hermann Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," *Slavonic Review* 2 (1923-24): 294.
22. Two years later Marx fell into the other extreme when, at the end of November 1851, he had his friend Ernest Jones declare in a Chartist paper "that the English, the Germans and the French understand the revolution as labour's crusade against capital and that they are unwilling to condescend to the cultural and social level of a people as obscure and semi-barbarous as the Magyars. This was exactly what Engels thought, too." Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:8. Cf. Marx's letter to Engels, 1 December 1851: "E. Jones, using my letter, has attacked Kossuth *sans misericorde*. 'I tell him that the revolutions of Europe mean the crusade of labour against capital, and I tell him they are not to be cut to the intellectual and social standard of an obscure, semi-barbarous people like the Magyars, still standing in the half-civilization of the 16th century, who actually presume to dictate to the great enlightenment of Germany and France, and to gain a false won cheer from the gullibility of England.'" Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe [MEGA]* (Frankfurt a. M., Berlin, Moscow, 1927-35), Abt. III, 1:290.
 23. Again in Engels' wider sense of the word.
 24. "The Magyar Struggle," pp. 218-19 (see also p. 221).
 25. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 235.
 26. An allusion to Hegel's *Philosophy of History*: "A World-historical individual is not so unwise as to indulge a variety of wishes to divide his regards. He is devoted to the One Aim, regardless of all else. It is even possible that such men may treat other great, even sacred, interests inconsiderately; conduct which is indeed obnoxious to moral reprehension. But so mighty a form *must trample down many an innocent flower*—crush to pieces many an object in its path." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 32.
 27. From the town of Ogulin in Croatia, which until 1886 was the headquarters of the former Ogulin-Slunj border district.
 28. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 235-36.
 29. *Ibid.*, pp. 236 and 233-34.
 30. *Ibid.*, p. 235. Engels used the same argument when dismissing the Ruthenians' complaints about Polish oppression. See above, chapter three, p. 59.
 31. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 236.
 32. Here we might recall the strong German nationalist sentiment that coloured the writings of the young Engels. For example, in his "Marginalia to Texts of Our Time" (1842), Engels wrote: "It is now several years since Königsberg in Prussia acquired an importance which must be gratifying to all Germany. Formally excluded from Germany by the Federal Act, the German element there has rallied its strength and claims to be recognized as German and respected as Germany's representative *vis-à-vis* the barbarism of the Slavonic East. And, indeed, the East Prussians could not represent Germany's culture and nationhood *vis-à-vis* the Slavs better than they have

done." In his article "Ernst Moritz Arndt" (January 1841), he wrote: "I am of the opinion, perhaps in contrast to many whose standpoint I share in other respects, that the reconquest of the German-speaking left bank of the Rhine is a matter of national honour, and that the Germanization of a disloyal Holland and of Belgium is a political necessity for us. Shall we let the German nationality be completely suppressed in these countries while the Slavs are rising ever more powerfully in the east?" Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 2:277 and 149.

33. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 245.
34. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 221.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
36. *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 58.
37. [Engels], "Panslavism," in Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: S. Sonnenschein & co., 1897), p. 544.
38. "But to remove Turkish authority beyond the Bosphorus; to emancipate the various creeds and nationalities which populate the peninsula;—why is not this provoking universal war? Thus asks diplomatic cowardice and routine.... But whosoever has, in the study of history, learned to admire the eternal mutations of human affairs in which nothing is stable but instability, nothing constant but change; whosoever has followed up that stern march of history *whose wheels pass relentlessly over the remains of empires*, crushing entire generations;... whoever knows how to appreciate the eminently revolutionary character of the present age, when steam and wind, electricity and the printing press, artillery and gold discoveries cooperate to produce more changes in a single year than were ever before brought about in a century, will certainly not shrink from facing a historical question...." "What Is To Become of Turkey in Europe?" *Collected Works*, 12:33–34. But we must emphasize that what Engels said in this article did *not* refer to the Hungarian and Austrian South Slavs!
39. Published in the *Deutsche Brüsseler Zeitung*, 27 January 1848.
40. *Collected Works*, 6:530–32. Engels goes on to explain what effect the advance of *capitalism* must have on the Austrian state as machinery, international and domestic trade and modern means of transportation develop. As long as Austrian industry remained limited to the peasants' domestic industry and to mere manufacture, it was "excellently suited to Austrian barbarism." But in some parts of Austria manufacture and even the old feudal domestic industry were already collapsing as a result of the development of machinery. "The mountain ranges which separated the Austrian monarchy from the outside world... fell before the railways. The granite walls behind which each province had... a limited local existence, ceased to be a barrier.... Trade between the provinces, and with the civilized outside world, acquired an unheard-of importance. The Danube, flowing towards the backward regions, ceased to be the main artery of the empire; the Alps and the Bohemian forests no longer exist.... Steam forced its way through the Alps and the Bohemian forests, steam robbed the Danube of its role, steam tore Austrian barbarism to shreds and thereby pulled the ground from under the feet of the House of Habsburg." *Ibid.*, 6:532, 534. In this passage, of course, Engels is anticipating the actual course of development by quite a few decades: "As he was still to do rather frequently, he overestimated the

speed at which an economic transformation in its initial phase produces a political effect." Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 1:325. Nonetheless, the force that would topple the old Austria—modern capitalism—is here described with brilliant vision.

41. See above, p. 23.

42. *Collected Works*, 6:535–36. Cf. the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* excellent lead article of 2 July 1848:

"All hitherto existing rulers and their diplomats have employed their skill and effort to set one nation against another and use one nation to subjugate another, and in this manner to perpetuate absolute rule. Germany has distinguished herself in this respect....

"Poland has been plundered and dismembered and Cracow throttled with the help of German soldiers. German money and blood have helped to enslave and impoverish Lombardy and Venice, and directly or indirectly to stifle any movement of liberation throughout Italy by means of bayonets, gallows, prisons and galleys. The list of sins is much longer; let us close it.

"The blame for the infamies committed with the aid of Germany in other countries falls not only on the governments *but to a large extent also on the German people* [emphasis in original]. But for the delusions of the Germans, their slavish spirit, their aptitude as mercenaries and 'benign' jailers and tools of the masters 'by divine right,' the German name abroad would not be so detested, cursed and despised, and the nations oppressed by Germany would have long since been able to develop freely. Now that the Germans are throwing off their own yoke, their whole foreign policy must change too. Otherwise the fetters with which we have chained other nations will shackle our own new freedom, which is as yet hardly more than a presentiment. Germany will liberate herself to the extent to which she sets free neighbouring nations." Engels, "Germany's Foreign Policy," *Collected Works*, 7:165–66.

43. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 244.

44. See Hermann Wendel, *Die preussische Polenpolitik in ihren Ursachen und Wirkungen* (Berlin, 1908), and Jan Kucharzewski, *Sprawa polska w parlamencie frankfurckim 1848 roku* (Warsaw, [1918]).

45. That is, in addition to the three old partitions of Poland [among Russia, Prussia and Austria—*trans.*], the Prussian government's division of Poznań province into four administrative units in 1848.

46. During the Polish-German conflict in the Grand Duchy of Poznań in 1848, the Jews of the region greatly embittered the Poles by siding completely with the government against the Poles. Hence Engels' negative reference to the "Jewish-German race." See below, p. 192–93.

47. We find this exact same argument in the Poles' address to the Frankfurt National Assembly, 25 May 1848, reprinted in Kucharzewski, *Sprawa polska*, pp. 89–94.

48. "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," *Collected Works*, 7:337–40.

49. See Mehring's detailed critique in his introduction to *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:25–31. Although Mehring is completely correct in his criticisms, he does make one point, on p. 37, that does not ring true: that Engels' evaluation of the German immigration into Poznań in the *New York*

Daily Tribune was "more just" than that in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. But in fact, Engels was equally "unjust" in both instances, only in opposite ways.

50. See note 15 of this chapter.
51. See the Appendix.
52. "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," 7:341.
53. *Ibid.*, 7:371.
54. See note 15 of this chapter.
55. On this, see N. Riasanoff, "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels über die Polenfrage," *Archiv für Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung* 6 (1916): 175–221, and Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 2:44–45, 59, 127–28, 461–62. Here it is worth noting one aspect of this problem—how Engels, in 1852, thought the Polish-German border conflict could be resolved:

"The revolution of 1848 calling forth at once the claim of all oppressed nations to an independent existence, and to the right of settling their own affairs for themselves, it was quite natural that the Poles should at once demand the restoration of their country within the frontiers of the old Polish republic before 1772. It is true, this frontier, even at that time, had become obsolete, if taken as the delimitation of German and Polish nationality; it had become more so every year since by the progress of Germanization; but then, the Germans had proclaimed such an enthusiasm for the restoration of Poland, that they must expect to be asked, as a first proof of the reality of their sympathies, to give up their share of the plunder. *On the other hand, should whole tracts of land, inhabited chiefly by Germans, should large towns, entirely German, be given up to a people that as yet had never given any proofs of its capability of progressing beyond a state of feudalism based upon agricultural serfdom?* The question was intricate enough. The only possible solution was in a war with Russia. . . . *The Poles, by receiving extended territories in the east, would have become more tractable and reasonable in the west; and Riga and Memel would have been deemed, after all, quite as important to them as Danzig and Elbing.*" *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 55–56.

In 1852, then, in order to preserve the German character of Gdańsk (Danzig) and Elbląg (Elbing), Engels was ready to make a deal and compensate the Poles with "extended [nota bene: non-Polish] territories in the east" as well as with the non-Polish cities of Riga and Klaipėda (Memel). Since the non-Polish nationalities of these territories were at this time submerged in the deepest "nonhistoricity," Engels' proposition was not quite so malign as it seemed to the Russian critic of Marx, Viktor Chernov ("Pol'skii vopros pered sudom marksizma," *Russkii zapiski*, 1917, no. 2–3, pp. 61–62). It is much more serious, however, that even Mehring found precisely this proposition "more just" than Engels' articles on Poland in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which made no reservations about Gdańsk and so forth and which called for returning all of Poznań to the Polish republic. Franz Mehring, *Geschichte der deutschen Sozialdemokratie*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1897–98), 1:388. It had not even crossed Mehring's mind that the territories Poland would receive as compensation for the loss of parts of Poznań and Silesia as well as Gdańsk and Elbląg were inhabited by Ukrainians, Belorussians, Lithuanians and Latvians.

56. Very characteristic in this respect are Marx's remarks on the Polish publicist Franciszek Duchiński. "I see," he wrote Engels on 24 June 1865, "that Łapiński's dogma—that the Great Russians are *not Slavs*—has been defended in all seriousness by Monsieur Duchiński, using linguistics, history, ethnography, etc.; in his opinion, the authentic Muscovites... are for the most part Mongols or Finns.... In any case, I gather that the matter has very much alarmed the Petersburg cabinet (since it would bring *pan-Slavism* to a terrible end).... The result, as Duchiński sees it, is this: *Russia* is a name that the Muscovites have usurped; they are not Slavs; they do not belong in the main to the Indogerman race; they are intruders who once again *must be pushed back beyond the Dnieper*.... I wish that Duchiński were correct and, at all events, that his view would be the prevailing one among the Slavs." *MEGA*, Abt. III, 3:275–76.

In his passion to undermine pan-Slavism, Marx failed to notice that the border drawn by Duchiński corresponded exactly to the border of the old Polish state of 1772 and that it ethnographically and linguistically divided the Ukrainians, who inhabited both sides of the Dnieper, partly into (Polish) "Slavs" and partly into (Russian) "Mongols"!

But cf. Marx's letter to Kugelman, 17 February 1870: "That the Pole Duchiński in Paris should declare the Great Russian race to be not Slavic, but Mongolian, and should have tried to prove this with a great show of erudition, was to be expected from the standpoint of a Pole. Nevertheless, his contention is not correct. It is not the Russian peasantry, but the Russian nobility, which is strongly alloyed with Mongol-Tatar elements." Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelman* (Moscow-Leningrad: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1934), p. 99.

8. The Problem of the “Nonhistoric Peoples” and Engels’ “False Prognosis”

Hardly any other sociological problem is quite so tricky as the national question, rooted as it is so deeply in the sphere of emotions. This is demonstrated by the example of Engels’ historical construction outlined in the preceding chapter.

The starting point of this historical construction was the historic fact of the Slavic peoples’ “thousand years of subjection” to the Germans and Magyars. We would look in vain for an authentic, materialist explanation of this fact, unless we were to accept as such his reference to the “physical and intellectual power of the German nation”¹ or to the greater “vitality and energy”² of the Hungarians (in contrast to the Slavs’ lack of “active historical forces”).³ And yet what bold conclusions Engels draws from this “thousand years of subjection” in his articles on the Slavs! In his view, all history seemed to have been aimed at the creation and perpetuation of the “spheres of influence” as they existed in 1848; he praises the hegemony of the Germans and Hungarians as the victory of “civilization” over “barbarism,” and divides all the peoples of the Danube region into active and passive, leaders and led, progressive and reactionary. He then arrives at the amazing conclusion that “in Austria...the Germans and the Magyars have assumed the historical initiative, in the year 1848 as in the previous thousand years. *They represent the revolution.*” By contrast, the Slavs, “who have trailed behind the Germans and Magyars for a thousand years, only [!] rose up to establish their national independence in 1848 in order to suppress the German-Magyar revolution at the same time. *They*

represent the counter-revolution.”⁴ The role of the individual peoples of Austria in the revolution of 1848–49 was thus merely a continuation of the role they had been playing for a thousand years; and although the historical stage was constantly changing, the actors and the cast of characters remained ever the same.

Also, if the Slavs of the Danube region had hitherto always been the anvil and never the hammer, if for the past thousand years they had to be pulled in tow by the Germans and Hungarians, was this not proof that these peoples had no more “national vitality” and therefore were not only “nonhistoric” but even *historically unviable*? And furthermore, was it not clear that the “inevitable fate of these dying nations” could only be “to allow this process of dissolution and absorption by their stronger neighbours to complete itself”?⁵ One could not, of course, expect the “obstinate” Slavic peoples to understand this and to renounce their nationality; on the contrary, stirred by a presentiment of their inevitable demise, they clung all the more desperately to their “absurd nationality,” in which they saw a bulwark against “historical progress.” But was this not the general characteristic of *all the “national refuse”* that the “confused and plodding development of history” left in its wake in every corner of Europe?

“There is no country in Europe,” Engels wrote,

that does not possess, in some remote corner, one or more *ruins of peoples*, left over from an earlier population, forced back and subjugated by the nation which later became the repository of historical development.⁶ These remnants of a nation, mercilessly crushed, as Hegel said, by the course of history, this national refuse, *is always the fanatical representative of the counter-revolution and remains so until it is completely exterminated or de-nationalized, as its whole existence is in itself a protest against a great historical revolution.*

In Scotland, for example, the *Gaels*, supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745.

In France the *Bretons*, supporters of the Bourbons from 1792 to 1800.

In Spain the *Basques*, supporters of Don Carlos.

In Austria the pan-Slav South Slavs [in the wider sense], who are nothing more than the national refuse of a thousand years of immensely confused development. It is the most natural thing in the world that this national refuse, itself as entangled as the development which brought it into existence, sees its salvation solely in a reversal of the entire development of Europe, which according to it must proceed not from west to east but from east to west, and that its weapon of liberation, its unifying bond, is the Russian knout.⁷

In Engels’ view, then, the counter-revolutionary conduct of the Austrian Slavs in 1848–49 was nothing exceptional. He believed, rather, that it only confirmed a general historical law, according to which dying nationalities *have to remain counter-revolutionary* to the very end, since their very existence is a “protest against a great historical revolution.”

It is not difficult to see how shaky an argument Engels makes here and how arbitrarily he interprets the real course of history. To refute this

argument one does not even have to refer to later developments (such as the Basques' support of the democratic government against Franco's rebels in the Spanish civil war). It is enough to refer to events which occurred in Engels' own time, the *Irish* people's struggle for independence since the second half of the nineteenth century. For this was a nationality that had been just as counter-revolutionary as the Scottish Gaels⁸ during the great English revolution and consequently (according to Engels' thesis) should have remained counter-revolutionary up to the very end of its existence. And furthermore, the reactionary conduct of the Highland Scots, the Bretons and, perhaps, the Basques proceeded, in the periods Engels refers to, not from the reactionary character of their *nationality*, but from specific social, economic and political conditions that drove this "national refuse" into opposition to the revolution (and so their very nationality became an *expression* of this opposition).

Thus the counter-revolutionary uprisings of the Highland Scots have to be explained in terms of a people still living within the clan organization and therefore opposing capitalist development, which would indeed use them ill in the end.⁹ The counter-revolution in Brittany, just as in neighbouring Vendée, has to be understood above all as a result of the peculiar agrarian structure of this region and of the local peasantry's dissatisfaction (for the most part justified) with the early agrarian legislation of the French revolution. And finally, as for the Basques, they supported Don Carlos because in Spanish absolutism they saw a threat to their "fueros" and to their "altogether democratic"¹⁰ (to quote Marx) organizations of self-government.¹¹ (Not to mention that the struggle between Maria Christina and Don Carlos can hardly be termed a struggle between "revolution" and "counter-revolution.") None of these three cases, then, offer any confirmation of Engels' thesis on the necessarily counter-revolutionary mission of the "ruins of peoples." Once again we are dealing with an arbitrary "historical construction," intended in the first place to prove that the Austrian Slavs too—just like the Gaels and Bretons—were only "national refuse" and that their reactionary role in the revolution of 1848–49 could only point to the impending *demise* of these peoples. And precisely this is the hidden motive behind Engels' analysis.

In summarizing his arguments, Engels says:

At first the year 1848 brought the most frightful confusion to Austria, by momentarily freeing all these different peoples who had hitherto been in thrall to each other through Metternich's agency. Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, Moravians, Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenians, Romanians, Illyrians¹² and Serbs all came into conflict, whilst the individual classes within each of these nations also fought each other. But order soon came into this confusion. The disputants divided into two huge armed camps: on one side, the side of revolution, were the Germans, Poles and Magyars; on the other side, the side of counter-revolution, were the others, i.e., all the Slavs with the exception of the Poles, plus the Romanians and the Saxons of Transylvania.

Then Engels asks: "What is the origin of this line of separation *according to nationality*? On what facts is it based?" This is his answer:

It corresponds to *the whole previous history* of the peoples in question. It is *the beginning of the decision on whether all these great and small nations will live or die.*

The whole previous history of Austria up to the present day is a demonstration of this, and the year 1848 has confirmed it. Amongst all the nations and nationalities of Austria there are only three bearers of progress, which have actively intervened in history and are *still capable of independent life*: Germans, Poles and Magyars. *They are therefore revolutionary now.*

The next mission of all the other great and small peoples is to *perish in the universal revolutionary storm. They are therefore now counter-revolutionary.*¹³

In other words, the history of the Danube realm over the past thousand years not only reveals the ultimate cause of the nationality struggle in Austria in 1848-49, but it also turns out to be the touchstone of the *viability* of these nationalities, a signpost to their *future*. Only the "*historic*," i.e., politically active, nations—the Germans, Hungarians and Poles—retain yet the capacity for independent life, and therefore they act in a revolutionary way; the Slavs, on the other hand, are necessarily counter-revolutionary—they have never yet had a political life of their own and *they never can have one in the future*. History itself has announced the final, decisive verdict on them.

Engels is so thoroughly convinced of the finality and irrevocability of this verdict that he even risks offering this axiomatic statement:

We repeat: apart from the Poles, the Russians and at most the Slavs of Turkey¹⁴ [not of Austria and Hungary!], *no Slav people has a future*, for the simple reason that all the other Slavs lack the primary historical, geographical, political and industrial conditions for a viable independence.

And he continues:

Peoples which have never had a history of their own, which come under foreign domination the moment they have achieved the first, crudest level of civilization, or are forced onto the first level of civilization by the yoke of a foreigner, *have no capacity for survival and will never be able to attain any kind of independence.*

And that has been the fate of the Austrian Slavs.¹⁵

This is Engels' "false prognosis," so ruthlessly denied by the subsequent course of history. It constitutes perhaps the most serious theoretical error of his articles on the Slavs.

The "geographical, political and industrial" impediments to the Slavic movements for independence will be discussed in the next chapter. Here it is enough to say that, however significant these other impediments seemed to Engels, he nonetheless felt they were of less importance than the "historical conditions for independence." For this reason we first of all

have to examine his historico-philosophical conception of "*peoples without history*."

It is obvious that this concept (which goes back to Hegel) was untenable from the outset and that it stood in contradiction to the *materialist conception of history* which Engels himself helped create. For instead of deriving the essence of the nationality struggles and national movements from the constantly changing material conditions and class relations of the peoples involved, the concept of nonhistoricity offers as its *ultima ratio* the notion of "national viability," which smacks of metaphysics, explains absolutely nothing and is altogether like Molière's "dormitive virtue of opium." It seeks the criterion for "national viability" in past history (only a nation which has had a state for a long time is "viable"). Unwittingly, it conforms to the ideas of the historical school of law, derided by Marx,¹⁶ which sanctifies today's and tomorrow's oppression by the oppression of yesterday. (Engels' concept contains additional contradictions and arbitrary elements¹⁷ which we will not go into.)

The concept, however, seemed to provide an excellent weapon to use against "the enthusiastic illusions of the Slavs." How could the "Slavonic visionaries"¹⁸ confront this argument? How could they deny the testimony of history which seemed to speak so unequivocally *against them*? What could they say in response to Engels' derisive argument:

And which nations are supposed to head this great Slav empire [to which the Austrian Slavs allegedly aspired]? Precisely those which have been scattered and split up for a thousand years, for which elements capable of life and development had forcibly to be imported by other, non-Slavic peoples, and which were saved from succumbing to Turkish barbarism by the victorious arms of non-Slavic peoples. Small, powerless nationalities ranging in number from a few thousands [?] to not quite two millions,¹⁹ everywhere separated from each other and robbed of their national strength! So weak have they become that, for example, the people which were most powerful and most terrifying in the Middle Ages, the Bulgars, now have a reputation in Turkey for their meekness and faint-heartedness and regard it as an honour to be called *dobre chrisztian*, good Christian!²⁰

"And if 'eight million Slavs,'" as Bakunin lamented,²¹ "had to allow the four million Magyars to impose their yoke on them for eight centuries, this alone is sufficient proof that the few Magyars had *more vitality and energy* than the many Slavs." And finally: "Does not the fate of the 'twelve million Slavs, Wallachians and Greeks' who have been 'trodden underfoot by seven hundred thousand Ottomans' right up to the present day speak loudly enough?"²²

Undoubtedly, before the tribunal of a "thousand years of history," Bakunin and the nonhistoric Slavs necessarily came off second-best. But as powerful and irrefutable as these historical arguments against the Slavs appeared, just so weak were they in reality. Faced with their opponents' historical claims, which were covered with mould and reeked of old parchment; the "Slavonic visionaries" could oppose to them a fact that was

very concrete and very much alive—the *rebirth* of their nationalities and languages. On the basis of this fact, they could have confidently answered the advocates of the historical principle with Engels' own words, which he once directed against Prussia's "historical pretensions" to the province of Poznań: "And in general, what meaning has this rusted and rotted theory of... 'claims,' which, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, served the purpose of covering up the naked commercial interests and rounding off one's lands? What meaning can it have in 1848 *when the bottom has been knocked out of all 'historical justice' and 'injustice'?*"²³ Why should it concern us, the Slavs could say, if in some bygone era, in which the nobility was generally the decisive class in society, the Magyar nobility—thanks to a specific geopolitical situation—demonstrated "more vitality and energy" than, say, the Croatian nobility? We are alive, we want to stay alive, and that's that.

But more than this, these "visionaries" could have turned the tables on their adversaries and attacked them with their own weapons. Because just as "historic" as the fact of the Slavs' thousand years of subjugation to the Germans and Hungarians was the fact that neither the Germans nor the Hungarians (nor the Poles) succeeded, *despite* this thousand years of subjection, in *assimilating* the nonhistoric Slavic peoples—all the Czechs, Slovenes, Croats, etc. From the standpoint of the historical method of argumentation, this could only mean that the Germans and Hungarians *were not equal* to their "historic mission" and consequently were obliged to give up their hegemony in the Danube region over the peoples they had subjugated.²⁴

But this is enough about the historical argumentation for the unviability of the "nonhistoric" peoples as it is presented in Engels' articles on the Slavs.²⁵ We have to reject this argumentation, since it represents a relic of the idealist interpretation of history and so has no place in Marxism. This does not mean, however, that we can simply relegate Engels as a theoretician of nationality to the ranks of the advocates of the "historical principle." By no means. Because, first, in spite of all his emphasis (and over-emphasis) on historical factors, Engels (as we will soon see) considered the present as decisive as the past in determining the destiny of the nonhistoric peoples. This present was in many respects such that it seemed to offer no chance of development to the peoples in question and therefore seemed to confirm the verdict of "history." Secondly, though Engels was immoderate in his praise of the consequences of the historical process and greatly exaggerated their significance in the case of the Slavs, this was not because he wanted to call a *halt* to the evolution of society, but because he wanted to *propel it forward*. In his own impetuous way he believed that these consequences anticipated what he regarded as the next *task* of history—the abolition of all "particularism," the fusing of Europe's population into ever greater political and economic units. Everything that could help accomplish this end was to be welcomed; everything that threatened to do away with the already existing "centralization" in favour of new "particularisms" had to be rejected as reactionary and

"antihistorical." The closer Engels thought he was to the longed-for socialist transformation of society, the shorter the lifespan he was ready to allot to capitalism, the more he overestimated the tempo of historical evolution—the more decisively he rejected national "particularism." This and *only* this made Engels hold fast to "the consequences of the historical process."

The theory of "historic" and "nonhistoric" peoples is by now long dead, and no one (least of all a Marxist) would want to revive it. Today it only remains for us to explain how a materialist thinker of Engels' stature could have propounded this particular theory.

We first have to note what a striking resemblance it bears to Hegel's theory of history. In Hegel's view, world history represented "the dialectic of several national minds," each of which "is appointed to occupy only *one* grade, and accomplish *one* task in the whole deed," i.e., of the "realization of the mind,"²⁶ so as to let another "world-historical national mind" take its place. However, *not all* peoples were allotted this task, but only those which were capable—thanks to their natural and spiritual abilities—to create a powerful political system that could help them carry out their will at home and abroad. *Only such* peoples were the bearers of historical progress. Peoples, on the other hand, who were unable to establish a state formation or who had the misfortune to lose their state for a long period of time were "nonhistoric"; their sole destiny was to become subject to other peoples and finally to be absorbed by them.²⁷ (Thus Hegel wrote that a people which was indifferent about possessing its own state would soon have to stop being a people.)²⁸ Hegel certainly considered the Slavic peoples of Germany, Austria and Turkey to be among those doomed to destruction, although he only expressly referred to the Bulgarians, Serbs and non-Slavic Albanians as "broken, barbaric remnants."²⁹

This, then, was Hegel's "dialectic of national minds."³⁰ Passing judgment on it today requires little effort, but it is all too easy to forget that, in spite of all its metaphysical arbitrariness, this represented the first attempt to master intellectually the apparent chaos of historical events and to comprehend human history as a *developmental* process that made sense and followed its own laws. This explains why Hegel's contemporaries and disciples were so fascinated by precisely this doctrine (one needs only to read Lassalle for confirmation of this).³¹ But even this grand attempt to comprehend "world history as a whole and the separate peoples as its 'organs'"³² could only retain validity as long as one had to be satisfied with the idealist interpretation of social processes, as long as it was not recognized that the real motive force in human history had to be sought in the evolution of the material forces of production and the class struggles resulting from it. With the emergence of Marx and Engels' materialist interpretation of history, Hegel's "national minds" were dismissed forever³³ and could only continue a minimal existence in textbooks of philosophy.

But how is it to be explained that a year after the *Communist Manifesto* we unexpectedly come across the reappearance of these "national minds" in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* articles on the Slavs? Did this Hegelian reminiscence not bother the paper's editors? Or were there perhaps other, "exoteric" factors that led them to hold on, in spite of everything, to the traditional view?

So once again³⁴ we have to look at the situation of the German "left" in the revolution of 1848–49. As things were, this revolution could only at first bring to power the German bourgeoisie and the Hungarian and Polish nobility allied with it; and their victory necessarily implied increased national oppression for the "nonhistoric" Czechs, Slovaks, Slovenes, Croats, Serbs, Romanians and Ukrainians. The German "left" found it impossible to remove this objective *barrier* to the revolution and to attempt to reconcile irreconcilable contradictions. Instead, it was compelled to take the actual situation into account and to declare the peoples rebelling against the hegemony of the German bourgeoisie and the Hungarian and Polish nobility "natural enemies" of the revolution. It was compelled, in its practical politics, to counterpose entire "revolutionary" *peoples* to entire "counter-revolutionary" *peoples*. But this strange division by nation, instead of by social class, required justification; it had to be derived either from history or from the nature of these nations. In this situation it was only natural that the revolutionary "left" would fall back on the traditional Hegelian doctrine of "historic" and "nonhistoric" peoples; this flight into the realm of historical mythology allowed them to deceive themselves about the fatal objective difficulties surrounding the revolution. The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* found the Hegelian reminiscences extremely handy.

It is our belief, then, that Engels' theory of the "nonhistoric peoples" has to be explained in terms of the objective situation of the Central European revolution of 1848–49. The same cause, in our opinion, also explains *the later fate of this theory*, the tenacity with which Engels persevered for decades in his conviction of the inevitable demise of the Austrian Slavs, in spite of facts that ever more clearly *contradicted this* (here we mean the continued progress of the Slavs' national rebirth). Even in the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s, his conception of the imminent Central European revolution remained basically *the same as in 1848*. He imagined it as an essentially *German* revolution that would have to solve the same problems as before, with the same allies (the Hungarians and the Poles) as well as the same enemies (the nonhistoric Slavs supported by tsarism). (The danger of pan-Slavism must not for a moment be forgotten in this context.) It is no wonder, then, that even later Engels held fast to his original interpretation of the nationality problem and continued to make the distinction between great, historically progressive "nations" and unviable, "nonhistoric ruins of peoples" the cardinal point of his politics on the national question.³⁵

In 1859 he wrote:

No one would venture to say that the map of Europe has been drawn once and for all. But all changes, in so far as they are to be durable, must proceed, in the main, from the principle that the *great* and *viable* European nations be ever more endowed with their authentic, natural borders, determined by language and sympathy; at the same time, the *ruins of peoples*, which are still found here and there and which are no longer capable of national existence, should remain incorporated into the great nations and either be dissolved in them or else remain as ethnographic monuments without any political significance.³⁶

We learn *which* "ruins of peoples" Engels probably had in mind here from some very characteristic passages in a series of articles he published in *The Commonwealth* in 1866:

There is no country in Europe where there are not different nationalities under the same government. The Highland Gaels and the Welsh are undoubtedly of different nationalities to what the English are, although nobody will give to these remnants of peoples long gone by the title of *nations*, any more than to the Celtic inhabitants of Brittany in France. . . .

Here, then, we perceive the difference between the "principle of nationalities"³⁷ and of the old democratic and working-class tenet as to the right of the great European *nations*³⁷ to separate and independent existence. The "principle of nationalities" leaves entirely untouched the great question of the right of national existence for the *historic* peoples of Europe; nay, if it touches it, it is merely to disturb it. The principle of nationalities raises two sorts of questions: first of all, questions of boundary between these great historic peoples; and secondly, questions as to the right to independent national existence of those numerous small relics of peoples which, after having figured for a longer or shorter period on the stage of history, were finally absorbed as integral portions into one or the other of those more powerful nations whose greater vitality enabled them to overcome greater obstacles. The European importance, the vitality of a people is as nothing in the eyes of the principle of nationalities; before it, *the Roumans of Wallachia, who never had a history nor the energy required to have one*, are of equal importance to the Italians who have a history of 2,000 years, and an unimpaired national vitality; the Welsh and Manxmen, if they desired it, would have an equal right to independent political existence, absurd though it would be, with the English. . . .

What is *pan-Slavism* but the application, by Russia and Russian interest, of the *principle of nationalities to the Serbians, Croats, Ruthenes, Slovaks, Czechs and other remnants of bygone Slavonian peoples in Turkey, Hungary and Germany?* . . .

If people say that to demand the restoration of *Poland* is to appeal to the principle of *nationalities*, they merely prove that they do not know what they are talking about, *for the restoration of Poland means the re-establishment of a state composed of at least four³⁸ different nationalities.*³⁹

Thus Engels. One must not, of course, fail to note that the article just cited dealt with two different questions: first, the question of the right of the oppressed nonhistoric peoples to demand political *independence*, to form their own *national state* (what we call today "the right of nations to self-determination"); and secondly, the question of the "historical *viability*," the *national future* of these peoples. Given the context of the time, one can all too readily understand Engels' struggle against "the principle of nationalities" and the use made of it by Russia and Bonapartism; one can also, for example, very well imagine that neither the Ukrainians nor the Belorussians and Lithuanians were mature enough to form their own states in 1866. From this, however, it does not at all follow that one had good reason at that time to consider these peoples *destined to perish*. But Engels' talk of "relics" and "remnants of peoples long gone by" as well as his comparison of the Serbs, Croats, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Czechs, etc., with the Manxmen and Welsh leave no doubt about his views on this matter; they clearly show that—*not only in the revolutionary years of 1848–49, but also a few decades later*—Engels *denied* the national future of these peoples and counted on their absorption, their assimilation by the great "historic" nations. This tendency is discernible in all of Engels' statements on the national question, and we can find echoes of it even in his letters to Bernstein and Kautsky.⁴⁰ So, even two or three decades later, Engels' views amounted to a rigorous *rejection* of the Slavic liberation movements (the Poles always excepted). In essence, his views were like a sign inscribed: "*Nonhistoric peoples not admitted!*" He condemned these movements always as movements that "would tend to undo what a thousand years of history have created," that could not be realized "without sweeping from the map Hungary, Turkey and a large part of Germany."⁴¹ Engels did not recognize that sweeping these powers from the map was objectively necessary and therefore also historically progressive. This constituted the greatest error in his theory of nationality.

Notes

1. See above, p. 108.
2. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, the Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 235.
3. "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 223.
4. Ibid.
5. See above, p. 108.
6. This is an echo of Hegel's philosophy of history.
7. "The Magyar Struggle," pp. 221–22.
8. See Marx's letter to Engels, 30 November 1867, about the "barbarities of Cromwell" in Ireland, as well as Engels' letter to Marx, 24 October 1869: "Irish history shows one how disastrous it is for a nation to have subjected

another nation. All the abominations of the English have their origin in the Irish Pale. I have still to work through the Cromwellian period, but this much seems certain to me, that things would have taken another turn in England too, if it had not been necessary to rule in Ireland by military means and to create a new aristocracy there." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), pp. 184, 209.

9. See Marx, "The Duchess of Sutherland and Slavery," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 11:487-94.
10. "Revolutionary Spain," *New York Daily Tribune*, 24 November 1854, p. 6.
11. "La mayoría de los vascos que participó en aquella lucha civil lo hizo en defensa de sus libertades, más que en la de una causa dinástica." *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, LXVII (Madrid, [1929]), s.v. "Vasconia," p. 159.
12. There was not really an "Illyrian" nationality distinct from the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes; there was only an "Illyrian" movement, founded by Ljudevit Gaj, that aimed at creating a common literary language for the Croats, Serbs and Slovenes.
13. "The Magyar Struggle," pp. 216-17.
14. Engels made this concession to the Slavs of Turkey only because he considered the Turks a "completely decayed nation" (i.e., state). *Ibid.*, p. 220. In another passage, however, he writes: "Finally the Turks...subjugated the Slavs living south of the Danube and the Save. The historical role of the South Slavs had thus come to an end *for all time*." *Ibid.*, p. 218.
15. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 231.
16. A "school of thought that legitimizes the infamy of today with the infamy of yesterday, a school that stigmatizes every cry of the serf against the knout as mere rebelliousness once the knout has aged a little and acquired a hereditary significance and a history." Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction," *Early Writings*, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1975), p. 245.
17. First among these is Engels' "senseless assertion...that the Czech nation never had a history." Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 1:326. Six years later Engels was already writing of "glorious epochs in Bohemian and Serbian history," which did not prevent him, however, from continuing to deny any national future to either people. "Deutschland und der Panslawismus," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke [MEW]*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957-68), 11:196.
18. See above, p. 97.
19. Engels is exaggerating here. According to Šafařík's statistics, reported in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 32, 2 July 1848, p. 2, col. 2, there lived at that time in the Austrian monarchy: 4,414,000 "Czechs and Moravians," 2,774,000 "Little Russians" (Ruthenians), 2,753,000 Slovaks, 2,594,000 "Serbs and Illyrians," 1,151,000 "Slovenes (Carinthians)" and 800,000 Croats; in Turkey: 3,500,000 Bulgarians and 2,600,000 Serbs.
20. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 221.

21. "In the name of those of us who live in Hungary, we offered [at the Prague Slav Congress] an alliance to the Magyars, to the raging enemies of our race, to those who, hardly numbering four million, have yet presumed to impose their yoke on eight million Slavs." Michael Bakunin, *Zwei Schriften aus den 40er Jahren des XIX. Jahrhunderts*, Internationale Bibliothek für Philosophie, Bd. II, no. 11–12 (Prague, 1936), p. 28.
22. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 235.
23. "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," *Collected Works*, 7:340–41.
24. This objection is particularly warranted with respect to Engels, since he considered the capacity to assimilate foreign peoples a touchstone of the strength and viability of a genuine "nation." Thus, in a letter to Marx of 23 May 1851 (a letter that is shocking in its unfriendliness to the Poles), Engels justified the change of his position on the Polish question by this argument, among others: "The Poles have never been able to nationalize foreign elements. The Germans of the cities are and remain German." How well, by contrast, Russia "knows how to assimilate Germans and Jews is tellingly demonstrated by every German Russian of the second generation. Even the Jews there have Slavic cheekbones." *MEW*, 27:267. Also in his work "Germanen- und Slawentum" (1854–55; unfortunately, hitherto unpublished), Engels considered it decisive whether "a resurrected Poland would be capable of assimilating foreign elements." He conceded that the Great Russians, "the semi-barbarians, knew how to assimilate barbaric peoples expertly." Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 2:59.
25. The designation "nonhistoric peoples" has indeed become accepted in Marxist literature, but one understands it in a sense completely different from Engels'. It refers to peoples whose "national culture in that period in which only the ruling classes were bearers of such a culture knew no history and no further development." Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1924), p. 191. Thus understood, the designation "nonhistoric peoples" is a sensible and very apt characterization of the situation of many oppressed peoples of Central and Eastern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
26. *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1894), pp. 275–76.
27. "In the existence of a *nation* the substantial aim is to be a state and preserve itself as such. A nation with no state formation . . . has, strictly speaking, no history—like the nations which existed before the rise of states and others which still exist in a condition of savagery." *Ibid.*, p. 277.
28. Hermann Heller, "Hegel und die deutsche Politik," *Zeitschrift für Politik* 13 (1923–24): 133.
29. Cited in Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 1:326. For the rest, Hegel restricted himself to the following remark on the Slavs: "The *Sclavonian nations* were *agricultural*. This condition of life brings with it the relation of lord and serf. In agriculture the agency of nature predominates; human industry and subjective activity are on the whole less brought into play in this department of labour than elsewhere. The Sclavonians therefore did not attain so quickly or readily as other nations the fundamental sense of pure individuality—the consciousness of Universality—that which we designated above as 'political power,' and could not share the benefits of dawning freedom [the

Reformation].” Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 420. On the Slavs’ reaction to this doctrine, see below, p. 178, note 56.

30. One can concede to the Ukrainian socialist (and later fascist) Dmytro Dontsov that Hegel’s conception, devoid as it was of all sentimentality, was superior to the shallow liberal (“Mazzinist”) position on the national question; the latter only knew how to treat national problems from the standpoint of abstract justice (“*justice éternelle*”). Dmytro Dontsov, “Engel’s, Marks i Liassal’ pro ‘neistorychni natsii,’” *Literaturno-naukovy visnyk*, year XVII (1914), vol. LXV, book 2 (February), pp. 312–32, book 3 (March), pp. 479–91; reprinted as a separate brochure (Kiev, 1918). On the other hand, however, it cannot be denied that precisely Hegel’s “unsentimental” conception was excellently suited to serve later as a cloak for chauvinist and imperialist aims.

Cf. Engels’ letter to Bernstein, 22 February 1882: “That my letter does not convert you is quite understandable, since you already had certain sympathies for the ‘oppressed’ South Slavs. We all, indeed, had originally carried over such sympathies for all ‘oppressed’ nationalities, in as much as we first passed through stages of liberalism or radicalism. And I know how much time and study it has cost me to get rid of them, but I ultimately got rid of them once and for all.” *MEW*, 35:278.

31. Consider the following passage from Lassalle: “The right of national minds to their own existence depends precisely on whether or not a national mind is developing in its own way and keeping pace with the cultural process of the whole. Otherwise conquest becomes a right, and that either *a priori* or it will prove to be so afterwards. The test for this right in the case of the conquest of a people of a different race is the *extinction* of that people, in the case of the conquest of a people of the same race—the *assimilation* of that people, the absorption of that people into the conqueror’s higher cultural sphere.” “Der italienische Krieg und die Aufgabe Preussens” (1859), in Ferdinand Lassalle, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, ed. Eduard Bernstein, 12 vols. (Berlin, 1919–20), 1:34. No wonder that Lassalle sympathized with the colonial fantasies of Johann Karl Rodbertus-Jagetzow! (See Lassalle’s correspondence with Rodbertus.)
32. Lenin, “Conspectus of Hegel’s Book *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*,” *Collected Works*, 45 vols. (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960–70), 38:311.
33. “In general [Hegel’s] philosophy of history yields very, very little—this is comprehensible, for it is precisely here, in this field, in this science, that Marx and Engels made the greatest step forward. Here most of all, Hegel is obsolete and antiquated.” *Ibid.*, 38:314.
34. See above, p. 89.
35. But official Marxist theory never wanted to admit this. So we read, for example, in Kautsky: “In the middle of the previous century, it was not yet clear that in our era it is no longer so easy as it was in the eighteenth century . . . to impose the rulers’ language on a backward people ruled by a people at a higher level of development. Thus Marx and Engels in 1848, enraged by the support that the counter-revolution received from several Slavic peoples, could consider these peoples to be under just such a sentence of doom as were the Gaels and Bretons. This was a great error. And later

on, our teachers did not express themselves in this way again." *Die materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1927), 2:582. Emphasis added.

36. "Po und Rhein," 13:267.
 37. Engels' emphasis.
 38. That is, the Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians and Lithuanians.
 39. "What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?" in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The First International and After*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1974), pp. 383–85.
 40. Engels to Kautsky, 7 February 1882: "Now you could ask me whether I have, then, no sympathy at all for the small Slavic peoples and ruins of peoples who are split up from one another by the three wedges driven into Slavdom: the German, Magyar and Turkish wedges. In fact, I have damned little. The Czech-Slovak cry of distress—'*Bože! ... Ach nikdo není na zemi, kdoby Slavum spravedlivost činil?*' [O God, is there no one left on earth who will do the Slavs justice?—is answered in Petersburg, and the entire Czech national movement is aimed at getting the tsar [to do them justice] *spravedlivost činiti*. It is the same with the others too: the Serbs, Bulgarians, Slovenes and Galician Ruthenians (at least in part). And this is a goal we cannot champion. Only after the collapse of tsardom, when the national aspirations of these dwarf-peoples cease to be mixed up with pan-Slavic tendencies to world domination, only then can we allow them to be free; and I am sure that six months of independence will suffice to induce most of the Austro-Hungarian Slavs to implore to be taken back once more. But in no case will one concede to these little peoples the right that they have ascribed to themselves in Serbia, Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia: *to hinder the extension of the European railway network to Constantinople*." *MEW*, 35:272–73. Emphasis added.
- See also Engels' letter to Bebel, 17 November 1885, in which he speaks of the "pitiable splinters of former nations—the Serbs, Bulgarians, Greeks and other robber riff-raff." *MEW*, 36:390.
- Perhaps these statements will sound less strange when we consider that even Kautsky, writing in social democracy's representative theoretical organ, *Neue Zeit*, as late as 1887 (!) still argued that the Czechs had no future as a separate nationality. "Die moderne Nationalität," *Neue Zeit* 5 (1887): 447. (There will be more on this subject in the next chapter.)
41. [Engels], "Panslavism," in Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: S. Sonnenschein & co., 1897), p. 544.

9. The Realistic Side of Engels' Prognosis

Up to this point we have dealt only with the *historical* foundation of Engels' prognosis. But in addition to this more or less "speculative" aspect, his prognosis also had its *realistic* side which applied to the contemporary situation of the Slavs and their national movements. We refer here to "the primary . . . geographical, political, industrial [and literary] conditions for a viable independence,"¹ from the lack of which—just as from the "nonhistoricity" of the Austrian Slavs—Engels derived the inevitable failure of their aspirations. In his articles on the Slavs, we find passages dealing with this realistic aspect:

If the Austrian Slavs formed a *compact mass* like the Poles, Magyars or Italians, if they were in a position to gather from twelve to twenty million people in a state, their claims would have a serious character despite everything. But the actual situation is the precise opposite of this. The Germans and the Magyars have inserted themselves between the Slavs like a broad wedge up to the outermost end of the Carpathians, almost up to the Black Sea[?]; they have separated the Czechs, Moravians and Slovaks from the South Slavs by a zone some sixty to eighty miles wide. Five and a half million Slavs live to the north of this zone; five and a half million Slavs live to the south of it. They are divided by a compact mass of ten to eleven million Germans and Magyars, who are allies by history and by necessity.²

What strikes us first in this passage is the emphasis on the "necessary alliance" of the Germans and Hungarians against the Slavs. (Similarly, Engels elsewhere refers to the Slavs as the Magyars' "natural enemies.")³ This certainly very strange method of argumentation results from his preceding historical analysis, in which he interpreted the struggle between

the Germans and Hungarians, on the one hand, and the Slavs, on the other, partly as a struggle between hostile races.⁴ (It is from this point of view too that we have to understand his argument about the German-Magyar wedge driven into the mass of Slavdom, which Engels repeated as late as the 1880s.)⁵ But aside from this, his argument here is very weak, because the Austrian Slavs in 1848 and later by no means aimed at establishing a unified Slavic state stretching from the Adriatic to the Giant Mountains; instead, following their "healthy" national egoisms, they only strove for the creation of their own individual national states. Engels himself felt the weakness of his argumentation, and so posed the question: "But why shouldn't the five and a half million Czechs, Moravians and Slovaks be able to form a state? And the five and a half million South Slavs, together with the Turkish Slavs?"

This was his answer:

Inspect the distribution of the Czechs and their linguistically related neighbours on the first linguistic map you find. They are inserted into Germany like a wedge, but they are gnawed at and forced back on both sides by the German element. A third of Bohemia speaks German; there are seventeen Germans to every twenty-four Czechs in Bohemia. And it is precisely the Czechs who are to form the nucleus of the intended Slav state; for the Moravians are just as heavily mixed with Germans, the Slovaks with Germans and Magyars, and moreover they are entirely demoralized as far as nationality is concerned. What a Slav state, which would be ultimately dominated by the German bourgeoisie of the towns!⁶

So much for the Czechs and Slovaks. The situation of the South Slavs too appeared no less hopeless to Engels. Here the first item for consideration is his geographical argument. Engels writes:

The Slovenes and Croats cut off Germany and Hungary from the Adriatic; and Germany and Hungary cannot allow themselves to be cut off from the Adriatic, owing to "geographical and commercial necessities" which are admittedly no obstacle for Bakunin's imagination, but which exist all the same and are just as much matters of life and death for Germany and Hungary as the Baltic coast from Gdańsk to Riga is for Poland.⁷ And where the existence of *great nations* and the free development of their resources is at stake, nothing will be decided by such sentimental factors as deference to a few dispersed Germans or Slavs. Not to mention the fact that these South Slavs are similarly mixed up with German, Magyar and Italian elements, that here too the projected South Slav state breaks up into disconnected fragments with the first glance at the language map, and that, at best, the whole state would be delivered into the hands of the *Italian bourgeoisie* of Trieste, Rijeka and Zara, and the *German bourgeoisie* of Zagreb, Ljubljana, Karlovac, Zemun, Pančevo and Bela Crkva.

Engels concludes his arguments by asking: "But couldn't the Austrian South Slavs link up with the Serbs, Bosniaks, Morlaks⁸ and Bulgars?" His answer is that the mutual antipathy of the Turkish and Austrian Slavs eliminates the possibility of establishing a common state for them both.⁹

Thus Engels. Here we still have to mention his references to the lack of a "national historical tradition" among the Austrian Slavs and to the character of their languages as mere patois¹⁰—and that is all that can be found in his articles about the geographic, political, industrial and literary "conditions for a viable independence" for these Slavs. It is really not much, and his arguments are of very uneven value. We no longer need to deal with his views that the Adriatic Sea is indispensable to Germany and that neither Germany nor Hungary would tolerate "the forcible detachment and independent establishment" of the Slavs' "small and unviable independent states."¹¹ We can also pass up his greatly exaggerated assertion that the South Slav regions are so mixed with linguistically foreign elements that a South Slav state would have to break up "into disconnected fragments." Very *strong*, by contrast, are his arguments against the creation of a *Czech* state. A "glance at the language map" really is all it takes to recognize the extremely precarious geographical position of the Czech nationality, which is situated "in the middle of Germany." In the case of the Czechs, then, Engels' "geographical" argument is fairly plausible. It is not for nothing that we constantly find this argument in later political literature as well, up until the collapse of Austria-Hungary.¹² And although recent history has invalidated (we hope, once and for all) Engels' thesis on the impossibility of an independent *Czech state*, it has also in a certain sense proved him right.¹³ For the Czechoslovak state created in 1918 was not set up as a national state, but as a multinational state; and even as such it was only able to hold its ground for a relatively short period of time. And if now [1948] the Czechs have resorted to the dubious measure of evacuating three and a half million Sudeten Germans, this only proves that geography was *against them*. And for this very reason they are trying to escape from their unfortunate situation by a forcible amendment of their demographic situation.

Engels makes an even stronger and more important case when he refers to the *undeveloped class structure of the Austrian Slavs*, when he asserts that even if these peoples did establish their own national states, *it would not be the Austrian Slavs who ruled these states, but rather the German bourgeoisie in the cities*.¹⁴ This argument hits the nail on the head. In actual fact, the Slavs of Austria could not achieve state independence as long as they had not developed their own national bourgeoisie and their own proletariat, as long, that is, as they remained purely peasant peoples. Engels, however, was far from considering the possibility that the class structure of the nonhistoric Slavs might change; on the contrary, he was convinced that the advance of capitalism would bring about the final Germanization (or Magyarization) of the Slavic cities and, in the longer run, of the Slavic hinterland as well. In this respect, Engels' false prognosis must be considered the first theoretical formulation of the sentiments which long prevailed among the German (or Germanized) cadres of the urban proletariat in the West Slavic lands. Such sentiments inevitably emerged wherever the unevenness of historical development had led to a

temporary denationalization of the cities and to the emergence of linguistically and ethnically foreign islands within the territory of the nonhistoric peoples. It is therefore no accident that we constantly run across similar false prognoses also in the later history of the workers' movement. As late as 1887, for example, Kautsky wrote this about the Czech question:

The fanatic opponents of German, those to whom ignorance of this language appears to be a national virtue, are the Young Czechs, the representatives of the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie. For this milieu, indeed, the knowledge of German is not an economic necessity; *but the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie are destined to die out, together with the language they speak.* The more these strata recede into the background and the more capitalism develops, *the less important economically will Czech become and the more important will German become.* Any attempt to impede the progress of the German language in Bohemia must ultimately amount to *an impeding of this land's economic development.* The advancement of the Czech nationality hardly signifies any longer the advancement of economic development.¹⁵

And that same year, Viktor Adler argued in Vienna's *Gleichheit* that for Austria the language of social democracy is German, because only the knowledge of this language gives workers freedom of movement and access to socialist literature. As Germans, Adler said, we can be indifferent whether the Czechs learn German or not, *but as social democrats we must wish them to do so!*¹⁶ The two most representative social democrats of Austria express here—albeit in a very vulgarized form—the very same viewpoint that Engels had used as the basis of his prognosis.

We run across almost identical arguments, however, in the *Polish* and *Russian* socialist movement as well. For example, when Rosa Luxemburg opposed the recognition of a separate delegation of "Lithuanian social democracy" at the 1904 international socialist congress, she argued thus: "As far as I am aware, the 'indigenous Lithuanian population,'" of whom the organ of Lithuanian social democracy, *Darbininku Balsas* (Voice of the People), spoke, "is mainly restricted to the *peasantry*, while at most *only the most backward* of the urban workers *use the Lithuanian language.*" And she ridiculed the "presumption" of the Lithuanian social democrats, who championed the creation of an independent Lithuanian republic: "Why not at the same time 'create' an 'independent Samogitian'¹⁷ republic' too—exclusively, of course, 'in the interests of the proletariat'?"¹⁸ (Fourteen years later there did emerge an independent Lithuanian republic, but no "Samogitian" republic.)

The views of Russian social democracy did not differ. Plekhanov's circle in Geneva, for example, published a brochure entitled *The Blind Alley of Ukrainian Socialism in Russia*;¹⁹ the author considered the Ukrainian movement to be a superfluous, utopian invention:

The abolition of serfdom, universal conscription, the development of commerce and industry, the steady growth of the homeless agrarian proletariat, the influence of the administration, railroads and schools (in so far as they exist), the influence of the church and religious sects, *the influence of urban life and civilization*—these are the factors that have definitively merged the rural population of Ukraine, even *linguistically*, . . . into a sphere of influences shared with Russia.²⁰

Without doubt, this curious brochure expressed sentiments and prejudices that retained their hold on Russian socialists for a very long time. For just *how long* a time is best demonstrated by the events of the October revolution. In the 1920s, the leader of the Communist party of Soviet Ukraine still advocated openly the so-called “theory of the struggle of two cultures.” This was the Ukrainian party’s secretary, Dmitrii Lebed. The essence of his peculiar theory was this:

In Ukraine urban culture is Russian; Ukrainian culture is rural. *The proletariat has an urban, Russian culture. The future belongs to the proletarian culture, i.e., to the urban culture, i.e., to Russian culture.* Life itself will effect an assimilation of the Ukrainian language to Russian, a union of proletarian and peasant, urban and rural, Ukrainian and Russian cultures into a single culture, namely, *Russian culture*. The country’s industrial development dictates the ascendancy of the urban, proletarian, that is, Russian, culture. Therefore, though at present the Communist party helps the peasant to develop his rural Ukrainian culture, it . . . must . . . work towards the inevitable victory of Russian culture in the struggle between these cultures, a struggle that is rooted in the very life of our country.²¹

The purpose of this whole digression was to show how much Engels’ error was “conditioned by the times” and how deeply this error was rooted in the actual situation that the early workers’ movement faced. Nonetheless, alongside the assimilation of the cities and the industrial population, there were also at work, even then, strong countervailing tendencies which manifested themselves in the national awakening of the nonhistoric peoples. The support these national movements found and their evident potential to develop into a real power seemed to admit of a simple explanation: as the capitalist mode of production gained ground and changed the peasants’ relation to the landlord, it also woke the peasants (these “barbarians in the midst of civilization”)²² from their centuries-long slumber and it drove them into the modern movement. “And since the movement of the peasants, who are always the bearers of national and local narrow-mindedness, is necessarily a local and national movement, the old national conflicts re-emerged at the same time.”²³ But the peasantry as a class could be considered historically obsolete, and so too could the national movements which represented the Slavic peasants. (So, at least, thought Engels and his successors.)

Here another question crops up—again, one that Engels himself has posed. In August 1848 he wrote: "The big agrarian countries between the Baltic and the Black Sea can free themselves from patriarchal feudal barbarism *only by an agrarian revolution*, which turns the peasants who are serfs or liable to compulsory labour into free landowners, a revolution which would be similar to the French revolution of 1789 in the countryside."²⁴

It was precisely the agrarian revolution that Engels saw as the surest guarantee of the re-establishment of an independent Poland:

What is the reason for the inexorable, the iron necessity for Poland's liberation? It is the fact that the rule of the aristocracy in Poland... is today just as antiquated and hollow as was the democracy of the lower nobility in 1772. It is the fact that the establishment of a form of agrarian democracy has become vital to Poland, not only politically but also socially; the fact that agriculture, the source of existence of the Polish people, will be ruined, if the peasants who are serfs or liable to labour services, do not become free landowners, and the fact that *an agrarian revolution cannot possibly be carried through without simultaneously winning a national existence...*²⁵

Engels' argument raises these questions: Why should not the same also hold true for the Slavic regions of Austria, Hungary and Turkey? Was not "agrarian democracy" a vital social concern in these regions as well? Why would not the achievement of such democracy have led here too to "winning a national existence," and why was this a possibility for Poland alone?

The Polish nobility's struggle against the "three autocrats of the East" (Russia, Prussia and Austria) was, of course, inextricably bound up with the course of democracy and revolution in Central and Western Europe. (It was just this fact that gave the Polish question its international significance.) But was there more to it than that? At least Engels thought so:

The old Poland of the noblemen's democracy died and was buried long since;...but the "hero" of this tragedy²⁶ has produced a strapping son,...who is still only preparing to act out *his* drama and to put his shoulder to the "revolving wheels of history," but who is bound to achieve success. This son is the Poland of *peasant* democracy.²⁷

But Engels was to be cruelly disappointed in this hope; however unflinching the Polish nobles were in the fight for their country's independence, they were never ready to relinquish their class rule over the peasantry, and they were in no hurry for "peasant democracy" to take hold in Poland.²⁸ Yet, these illusions help us to understand why Engels made an exceptional case of Poland and only in the case of Poland derived the necessity of an independent "national existence" from the necessity of "agrarian democracy." By contrast, he felt that the nonhistoric Slavic peasant peoples would obviously share the fate of the Provençals, who ultimately became Frenchmen during the French revolution and "in

reparation for their nationality" received democracy from the Convention.²⁹ But was not this perspective too based on equally hopeless illusions? How could the Hungarian and Polish landed nobility bring agrarian democracy to the Serbian, Slovak, Romanian and Ukrainian peasant masses if they did not even concede such democracy to their own peasantry? Moreover, neither did the *German bourgeoisie* exhibit the slightest desire to compensate the Slavic peasant peoples in *this* way for the loss of their nationality!

Notwithstanding the illusions Engels (necessarily) held about the revolutionary mission of Hungarian and Polish noble democracy, he recognized already in 1848 the interrelation between the "agrarian revolution" and the national question. (This demonstrates the fruitfulness of the materialist conception of history that Engels, together with Marx, discovered.) Only by following in his footsteps could Engels' Austrian disciples, Kautsky and Bauer, later explain the national rebirth of the Slavic peasant peoples as the result of the way capitalist development changed their social structures.

Engels himself, to be sure, could not comprehend the historical inevitability of this process; in fact, he *had* to misunderstand it. This was not only because the process was then still in its most embryonic stages; much more important and essential were the reasons already adduced. First, the situation during the revolution of 1848 was complex and confusing, and the counter-revolutionary role of the Slavic peoples made a correct and objective evaluation of the Slavic question extremely difficult, especially for a German revolutionary. Secondly, at that time the "historic nations" still had a real chance to attach the peasant masses of the nonhistoric peoples to themselves; bold revolutionary politics and the implementation of "agrarian democracy" by the historic nations could have induced the nonhistoric peoples to abandon their national separatism.³⁰ (The experiences of the French and even the English revolutions, which Engels and Marx studied so assiduously, seem to confirm this.)³¹ But we are now touching upon a question that deserves separate treatment.

Notes

1. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 231 (and 237).
2. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
3. "The Magyars are therefore surrounded on three sides by natural enemies." "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, p. 223.
4. The following passage is from Engels' article, "Panslavism" (1855): "The Slavonic race, long divided by internal conquests; repelled towards the East by Germans; subjugated, in part, by Turks, Germans, Hungarians; quickly reuniting its branches, after 1815, by the gradual rise of Panslavism, would

then for the first time assert its unity, and, in doing so, declare war to the knife against *the Romano-Celtic and Germanic races* which have hitherto ruled the Continent." [Engels,] in Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: S. Sonnenschein & co., 1897), p. 544.

5. See note 40 of the preceding chapter.
6. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 232-33.
7. In his series of articles on Poland, Engels wrote: "Needless to say, it is not a question of restoring a bogus Poland, but of restoring the state upon a viable foundation. Poland must have at least [!] the dimensions of 1772, she must comprise not only the territories but also the estuaries of her big rivers and at least a large seaboard on the Baltic." "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 7:352. But cf. note 55 on p. 122, as well as what Mayer says about Engels' policy in regard to Poland in 1881: "Only 'if necessary,' would he cede to the new Poland a little piece of Prussian Poland as well...." Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:462.
8. "Morlaks... are a South Slavic tribe in northern Dalmatia..., numbering about 100,000 people. The Morlaks speak Serbian and belong to the Oriental church." *Der grosse Brockhaus*, 20 vols. (Leipzig, 1928-35), s.v. "Morlaken."
9. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 233.
10. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 221.
11. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 237.
12. Thus, for example, "at the Prague party congress of Czech social democracy (December 1913), which discussed the national question as well as the question of establishing a Bohemian state, the moderate national trend led by Deputy Dr. Šmeral was victorious over the radical nationalists led by Deputy Johanis. Šmeral's programme was the same as it is today [1917]: the achievement of national autonomy within the framework of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.... In his detailed argumentation for the resolution, Šmeral declared that the establishment of a completely independent Bohemian state would be the greatest misfortune that could befall the Czech people, since this state would become a plaything for the neighbouring Great Powers. *A third of the inhabitants* of the state would be *Germans*, who would find a powerful protector in the neighbouring German Reich. This would be a source of perpetual conflict. Bohemia does not have a border on the sea, and therefore it would always be economically dependent on those nations that possess a sea coast. In consideration of the Germans and for reasons of national justice, Czech social democracy must renounce the Bohemian right to statehood." Emil Strauss, "Die tschechische Sozialdemokratie und der böhmische Staat," *Der Kampf* 10 (1917): 279-80.
13. We emphasize that we mean the Czech *state*, and not the national existence of the Czech people in general. (Only with this reservation can we consider Engels' view to be to some extent justified.)
14. We can hardly speak of a Hungarian bourgeoisie at that time, since only the rudiments of this class were beginning to emerge. The absence of a Magyar bourgeoisie, however, did not prevent Franz Mehring from stating: "When Marx and Engels were writing about these things [i.e., about the role of the Austrian nations in 1848-49], of all the nations of the Danubian realm only

the Germans and Magyars had completely *developed modern class structures*; they were the bearers of the revolution, while the other nations were helpless ruins, spineless tools for all reactionary bailiff duty." Franz Mehring, "Historisch-materialistische Literatur," *Neue Zeit* 35, Bd. 2 (1906-07): 507. It did not occur to Mehring that the development of industry and a "modern class structure" had gone much further in Bohemia and Moravia by 1848 than it had in contemporary Hungary.

15. Karl Kautsky, "Die moderne Nationalität," *Neue Zeit* 5 (1887): 447. It would be difficult to find a more primitive, more vulgarly "materialistic" treatment of this question.
16. O.B., "Tschechische Parteiliteratur," *Der Kampf* 3 (1909-10): 144.
17. Samogitia (Lithuanian: Žemaičiai) is the name of the western part of Lithuania situated between East Prussia and Kurland; its population is thoroughly Lithuanian.
18. Letter of Rosa Luxemburg to the organ of Russian social democracy, *Iskra*, 25 July 1904, no. 70, p. 8.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Luxemburg's party comrades in the periodical *Przegląd Robotniczy*: "The Lithuanian nationality is vanishing. Simultaneously the working class is developing and becoming imbued with consciousness and solidarity. In Lithuania, as everywhere else, the working class has its own separate class interests. It has nothing in common with the question of nationality and federation." Cited by Ludwik Kulczycki [Mieczysław Mazowiecki], *Historia ruchu socjalistycznego w zaborze rosyjskim* (Cracow, 1903), p. 406.

No wonder that the Polish social democrats had no qualms about calling their party "Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania" (SDKPL).

19. The style and contents of the brochure definitely indicate that Plekhanov himself wrote it, at least in part.
20. O. P[olinkovskii], *O bezvykhodnosti ukrainskogo sotsializma v Rossii* (Geneva, 1891), p. 34.
21. Cited in Mykola Skrypnyk, "Do teorii borot'by dvokh kul'tur," *Nasha pravda*, 1926, no. 6-7, p. 21.

"In 1923," writes a very authoritative witness, "I proposed to the party conference of the Bolsheviks of the Ukraine that functionaries should be able to speak and write the idiom of the surrounding population. How many ironical remarks were made about this proposal, in the main by the Jewish intelligentsia who spoke and read Russian and did not wish to learn the Ukrainian language!" Leon Trotsky, "Thermidor and Anti-Semitism," *The New Internationalist* 7 (1941): 92.

22. Engels, "Von Paris nach Bern," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe* [MEGA] (Frankfurt a.M., Berlin, Moscow, 1927-35), Abt. III, 7:542.
23. "The Magyar Struggle," p. 215.
24. "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," 7:351.
25. *Ibid.*, 7:363.
26. A reference to the speech of deputy Jordan in the Frankfurt parliament. Jordan admitted that Poland was the hero of a "true tragedy," but he was also emphatic that this did not justify the Polish case: "The desire to restore

Poland simply because her ruin justly fills us with sorrow is, to my mind, imbecile sentimentality." Ibid., p. 362.

27. Ibid., pp. 363–64. Engels' emphasis. But three years later Engels wrote to Marx: "The more I reflect on history, the more clearly I understand that the Poles are a *nation foutue*, that they can be used as an instrument only as long as Russia itself is not drawn into an agrarian revolution. From that moment on Poland will have absolutely no *raison d'être*. The Poles have done nothing else in history but engage in valorous and pugnacious stupidity. It is impossible to find a single moment when Poland, even in relation to Russia, successfully represented progress or accomplished anything of historical significance.... Fortunately, in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* we have assumed no positive obligations in respect to the Poles except for the unavoidable one of the restoration of Poland with suitable borders, and this only on the condition of an agrarian revolution. *I am convinced that this revolution will be completed in Russia sooner than in Poland* because of the national character and the more developed bourgeois elements in Russia. What is Warsaw and Cracow compared to Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, etc.!" Letter of 23 May 1851, in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* [MEW], 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957–68), 27:266–67. This letter shows great foresight; nonetheless, its political conclusions can only be considered deplorable.
28. Mehring remarks that the events of 1846 in Galicia demonstrated "how far the Poles were from a peasant democracy." Franz Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lasalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:36.
29. We are referring here to Engels' polemic against the speech of the "humane Citizen Ruge" in the Frankfurt parliament. Engels used a comparison between the Provençals and the Poles to prove Ruge wrong. Here is the passage that is most relevant to our theme: "The Southern French nationality was, in the Middle Ages, no closer to the Northern French nationality than the Polish nationality is now to the Russian. In the Middle Ages, the Southern French nation, commonly called the Provençal nation, achieved not only a 'remarkable development' [Ruge's phrase], it even led European development. It was the first modern nation to have a literary language.... The Southern French vied with the Castilians, the Northern French and the English Normans in the perfection of feudal chivalry and were equal to the Italians in industry and commerce.... Nevertheless, like the Poles, they were first partitioned between Northern France and England and later completely subjugated by the Northern French.... The Southern French fought against their oppressors for centuries—but historical development was inexorable. After a struggle lasting three centuries, their beautiful language was reduced to a patois and they themselves were turned into Frenchmen. Northern French despotism ruled over Southern France for three hundred years, and only then did the Northern French make amends for their oppressive rule—by destroying the last vestiges of Southern French independence. The Constituent Assembly divided up the independent provinces, and it was the iron fist of the Convention that first turned the inhabitants of Southern France into Frenchmen and, in reparation for their nationality, gave them democracy.... But the subjugation of Southern France by the Northern French has never been called a 'shameful injustice' [as Ruge designated the subjugation of Poland]. What is the reason, Citizen Ruge? Either the

subjugation of Southern France is a shameful injustice, or the subjugation of Poland is not a shameful injustice.... What is the difference between the Poles and the peoples of Southern France? [The difference is that] Southern France became the *reactionary* section of France.... It became the principal support of feudalism and has remained the backbone of the French counter-revolution up to now. *Poland*, on the other hand, became the *revolutionary part of Russia, Austria and Prussia*.... Its opposition to its oppressors was, at the same time, *opposition to the great aristocracy in Poland itself*. This... guarantees the restoration of Poland and makes it inevitable." "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," 7:372-73.

30. "Would a re-established Poland be capable of assimilating foreign elements? Engels [in his hitherto unpublished fragment, "Germanen- und Slaventum"] made the answer to this question dependent upon whether Poland could succeed in *creating a free peasantry*, or more generally, whether it could develop into a free peasant state." Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 2:59.

The accuracy of Engels' judgement here can perhaps best be shown by the example of the Ukrainians. Even in 1848 a small part of the Ukrainian intelligentsia (e.g., the writer Ivan Vahylevych) considered themselves Poles, and as late as 1863 some Ukrainian intellectuals participated in the Polish insurrection. Among the latter was the author's great-grandfather; the author's grandfather, however, was already a fervent Ukrainian patriot and an opponent of Polish and Russian rule. Had the Polish middle and petty nobility actually been what Marx and Engels considered them, i.e., the East European counterparts of the Jacobins, and had they indeed brought about the social liberation of the Ukrainian peasant masses, then perhaps there would be no "Ukrainian question" today. (The same also holds true *mutatis mutandis* for the "Great Russian democrats" of the time. But since the Polish nobility was not what Marx and Engels imagined, since it squandered the last chance that history offered it, the Ukrainian people was spontaneously reborn, and today the assimilation of the Ukrainians—whether by the Poles or by the Russians—seems to be outside the realm of possibility.

31. See Otto Bauer's excellent study, "Die Bedingungen der nationalen Assimilation," *Der Kampf* 5 (1911-12): 257. "National assimilation is effected most easily during periods of great economic, social, political and religious struggles. When conflicts over mankind's great concerns arouse the passions, national differences appear insignificant to people and they are therefore ready to assume a foreign nationality. This is why whole peoples were assimilated during the Reformation and the great English and French revolutions. Because Marx and Engels believed that *the revolution of 1848 would initiate a decades-long revolutionary epoch in Europe*, they expected rapid assimilation of the Czechs, Slovenes and Ruthenians. They banked on the assimilatory power generated by every revolutionary movement."

10. The Peasant Question and the National Question

Whatever importance one assigns to each of the individual factors that influenced the nationality politics of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, at least this much is clear: since Engels absolved the Germans and Hungarians of their sins of oppression against the Slavs, and since he denied the subjugated Slavic peoples any right to their own national existence, he necessarily could not find the path to understanding the nationality problems of Austria. In particular, he could not, with this viewpoint, bring himself to admit that those sins of oppression were among the most decisive causes of the *defeat* of the revolution of 1848–49. The revolution “was wrecked as much by the Germans’ aspirations for supremacy over the Czechs and Italians and by the Hungarians’ aspirations for hegemony over the Croats as by the Slavs’ counter-revolutionary conduct, which was a reaction to these aims”; and, as Kautsky rightly stressed, these experiences offered a single lesson for the future: “Every modern revolutionary movement does great harm to itself when it abandons the internationalist position of the self-determination of nations.”¹ But (and this is a point in which we differ from Kautsky and others who have written on this subject), the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*’s error was graver, its origins lay deeper than one generally assumes. Behind the false evaluation of the national struggles of 1848–49 lay the failure to recognize the *social* contradictions at the root of these struggles. Reading Engels’ articles against the Slavs, one cannot but notice how, on the one hand, he ridicules the internal weakness of the Slavic national movements and their lack of a “mass base,”² but on the other hand, he ascribes to these same Slavic movements an uncanny power to determine the outcome of the

Austrian revolution and to bring about its defeat.³ How can this be reconciled? And when is Engels closer to the truth: when he *underestimates* or when he *overestimates* the strength of the Slavs' national movements?

Strangely enough, he seems to be right in both cases. The *peasant masses*, the main component of Austria's nonhistoric peoples, were indeed as yet very little nationally-conscious in 1848. Their "national consciousness" (if one can use this term at all) was at most of a purely *negative* nature; it was merely a consciousness that they spoke a different language and, in some cases, belonged to a different religion *than did their landlords*. This was true of the Serbian, Slovene, Ukrainian, Slovak and even Czech peasant masses (although the national rebirth had begun earlier among the Czechs, and the Czech peasants in general stood at a higher level of civilization than the other Slavic peasants of Austria). But the *Polish* peasants of Western Galicia were also so remote from a Polish national consciousness that *they did not even want to be called Poles* and used this name only in reference to the hated landlords and their dependents as well as in reference to the urban bourgeoisie and intelligentsia.⁴ (It was only in the 1880s and 1890s that an authentic, cultural-political national consciousness began to take shape among the Polish and Ukrainian peasants of Galicia.)⁵ It is therefore absolutely true that in 1848-49 the national movements of the Slavs were restricted to a thin stratum of intellectuals and petty bourgeois and lacked a mass constituency among the "people" itself. In this, Engels made no mistake (even though he incorrectly interpreted this fact as proof of the "unviability" of the peoples in question).

He was also on the whole correct when he maintained that the Slavs of Austria in 1848 "fell in as one man under the banner of counter-revolution" and thereby contributed greatly to the defeat of the revolution. However, these Slavs (i.e., primarily the Slavic peasant masses) acted as they did not out of *national* motives, but out of *social* motives, because they believed—and for the most part, not without good reason—that the spokesmen of the revolution were *those who had hitherto oppressed them*. The best proof of this is the conduct of the *Polish* peasants of Galicia, who—though they belonged to what the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* called a "revolutionary" nation—nonetheless, without exception, were just as loyal to the emperor and just as "counter-revolutionary" as their Ukrainian counterparts. The *Hungarian* peasants were not much different in this respect either; not infrequently, in the midst of the national revolution, they had to be "pacified" by the revolutionary Kossuth regime.⁶ In short, the division into hostile camps in Austria in 1848-49 proceeded less along *national* than along *class* lines; the throttling of the Austrian revolution should be ascribed less to the willing assistance of "Slavdom, the traitor to the revolution" than to the—Slavic and non-Slavic—*peasantry*.

But what caused this peculiar constellation of social forces in the Austrian revolution of 1848-49, and why did this constellation

simultaneously manifest itself as a division among nations? What circumstances made possible this unnatural alliance between the imperial-feudal reaction and the Slavic as well as non-Slavic peasant masses? Was this inevitable? Or could the revolutionary forces have pursued some other policy that would have averted the peasantry's defection to the camp of the counter-revolution?

In Marxist literature, regrettably, the question has not yet been thoroughly examined. The defection of the peasants is usually represented as a predetermined, inevitable consequence of their contentment once feudal duties had been abolished;⁷ but otherwise most authors are satisfied to repeat the cliché about "revolutionary" and "counter-revolutionary" nations, without looking more closely at the *class contradictions* expressed in the national struggles of 1848-49 and to seek in these contradictions the basis for this peculiar national division. To our knowledge, only Rosa Luxemburg attempted to deal with this question from a socio-economic standpoint. In her view, the "pan-Slavic counter-revolution of the [Austrian] South Slavs in 1848" was "the expression of the opposition on the part of conservative *peasant lands*, with a natural economy, to the *advance of capitalism*, which was crushing them."⁸ This interpretation, the core of which can already be found in Engels' critique of pan-Slavism, no doubt contains a grain of truth; but that's all—*just a grain*. One must not forget that, in spite of the backwardness of most of Austria's Slavic regions in the mid-nineteenth century, the peasant masses of these regions were for the most part engaged in the most bitter opposition to their landlords; the conduct of these peasant masses in 1848-49, therefore, had much more to do with their opposition to the *nobility and feudalism* than with their opposition to "the advance of capitalism." What Marx and Engels said in 1847 about the Galician peasants applied as well to all of Austria's restive peasants: for them (just as for the French peasants in 1789), the "question of property" was reduced to "the transformation of feudal landed property into small *bourgeois* landownership,"⁹ and consequently these peasants constituted an undeveloped, but nonetheless revolutionary element.¹⁰ And if, even so, the peasants during the revolution became the most reliable supporters of the reactionary forces, then this was because, in complete contrast to the French revolution,¹¹ at the time of the Austrian revolution of 1848-49 *there was no social class ready and able to lead the peasant masses* and to implement a truly radical solution to the peasant question. It was obvious that this could not be expected of the Hungarian and Polish nobility;¹² but even Austria's "miserable German middle class"¹³ proved to be terribly feeble and short-sighted in this regard. Thus, in the end, it was the Austrian *counter-revolution* that could reap the fruits of the "peasant emancipation" which circumstances had forced upon Austria; and precisely with the help of the (Slavic and non-Slavic) peasantry, the Austrian counter-revolution was able to defeat decisively both the German bourgeoisie and its allies, the Hungarian and Polish middle and petty nobility.

We have already noted¹⁴ that even the *extreme left* of the 1848 revolution, whose organ was the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, was unable to evaluate correctly the enormous significance of the peasant question in Austria and that one would search the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in vain for an analysis of Austrian agrarian problems, for a concrete programme on the Austrian peasant question or even for substantive articles and reports on these matters. The newspaper's attitude seems to confirm Bakunin's opinion that *the decisive error of the German revolutionaries of 1848-49 was their underestimation of the peasant question.*¹⁵

But it was not easy for them to arrive at a correct appreciation of the peasant problem. It has already been stressed how difficult it was for the German bourgeoisie and its allies, the Hungarian and Polish nobility, to give up their *national* privileges in order to save the revolution. How much more difficult and complicated the situation of these classes must appear if we examine the question from the standpoint, not of national relations, but of *social* relations. As for the "foreign" allies of the German-Austrian bourgeoisie, i.e., the Hungarian and Polish nobility, a truly radical solution of the peasant problem (the abolition of all¹⁶ feudal duties without compensation, the return of forests and pastures to the villagers, the expropriation of the large feudal estates) *would necessarily have destroyed the basis of their existence as a social class.* (*Et propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*) The Hungarian and Polish nobility followed their healthy class instincts and not only refrained from committing suicide, but even tried to *profit* from the "peasant emancipation";¹⁷ this is understandable, especially to a materialist historian. And the Austrian German bourgeoisie, trembling before the spectre of a "red republic," did not even dare to mobilize the peasants of its own nation against despotism;¹⁸ how, then, could it be expected to make allies of the "uncivilized" Slavic peasant masses, whom it so despised? It suffices to formulate the question to realize the next to insurmountable obstacles with which the bourgeois revolution in Austria had to struggle and which ultimately and necessarily led to the downfall of this revolution.

This point of view reveals *another aspect* of the question of the "nonhistoric peoples" and their role in the revolution. While the democrats of the revolutionary nations, for the reasons we have described, were incapable of winning over the peasant masses of the nonhistoric peoples, the nonhistoric peoples themselves, as a result of their undeveloped class structure, were *just as incapable of acting as an independent force in the revolution.* And although their peasant masses potentially constituted a *revolutionary* factor, an "undeveloped revolutionary element," they nonetheless—in that situation at that time—*had* to become, in reality, instruments of the *reaction*. They *were*, therefore, in truth "*necessarily counter-revolutionary,*" though in an entirely different way than Engels conceived of it.

The contradiction between the enormous revolutionary energies that lay dormant in the Slavic peasant masses and their actual reactionary role during the revolution is reflected with exceptional clarity in the ideology and revolutionary praxis of Mikhail Bakunin.

Notes

1. Karl Kautsky, *Die Befreiung der Nationen* (Stuttgart, 1917), p. 8.
2. "And although nowhere the mass of the people had a part in the petty squabbles about nationality raised by the Pan Slavistic leaders, for the very reason that they were too ignorant, yet it will never be forgotten that in Prague, in a half-German town, crowds of Slavonian fanatics cheered and repeated the cry: 'Rather the Russian knout [sic] than German Liberty!'" *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York: International Publishers, 1969), pp. 86-87. I have not been able to discover the source of Engels' highly improbable anecdote.
3. "But while the French, the Germans, the Italians, the Poles and the Magyars were raising the banner of revolution, the Slavs fell in *as one man* under the banner of counter-revolution.... At that time the fate of revolution in Eastern Europe depended on the attitude of the Czechs and the South Slavs; we shall not forget that at the decisive moment they betrayed the revolution... for the sake of their petty nationalist aspirations." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, the Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguins Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), pp. 238-39 and 242.
4. The archives of the Austrian Reichstag of 1848-49, Bd. 117, Nr. 1181 (Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv), contain petitions from twenty communities in the Tarnów circle (*Kreis*) requesting "that Galicia be retained within Austria and that the crownland be administered the same way in the future as it had been hitherto." "There are many Polish lords who would like to introduce Polish rule in Galicia together with the nobility and the officials.... We dread Polish rule, because nothing good will come of it."
5. As late as 13 April 1886, the Galician viceroy reported to Vienna: "In my report of 9 January I had the honour to inform Your Excellency that back in the fall of 1885... odd rumours were circulating among the country folk of some West Galician districts. The rumours, which concerned an imminent insurrection by the Polish nobility, the reintroduction of compulsory labour and the like, have once again surfaced in various places. Since the first report, I have received additional official reports and alarming private communications. According to this recent information, the rumours are circulating in several districts, namely Grybów, Gorlice, Tarnów, Pilzno and Dąbrowa; the rumours assume the most diverse forms and versions and have provoked unrest among the country folk. Some say that a Polish insurrection is being prepared, others maintain that compulsory labour will be introduced once again and that the nobles are gathering arms so that during Holy Week they might take revenge on the peasants for what happened in 1846." Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Informationsbüro, "Annexe," alt 11.
6. *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, 65 vols. (Moscow, 1927-47), s.v. "Vengriia. Istoricheskii ocherk" by A. Bolgar, pp. 54 and 57.

7. This, in effect, is a replacement of the *materialist* conception of history with a *fatalist* conception. Already during the revolution, such "materialists" had emerged, e.g., Schuselka, whom we have met before; in a Reichstag committee meeting on 12 October 1848, he declared: "Gentlemen, we would only compromise ourselves [if we were to summon the peasants to our aid]! If I could believe that it would be of some use, that the rural population really would rise [to the defence of Vienna] in a formidable mass, then I would warmly support a muster in the countryside. It's just that *the worthy peasants simply will not come*. They have what they want—compulsory labour is abolished—and now the peasants see nothing else that they should be willing to die for." Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), pp. 735–36. See also note 13, on pp. 101–02. But it never, of course, occurred to the good Schuselka that it made a difference *whom* the country folk credited with the abolition of compulsory labour and that there were still *other* questions in which the "worthy peasants" would perhaps take an interest, e.g., the question of *compensation* for the abolition of compulsory labour and the question of *to whom the forests and pastures belonged*.
8. Rosa Luxemburg, "Kankan kontrrewolucji," *Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny*, June 1908, no. 4, p. 282.
9. "For the Galician peasant, for instance, the question of property is reduced to the transformation of feudal landed property into small bourgeois landownership. For him it has the same meaning as it had for the French peasant before 1789...." Marx, "Moralism, Criticism and Critical Morality," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 6:322.
10. See note 7 on p. 70.
11. This is Marx writing about the French historian Thierry: "Moreover, he has proved without wanting to that nothing did more to retard the victory of the French bourgeoisie than the fact that it did not decide until 1789 to make common cause with the peasants." Letter to Engels, 27 July 1854, in *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), pp. 81–82. We now know that it was first the Jacobins who found a common language with the peasants in 1793–94; on this point, then, Marx is in error.
12. The utopian aspect of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* Hungarian and Polish politics was that it cherished such hopes.
13. "[The Viennese Revolution and the *Kölnische Zeitung*]," *Collected Works*, 7:496.
14. See above, p. 67.
15. Bakunin wrote in his *Confession* (1851): "The great mistake of the Germans, and at first also of the French democrats, was, in my opinion, that their propaganda was limited to the cities and did not penetrate to the villages." *The Confession of Mikhail Bakunin*, trans. Robert C. Howes, ed. Lawrence D. Orton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 109.
16. An example of a feudal right to which the landlords clung tenaciously was "propination" (the monopoly over the production and sale of spirits); the right of propination in Galicia was only abolished *in the twentieth century*.
17. In 1846 the Polish nobility in Galicia submitted a "compensation plan" to the government; in exchange for the abolition of feudal duties, for twenty years the landlords would receive compensation *equal to almost 80 per cent*

of the net income from the peasants' holdings! See: Lemberger Gubernialarchiv, Prä. Nr. 438 ex 1851, and [Maurycy Kraiński], *Memoiren und Aktenstücke aus Galizien im Jahre 1846* (Leipzig, 1847), pp. 227–84. And it was about *this* nobility that Engels wrote in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on 2 September 1848: “Even the nobility, which was in part still feudal, supported the democratic-agrarian revolution [in Poland] *with quite unprecedented selflessness*.” “The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question,” *Collected Works*, 7:373.

18. See note 7 of this chapter.

11. “Democratic Pan-Slavism”: Engels *contra* Bakunin

The last part of our presentation concerns Engels’ polemic against Bakunin. Most of the arguments Engels used here are already known to us: above all, his views on the “necessarily counter-revolutionary” role and inevitable national demise of the Austrian Slavs. Several important points, however, still require clarification.

Engels’ polemic was directed against Bakunin’s brochure, *Aufruf an die Slaven* ([Leipzig,] 1848). In this work, which was written after the Slavic parties joined the reactionary camp, the future ideologue of anarchism aimed at building a bridge between Slavdom and the revolution; he sought to convince the Slavs of the necessity of active support for the German and Hungarian democrats, and at the same time he tried to convince these democrats of the justice of Slavdom’s national-political postulates. This was truly a labour of Sisyphus. At the time he was writing, the situation allowed neither side to have much sympathy with his ideas, which merely earned Bakunin the reputation of being a “democratic pan-Slavist.”

In his *Aufruf*, Bakunin shows himself to be an unadulterated revolutionary romantic:

The revolution’s very first sign of life... was a cry of hatred against the old politics of oppression, a cry of sympathy and love for all oppressed nationalities. Peoples, who for so long had been towed by the rope of hypocritical and treacherous diplomacy, finally felt the shame with which the old diplomacy had laden mankind, and recognized that the welfare of nations would never be secure as long as anywhere in Europe a single people lives

under oppression, that the freedom of peoples, in order to take root anywhere at all, must take root everywhere. And for the first time they have demanded, as if with one voice, authentic *freedom for all men, for all peoples, true and complete freedom, freedom without reservation, without exception, without restriction*. "Away with oppressors!" was the cry which resounded as from a single mouth. "Hail to the oppressed, the Poles, the Italians and all! No more wars of conquest, but just the one last war, fought out to the end, the good fight of the revolution for the final liberation of all peoples! Down with the artificial barriers which have been forcibly erected by congresses of despots in accordance with so-called historical, geographical, commercial and strategic necessities! Let there be no other boundaries but *those which correspond to nature, boundaries drawn justly and in the spirit of democracy, boundaries which the sovereign will of the peoples itself prescribes on the basis of their particular national characteristics*." This is the call which issues forth from all peoples.

The brochure goes on to say:

A new day has broken, a blood-red dawn of the springtime of peoples. The old state politics has sunken into nothingness; a new politics has come to life, a politics of peoples. Out of the plenitude of its own power, the revolution proclaimed the dissolution of the despotic states, the dissolution of the Prussian kingdom...; the dissolution of *Austria*, this monster made up of the most diverse nationalities forced together through cunning, violence and crime; the dissolution of the *Turkish* empire, in which barely seven hundred thousand Ottomans trampled on a population of twelve million Slavs, Wallachians and Greeks; finally, the dissolution of the last consolation of despots, the last treacherous bulwark of a diplomacy that has had its head bashed—the Russian empire—so that the three nations it has enslaved—the Great Russians, Little Russians and Poles—left to themselves, might extend a free hand to the rest of their Slavic brothers. Thus the whole North and East of Europe have been dissolved, otherthrown and reconstructed. Italy has been liberated and the ultimate aim of all this has been *the general federation of European republics*.¹

Certainly, what Bakunin proclaims here sounds like fantasy and phrasemongering. No wonder that these lines became the target of Engels' ridicule:

We have pointed out often enough that the sweet dreams which came to the surface after the February and March revolutions, the fantasies of universal brotherhood among peoples, of a European federal republic and of everlasting world peace, were fundamentally nothing more than a cover for the helplessness and the inactivity of that time....

We have learnt through painful experience that the "European brotherhood of peoples" will come to pass not through mere phrases and pious wishes but only as a result of thorough revolutions and bloody struggles; that it is not a matter of fraternization among all European peoples underneath one republican flag, but of *the alliance of revolutionary peoples against counter-revolutionary peoples*, an alliance which does not happen on paper but on the field of battle.

And yet Bakunin does not tire of repeating these same stale phrases about the general liberation of peoples and the fraternization of the peoples of Europe.

There is no mention here [in Bakunin's brochure] of the obstacles which are really in the way of such a general liberation, *of the utterly different levels of civilization of the individual peoples and the equally different political needs conditioned by those levels. The word "freedom" replaces all of this.* Of reality itself there is either no discussion at all, or, in so far as it does come into consideration, it is portrayed as something absolutely abominable, the arbitrary creation of "congresses of despots" and "diplomats." *The supposed will of the people confronts this bad reality with its categorical imperative, with its absolute demand for plain and simple "freedom."*

"We have seen," Engels continues, "who was the stronger. The supposed will of the people was duped so outrageously precisely because it accepted such an imaginary abstraction from the conditions which actually existed at the time." And if Bakunin, giving free rein to his fantasy, was proclaiming whole empires "dissolved" by the revolution, this was indeed "precisely the worst feature of the revolution, that it 'proclaimed the dissolution of the despotic states out of the plenitude of its own power,' but at the same time did not move a muscle 'out of the plenitude of its own power' to execute its decree." "'Justice,' 'humanity,' 'liberty,' 'equality,' 'fraternity,' 'independence,'" Engels scoffs, "—so far we have found nothing more in the pan-Slav manifesto than these more or less *moral* categories, which admittedly sound very fine, but prove absolutely nothing in historical and political matters. . . . The pan-Slavists could have learned something about their illusions from the role the mass of the Slavs has played since the Prague Congress, they could have realized that there is nothing to be achieved against iron reality with all the pious wishes and beautiful dreams in the world. . . . And yet they come to us now, in January 1849, with the same old phrases about whose content Western Europe was disillusioned by a most bloody counter-revolution!"²

Thus the positions of the two opponents. One must admit: the superiority of *Engels'* argumentation is immediately apparent. It is simply the superiority of his materialist method over Bakunin's idealist approach, which frequently resorts to concepts of natural rights. It is not reality that has to be set right according to "eternal principles," but the other way around—principles are only justified in so far as they are rooted in reality, in the material conditions of life. By concentrating on this difference of methodology, Engels strikes Bakunin at his weakest point. But should we be completely content today with emphasizing the pre-eminence of Engels' method, as were earlier Marxist authors? Should we not rather test the manner in which Engels here *applies* his method and the political aims it served in this instance?

It is true that Bakunin's brochure contains

more revolutionary pathos than logic, more poetry than truth. . . . His summons to the Slavs—to plunge head over heels into the revolution—was

an empty phrase; just such a phrase, too, was his proposition to recall the Slavic soldiers from Italy and Austria in order to set up a revolutionary Slav army. These appeals were altogether addressed to a vacuum, to some totality existing only in the mind but not in reality, to an imaginary phantom; and therefore the appeals themselves were illusionary and not in the least useful to the revolution in its hard and cruel struggle with real—not imaginary—enemies.³

And yet, undoubtedly, behind Bakunin's illusion there was also something powerful, something very real: this was a vision, an inspired presentiment of the historical process that would finally lead the Slavic peoples to a new life, to an independent existence. However odd it may seem, in this great controversy the political romantic Bakunin proved victorious over the political realist Engels—not because, but in spite of, his inverted way of thinking; and Engels remained in the wrong, in spite of his superior method. This is not to say that method is irrelevant or that we have to rank "intuition" as the equal of scientific knowledge; it only goes to show that even great thinkers form their theorems "not from their free initiative, . . . but according to immediately present, given and inherited conditions." Therefore Engels adhered to the inherited concept of the civilizing mission of the Germans in the Danube region and the inevitable national extinction of the Austrian Slavs; therefore he unconditionally rejected the right of self-determination that Bakunin proclaimed for the nonhistoric Slavic peoples; and therefore, finally (and this is difficult for us to understand today), he defended "historical, geographic, commercial, strategic necessities" and other results of "a thousand years of history."

Engels heaps scorn on Bakunin's struggle against these "necessities":

Just one word about "the universal brotherhood of peoples" and the drawing of "boundaries, which the sovereign will of the peoples itself precribes on the basis of their particular national characteristics." The United States and Mexico are two republics; the people are sovereign in both of them.

How did it happen that a war⁴ broke out over Texas between these republics, which are supposed to be "united" and "federated" according to the moral theory; how did it happen that the "sovereign will" of the American people, supported by the courage of the American volunteers, moved the naturally drawn boundaries some hundreds of miles further south for reasons of "geographical, commercial and strategic necessity"? And will Bakunin reproach the Americans with this "war of conquest," which admittedly gives a hard knock to his theory based on "justice and humanity," but which was waged simply and solely *in the interests of civilization*? Or is it perhaps a misfortune that magnificent California was snatched from the *lazy Mexicans*, who did not know what to do with it? Or that the energetic Yankees are increasing the means of circulation by the rapid exploitation of the Californian gold-mines, have concentrated a thick population and extensive commerce on the most suitable stretch of the Pacific coast within a few years, are building big cities, opening steamship communications, laying a railway from New York to San Francisco, opening the Pacific for the first

time to actual civilization and are about to give world trade a new direction for the third time in history? The "independence" of a few Spanish Californians and Texans may suffer by this, "justice" and other moral principles may be infringed here and there; but what does that matter against such world-historical events?"

It is evident that here Engels goes too far. In order to refute the "moral theory," which derived the principle of the self-determination of peoples from "eternal human rights" he also denies *this principle as such*, he denies the necessity of borders "which the will of the peoples itself prescribes," and he finds it necessary even to justify annexations in so far as they take place "in the interests of civilization." Moreover, the example which he uses is particularly ill chosen. The province of Texas, the object of contention in the war between the United States and Mexico, was of enormous size. But in 1836, when it broke away from Mexico, Texas only had about 38,000 (*white*) inhabitants, most of whom were immigrants from the United States. It was, therefore, a colonial region in the strictest sense of the word. As for California, which was taken from the "lazy Mexicans" in consequence of the war, there were barely 15,000 Mexicans in this whole immense territory in 1846; these were not the sort of conditions that allowed one to speak either of "the right of self-determination" or of the violation of that right. This example was even less cogent as far as the argument about "civilization" was concerned. The immigrants from the United States who rose against Mexico in 1836 were *planters, owners of Negro slaves*, and their main reason for revolting was that *slavery had been abolished in Mexico in 1829*. (The slavery question also prevented the American Congress from approving the annexation of Texas until 1845.) These features of the Mexican-American conflict show now inappropriate, in fact perverse, was Engels' illustration.⁶

This does not mean, of course, that the problem of the Austrian Slavs, to which this example was supposed to have applied, should have been treated from the standpoint of "moral categories" (in this Engels is absolutely correct); it was, rather, very important *material* factors—the abolition of the feudal mode of production as well as the advance of capitalism—that would, in the not too distant future, bring about the liberation of these peoples, the implementation of their "right of self-determination." To them too applied what Engels (in his polemics against Arnold Ruge) said about the difference between the oppression of Poland by the "three autocrats of the East" and the oppression of Southern France by the French of the North: *social conditions*, not moral categories, made the subjugation of Poland—but not the erstwhile subjugation of Provence—appear as a "shameful injustice." For the same reasons, Poland's struggle for self-determination was, from the standpoint of European democracy, a rightful struggle.⁷ For the smaller Slav nations too, just as for the Poles, "agrarian democracy"—the emancipation of millions of peasants—had become a vital social question; and this implied their national rebirth.

In one of the preceding chapters we indicated what circumstances prevented Engels from understanding the necessity of the rebirth of the nonhistoric Slavic peoples. We also know that Engels denied this necessity not only in 1849, but even several decades later. And—let us add at this point—*herein* also lay, to a great extent, the sense and content of his constant struggle against *pan-Slavism*, a struggle waged not only against the real authors and spokesmen of this reactionary ideology, but likewise against the representatives of contemporary Russian democracy, Herzen and Bakunin. From this it follows that we should not (as was frequently the case in the past) accept Engels' critique of pan-Slavism *in toto*, but rather that here too, if we want to acquire an objective picture of this side of Engels' (and Marx's) activity, *we have to distinguish the correct from the incorrect*.

What, then, according to Engels, was pan-Slavism, where did it arise and what were its aims? In his articles "The Magyar Struggle" and "Democratic Pan-Slavism," the pan-Slavic movement is depicted as a "separatist league" (*Sonderbund*) established by the *Austrian* Slavs long before the revolution of 1848 and directed against the constitutional movement of the Hungarian nobility as well as against the "reawakening political movement in Germany":

Pan-Slavism arose in Prague and Zagreb, not in Russia or Poland.⁸ Pan-Slavism is an alliance of all the small Slav nations and nationalities of Austria and secondarily of Turkey, for the purpose of fighting against the *Austrian Germans*, the *Magyars* and ultimately the *Turks*. . . . [Thus it] is fundamentally directed against the *revolutionary* elements in Austria and is therefore *reactionary from the outset*.

So much for the birthplace of the pan-Slavic ideology and movement. "The direct *aim* of pan-Slavism," Engels continues,

is the establishment of a Slav empire *under Russian domination*, from the Erzgebirge and the Carpathians to the Black, Aegean and Adriatic seas, an empire which would include about a dozen Slav languages and chief dialects, in addition to German, Italian, Magyar, Wallachian, Turkish, Greek and Albanian. The whole thing would be held together not by the elements which have so far held together and developed Austria, but by the abstract characteristic of Slavdom and the so-called Slav language. . . . But where does this Slavdom exist except in the heads of a few ideologists, where does the "Slav language" exist except in the imagination of Messrs. Palacký and Gaj and their confederates, and, roughly speaking, in the Old Slavonic liturgy of the Russian church, which no Slav understands any more? In reality all these peoples have the *most varied* levels of civilization, from Bohemia's modern industry and culture, which has been developed (by Germans) to a relatively high degree, down to the well-nigh nomadic barbarism of the Croats and Bulgarians; these nations therefore really have the *most opposed* interests. In reality, the Slav language of these ten or twelve [?] nations is composed of so many dialects, for the most part mutually incomprehensible; . . . they have turned into mere patois owing to the complete neglect of all literature and the crudeness of most of the peoples, who,

with few exceptions, have always used a foreign non-Slavic language as their written language. The unity of pan-Slavism is therefore either a mere fantasy or—the Russian knout.⁹

The reactionary character of pan-Slavism, then, stems, in Engels' view, above all from the fact that it represents a movement of Slavic "ruins of peoples"—*unviable*, "*dying*" and, consequently, *solely dependent on tsarist aid*. The Austrian Slavs are as reactionary in internal affairs as they are in external affairs. Externally, they are contemptible tools of tsarist despotism, internally—the bailiffs of the counter-revolution; that, says Engels, is the true meaning and content of the Slavic national movements in Austria. In his article directed against Bakunin, he writes:

The Austrian pan-Slavists ought to realize that all their wishes are fulfilled, in so far as they can be fulfilled at all, in the restoration of the "united Austrian monarchy" under Russian protection. If Austria collapses, *they have in store for them the revolutionary terrorism of the Germans and the Magyars*, but not, as they imagine, the liberation of all the nations enslaved under the Austrian sceptre. They are therefore bound to want Austria to *remain united*. . . . It follows, however, that a "Slav Austria" will similarly remain a mere dream; for without the supremacy of the Germans and the Magyars, without the two centres of Vienna and Budapest, Austria falls to pieces again, as proved by its whole history up to the last few months. The realization of pan-Slavism *would therefore have to be limited to a Russian protectorate over Austria*. The openly reactionary pan-Slavists were therefore quite right to cling to the maintenance of the whole monarchy; it was the only way to save anything.¹⁰

The democratic pan-Slavists, however, imagine that the Austrian Slavs can be liberated precisely through the *collapse* of Austria; they demand "independence for all Slavs without differentiation, . . . without regard for the *historical* position or the social level of development of the individual peoples."¹¹ "How wonderful it would be," Engels scoffs, "if Croats, Pandours and Cossacks formed the vanguard of European democracy, if the ambassador of the Siberian republic could present his credentials in Paris! A pleasant prospect indeed; but the most enthusiastic pan-Slavist will not demand that European democracy *should await its realization*—and at *present* it is precisely the nations whose particular independence is demanded by the Manifesto¹² that are *the particular enemies of democracy*."¹³ Later on Engels says:

They are demanding of us and the other revolutionary nations of Europe that we should guarantee an existence without let or hindrance to *the centres of counter-revolution* situated close by our door, a right freely to conspire and bear arms against the revolution; that we should constitute a counter-revolutionary Czech state right in the heart of Germany, that we should break the power of the German, Polish and Magyar revolutions by thrusting between them *Russian advance posts* on the Elbe, in the Carpathians and on the Danube!

We would not even think of it. . . . We know now where the enemies of the revolution are concentrated: in Russia and in the Slav lands of Austria; and no phrases, no *references to an indefinite democratic future of these lands* will prevent us from treating our enemies as enemies.¹⁴

The "democratic pan-Slavists" therefore have the choice: "either abandonment of the revolution and at least partial salvation of their nationality by the Austrian monarchy, or *abandonment of their nationality* and salvation of the revolution by the collapse of that monarchy."¹⁵ Engels adds:

Let us in any case have no illusions about this. With all pan-Slavists, nationality, i.e., imaginary general Slav nationality, comes *before the revolution*. The pan-Slavists want to join the revolution on *condition* that they are permitted to constitute all Slavs without exception,¹⁶ and without regard for the most vital necessities, into independent Slav states. . . . *However, the revolution does not allow conditions to be dictated to it*. Either one is a revolutionary and *accepts the consequences of the revolution, whatever they may be*, or one is thrown into the arms of the counter-revolution and is one morning to be found *arm in arm with Nicholas and Windischgrätz*, perhaps entirely unknowingly and unwillingly.¹⁷

It must not be difficult for the present-day reader of Engels' two articles to distinguish between the strong and weak sides of his critique of pan-Slavism. The passages quoted show very clearly the main fault of this critique: *Engels arbitrarily mixes the question of pan-Slavism with his views on the unviability of the Austrian Slavs*. Engels here interprets the concept of pan-Slavism very widely, indeed so widely that it appears to encompass each individual Slav national movement (with the exception of that of the Poles). For him a "pan-Slavist" was essentially anyone who did not recognize the claims of the Austrian Germans and Hungarians to the Slavic¹⁸ territories they held and who adhered to the right of self-determination for the nonhistoric Slavs. From this standpoint, however, every national movement of the Austrian and Hungarian Slavs had to amount, in Engels' view, to either a "mere fantasy" or a cult of the "Russian knout." He thus unwittingly ascribed to tsarism the uncanny power of conjuring up whole national movements out of nothing and failed to consider that pan-Slavism could never have become a danger if the actual oppression of the Slavic peoples had not prepared such fertile soil for it. Misled by his erroneous prognosis, he altogether failed to see that in *Austria* and also in *Turkey* pan-Slavist ideology was for the most part only one of many aspects of the defensive national struggles of the Slavic peoples enslaved by these states. The more severely oppressed and the more helpless these peoples felt, the more vehemently did hatred against their oppressors flare up, the more readily did they turn toward their "northern uncle" "who played the big double bass"¹⁹ and lend an ear to pan-Slavic theories.²⁰ And it was, of course, no accident that the Slavs of Austria, in every historical situation which seemed to promise them a tolerable existence within the Austrian state, immediately dissociated

themselves from and renounced their "northern uncle" (whom they considered, in reality, merely a "lesser evil"). The first proof of this was provided by the Slav Congress at Prague in 1848. The petty-bourgeois, non-revolutionary majority at the congress, in spite of all their enmity against the Germans and Hungarians, took care to distance themselves from the "Russian colossus" too, and in their pro-Austrian conduct there was a distinct anti-Russian tone.

We must keep all this in mind when reading Engels and Marx's outbursts against pan-Slavism in general and against Bakunin's "democratic pan-Slavism." It is by no means always *real* pan-Slavism that they refer to under that name; very often their reproaches in this regard are unjustified or at least exaggerated.²¹ In one point, however, we have to admit that Marx and Engels were *right*. However much the "old, civilized nations"—the Germans, Hungarians and Poles—had contributed, by their nationalistic intolerance and excessive chauvinism, to the pro-Austrian conduct of the Slavs, the fact remains that the actual, objective role of these nations in 1848–49 was, on the whole, *revolutionary*, while the struggle the Slavs waged against them played into the hands of the *counter-revolution*. For a very simple reason: every revolutionary crisis forces those involved to declare themselves clearly and unequivocally either *for* or *against* the revolution; and this was the case, too, during the revolution of 1848–49. Thus, for example, during the months of the decisive military confrontations between the Kossuth regime and the imperial camp, the Slavs living in Hungary could have fought either on the side of the Hungarians against Austrian absolutism or on the side of the latter against the Hungarians; but *there was no third choice*. And since the petty-bourgeois Slavic national parties were led, not by men like Bakunin, but by conservatively inclined politicians like Palacký, they proved to be (for the most part against their will) tools of the counter-revolution and grave-diggers not only of Hungarian and German freedom, but ultimately of their own freedom as well.²² One thing, however, is certain: at the moment of decisive struggle all that matters is a movement's or party's *actual* role. Even if Marx and Engels had displayed the fullest understanding for the motives and the extremely precarious plight of the Slavs in 1848–49 (which they did not), as revolutionaries they would still have had to *oppose*, and by no means *support*, Jelačić, Stratimirović and Palacký. This takes care of Wendel's seemingly objective remark: "That the Southern Slavs by their resistance injured the German revolution and assisted both the Habsburgs and Tsarism is a historic fact *for which they cannot be blamed!*" Engels, he feels, "had no right to assume that it was the duty of the Southern Slavs to sacrifice themselves to the German and Magyar revolution, or to criticize their refusal to accept the historic mission of 'perishing in the sea of world-revolutions.'" ²³ (This last phrase, of course, is not to be found in Engels.)

Nonetheless, there is also a grain of truth in what Wendel says. Posing questions in the abstract will not help us here. What is important in such cases is not the "right," or the "blame" or other such moral considerations; the most important consideration here is *political effectiveness*. Who can deny that given their situation in 1849, Austria's nonhistoric Slavs regarded and had to regard union with the Hungarians and Germans as a form of suicide? And since it may be assumed that no people can be expected willingly to commit suicide, it was not very realistic for the spokesmen of the historic nations to demand self-immolation from the nonhistoric Slavs "in the interests of the revolution," while they themselves showed not the slightest desire to give up their intransigent behaviour *vis-à-vis* these Slavs. Under such conditions, no lashing out against the counter-revolutionary conduct of the Slavs could change this conduct and *its fateful consequences for the revolution*; it remained simply *ineffectual*.

An example from recent history can illustrate what has been said. There were similar situations during the *Russian* revolution. For instance, in the cities of Ukraine in 1918-19, it was not a rare occurrence for the Red Guards to shoot inhabitants who spoke Ukrainian in public or publicly admitted to Ukrainian nationality. (We take this fact from a speech by one of Ukraine's leading Communists, Volodymyr Zatonsky,²⁴ who explained that the rank-and-file—mainly Russian or Russified—party members then considered Ukrainian a "counter-revolutionary" language!) Nonetheless, the most radical of the Ukrainian socialist parties—the "independentist" social democrats and the "left social revolutionaries" (the "Borotbists")—fought the petty-bourgeois Ukrainian Rada alongside the Bolsheviks. This fact is open to varying interpretations; some consider the conduct of the Ukrainian left to have been "national treason" while others praise it as a model of internationalism. There is no dispute, however, about one thing: that this alliance of the Bolsheviks and the Ukrainian left could not have been successful if the leaders of the Russian Bolsheviks (above all, Lenin and Trotsky) had not understood the "danger" of the Ukrainian question and had not offered real concessions to make a compromise with the Ukrainians possible. (Parenthetically, this is not to say that the Ukrainian question in the Soviet Union is "definitively" solved, as official Stalinist publicists assure us. Far from it. The question cannot be solved as long as the Ukrainians have not achieved full—and not merely formal—independence, with or without federation with the Russians.) In any case, the example shows how we should judge the nationality politics of the "revolutionary" nations in 1848-49. It was the restricted bourgeois (or, rather, bourgeois-noble) character of the Austro-Hungarian revolution of 1848 that impeded any real solution of contemporary nationality problems and that made the counter-revolutionary conduct of the Slavs appear a *fated, inevitable necessity*.

It is just from this point of view, we believe, that one must assess the political conclusions at which Engels arrived in his critique of Bakunin's "democratic pan-Slavism." His conclusions bear the mark of the inextricably entangled situation of the revolution of 1848-49. This is best shown by the exaggerated argumentation of Engels' critique. Thus the Slavic democrats are taken to task for not being ready to join the revolution "unconditionally"; but this does not prevent Engels, on his part, from imposing on them the condition that they first "give up their nationality" if they wish to be considered revolutionaries, an impossible, nonsensical demand which Bakunin and his Slavic friends had to reject from the outset. And nevertheless, Engels' principle was essentially correct: participation in the revolution could not be bound up with any sort of "conditions"; in the moment of decisive confrontation, all secondary questions, all democracy's partial demands, *had to be subordinated* to the main goal—the overthrow of the common enemy. The correctness of this principle was best shown by the example of Bakunin himself, who, *in practice*, again and again was forced by the existing situation to sacrifice "Slavdom" for the "revolution."

Already at the end of 1848, Bakunin wrote in his *Aufruf*: "The revolution... tolerates no half-heartedness, no double faces,... no vacillating, distrustful, hypocritical concessions.... Clearly, we must now declare ourselves against Windischgrätz and for the Magyars."²⁵ And regarding the Germans:

You should extend your hand to the German *people*. Not to the despots of Germany, with whom you are now in alliance.... Not to those German pedants and professors in Frankfurt, nor to those wretched, narrow-minded litterateurs who, either dull in mind or bribed, have filled most German periodicals with slander against you and your rights, against the Poles and the Czechs.... But to the German *people* that is emerging from the revolution, that will only now become the free German nation, to the Germany *that does not yet exist* and that therefore could not have done you any injury, [to the people] whose individual members, scattered through the whole of Germany, are as dispersed as our Slavic peoples, as persecuted and oppressed as we are, who are worthy of our friendship and are ready to greet us with open arms, to be our friends.²⁶

(Does not Bakunin promise way too much here?)"

But Bakunin goes even further in his second appeal to the Slavs (spring 1849):

To the Slavs!

The Russians troops have come. They have set foot on Austrian soil. They have been sent not by the Russian people, but by the Russian tsar, not to bring you freedom,... but to enslave you.... The Russians are Slavs, and they bear in their bosoms a Slavic heart; but so far this heart has been sealed shut with the seal of a Mongol tyranny, and as long as the Russians obey the tsar they remain the enemy, *the most fearsome and dangerous enemies of Slavic liberation*. Woe to you, if you do not *repulse* Nicholas' troops as *enemy troops*!... Do you want to be free? Then lose no time, arm yourselves

one and all and destroy the enemies of your freedom: the Austrian army and the army of the Russian tsar! Do you want *to be free*? Then *drive out your treacherous leaders*, who—like Jelačić, Rajčić, Palacký, Brauner and many others—promise you everything but deliver nothing, who deliberately deceived you and sold you to the Austrian dynasty and to Nicholas.... Do you want *to be free*? Then extend a hand of reconciliation to the *Magyars*. The Magyar *people*, misled by a mean-spirited faction, has indeed sinned grievously against you, but it has completely atoned for its guilt, dearly paid its debt with heroic deeds and blood shed for freedom; *no longer does it think of enslaving you*,²⁸ since now it is the last support of freedom in Austria. Serbs! Croats! Slovaks! Do you want to destroy your own support? Do you want to bury yourselves alive? Do you want to become slaves of the Russian emperor? If not, then you must give up this unholy war against your common, most perilous enemy, the allied power of Russia and Austria.²⁹

The passages cited show that Bakunin too, for all his early vacillation,³⁰ was forced by the logic of events to come out *unconditionally* in support of the Hungarian and German revolution. Here one can certainly object that both of Bakunin's "appeals" remained virtually without any effect outside of a small circle of Czech intellectuals, whose conspiracy was prematurely discovered. But let us be just: at that time, when the Austrian revolution was already decisively defeated, did the German democrats of Austria or the Polish democrats in Galicia have any greater success, could they have done more for the Hungarian cause?

After what has been said, the question arises whether one can speak at all of Bakunin as a "democratic pan-Slavist" or, what's more, as a pan-Slavist *sans phrase*. Is not Engels doing him a grave injustice? Yes and no. Bakunin always (even after joining the International) held to certain *elements* of pan-Slavism. This is evident from numerous passages in both of his "appeals," from his article "Statutes of a New Slavic Politics,"³¹ and from other writings as well, but especially from the well-known passage in his *Confession* where he speaks of a "new Eastern world-power" with Constantinople as its capital.³² And yet it would be wrong simply to put the apostle of anarchy in the camp of the "pan-Slavists," and, moreover, to place him in this regard on the same level as Aleksandr Herzen.³³ Let us not forget that even ideas that are *reactionary* in themselves can sometimes express revolutionary sentiments. A case in point is "anti-capitalist anti-Semitism," which so long prevailed in West European and Russian socialism³⁴ and whose sinister legacy is conspicuous in several workers' parties to this very day. It was a similar case with pan-Slavism. In Austria, ideas like the unity of all Slavs, the particularity of the "Slavic world" and the special historic "mission" of Slavdom served the oppressed Slavic nationalities for decades as ideological weapons against the practice of the Germans' and Hungarians' "pan-Germanism" and "pan-Magyarism."³⁵ But even in Russia pan-Slavic ideas about a "federation of *free* Slavic peoples" not infrequently became fighting slogans which expressed *opposition against the tsar* and tsarist despotism, opposition that was national (when non-Russians were involved), political

and social. This was the case, for example, with the "Brotherhood of Ss. Cyril and Methodius," a secret Ukrainian revolutionary society led by Taras Shevchenko³⁶ and Mykola Kostomarov³⁷ in 1846-47; so it was also with Bakunin.

Bakunin's first "Polish sympathies" had their source in this revolutionary, anti-tsarist sentiment. As he wrote in his *Confession*: "I wanted to propose to them [to the Poles in 1846] joint action concerning the Russians living in the Kingdom of Poland, in Lithuania and in Podillia, supposing that they had connections in these provinces sufficient for active and successful propaganda. The goal I set was a *Russian* revolution and a republican federation of all the Slav lands. . . ."³⁸

That the Russian revolution was Bakunin's driving force is revealed more clearly yet in all his ideas, plans and ventures in 1848-49: Russia! Russia!—we read again and again in his *Confession*; the *Russian revolution*, whose coming Bakunin longed for with every fibre of his soul—this is what drove him from Paris to Germany, made him take part in the Prague Slav Congress and in the revolutionary plans of the Poles, and led him to the barricades of Prague and Dresden. The overpowering urge to destroy and transform, revolutionize "this abominable empire"³⁹—that is the key to all Bakunin's "Slavic" (or if one wishes, "pan-Slavic") activity. He wrote in his first "appeal":

And, finally, the submission of the masses—if you build on this, blinded tsar! . . . you build on sand! True, the peasant uprising in Galicia [1846] is bad, because—abetted and nursed by you—it is directed against the democratically-inclined noblemen who are seized by the spirit of freedom! But it holds in its womb the seed of a new, unheard-of power, a volcanic fire, whose eruption will bury the carefully constructed instruments of your diplomacy and rule under mounds of lava and will bury alive your power, blinded tsar, and in a single moment destroy it without a trace. A peasant rebellion in Galicia is nothing, but it continues to burn in the underground hearth, and already among the peasant masses of the enormous Russian realm gigantic craters arise. This is Russia's democracy, whose blazing flames will devour the realm, while the whole of Europe will bask in the bloody light they give off. Prodiges of the revolution will rise up out of the depths of this sea of fire; Russia is the goal of the revolution; its greatest power will manifest itself there, and there too it will achieve its perfection. . . . The enslavement of the peoples now united under the Russian sceptre as well as of all Slavic peoples will be torn apart in Moscow; so too will all European enslavement; and it will be buried for eternity beneath its own rubble. . . . in Moscow, from a sea of blood and fire, the star of the revolution will rise high and nobly to become the guiding star for the salvation of all liberated humanity.⁴⁰

One can imagine how Engels reacted when he read this unearthly passage of the "appeal," how he might have shaken his head in disbelief. A poetic vision, this passage? Certainly, *only* a vision, but a thoroughly real vision born of the actual historical process. The hot breath of the Russian revolution, "raging in the underground hearth," could already be felt. Of

this revolution, Bakunin was the first herald, the "all too early harbinger of an all too late spring."⁴¹ Herein indeed lay the real historical greatness of Bakunin; and it is from this viewpoint too that we have to understand his position in and regarding the Central European revolutionary movement of 1848–49. The fantasy-ridden and contradictory ideology of this fiery spirit reflected the contradiction between the plebeian revolution of the peasants and workers of the Russian empire, a revolution as yet immature and remote, though already casting a powerful shadow, and the German bourgeois revolution of 1848, just born, but already limping and decrepit from old age. Herein lay both the strengths and weaknesses of Bakunin. Consider how Bakunin in his *Confession* described his Czech plans in 1848:

I hoped for a decisive, radical revolution in Bohemia; in a word, one that, even if it were subsequently defeated, succeeded in so overturning everything and turning everything upside down that the Austria government after its victory would not find a single thing in its old place. Taking advantage of the fortunate circumstance that all the gentry in Bohemia—and, in general, the whole class of rich landowners—consisted exclusively of Germans, I wanted to drive out all the gentry, all the hostilely inclined clergy, and, having *indiscriminately confiscated all the landed property of the masters, divide part of it among the poor peasants* to encourage them to join the revolution. . . . I wanted to destroy all castles, burn absolutely all documents throughout the whole of Bohemia, all administrative as well as judicial, governmental and manorial papers and documents⁴². . . . In a word, the revolution that I was planning was terrible, unparalleled, although it was directed more against things than against people. It would really have so eaten into the blood and the life of the people that even if victorious the Austrian government would never have had the strength to root it out. It would not have known how to begin, what to do; it could not have collected or even found the remnants of the old order, which had been destroyed forever, and it never could have made peace with the Bohemian people. Such a revolution, *not limited to one nationality*, would have attracted by its example, by its fiery red propaganda, not only Moravia and Austrian Silesia but also Prussian Silesia and, in general, all the German borderlands, so that the *German revolution* itself—until this time a revolution of cities, burghers, factory workers, litterateurs and lawyers—would have been turned into a general *popular* revolution.⁴³

This passage of the *Confession* is especially characteristic of Bakunin's ideology at that time (and, with certain qualifications, as it later developed). For him only the *peasant* revolution is a genuine "*popular* revolution." The "*factory workers*" are mentioned here in the same breath with "burghers, litterateurs and lawyers"; Bakunin had no conception of the epoch-making significance of the industrial working class, no conception of the special historical mission of the *proletariat*. Thus, he was blind here to the very thing that constituted Marxism's progressiveness and superiority *vis-à-vis* all previous socialist doctrines. His conception of the "terrible, unparalleled" revolution was of a mere jacquerie, only repeated on a gigantic scale, a Russian *pugachevshchina*⁴⁴ with all its inevitable

requisites—the burning of castles, destruction of documents, etc. And yet, with what sure instinct he senses the “volcanic” forces that lay dormant in the peasantry of Russia and Eastern Europe as a whole! How well he knows how to move the Slavic peoples of Austria, their peasant masses, when in his “second appeal” he emphasizes above all *the enmity between them and the feudal nobility* and again and again reminds them of the “fees, duties and services” that oppress them!

It is enough to compare Bakunin’s peasant propaganda with the nervous, colourless peasant politics of German democracy in 1848–49 to appreciate the striking contrast, the undeniable *pre-eminence* of Bakunin in this sphere. Moreover, this comparison does not speak too well of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* either, since the paper regarded the Slavs of Austria as hopelessly reactionary masses and did not realize that the peasantry of these peoples was rebelling against feudalism.⁴⁵ In this regard, then, Bakunin’s revolutionary perspective was more realistic and farsighted, in spite of his revolutionary romanticism and his fantastical presuppositions.

The same can be said of Bakunin’s understanding of the *nationality question*, of his evaluation of the future and viability of the “nonhistoric” Slavic (and non-Slavic) peoples. We have already seen how, in his “appeal to the Slavs,” Bakunin advocated the right of national self-determination and only recognized “boundaries drawn justly and in the spirit of democracy, boundaries which the sovereign will of the peoples itself prescribes on the basis of their particular national characteristics.” He also defended this same principle on the eve of and during the Polish insurrection of 1863 when he engaged in polemics against Polish democrats who demanded the restoration of Poland in its historical boundaries of 1772, i.e., who wanted to *annex* to the resurrected Polish state *Lithuania, Belorussia and the greater part of Ukraine*. In his proclamation “to Russian, Polish and all Slavic friends,” published in Herzen’s *Kolokol* in 1862, Bakunin stated:

I demand only one thing: that every people, that every tribe, great and small, be given the full opportunity and right to act according to its will. If it wants to merge with Russia or Poland—let it merge. Does it want to be an independent member of a Polish or Russian or general Slavic federation? Then let it be so. Finally, does it want to separate completely from every other people and live as a totally separate state? Then, God bless it!—let it separate.⁴⁶

It is useful to compare this declaration of Bakunin’s to Engels’ article in *Commonwealth* (1866). Engels here restricts the right of self-determination to the “great historic peoples,” “the great European nations,” as opposed to the nonhistoric “nationalities,” the “remnants of bygone Slavonian peoples”; and in Engels’ view, a restored Poland unconditionally had to include not only Poles, but Ukrainians, Belorussians and Lithuanians.⁴⁷ The contrast between these points of view is obvious. And once again Bakunin’s vision proves to have been *clearer and more farsighted*, because the national awakening of the nonhistoric Slavic

peoples was only the other side of the *social* awakening—the process of becoming historic—of the broad *peasant* masses of these peoples. And for this very reason, the national awakening found its best resonance in Bakunin's ideology, which in its most profound essence was a *peasant-revolutionary* ideology.⁴⁸ This is confirmed by another passage of Bakunin's proclamation of 1862:

I think that the Poles are making a great mistake.... The old Polish Kingdom was pre-eminently a knightly, aristocratic state.... For this reason, in bygone times it was enough if the magnates and gentry of any land were Polish for that whole land to be considered Polish, no matter what nationality the *common people* belonged to. At that time this was natural.... But now, when the *people* everywhere are loudly demanding freedom, is it still possible?... Is it possible to unite Lithuania, Belorussia, Livonia, Kurland and Ukraine to Poland if the Lithuanian, Belorussian, Livonian, Kurlandish and Ukrainian peasants will not want this? Why talk about historic, strategic and economic borders? Do you think it possible to move and convince peoples by these considerations? What need have they of historical recollections?... No, they need something else. Just like the Russian people, they need *land and freedom*....⁴⁹

And if the peasant masses of these peoples were already, as it seemed to Bakunin, clamouring "loudly" for their social and political liberation, if they wanted to become themselves the masters of their own fate, then could they be denied the right to *national* self-determination? Was it not clear that *these peoples themselves* had to decide the political fate of their territories and the future boundaries of their states?

To be sure, the criticism that Engels levelled at the "appeal to the Slavs" in 1849 applies as well to this programme of Bakunin's. Once again it appears that Bakunin is wandering in the clouds: he counterposes his vague Slavic confederation⁵⁰ to Poland's "historic" programme, without taking into account the *level of development* of the nationalities involved (Ukrainians, Belorussians, etc.) or to ask whether *at that time* they would have been able to serve as a "barrier against tsardom." And this was the heart of the matter; this, as we know, was the decisive factor that motivated Engels' and Marx's "Polish politics" (and that forced Bakunin himself, in spite of all his protests against the national and social programme of Polish democracy, to form a common front with the latter—with these noble-bourgeois democrats full of annexationist ambitions—during the insurrection of 1863). Bakunin's national programme, therefore, can certainly be called "utopian" and incapable of realization. But *no less utopian* under the given conditions was the programme of the Polish democrats which Engels supported. Poland's independence could be won only in a hard and dogged fight against the superior power of tsarism, but Polish revolutionaries were handicapped by a programme that treated the non-Polish "border peoples" as simple objects for annexation. An independent Poland could not be achieved without the most active cooperation of not only the Polish, but also the Ukrainian, Belorussian and Lithuanian *peasant masses*. But how could one hope for

their support if one altogether *refused to reckon* with the national and, above all, social needs and desires of these peasant masses? The most pertinent answer comes again from Bakunin:

... And once more I repeat: I think the Poles are mistaken to appropriate Ukraine for themselves on the basis of historical rights alone, and without first asking the Ukrainian people about it. It seems to me that [what was formerly] Polish Ukraine, together with the Ruthenians of Galicia as well as our Little Russia [i.e., the parts of Ukraine situated on the Left Bank of the Dnieper River]—a country of fifteen million who speak one language and confess one faith⁵¹—*will be neither Poland nor Russia, but will be its own self.* [Bakunin's emphasis.]... This is what I think, though I may be wrong.... And if Lithuania, Kurland, Livonia, Belorussia... and Ukraine... decide to join *Poland*, not as the result of force or intrigue, but through the straightforward and open decision of these peoples, then we will not say one word against it. All will depend on the degree of independence of these lands, *on their ability or inability to live their own lives.* And from now on the only contest in which Russia and Poland should be engaged is a contest to see which of them can appear more attractive to the peoples living between them. Whose spiritual charm gains the upper hand, where it will be easier for the peoples to live—that is where the peoples will go.⁵² Thus the whole question of borders comes back to the same point: which will be established first—*Peasant (khlopskaia) Poland or Peasant (krest'ianskaia) Russia?*... *With the landlords' programmes you will not rouse a single peasant.*⁵³

As one can see, Bakunin deals a hard blow here to the inconsistent Polish democrats. The main object of conflict is *Ukraine*, and here Bakunin, with the intuition of genius, finds the correct solution to the Ukrainian problem of that time: the question of "independent Ukraine," "historical Poland" or "a great and indivisible Russia" is, in the final analysis, a *social* question—the question of "*land and freedom*" for the *Ukrainian peasant people*. Not only Polish democracy, but Russian democracy as well, were offered one more chance by history to resolve this question through their revolutionary praxis so as to produce the result they desired, so as to create the preconditions for the Ukrainian people to unite with a "Peasant Poland" or a "Peasant Russia."⁵⁴ And one certainly cannot blame Bakunin for fantastic assumptions if both democracies—the one because of its hidebound-noble character, the other because of its immaturity and weakness—let this last chance slip by, and if the Polish insurrection of 1863 had to repeat the wretched experience of 1848.

We thus see Bakunin's position on the nationality question to be the result of the essentially peasant origin and character of his revolutionary ideology.⁵⁵ In this, as we have said, lay his strengths, but from this same source nonetheless flowed all the backward features, all the contradictions and illusions of his socialism, which necessarily brought him into an irreconcilable conflict with the West European, proletarian socialism of Marx and Engels. And among these backward features was Bakunin's "revolutionary pan-Slavism," which combined ideas (tinged by

Hegelianism) about the special historic mission of the Slavs⁵⁶ with sentiments reminiscent of Russian nationalism⁵⁷ and with a peasant's antipathy towards the West European, especially German, workers' movement. This pan-Slavism of Bakunin's really *had nothing in common* with the ordinary variety of reactionary Russian pan-Slavism, and hence it was *very unjust* of Engels and Marx constantly to attribute to him such a spiritual kinship. (In this they acted no different than Bakunin himself, who continually suspected them of being pan-Germans.) Nonetheless, Bakunin's "revolutionary pan-Slavism" has to be judged a backward feature of his ideology and a symptom of the *backwardness* of contemporary Russian socialism.⁵⁸ But today we can do more justice to Bakunin's position and need not view his pan-Slavism entirely from Engels' perspective. We hope, though, to have shown which aspects of Engels' critique were correct and therefore of lasting value.

Notes

1. Bakunin's emphasis in the last phrase of this passage. Michael Bakunin, *Zwei Schriften aus den 40er Jahren des XIX. Jahrhunderts*, Internationale Bibliothek für Philosophie, Bd. II, no. 11–12 (Prague, 1936), pp. 27–28. [An English translation of the "Appeal to the Slavs" is included in *Bakunin on Anarchism*, ed. Sam Dolgoff, revised ed. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1980), pp. 63–68. But since this English version is a retranslation from French, I have preferred to translate from the German original.—*Trans.*]
2. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), pp. 226–29.
3. Viacheslav Polonskii, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin*, 2nd ed. (Moscow-Leningrad, 1925), pp. 233–34.
4. The passage refers to the war of 1846–47 between the United States and Mexico; Engels had already reported on this war—in the same spirit—in the previous year: "The Movements of 1847," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975–), 6:527.
5. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 229–30.
6. See Karl Kautsky, *Die Befreiung der Nationen* (Stuttgart, 1917), pp. 7–8.
7. See note 29 on pp. 147–48.
8. "Pan-Slavism was always not only an out-and-out ideology of the reaction, but particularly of Russian imperialism. Marx [i.e., Engels] was wrong to believe that this ideology did not arise in Russia. The whole theory, philosophy, literature and journalism of pan-Slavism arose in *Russia*." Rosa Luxemburg, "Kankan kontrewolucji," *Przegląd Socjaldemokratyczny*, 1908, no. 4, p. 282. What Luxemburg says here is certainly true, but only when one regards pan-Slavism as essentially an ideology of Russian imperialism; then one must consider Mikhail Pogodin, and not Jan Kollár or Ljudevit Gaj, to be the real father of pan-Slavist doctrine. But Engels employs a much *wider* concept of pan-Slavism; hence his different opinion on the

birthplace of this ideology.

9. "The Magyar Struggle," *Revolutions of 1848*, pp. 220–21.
10. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 242.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 231 and 230.
12. That is, Bakunin's *Aufruf*.
13. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 231.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 244–45.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 242.
16. Engels here seems to deny the right to independent existence only in exceptional cases, only to some Slavic peoples. In reality, as we know, he was unwilling to concede a national future to any Slavic people other than the Russians and Poles.
17. "Democratic Pan-Slavism," p. 244.
18. Galicia here, of course, is an exception.
19. An expression used by the prominent Czech publicist Karel Havlíček-Borovský.
20. This is why the Ukrainian Marxist Vasyl Shakhrai said that Ukraine "had always spoken the language of *independence*, even when renouncing it." Vasyl' Shakhrai [V. Skorovstanskii], *Revoliutsiia na Ukraine*, 2nd ed. (Saratov, 1919), p. iii.
21. Those so reproached therefore replied: "In the eyes [of the Germans] pan-Slavists are all Slavs who reject with aversion and anger the culture that they want to force on us. If *this* is the meaning they give to the word 'pan-Slavist'—oh! then I am a pan-Slavist with all my heart." Michael Bakunin, *Gesammelte Werke*, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1921–24), 1:93.
22. "It has finally become clear to these traitors that, despite their treason, they have been taken in by the counter-revolution, that there is no intention of creating either a 'Slav Austria' or a 'federal state on the basis of national equality,' least of all of setting up democratic institutions for the Austrian Slavs.... Once more the Slavic Linden unions are everywhere coming up against the government and daily undergoing painful experiences which show them the trap they allowed themselves to be enticed into. But now it is too late; in their own homeland they are powerless against the Austrian soldiery they themselves reorganized. They are rebuffed by the Germans and Magyars they betrayed, they are rebuffed by revolutionary Europe, and they will have to endure the same military despotism they helped to impose on the Viennese and the Magyars." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 240–41.
23. Hermann Wendel, "Marxism and the Southern Slav Question," *Slavonic Review* 2 (1923–24): 296.
24. Volodymyr Zatons'kyi, "Materiialy do ukrains'koho natsional'noho pytannia," *Bil'shovyk Ukrainy*, 1927, no. 6. See also Roman Rosdolsky [V. S.], "Ukrains'ke natsional'ne pytannia v kryvomu zerkali V. Zatons'koho," *Kul'tura*, 1930, no. 1, pp. 25–29. See also above, note 21 on p. 146.
25. Bakunin, *Zwei Schriften*, pp. 38–40.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

27. Cf. the following passage from Bakunin's *Confession*: "Since ancient times the Germans had been accustomed to view them [the Austrian Slavs] as their serfs and did not want to permit them even to breathe in Slavic! In this hatred for the Slavs, in these Slav-devouring cries, absolutely all the German parties [in 1848–49] participated. Not only did the conservatives and liberals shout against the Slavs, as they did against Italy and Poland, but the *democrats*, too, shouted louder than the others: in newspapers, in brochures, in legislative and national assemblies, in clubs, in beer halls, on the street.... It was such a din, such a furious storm, that if a German shout could have killed or harmed anyone, then all the Slavs would long since have died." *The Confession of Mikhail Bakunin*, trans. Robert C. Howes, ed. Lawrence D. Orton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 97.
28. This, too, was only a *pium desideratum* of Bakunin's, since in reality the ruling caste of nobles and bourgeois had never stopped enslaving the non-Magyar peoples living in Hungary.
29. Václav Čejchan, *Bakunin v Čechách; příspěvek k revolučnímu hnutí českému v letech 1848–1849* (Prague, 1928), pp. 193, 196, 198–99.
30. We refer here above all to Bakunin's role in the preparations for a Slovak military action against the Hungarians (summer 1848); the action fell apart owing to the lack of unity among the Slovaks themselves. See Zdeněk Tobolka, *Politické dějiny československého národa od r. 1848 až do dnešní doby*, 4 vols. in 5 (Prague, 1932–37), 1:117; see also Stúr's letter to Bakunin in Viacheslav Polonskii, ed., *Materialy dlia biografii M. Bakunina*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1923–33), 1:28. Later, however, Bakunin felt compelled to censure his Slavic companions sharply. "Brother, what are you doing?" he wrote to an unknown Slavic adherent. "You are driving Slavdom to destruction.... You are sacrificing the great cause of the Slavs and acting only in the interests of the emperor and the Austrian aristocracy. You believe that diplomacy will save you; it will only bring your destruction. You have declared war against the revolution, you serve the reaction, you bring shame to all of Slavdom." M.A. Bakunin, *Sobranie sochinenii i pisem 1828–1876*, ed. Iu.M. Steklov, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1934–35), 3:320. How right, then, was Engels when he wrote about Bakunin: "And if a few upright Slav democrats now called on the Austrian Slavs to join the revolution, to look on the Austrian monarchy as their main enemy, and indeed to side with the Magyars in the interests of the revolution, this reminds one of the hen which runs around at the edge of the pond in despair over the young ducks it has itself incubated, which now suddenly escape into an environment utterly foreign to it, where it cannot follow them." "Democratic Pan-Slavism," pp. 243–44.
31. See Michail Dragomanow, ed., *Michail Bakunins sozial-politischer Briefwechsel mit Alexander Iw. Herzen und Ogarjow* (Stuttgart, 1895), pp. 285–89.
32. Here is the relevant passage: "My fantasies went even further. I thought, I hoped, that the Magyar nation (forced by circumstances, by its isolated position in the midst of Slav peoples, and also by its more Eastern than Western nature), that all the Moldavians and the Vlachs, and finally even Greece would enter the Slav union; and thus there would be created a single, free, Eastern state, a reborn Eastern world, as it were, in contrast to the Western, although not hostile to the latter, and that its capital would be Constantinople." Bakunin, *Confession*, p. 89. Bakunin's two Russian

biographers do not agree on how to assess this very characteristic passage. While Steklov attempts to defend Bakunin against himself by pointing to the problematic nature of the *Confession* (Iu. Steklov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, ego zhizn' i deiatel'nost'*, 4 vols. [Moscow, 1920–27], 1:312–13), Polonsky considers such a defence of Bakunin “not only superfluous but unfounded.” “Revolutionary pan-Slavism,” he says, “is nonetheless nothing else but pan-Slavism. Where there is pan-Slavism, there must also be—sooner or later, but in any case inevitably—Constantinople.” Polonskii, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin*, p. 414.

33. This is exactly what Engels does, for example, in his fragment “Germanen- und Slaventum.” Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:55.
34. See the Appendix to this work.
35. “While in Germany philosophy formed the pretext under the protection of which the most revolutionary doctrines in politics or theology were propounded, in Austria and under the very nose of Metternich, historical and philological science was used by the Panslavists as a cloak to teach the doctrine of Slavonic unity, and to create a political party with the unmistakable aim of overturning the relations of all nationalities in Austria....” [Engels], “Austria’s Weakness,” in Karl Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: S. Sonnenschein & co., 1897), p. 549. [Rosdolsky cites Engels’ German version of this article, which differs somewhat from the English version published in the *New York Daily Tribune* and reprinted in *The Eastern Question*. In the quotation above, I have substituted one phrase from the German version.—*Trans.*]
36. The greatest Ukrainian poet.
37. A Ukrainian historian.
38. Bakunin, *Confession*, pp. 51–52.
39. From a letter of Bakunin to Aleksandr Herzen and Nikolai Ogarev, 19 July 1866. M. A. Bakunin, *Izbrannyya sochineniia* (n.p., 1920), p. xlv.
40. Bakunin, *Zwei Schriften*, pp. 37–38.
41. From a poem by the Russian poet Zinaida Hippus.
42. All his life Bakunin remained true to this—thoroughly peasant—idea of burning documents.
43. *Confession*, pp. 110–11.
44. The great Russian peasant rebellion led by the Cossack Emelian Pugachev.
45. See also chapter three above, p. 67. It is not until 1856 that we find in Marx and Engels’ correspondence the following remark made in passing: “The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War.” Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 86.
46. Bakunin, “Russkim, pol'skim i vsem slavianskim druž'iam,” supplement to *Kolokol*, 15 February 1862, no. 122–23, p. 1,027. Bakunin also, of course, knew that “nationality is a fact, not a principle. As a fact it has the right to free existence and development; as a principle it only serves as a diversion from the spirit of the revolution. The right of nationality is only a natural corollary of the supreme principle of freedom; as soon as it comes into conflict with freedom, however, it ceases to be a right.” Steklov, *Mikhail*.

Aleksandrovich Bakunin, 3:322.

47. "Therefore, if people say that to demand the restoration of Poland is to appeal to the principle of nationalities, they merely prove that they do not know what they are talking about, *for the restoration of Poland means the re-establishment of a state composed of at least four different nationalities.*" "What Have the Working Classes to Do with Poland?" in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The First International and After*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1974), p. 385.
48. As an idealist, Bakunin necessarily saw this connection in a perverted way. Thus he reproached the "Marxists" that "as all-devouring pan-Germans[!], they had to reject the *peasant* revolution, because this was a specifically *Slavic* revolution." Mikhail Bakunin, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, vol. I: *Gosudarstvennost' i anarkhiia*, 2nd ed. (Petersburg-Moscow, 1922), p. 202. In reality just the opposite was true: Marx and Engels rejected Bakunin's "*Slavic* revolution" above all because it struck them as a specifically *peasant* revolution. Thus Marx wrote in his notes on Bakunin's book: "He wants the European social revolution, premised on the economic basis of capitalist production, to take place at the level of the Russian or Slavic agricultural and pastoral peoples, not to surpass this level.... The will, and not the economic conditions, is the foundation of *his* social revolution." "Conspectus of Bakunin's *Statism and Anarchy*," *The First International and After*, p. 335.
49. "Russkim, pol'skim i vsem slavianskim druž'iam," p. 1,026.
50. Bakunin writes in his proclamation: "Together with the Austrian empire, no doubt, ... the Turkish empire will also collapse; and from the ruins of these two monstrous states will rise to new life and broad freedom: the Italians, Greeks, Romanians, Magyars and the whole great, fraternally united, Slavic tribe. Poland has been reborn. And now Russia too will rise again. Yes, this is a great era." *Ibid.*, p. 1,021.
51. Bakunin is in error here, since the Galician Ukrainians are—or, rather, were until recently—Greek Catholics. See above, p. 70, note 4.
52. At that time it was still permissible to pose the question this way; Drahomanov, therefore, had no reason to be indignant over similar statements of Herzen's. See M.P. Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha i velikoruskaia demokratiia* (Geneva, 1881).
53. "Russkim, pol'skim i vsem slavianskim druž'iam," pp. 1,026–27.
54. As early as 1860, the prominent Ukrainian historian Kostomarov addressed these words to the editors of *Kolokol*: "Neither the Russians nor the Poles should regard the territory inhabited by our people as their own!" "Ukraina," *Kolokol*, 15 January 1860, no. 61, p. 503. That this admonition was not unnecessary is shown by Herzen's declaration "to the Russian officers in Poland" in 1862: "What Russian does not regard, and with complete justice, Kiev [the capital of Ukraine] to be just as much a Russian city as Moscow?" "Russkim ofitseram v Pol'she," *Kolokol*, 15 October 1862, no. 147, p. 1,214.
55. It was surely no accident that precisely Russian *social democracy* displayed, in its early phases, so little understanding for the "separatist" aspirations of the non-Russian nationalities. The urban *proletariat* of Ukraine, Belorussia, etc., was Russified or Russian, and it was only natural that in the separatist national movements it saw a disagreeable nuisance rather than a future ally.

It was first in Lenin's writings that the national question took on a new significance—this time as a strategic problem of the proletarian revolution.

56. What Drahomanov said about Herzen also applied (with some reservations) to Bakunin: "By his historical-philosophical background, Herzen was—just as Konstantin Aksakov and his other Muscovite compatriots—a Hegelian. According to Hegel's teaching, the entire evolution of mankind advances in stages, but in such a way that each stage is embodied in a particular nation. The Germans (especially the Prussians) represented, in Hegel's view, the last stage of this development, at which point no further replacement of the predominant nation was foreseen. Herzen himself made fun of this, saying that in the opinion of the Hegelians *the Lord God now lives in Berlin*. The Muscovite Hegelians, however, only *transferred this Lord God to the Slavs*, in particular, of course, *to the Great Russians*; the socialists—like Herzen—connected the doctrine of the future supersession of the German period of history by the Slavic period with the doctrine of the imminent supersession of bourgeois rule by the triumph of the working classes." Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha*, pp. 72–73. See also G. V. Plekhanov's article of 1914, "From Idealism to Materialism": According to Hegel, "every stage of the development of the world spirit is represented on the historical scene by a separate nation. *The present historical epoch* is the epoch of *German* culture. . . . But the Slav peoples could not willingly accept the hegemony of the Germans. Since Schelling's time part of the intelligentsia in the Slav countries has been busily occupied with the question of which exact stage of development of the world spirit these peoples are fated to represent." Georgi Plekhanov, "From Idealism to Materialism," *Selected Philosophical Works in Five Volumes* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House-Progress Publishers, n.d.–1976–), 3:606–07.
57. "On the contrary, in a Slav union I saw a fatherland, but a broader one in which, if only Russia were to join it, both the Poles and the Czechs would have to yield first place to her." Bakunin, *Confession*, pp. 77–78.
58. Cf. Bakunin's letter to Nikolai Zhukovsky, 17 July 1870: "Karl Marx was completely right with reference to pan-Slavism, which always was and always will be a *covert despotism*. The Russian tsars always promised the Slavic peoples liberation from the foreign yoke, in order to subject them to Russian despotism, and one must admit that our brother Slavs, by their single-minded nationalism, to a large degree abet tsarist propaganda, just as the Prussians [by their anti-Polish policies] do in Silesia and as our Poles [who want to subjugate the Ukrainians] do in Little Russian Galicia." Steklov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin*, 3:330, note 1.

12. Conclusions

What was the aim and what is the result of our investigation? We have endeavoured to *understand* the rival conceptions of the nationality problem held by the revolutionaries of 1848, *within their historical context*. This must certainly be the starting point of every critique.

For socialists today (or for those who call themselves socialists), "the right of peoples to self-determination" has become so self-evident a principle (or so self-evidently a phrase demanding lip-service) that we cannot help but "like" Bakunin's nationality programme better than Engels'.¹ This, of course, says nothing about the *historic* justification and the practicability of the two programmes a hundred years ago. And indeed, as we have seen, at that time *both* programmes proved to be equally impracticable and "unrealistic." Such had to be the case since the programmes merely reflected two different sides of the *contradiction between the objective tasks of the revolution and the limitations of the social forces at its disposal*. While Bakunin's programme found its insurmountable barrier in the backwardness and lack of cultural development of the Slavic peasant masses, Engels' programme ran up against the anemia and class bigotry of the ruling classes of the "historic" nations, the German bourgeoisie and the Hungarian and Polish nobility, i.e., in the final analysis, against the immaturity of the industrial proletariat in Austria and Germany.

This way of looking at both programmes puts their errors in a different perspective. Instead of measuring them against the concepts of today, we recognize that these errors were historically determined and in this sense necessary. In Bakunin's case, the "unparalleled" peasant revolution of which he dreamed and which was supposed to start in Russia and then go on to destroy "all European enslavement," was in itself a contradictory concept; the peasantry was never able to act as an independent force, let

alone as an independently socialist force. Moreover, this revolution was very far off, while the actual role of the Slavic peasant peoples for the time being was to provide cannon fodder for the armies of the counter-revolution. Is it any wonder, then, that under these circumstances Bakunin's programme was thoroughly illusory, and that the more reality conflicted with his revolutionary hopes, the more he had to escape into the realm of rhetorical phrases and moral postulates and felt compelled to idealize some of the weaknesses and reactionary traits of these peasant peoples? Therefore Bakunin placed his hope for the realization of "freedom for all men, for all peoples, true and complete freedom, freedom without reservation, without exception, without restriction" on the revolt of a peasantry that still languished in the fetters of the most degrading enslavement and to whom the idea of the necessity of a struggle for political rights and liberty was completely alien. While the nonhistoric Slavic peoples were only slowly achieving a consciousness of their national identities, Bakunin wanted to strengthen them by means of an artificial "all-Slavic" national consciousness and to see them all immediately joined in a federation of "free Slavic republics." It was, then, no fault of Bakunin's that his ideas were so permeated by the spirit of "political romanticism" and seemed to be completely out of touch with reality; rather, this resulted from the specific immaturity of conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe as a whole. In this, too, he was merely a faithful interpreter of his time and his country.

But this also holds true for the nationality policy of Engels and Marx, for *their* perception of the resolution of the national problems of Central and Eastern Europe. We know that they saw the revolution of 1848 as only the beginning of an upheaval on a world historical scale, a revolution which, after a short interim period of bourgeois rule, would bring the proletariat into power and introduce a state of permanent revolution and the transformation to a socialist order. But given the circumstances, this most radical of all the revolutions of history would have had to remain *limited within the narrow confines of Western and Central Europe*. From the East it was threatened by the fearsome power of Russian tsarism, which could rely for support upon the backward Slavic peoples, hardly touched by modern development and its attendant struggles. Moreover, the immediate political tasks of this revolution in Central Europe, and especially Germany, coincided with the tasks of *national unification and independence*, so that the most radical German party—that of Marx and Engels—could well be considered "the most national" too.³ This situation naturally gave rise to a certain conception of the role and mutual relations of the individual peoples in the revolution—a conception that divided the peoples into "revolutionary" and "reactionary," "civilized" and "barbaric," leading and led, and that made the hegemony of revolutionary Germany in Central and Southeastern Europe appear an unshakeable axiom. Marx and Engels held to the theory that the spread of the capitalist mode of production, which "is as truly cosmopolitan as Christianity,"⁴ would also draw the more backward peoples of the European continent into the vortex

of the revolutionary movement, and that therefore "the time of chosen peoples of the revolution had passed forever."⁴ All this, however, demanded decades of unimpeded capitalist development, a perspective with which the two friends, who already envisaged capitalism on its death bed, could not reconcile themselves. But in concrete reality the Slavic peoples of Eastern and Central Europe were far removed from an active revolutionary role, and therefore they were—actually or potentially—"the handy men of tsarism,"⁵ which could then, for good reason, be considered the chief enemy not only of European democracy, but also of German unification. This explains why Engels and Marx, though principled internationalists, would only concede the right of self-determination to the old "cultured nations" (the Germans, Italians, Hungarians and Poles), why at times they were "firmly convinced of the inferiority of the Russians" (and of the Slavs in general) "*vis-à-vis* nations of equal or higher cultivation,"⁶ and why, in their thoughts and feelings, the idea of the hegemony of the German revolution coalesced with the notion of the hegemony of the Germans in the Danube region, based on "a thousand years of history."⁷ This attitude, obviously, had to give rise to numerous inconsistencies. And yet it would be completely false and unhistorical to view the two thinkers, on these grounds, as ancestors of the patriotically-minded reformism that emerged later or even as "German nationalists."⁸ It suffices to refer to their position on the Alsace-Lorraine question, not to mention that it makes a difference whether one champions a Greater Germany in the interests of the revolution or of the German Kaiser.

Here too, then, historical reality proves too complicated to be explained by simple catchwords borrowed from the daily usage of political journalism. Engels and Marx acted and fought in a world very different from that of today; and to understand their errors we must understand the special range of problems posed by that world. Above all, there was the fundamental error of misjudging the speed of historical development, from which (for readily comprehensible reasons) they were never able to free themselves completely: they were unwilling to concede to capitalism, which had hardly reached manhood, a longer lifespan, and they therefore regarded the socialist revolution as the direct, practical task of their generation. On *this* premise their nationalities' policy, with all its errors, is nonetheless understandable; it showed the road which a socialist revolution, limited to Western and Central Europe, and therefore *isolated*,⁹ indeed would have had to take if it were to be able at least temporarily to hold its own against a hostile environment. Moreover (and here we follow Kautsky's and Bauer's analysis), just such a truly radical revolution would have made a "French" solution to the Central European nationality problems appear possible: it could have given the Slavic peoples democracy and social progress "in reparation for their nationality."¹⁰

There is no denying that the results of our investigation in great measure contradict the traditional conception of the nationalities' policy of the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. It is simply not true (as Kautsky, for instance, would have it) that Marx and Engels' negative attitude towards the nonhistoric Slavic peoples was only a short-lived episode in the history of Marxism, limited to the revolutionary years of 1848 and 1849.¹¹ And it is also not true that this attitude can be explained *completely* by the counter-revolutionary role of these peoples and by the danger of pan-Slavism. (A national-German undertone is sometimes clearly audible in the national policy of Marx and Engels, although for them a united, republican Germany never meant anything else but the most suitable base of operation and the most competent agent of the *socialist revolution*.) The real conjunctures were by far not so unequivocal and free of contradictions as to correspond to the all too linear, and therefore dogmatic, "orthodox" conception—however justified this conception otherwise was in the confrontation with vulgar-nationalist interpretations of Marx and however much it was fundamentally correct *vis-à-vis* the latter.

But if our interpretation is correct, then the question arises: to what extent can the nationality policy of Marx and Engels be considered truly *internationalist*? Was it not precisely Marx and Engels who created a critical method that first made it possible to understand nationality no longer as something eternal but as a historical, social category, and did they not thus give a real basis to the "natural cosmopolitanism"¹² of the workers' movement? And must not all that was and is internationalist in the ideology of the modern workers' movement be traced back, in the first place, to the *Marxist* source of this ideology?

Certainly, the internationalism of the workers' movement is now unthinkable without Marx and Engels. But this does not mean that one may not distinguish between the general propositions of their scientific theory and the practical, day-to-day politics that they engaged in. Nor does it mean that one should understand the necessarily internationalist *tendency* of the proletarian movement for emancipation as a *ready-made, predetermined fact, not subject to any historical development*. Just as the working class cannot be socialist or revolutionary *a priori*, *neither is it internationalist a priori*.¹³ The only thing "given" in the proletariat (providing it is not corrupted by imperialism) is a revolutionary *instinct* and—proceeding from this—an emotional sympathy "with all the oppressed." And in every land it takes a long period of development and a hard spiritual struggle until on this basis a clear and consistently internationalist way of thinking develops within the class-conscious proletariat. This process is made all the more difficult, since to think and feel as internationalists, the proletarians must have an understanding of things that have no direct connection with the economic and political

struggle of the working class and even seem to impede it. So, for example, wherever several nationalities are forced together in a single state, the internationalist policy of the Marxist workers' parties not only strives to make the workers of the *oppressed* nation recognize the workers in the ruling nation as their comrades-in-arms and subordinate their particular national goals to the interest of the common struggle for socialism, but also (and above all!) it encourages the workers of the *oppressing* nations (notwithstanding their national "pride" and the national privileges that may benefit some strata of the working class) to dissociate themselves entirely from all the policies of national oppression pursued by their ruling classes and to come out clearly and without reservation *for the complete liberation of oppressed nationalities*.

An objection immediately arises: Should, then the workers let themselves be "diverted" from the class struggle by the national question? How can one demand that they support the party of one bourgeoisie against another in a "competition between bourgeoisies"? (In the last analysis, given the present social order, every national struggle can be reduced to this.) Why cannot the oppressed nationalities wait with their emancipation until the hour of freedom arrives for the proletariat too?¹⁴ And why should the English, German, Austrian and Russian workers have been concerned with the establishment of independent (or even only autonomous) Irish, Polish, South Slavic and Ukrainian states, whereby large political and economic regions would be broken up, whose integrity would facilitate socialist development?

It is enough to ask these questions, which have constantly recurred in the history of the workers' movement, in order to appreciate the extreme difficulty and complexity of the problem. Far from being "by nature without national prejudice," the proletariat of every land must first acquire *through arduous effort* the internationalist attitude that its general, historical interests demand from it. One can therefore understand why it took so long for the Marxist workers' movement to achieve clarity in this area (it was a long way from Engels to Lenin!) and how necessarily doctrinaire and one-sided the attitude of the early workers' movement had to be when confronted with the national question. Thus, for example, whole generations of French socialists—in spite of their heavily emphasized cosmopolitanism¹⁵—held fast to the idea of the predestined hegemony of the "revolutionary" French "model nation";¹⁶ thus, in Marx and Engels (not to mention Lassalle!) the conviction that the working classes must form an international alliance could long be bound up with the notion that whole backward peoples had no rights and with prejudices against certain nations which they did not particularly like. But later, too, in the period of the Second International, the socialist workers' movement did not remain exempt from such biases and contradictions, even if we abstract completely from so-called reformism!¹⁷

It is well known that the socialists of *oppressed* nationalities very often suffered from "national hypersensitivity." But the situation was no better—in fact, it was much worse—among the socialists of the *ruling*

nations. Often, the more "internationalist" they considered themselves, *the less were they willing to take notice of the existence of the national question*; their "internationalism," then, should more correctly be designated—to use the terminology customary in Russia—"national nihilism" or "indifferentism."¹⁸

The most striking example of this is provided by Austro-Marxism. Before World War I German-Austrian social democracy was always professing "internationalism" and "the right of peoples to self-determination"; but how tightly this party (consciously and unconsciously) clung to the maintenance of the Austrian monarchy is shown by the unflagging effort which its leading theoreticians expended on puzzling out, in the form of the so-called "cultural-national autonomy," an Austrian "Island of Utopia" that would, on the one hand, eliminate national oppression in Austria, but, on the other hand, *would leave the decisive positions of state power in the hands of the German minority!*¹⁹ (No less characteristic of this party's nationality politics was the enduring intraparty alliance of Viktor Adler with Ignacy Daszyński, the leader of the Polish social democrats, as well as with the Hungarian social democrats; this alliance was primarily directed against the rebellious Czech, Ukrainian and South Slav comrades in the party,²⁰ and, paradoxically, it reproduced—within social democracy!—the division we already know from the revolution of 1848–49, i.e., the division into "historic" and "nonhistoric" nations.)

So much for German-Austrian social democracy. As to the *Russian* social democrats (before Lenin), their internationalism can best be tested by their attitude to the sensitive *Ukrainian* question. Here we would like to call the reader's attention to an episode very little known, but quite telling. In 1890 Engels wrote a study entitled "The Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism" (which Stalin later put on the index). When he submitted it to the Russian periodical *Sotsialdemokrat*, published in Geneva, the editors, Vera Zasulich and Georgii Plekhanov, *protested* against a passage in which Engels referred to the Ukrainians and Belorussians as *separate nationalities, distinct from the Russians* and annexed to the latter by force. Unfortunately, their letter has not been preserved, but we do have Engels' answer to it, which can give us an idea of the matters at issue. Engels wrote to them:

I admit, incidentally, that from the Russian point of view the question of Poland's partitioning (1772 and so on) looks completely different than it does from the Polish point of view, which has become the viewpoint of Western Europe. But in the final analysis I must likewise take the Poles into account. If the Poles have pretensions to territories *which the Russians have generally considered to be their permanent acquisitions and Russian by national composition*, then it is not my task to decide this question. I can only say this, that in my opinion the people concerned *should decide their fate themselves*—just as the the Alsatians will have to choose themselves between Germany and France.²¹

Zasulich and Plekhanov, then, considered the Ukrainian and Belorussian territories acquired by tsarism in 1772 to be "permanent acquisitions and Russian by national composition." It does not have to be emphasized that much later too—up until World War I—many leading Russian socialists could quite easily reconcile a recognition in principle of "the right of nations to self-determination" with the denial in fact of the *very existence* of separate Ukrainian and Belorussian nations or even with a Great Russian chauvinist resentment against these nations.²² It was the 1917 revolution, which raised the questions of Ukraine and other Russian "borderlands" in all their implications, that first brought about a decisive change in this regard.

It would certainly be rewarding to compare Engels' theory on nationalities—as well as Bakunin's—with that which Lenin developed some sixty years later. But this theme would carry us beyond the limits of the present study. Here we can only make two points that seem to us essential. First, in Lenin's time the question of the socialist transformation of society was actually on the historical agenda, and not just for the peoples of Western and Central Europe (as during Marx and Engels' time), but for all the peoples of the European continent. And secondly, in his theory Lenin could base himself on the modern working class movement, and not—as Bakunin had to—on the most profoundly "nonhistoric" peasantry. It is no wonder, then, that it was first Lenin who was able to overcome the onesidedness of both Engels' and Bakunin's conceptions and to build a bridge between them.²³

In conclusion, some remarks *pro domo sua*. It is certainly not pleasant to criticize, a hundred years later, the views of a great thinker, views, moreover, that have been irrevocably refuted by the severest of all critics—history. The author hopes that he will not be accused at any point of picayune nit-picking; and he did point out how much one can learn even from an erring Engels and how the latter's views still contain much that is great and fruitful. There are two ways to look at Marx and Engels: as the creators of a brilliant, but in its deepest essence, thoroughly *critical*, scientific method; or as church fathers of some sort, the bronzed figures of a monument. Those who have the latter vision will not have found this study to their taste. We, however, prefer to see them as they were in reality.

Spring 1948.

Notes

1. Steklov, for example, writes: "It is perfectly obvious that in this dispute [over the right to self-determination of the nonhistoric peoples] it is rather *Bakunin* who is in the right.... In comparing [both points of view], Bakunin's viewpoint, for all its deficiencies, is nonetheless closer to our present understanding of this question than is the position taken at that time by Marx and Engels...." *Iu. Steklov, Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin, ego zhizn' i deiatel'nost'*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1920-27), 1:244 and 243.
2. "In the name of the 'extremist party,' in which he included himself, Engels declares here [in his hitherto unpublished brochure "Germanen- und Slaventum," 1855] that the party is neither 'Teutonomanic nor democratically Germanophobe.' Theoretically, it makes no difference to the party whether France, Germany or England stands in the centre of the movement or whether historical development puts down and crushes this or that nation. Nevertheless, the party's theory does not indicate that such a fate awaits Germany.... Just as bluntly as the extremist party tells Germans the truth, just so proudly does it constantly conduct itself in relations abroad. Germany's most decisive party is also its most national. This is possible because Germany's struggle for inner unity and for a territory encompassing the entire nation coincides with the class struggle. *Its eastern boundaries* and its independence are directly endangered by *pan-Slavism*, the actual expressions of which have so far all displayed a reactionary character. The proof of this is the conduct of the Austrian Slavs during the revolution." Gustav Mayer, *Friedrich Engels: Eine Biographie*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (The Hague, 1934), 2:56.
3. "The development of capitalist production creates an average level of bourgeois society and therefore an average level of temperament and disposition amongst the most varied peoples. It is as truly cosmopolitan as Christianity." Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, 3 vols. (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963-71), 3:448.
4. Engels addressed these words to the Russian revolutionary group *Narodnaia volia*, which "considered its own Russian people the chosen people of the social revolution." "Nachwort (1894) [zu 'Soziales aus Russland']," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke [MEW]*, 39 vols. (Berlin, 1957-68), 18:672.
5. Engels to Bernstein, 22 February 1882: "Have, then, as much sympathy with the primitive little peoples as you want.... But they are and remain the handy men of tsarism, and poetical sympathies have no place in politics. And if as a result of these chaps' insurrection [the South Slavs in Hercegovina and Krivošije], a world war threatens to break out, which would ruin our whole revolutionary situation, then they and their right to cattle-rustling [!] must be sacrificed without mercy to the interests of the European proletariat." *MEW*, 35:281-82. See above, pp. 54-55, note 43.
6. Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 2:59. Mayer refers here only to Engels. He thought he could explain this attitude by referring to Engels' West European mentality ("an inveterate West European"). This, of course, is a meaningless phrase.
7. This idea of the German revolution's hegemony became deeply rooted in Marx and Engels' thought. Even as late as 1870 Marx saw the task of the

Russian revolutionaries to be "to work for Poland (i.e., to liberate Europe from having them as neighbours)." Letter to Engels, 24 March 1870, *MEW*, 32:466. But Engels responded: "One can permit them [the Russian section of the First International] an attempt at protection over the other Slavs until one has a good foothold in Austria and Hungary; then it will cease of itself." 27 March 1870, *MEW*, 32:470.

8. Here one need only recall the well-known story of Engels' "campaign plan" of 1879. Mayer tells us: "Since the war on the French side had become a people's war, while on the German side the call for annexations grew ever louder, Engels' sympathies changed completely, so that towards the end of 1870 he drafted a campaign plan, the implementation of which, in his view, would enable the French to relieve Paris and push the German troops back to the border. A rough draft of this was found among his papers. The executors of his estate, Bebel and Bernstein, destroyed it, presumably out of fear that this could provide yet an additional pretext to reproach the German social democratic party ... with treason." Mayer, *Friedrich Engels*, 2:197; see also 2:544-45. It took a peculiar sort of "German nationalist" to draw up, in the midst of a "national war," a campaign plan for the general staff of the enemy army. See also Marx's letter to the *Daily News*, 19 January 1871: "France—and her cause is fortunately far from desperate—fights at this moment not only for her own national independence, but for the liberty of Germany and Europe." Karl Marx, *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann* (Moscow-Leningrad: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR, 1934), p. 122. See also D. Riazanov, *Ocherki po istorii marksizma* (Moscow, 1923), pp. 291-324.
9. Marx deals with the problem of an isolated socialist revolution from another aspect in a letter to Engels of 8 October 1858: "The specific task of bourgeois society is the establishment of a world market, at least in outline, and of production based upon this world market. Since the world is round, this seems to have been completed by the colonization of California and Australia and the opening up of China and Japan. *The difficult question for us is this*: on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will moreover immediately assume a socialist character. *Is it not bound to be crushed in this little corner, considering that in a far greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant?*" Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), pp. 103-04.
10. See above, pp. 143-44.
11. See above, pp. 131-32.
12. This is Otto Bauer's phrase. See his *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (Vienna, 1924).
13. The young Engels wrote in 1845: "The proletarians in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy and the same struggle. The great mass of proletarians are, by their very nature, free from national prejudices and their whole disposition and movement is essentially humanitarian, anti-nationalist." "The Festival of Nations in London," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 6:6. This image of the proletariat, of course, never corresponded to reality and reflected a mere developmental tendency.

14. Engels often used this argument himself.
15. Incidentally, we do not think that contrasting "internationalism" and "cosmopolitanism"—as did Moses Hess (see Sidney Hook, *From Hegel to Marx* [New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1950], pp. 202–03) and, after him, Otto Bauer—does justice to the essence of *socialist* internationalism. (Even less valid, of course, was Stalin's crudely nationalistic campaign against "decadent cosmopolitanism.")
16. See Engels' polemic against Louis Blanc: "A Frenchman is necessarily a cosmopolite," says M. Blanc. Yes, in a world ruled over only by French influence, French manners, fashions, ideas, politics. In a world in which every nation has adopted the characteristics of French nationality. But that is exactly what the democrats of other nations will not accept. Quite ready to give up the harshness of their own nationality, they expect the same from the French. They will not be satisfied in the assertion, on the part of the French, that *they are cosmopolites by the mere fact that they are French, an assertion which amounts to the demand urged upon all others to become Frenchmen.*" "Louis Blanc's Speech at the Dijon Banquet" (1847), *Collected Works*, 6:411. But this critique of Blanc did not prevent Engels himself from emphasizing "the cosmopolitan character of the *Germans*." See above, p. 28.
17. A socialist allegiant to the state, of course, cannot be indifferent whether "his" state is greater or smaller, possesses better or worse strategic borders, exploits more or fewer "underdeveloped regions," etc.
18. It is indeed easy for a socialist of a ruling nation to blame his party comrades of the oppressed nationality for being "nationalists." (One only needs to recall Friedrich Adler's famous dictum that the Czech socialists were "inferior in internationalism"!) *His own* nation—thank God!—was "nationally satisfied," so that *he* was hardly ever tempted to involve himself with the "unsocialist" national question and thereby leave himself vulnerable. Thus in the Second International before World War I it was common to think of the *Czechs* as "nationalists" and the *German Austrians* as "internationalists." Later developments, however, showed clearly enough how relative this difference was and of how little import internationalism was on both sides, but especially in the case of the German Austrians. See the similar opinion in Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1960), p. 217.
19. It is interesting how Bauer, who was the first to analyse (however unsuccessfully) the question of proletarian internationalism (*Die Nationalitätenfrage*, pp. 302–23, 559–76), dealt with the problem of the so-called language of internal administration (*innere Amtssprache*). "There is, for example, the question of the Czech bourgeoisie's demand that *Czech* become the *language of internal administration*. German and Czech social democrats will point out that on the resolution of this question depends neither the importance nor the cultural development of both nations, that the struggle for the language of internal administration does not affect the interests of the working class, but is merely a veiled form of the competition within the intelligentsia, that the bureaucratic administration—whatever the language it may employ—is alien rule as far as the working class is concerned [how radical!] and only the replacement of the bureaucratic administration by a democratic self-government can resolve national problems." *Ibid.*, pp. 569–70. What else is this exposition but a typical example

of "national nihilism"? In another passage Bauer also equates the demand for national secondary schools and universities with the demand for the "language of internal administration" and only considers the demand for national elementary schools to be among the "demands for the proletariat." Ibid., p. 565. This shows how questionable were Bauer's positions also in regard to the practical side of the *Nationalitätenfrage*.

20. Another reason for the alliance between Adler and Daszyński was their common hatred for Rosa Luxemburg and for all the leftists in the Second International. To appreciate how deep-rooted this hatred was, see Adler's correspondence with Kautsky and others: Victor Adler, *Briefwechsel mit August Bebel und Karl Kautsky* (Vienna, 1954).
21. Letter of Engels to Zasulich, 3 April 1890, *MEW*, 37:374.
22. The erstwhile revolutionary and later conservative Lev Tikhomirov had this to say about Plekhanov in his memoirs: "I can not refrain from noting a curious character trait of his. He bore in his soul an irrepressible Russian patriotism. He did not see or recognize in Russia, as in all other lands in the world, anything original, unique. Yet he saw in Russia the great socialist land of the future, and he did not give Russia away to anyone. He literally hated every kind of separatism. He regarded Ukrainophilism with contempt and hostility. In the depths of his soul lived the Great Russian unitarist and unifier. As a revolutionary and emigrant he dared not come out openly against the Poles, since they were also a revolutionary force. But Plekhanov did not like the Poles; he neither respected nor trusted them. He was quite frank about this in conversations among friends. He was in open enmity with Drahomanov [the Ukrainian socialist]. He used to laugh and say this about Shevchenko [the Ukrainian poet]: 'I will never forgive Shevchenko for writing: I can, but don't want, to speak Russian.' He hated Shevchenko and the Ukrainophiles even more, for instance, than did Katkov [the well-known Russian reactionary]." Lev Tikhomirov, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1927), p. 91.

Unfortunately, Tikhomirov's sketch comes very close to the historical truth, as is shown in Plekhanov's notebooks from 1880–81 (*Literaturnoe nasledie*, 8 vols. [Moscow, 1934–40], 1:45–46) and, especially, by his chauvinistic sallies against the Ukrainians and Finns in 1917 (*God na rodine*, 2 vols. [Paris, 1921], 1:210–13, 226–30).

But what accounts for Plekhanov's attitudes? In an article from 1917 Plekhanov stresses that one of the great historical services of Peter the Great was that he secured for Russia the coasts of the Baltic and Black seas from which "German imperialism... pushes us back." Ibid., 2:110. By that time, certainly, Plekhanov was already a Russian chauvinist. We also find the same motif in the brochure published by the Plekhanov group in Geneva in 1891: O. P[olinkovskii], *O bezvykhodnosti ukrainskago sotsializma v Rossii*; see above pp. 141–42. This brochure depicts the conquest of the Black Sea coast and of the fertile Ukrainian territories as an economic necessity whose full realization was brought about during the reign of Peter the Great. One can see why we consider the Ukrainian question so sensitive a test for the internationalism of Russian socialism.

23. "Whatever may be the further destiny of the Soviet Union,... the national policy of Lenin will find its place among the eternal treasures of mankind." Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, 3 vols. in one (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), 3:61.

Appendix: The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and the Jews

The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* attitude towards the Jews must appear especially strange to us today. In the scholarly and popular literature on Marx and Engels not one word, unfortunately, can be found relating to this topic.¹ Only Franz Mehring broaches it once in passing; but the way he does it! Writing about the demise of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Mehring says:

Marx was not in Cologne when the order expelling him was issued. He was on his way to Westphalia to replenish funds for the paper, which was in constant financial distress.... The limited share-capital had produced only a small amount, and the paper's revolutionary articles had alienated almost all its shareholders, not least the "democratic" *money-Jews*, who in several letters (which are still extant) demanded the return of their few pennies because the newspaper preached "religious hatred," in other words: because the paper duly exposed the shabby role, on the whole, of *money-Jewry* in the German revolution.²

The terminology that Mehring uses here (1902) is unpleasant;³ even more so, however, is the actual content of his assertion once we confront it with the articles and dispatches in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The question is not whether the paper struggled against the "shabby role" of "money-Jewry," but *how* it did. And in this respect, unfortunately, the principled conduct of the paper leaves very much to be desired.

Lest there be any misunderstanding: for the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* there could not, of course, exist a *national* "Jewish

question" as it is understood today. In their view, the Jews were neither a "nation" (like the English, French, Germans and Poles) nor a "nationality" (i.e., a mere ethno-linguistic community like, say, the Serbs or Czechs); rather, the Jews were an anachronistic vestige of an ancient trading people that by its particular way of making a living and its distinct religion and distinct mentality differed from the peoples in whose midst it lived. It was only in this sense, then, that Marx and Engels spoke of the Jews as a distinct people, or spoke of a specific national character (*Volkscharakter*) peculiar to the Jews.

To return now to Mehring's assertion: the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* really had little at all to say about the "shabby" behaviour of German "money-Jewry" in the revolution. What it said about the Jews referred almost exclusively to their role in the Polish-Prussian province of *Poznań* as well as in *Austria*.

As for the Jews of *Poznań*, here we only have to supplement what was already mentioned before.⁴ The *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* came out against the Jews of *Poznań* above all because at that time the latter, on the whole, opposed the Poles' aspirations for emancipation and supported the severe anti-Polish policies of the Prussian bureaucracy and Junkers. The fact itself cannot be contested.⁵ As an authentic—and severely oppressed—national minority (*Volksminorität*) the Jews in all nationally subjugated lands tried to make their lot easier by siding with the ruling nation or by attempting at least to remain neutral in national conflicts. (Only the socialistically inclined part of the Jewish working class later constituted an exception.) Thus the Poles in *Poznań* complained about the Germanophile behaviour of the Jews, the Poles in the Kingdom of Poland—about their Russophilism; the Czechs reproached the Bohemian Jews for being *pro-Austrian*, while the Ukrainians charged the Galician Jews with being *pro-Polish*. (Indeed, even the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* occasionally repeated the Hungarians' complaint that the Jews of Transylvania persisted "in retaining an absurd nationality in the middle of a foreign country.")⁶ The accusation, then, is as old as Adam and grounded in fact. But it only requires a little reflection to realize that we are dealing here with behaviour typical of every genuine national minority; in general, no oppressed nationality disdains or has disdained the opportunity of reaping benefit for itself at the cost of another oppressed nationality. (So, for example, the German colonists in Eastern Galicia, in the midst, that is, of Ukrainian territory, as a rule supported the Polish regime against the Ukrainians.) One may justify or condemn this behaviour, which follows naturally from the very essence of nationalism, but surely it has nothing to do with Jewry as such or with the Jewish national character. And this precisely the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* continually overlooked, when it not only attacked "German-Jewish Polonophobes,"⁷ "the Prussian-Jewish 'Netze brotherhood'"⁸ and "the barbarities of the Prussian soldiery, the Jews and the German Poles,"⁹ but went even further and called Polish Jewry "the very incarnation of haggling, avarice and sordidness"¹⁰ and the "meanest of all races."¹¹ Undoubtedly, the behaviour

of the Poznań Jews in the Polish-Prussian conflict could not justify statements such as these, which even at that time, in spite of the cultural backwardness and parasitic character of a great part of Polish Jewry, were inadmissible. In the case of the Poznań Jews, however, it is still possible to explain the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung's* hostility by the reactionary, Polonophobic behaviour of these Jews. But this was not the case with *Austrian* and especially *Viennese* Jewry, whom the paper's Vienna correspondent, Müller-Telling (whose acquaintance we made earlier) pursued with an all too maniacal hatred. On 11 August 1848 he wrote:

Under Metternich the fiction of Austria was maintained by bayonets and ignorance; now it will be maintained temporarily by—haggling.... Therefore no one in Vienna is as jubilant over this reconquest [of Italy] as the haggling Jews of the Exchange.... *Europe's humanity has become Judaized*; it has long since lost all inner morality, considering its only salvation to be faith in money and haggling.¹²

Further gibes at the Jews are contained in Müller-Telling's dispatches of 7 and 9 September 1848, in which he attacks the Jewish members of the Reichstag,¹³ the Viennese "Jew-Democrat-press" and "the great literary Jew Jellinek from Berlin."¹⁴ Very revealing is his dispatch of 12 September:

Viennese democracy still shares the ideological wretchedness of its German counterpart.... What you call the bourgeois *are here the Jews*, who have taken control of the democratic leadership. But this Jewry is ten times as base as the West European bourgeoisie, because it deceives the peoples [of Austria] with its fraudulent mask of democracy, a mask bearing the stamp of the stock exchange, so that it can lead these peoples directly into the despotism of haggling.

Where democracy is based only on stupidity and the vulgarity of Jewish haggling and place-seeking, democracy will get on just fine.¹⁵

Here we have the source of Müller-Telling's hatred for the Jews: it is the "socialism of fools," the naive anti-capitalist sentiment of the backward layers of the population, for whom he speaks. Although the sentiment may spring from a rebellion against exploitation, it threatens at any moment to become openly *reactionary*. This is especially clear in the case of Müller-Telling. In his dispatch of 17 September he complains:

Deserted by French *Jewry*, without hope on that sleepy hamlet Germany, with Jelačić, Windischgrätz, Radetzky and the Russian army at our backs, *with only cowardly, faithless, haggling Jews and heroic phrase-mongers at the head of our democracy*, I do not see how we can win. Even if we win, then once again only vulgar Jews, whose cowardly speculating robs democracy of all prestige among the people, will stand to gain, by leading us into all the debasements of a bourgeois regime. *At the head of all democratic organizations, at the head of the entire press, stand only Jews*. They also held sway in the Committee of Safety, where they played the democrats; *they drew flocks of Jews from all over to Vienna*, and when those like Fischhof, Mannheimer and Mayer achieved their goal of becoming

ministerial councillors, they immediately became the most shameless betrayers of the people. The swarm that was brought in had a truly ravenous appetite and made use of the general distress to engage in the most infamous usury.... In Austria there are a whole million Jews who live only from haggling; hence for every thirty people there is one blood sucker.¹⁶

Here Müller-Telling strikes almost the same tone we find in a reactionary Viennese poster of 20 May 1848 (reprinted by Maximilian Bach):

Wretched creatures who have nothing to lose, who want to build their fortune on the burgher's ruin, these creatures have produced anarchy with their hostile scribbling, have brought Austria—gallant Austria—to the brink of the abyss. Who, then, is this monster, this scum of humanity? It is the Jew Häfner, the Jew Mahler and their cohorts.... So as not to call for a "republic" in so many words, they have shouted: "Germany! United Germany!" That way, from a large republic, they can profit all the more. O Jews! *Profit is your slogan!* A Jew can never be and will never be a true patriot....¹⁷

Müller-Telling looks like a twin brother to this "Viennese patriot." The intentions of the two differ, but their language is essentially the same; Müller-Telling's, in fact, is even juicier. Here is how he reports to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on a session of the Reichstag: "Indignant over the perfidious cowardice of these wretches and disheartened by the brainless pusillanimity of the *democratic Jew riff-raff* which is in control [of the Reichsrat], I left the assembly...."¹⁸

His fusillade of abuse, however, reached its height after the suppression of the October uprising in Vienna. On 17 November 1848 he reported:

The Jews have done good business on the conquest. What the Croats robbed and stole has mostly been bought up dirt cheap by *Jewish democrats*. The communism [!] of the Croats, of course, brought in even more than the ordinary democracy of the newspapers.... The military dictatorship has ordered all public buildings to be searched for individuals and weapons; only the *Jewish synagogues*, in which, they say, the whole of *democratic Israel* has found asylum, have remained exempt from the search. How do you [he asks Marx] explain this indulgence?¹⁹

On the next day Müller-Telling wrote:

Everyone has noticed *that not one single Jew has been called to account*, although it was precisely the Jews who, in the interests of their moneybags, everywhere stood at the head of the movement, where it was safe to be, and although the black-and-yellow is always raging against them. But when one reflects that Rothschild in Penzing is being solicited for a loan of some eighty million..., then the riddle may well appear solved.²⁰

So it is always the same old song, in Heine's ironic phrase: "They're mainly foreigners and Jews." And it is always this same stupid confusion of Jews as a whole with democracy. This reaches the point where

Müller-Telling is not even ashamed to reduce the October uprising in Vienna to the filthy machinations of the Jews! He writes on 20 November 1848:

It can now be positively vouched for that the root cause of the October revolution was not the initiative of the Viennese, but solely of the Magyars.

When Jelačić crossed the borders of Croatia so as to attack the Magyars, Kossuth is supposed to have cried: "What we need now is a riot in Vienna!" With this in mind, he immediately contacted the principal leaders of the Viennese movement. The Hungarian under-secretariat of state for foreign affairs, located in Vienna, was supposed to have served as the intermediary for the mutual agreement, and ample *contributions of money* to the democratic authorities of Vienna were distributed from there. They speak of 1,200 F.K.M.²¹ weekly.

I was unable to come up with more particulars about the personalities involved in this; this much, however, is certain: that the student committee—*made up chiefly of Jews*—and the democratic union—likewise *nothing but Jews*—received considerable sums and consequently had to act according to instructions....²²

"Under these circumstances," the correspondent concludes,

the entire population of Vienna is astonished that Windischgrätz *has not so much as mussed the hair of a single one of the Jews who were involved because they were paid to be*; rather, he tries to divert the investigation of the case entirely away from this *Magyar-Jewish* aspect in order to call to account people who acted out of an unselfish and pure enthusiasm for liberation. But the Jews who have fled from here to all corners of Europe will not omit to pose everywhere as Viennese freedom fighters and thus *exploit for their purses* the democratic public opinion of Germany.²³

To be sure, only a few days later Müller-Telling had to report to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* that the "literary Jew" mentioned previously, Jellinek, *had been executed by firing squad under martial law*;²⁴ but this in no way prevented him from carrying on with his hatred for the Jews. Thus in several issues of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* he inveighed against Windischgrätz's mild treatment of "Israel,"²⁵ against the enigmatic "Hukuls" (Hutsuls), who "in reality are only Jews and German officials,"²⁶ against the "Jew caravans" that came to the Kroměříž Reichstag to press for Jewish emancipation,²⁷ and even against "the Jewish-German race, by whose mediation *the Russians were brought into the country*."²⁸ The man was simply a hopeless case. Earlier it was the *democratic* newspapers, now it is all the imperial "*martial-law newspapers*" that represent "the Jewish bourgeoisie, i.e., the summit of knavery."²⁹ In Müller-Telling's dispatch of 26 November we read:

Of all the ninety-nine nations and would-be-nations of Austria,³⁰ at this moment the greatest prop of the camarilla is the *Jews*. They have been radically emancipated *de facto*, and two of their people—Bach³¹ and Thinnfeld—have been accepted into the new cabinet.... But the Jews are even cleverer than the camarilla; they are trying to take advantage of the

terrible financial difficulties to gain possession of land, which previously they were not allowed to acquire.³²

He again declared on 18 February 1849: "In Austria one gets the feeling from all the people that the Jewish people there represent the lowest species of bourgeoisie and the most vulgar hagglers, and in this lies the whole antipathy against the Jewish riff-raff...." And what conclusion does he draw from this? "It is believed that the emancipation of the Jews would first make veritable servants of the non-Jews, who then—thanks to the Jews' industry and the comforts of martial law—would turn into beggars and proletarians too."³³

This is enough of Müller-Telling and his literary output. One should not forget that at that time the editorial boards of newspapers gave their correspondents more leeway than they do today and that therefore Müller-Telling's statements have to be charged above all to his own account.³⁴ Nonetheless, the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* cannot be absolved of all blame: there is a drop of their own honey too in the drink that tastes so bitter on our lips today.

We have already cited from Engels' articles two very harsh pronouncements on the *Polish Jews*; here is a third, this one directed against *Austrian Jewry*:

Jews are known to be cheated cheats everywhere, but especially in Austria. They exploited the revolution [?!] and are now being punished for it by Windischgrätz. Incidentally, anyone who knows how powerful the Jews are in Austria will appreciate what an enemy Windischgrätz has taken on by issuing the . . . proclamation [to the Jews of Pest].³⁵

In another article by Engels (or Marx) we read: "And as for the Jews, who since the emancipation of their sect have everywhere put themselves, at least in the person of their eminent representatives, at the head of the counter-revolution—what awaits them? There has been no waiting for victory in order to throw them back into their ghetto."³⁶

Here too, then, the Jews in general are unceremoniously branded enemies of the revolution and exploiters. But even at that time one could not declare a whole people (whether the Czechs, Croats or Jews) to be counter-revolutionary and inferior without simultaneously nurturing simple nationalistic or "religious" hatred. The dispatches of Müller-Telling are a flagrant example of both.³⁷

But we must take into consideration some other aspects of the question. There have been many attempts, especially recently, to portray Marx and Engels themselves as "anti-Semites." The method is quite simple: one extracts a number of citations from their works and private correspondence, and then one places these citations alongside the concept of anti-Semitism as one understands it (or rather: as the "sound common-sense" of one's milieu understands it). The result of this uncritical (and thoroughly *unhistorical*) procedure is that ultimately even the founders of Marxism appear to be some sort of spiritual comrades-in-arms

of Julius Streicher. Using this method, clearly, it is very easy to put three-quarters of the thinkers, writers and politicians of the past into the camp of anti-Semitism. Abram Leon was right in saying that "Zionism"—we would prefer to speak here of Jewish nationalism—"transposes modern anti-Semitism to all of history; it saves itself the trouble of studying the various forms of anti-Semitism and their evolution." It clings to the dogma of "eternal anti-Semitism."³⁸

In other words, Jewish nationalism here shows up as an inverted anti-Semitism. While one doctrine regards the Jews as the enemy of the whole world, the other declares the whole world to be the enemy of the Jews. And just as anti-Semitism, by its vehement exaggeration of the role and power of "Jewish subhumanity," unintentionally makes the Jews appear to be an exceptionally able and estimable race, so too does Jewish nationalism, by its absurd generalizations, lead to a totally unwished for conclusion. Let us put ourselves in the place of some readers of these articles denouncing Marx and Engels' "anti-Semitism": Indeed, they might argue, if even men like Marx and Engels were outright anti-Semites, then 'there must be something to it.' This profligate generalization makes anti-Semitism appear less unjustified and senseless than it really is.

But the Jewish nationalist critic of Marx and Engels can try to surmount this difficulty by using a quasi-psychological explanation; he can argue that Marx's "Jewish inferiority complex" or the "psychology of a renegade" made him conceal his own Jewish origin with strong (and often very unpleasant) anti-Jewish attacks, which can be found in abundance in his private correspondence. This "explanation" (which, incidentally, is all too reminiscent of the "valet's approach to history" already ridiculed by Hegel)³⁹ reduces the whole problem to the aspect of psychological motives, and therefore it shifts the focus to an area of only secondary importance for intellectual history. Apart from this, however, the explanation breaks down when confronted with the simple fact that Marx's partner, the non-Jew Engels, had exactly the same position *vis-à-vis* the Jews as Marx had; and moreover, both of them shared their antipathy to the Jews with very many other socialists of the past⁴⁰ (including, to mention only a few, Fourier,⁴¹ Proudhon and Bakunin).

If, then, the critic wants to be serious about his critique, he must reconcile himself to the old *historical* method, i.e., he must try to understand Marx and Engels' "anti-Semitism" in the context of their age and milieu. Then it will turn out that the concept of anti-Semitism, which he uses without reflection, must first be *defined*; it will become obvious that very different varieties of "anti-Semitism" can exist, and not all of them can be lumped together in the same heap, that is, if we want to have a clear idea about the sense and sociological significance of this mental confusion.

But where is the dividing line? What distinguishes the views of Marx and Engels on Judaism and the Jewish question from "anti-Semitism" *sans phrase*? The distinction is striking.⁴² While to anti-Semites Judaism appears as an innate, immutable attribute of the so-called Jewish race or else as an emanation of a mysterious "Jewish spirit" (or of the Jewish religion), Marx (in his well-known essay "On the Jewish Question") seeks to derive the "Jewish national character" (*Volkscharakter*) of his time from the factual historical role that the Jews played in the economic life of the Middle Ages and the modern period as representatives of merchants' and usurers' capital. Hence, Judaism for him meant a *social characteristic*, the "chimerical nationality of the Jew" meant "*the nationality of the merchant, of the man of money in general.*"⁴³ Like the gods of Epicurus in the intermundia of the universe, Jewish merchants' and usurers' capital lived in the pores of medieval society,⁴⁴ exploiting this society in parasitic fashion and simultaneously accelerating its dissolution. Here, in this specific economic function of Jewry, lies the answer to the "riddle" of how the Jews—in spite of the most severe persecutions to which they were subjected in the course of history—have been able to preserve themselves as a separate people (or rather, as a "people-class").⁴⁵ This also explains the prominent role that the Jews were able to play in the emergence and diffusion of the capitalist mode of production. But they were only able to do this because the civil, bourgeois, society that replaced feudal society "ceaselessly begets the Jew from its own entrails,"⁴⁶ because the egoism, the worship of money, which constitutes the terrestrial basis of the Jewish religion, *had also become the guiding principle of civil, bourgeois, society*; in fact, it was first in this society that egoism and money-worship reached their peak. "But civil society first reaches its completion in the Christian world." "Only under the rule of Christianity, which makes all national, natural, moral and theoretical relationships external to man, could civil society... tear apart all the species-bonds of man, substitute egoism and selfish need for those bonds and dissolve the human world into a world of atomistic individuals confronting each other in enmity."⁴⁷

It was only thanks to Christendom, therefore, that the medieval Jew engaging in commerce and usury was able to survive the transition into the modern capitalist world and even to become an influential factor within it. But while "through him or apart from him money has become a world power," "the practical Jewish spirit" has necessarily developed into "the practical spirit of the Christian peoples," *the Christians themselves* have necessarily "*become Jews.*" "Christianity sprang from Judaism. It has now dissolved back into Judaism."⁴⁸ The "narrowness of the Jew" thus represents only a particular aspect of the "Jewish narrowness of [Christian] society,"⁴⁹ of its *capitalist* character. *This* society must first be superseded, the rule of private property and money must be broken, if the "empirical essence of Judaism" is to be overcome, if the political emancipation of the Jews is to coincide with "general human emancipation." Therefore: "Emancipation from haggling and from money,

i.e., from *practical, real* Judaism, would be the same as the self-emancipation of our age."⁵⁰

That is what Marx had to say about the "Jewish question." It is readily apparent that if this can be taken for "anti-Semitism," then it is in any case a *completely different* type of "anti-Semitism" than the one which the severe critics tacitly imply. This youthful work of Marx's rose high above the flood of anti- and philo-Semitic literature of his time.⁵¹ This applies above all to Marx's brilliant and fundamental idea (referring to Ludwig Feuerbach's critique of religion) that "Judaism has managed to *survive not despite history but through it*,"⁵² and that "the Jew's secret" must not be sought "in his religion," but rather "the secret of the religion" must be sought "in the real Jew."⁵³ (Even the subsequent history of the Jews—and in particular the Jewish people's national rebirth, which was stimulated by capitalist class differentiation—can only be fully understood using Marx's materialist method.)

And yet, in spite of the superiority of its approach in general, one must disagree precisely with this part of Marx's essay, this (admittedly less significant) part that deals with the Jewish question proper.⁵⁴ This refers above all to the general equation of capitalism with Judaism, which cannot be sufficiently explained by the young Marx's predilection for a "dialectic occasionally degenerating into arrogance."⁵⁵ Indeed, if through the victory of capitalism the Christians themselves have "become Jews," if the "narrowness of the Jew" represents only a special case of the general *capitalistic* narrowness of civil society, then does it not follow that this capitalistic narrowness cannot be described as "Jewish" in its essence? If we assume that the social type of the Jew of that era was identical to that of the capitalist exploiter, then does it follow that this equation can be inverted, that the capitalistic exploiter can be reduced to a "Jew," circumcized or uncircumcized? Or doesn't it rather follow from Marx's arguments that Judaism as such is merely accidental to the concept of capitalism, however important the role of Jewish merchants' and usurers' capital may once have been in preparing the way for and serving as a driving force of capitalist development?

Certainly one should not forget who the Jews were in the eyes of Marx and his milieu. For them, as Mayer remarks, the Jews were first of all "the Jewish cattle dealers in the Rhineland, those who bought from, and sold to, the small peasants, taking advantage of their own superior business abilities." "During the 1840's in Prussia," according to the same author, "431 out of every 1,000 Jews were engaged in *trade*. In the Rhineland . . . 974 out of the 3,137 peddlers were Jews."⁵⁶

This was the case in the relatively highly developed Rhineland. Even less differentiated, even more definitely a mere "trading people" was *East European* Jewry, 86.5 per cent of which—according to the Russian census of 1818—were engaged in trade;⁵⁷ a great part of these Jewish trademen (as so-called manorial "tavern-Jews") derived their livelihood solely from

the parasitic exploitation of the enserfed peasants. (This was what engendered the anti-Semitism of the Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian and other East European peasants.) So it should not astonish us that, not only for the mass of the East European population, but also for the average German and Frenchman,⁵⁸ the terms "Jew" and "exploiter" (or "Jew" and "capitalist") "came pretty close to being synonymous."⁵⁹ This popular generalization seemed to find confirmation in the way the Jews themselves, when they gave up their traditional business to enter new occupations, chiefly the so-called free professions, for the most part repudiated their Judaism and began to assimilate to the nationality of the surrounding Christian population.⁶⁰ All this, of course, must be taken into account if we want to deal fairly with Marx's essay of 1844. Nevertheless, the general equation of Judaism with capitalism, which is a feature of this essay, was already, even then, *incorrect*; not only because capitalism had long since outgrown its "antediluvian forms" (merchants' and usurers' capital), but also because the Jews, in consequence of the class differentiation produced by capitalism, were steadily losing their character as a trading-people *par excellence* and were accomplishing the transition from a "people-class" to a modern nationality. Marx, therefore, by rigidly holding to the *historical* identification of the "Jew" with the "man of money," adopted a viewpoint that was in contradiction to the actual course of development as well as to his own method of analysis. Consequently, with the passage of time, his views on the Jewish question grew ever more anachronistic, and thus more unjust.

How it was that Marx remained unaware of this dangerous precipice is best explained, in our opinion, by examining the attitude of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. The tasteless anti-Jewish dispatches of this paper have surely caused the reader some consternation. From what dark sources did they arise? What social classes were making themselves heard? The answer is simple: It is the polyphony of "popular opinion" that confronts us in these dispatches. This popular opinion for the most part reflected the legitimate indignation over the economic exploitation of "the little man," but it simultaneously expressed the hatred of the Christian petty bourgeois and manufacturer for Jewish "competition," the hatred of the prodigal Junker for his Jewish creditor⁶¹ and the hatred of the church for the impenitent heretic. Ignorant of the social context and narrow-mindedly religious and nationalistic, this anti-Semitic popular opinion was a most useful instrument for the reactionary parties, the clergy and the regimes. True, this "popular anti-Semitism" was to a considerable extent "anticapitalist"; but so too was the later anti-Semitism of Adolf Stöcker, Karl Lueger and Adolf Hitler.

Today, after the horrifying experiences of recent decades, we know that every form of anti-Semitism can only be *reactionary* in practice. Not so the socialists of the mid-nineteenth century; they frequently had illusions

about the real content of anti-Semitic sentiments among the people and even thought it possible to use these sentiments for revolutionary purposes. This was also true of the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*: they only saw the anticapitalist source of popular anti-Semitism and overlooked its reactionary essence.⁶² It was all the easier for them to fall into this error since in general they were very quick to condemn whole peoples summarily; and, on the other hand, they greatly exaggerated the proletariat's level of consciousness and its alleged freedom from national and other prejudices.⁶³ This is why the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* did not dissociate itself from the anti-Semitic "popular opinion," and why the same newspaper that published Marx's stirring articles in praise of the October insurrection in Vienna as well as Freilighath's fine verse in its honour—

Wenn wir noch knien könnten, wir lägen auf den knien;
Wenn wir noch beten könnten, so beteten wir für Wien!⁶⁴

—several weeks later could publish Müller-Telling's explanation of the insurrection as the machinations of greedy Jews. This demonstrates that in some respects—and despite the *Communist Manifesto*—the socialist movement in the mid-nineteenth century was still in its infancy; it is foolish, therefore, to cling to the view that the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* offers an unsurpassed model of consistent socialist politics and proletarian internationalism.

We have come to the conclusion that the deplorable position of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the Jewish question was a *children's disease of the workers' movement*. And it was, furthermore, a disorder from which the socialist movement of almost every country suffered. Leaving Germany aside, it will suffice here to refer to the history of *French*⁶⁵ and *Russian* socialism. It was no accident, after all, that even the central committee of the famous Russian revolutionary party Narodnaia volia (People's Will), following the outbreak of the first wave of anti-Jewish pogroms in Russia in 1882, issued a proclamation to the people, summoning them to revolt against the Jews, estate owners and capitalists.⁶⁶ True, the proclamation was supposed to have been immediately thereafter revoked, but the party's branch in Ukraine still engaged in this sort of propaganda in 1883.⁶⁷ The source of the error was the same here too: the Russian populists believed they could see a precursor of the social revolution in the anti-Jewish excesses of the mob; they overestimated the revolutionary consciousness of the masses and underestimated the immense danger of anti-Semitism. This confusion prevailed throughout the Russian revolutionary camp, and it took the shameful experiences of the wave of pogroms in 1882–83 to liberate the Russian and Ukrainian revolutionary movement from this disastrous error.⁶⁸ In Western Europe this was achieved by the Dreyfus affair; only after the Dreyfus case was the peril of anti-Semitism recognized in all its magnitude and unequivocally opposed.⁶⁹

But it can hardly be denied that even later the lingering, naive, workers' anti-Semitism in the workers' movement of several countries (especially Austria) was sometimes considered—for opportunistic reasons—"harmless" and therefore was not combatted as energetically as it should have been. The importance of this fact should certainly not be exaggerated, but neither should it be underestimated. The death of millions of Jews in the German gas chambers has made us sensitive about this. Certainly, the workers' movement as such cannot be blamed for this bestiality. On the contrary, it proved itself the one real social force in Europe that, until its tragic suppression, consistently and fearlessly fought against the upsurge of anti-Semitism. And yet neither decades of educational work nor the great tradition of the socialist movement could prevent the contamination of some segments of the working class during the war by the anti-Semitic propaganda of National Socialism.⁷⁰ How deeply was the poison able to penetrate? The alarming indifference of segments of the working class to the question of anti-Semitism gives an answer to this.⁷¹ Thus it is all the more important to examine the roots and phenomenal forms of this malady in the past, even if they appear to have only a tenuous connection with the tragedy of civilization that confronts humanity today.

Notes

1. But there does exist a whole literature dealing with Marx and Engels' position on the Jews and the Jewish question in general. Among more recent investigations, the works of S.F. Bloom and E. Silberner are particularly worthy of mention.
2. Franz Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 3:85-86.
3. How peculiar would an expression like "money-Christians" sound!
4. See above p. 114. (See also p. 29: the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the role of Czech Jewry.)
5. One can find this fact reflected even in Bakunin's *Confession*: "The Poles had been...deceived by Germans, insulted by German Jews." *The Confession of Mikhail Bakunin*, trans. Robert C. Howes, ed. Lawrence D. Orton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 98.
6. Engels, "The Magyar Struggle," in Karl Marx [and Frederick Engels], *The Revolutions of 1848*, ed. David Fernbach, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1973), p. 219.
7. Engels, "A New Policy in Poland," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1975-), 7:104.
8. Engels, "The Frankfurt Assembly Debates the Polish Question," *Collected Works*, 7:356.
9. Engels, "The Agreement Debate," *Collected Works*, 7:197.

10. See above, p. 116.
11. Engels, "[Posen]," *Collected Works*, 9:359–60: "Readers of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* will recall that... the German national simpletons and money-grubbers of the Frankfurt parliamentary swamp always counted as Germans the Polish Jews as well, although this meanest of all races, neither by its jargon nor by its descent, but at most through its lust for profit, could have any relation of kinship with Frankfurt."
12. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 77–78, 17 August 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
13. On the balloting in the Viennese Reichstag to decide whether the Reichstag itself could publish its resolutions: "All the Jews, of course, voted 'nay.'" *Ibid.*, no. 102, 14 September 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
14. *Ibid.*, no. 101, 13 September 1848, p. 2, col. 2. On the radical writer Jellinek, who "criticized the revolution philosophically and pointed out to it the contradictions of its development," see Maximilian Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution im Jahre 1848* (Vienna, 1898), pp. 257–58, 855.
15. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 105, 17 September 1848, p. 3, col. 1.
16. *Ibid.*, no. 109, 22 September 1848, p. 2, cols. 2–3. See also the brochure Müller-Tellingner published in Vienna in 1848: *Freiheit und Juden: Zur Beherzigung für alle Volksfreunde*.
17. Bach, *Geschichte der Wiener Revolution*, p. 416.
18. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 117, 15 October 1848, p. 1, col. 3.
19. *Ibid.*, no. 150, 23 November 1848, p. 2, cols. 2–3.
20. *Ibid.*, no. 151, 24 November 1848, p. 2, col. 2.
21. *Floren Konventions-Münze*, i.e., florins.
22. This rubbish was printed in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*!
23. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 152, 25 November 1848, p. 3, cols. 1–2.
24. *Ibid.*, no. 157, 1 December 1848, p. 2, col. 3.
25. *Ibid.*, no. 191, 10 January 1849, p. 1, col. 3: "Windischgrätz has once again given proof to Israel of his mild attitude."
26. See above, pp. 72–73, note 20.
27. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 226, 19 February 1849, p. 3, col. 1.
28. "With the exception of the Jewish-German race, by whose mediation the Russians were brought into the country and who have in general managed to achieve a classical perfection in their great baseness, even the tribes of Hungary that are inimical to the Magyars are more or less indignant at the calling in of the Russians. But the Jewish-German crime committed in Transylvania is... the overt expression of the inner voice of the whole German bourgeoisie." *Ibid.*, no. 237, 4 March 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
29. *Ibid.*, no. 196, 16 January 1849, p. 2, col. 3.
30. See above, p. 40, note 52.
31. Minister Alexander Bach "was born in a village... in Lower Austria at a time when his father was a bailiff on a noble's estate; a brother of his father and the brother's children worked his family's farm... It is noteworthy that in spite of this his opponents in the aristocracy spread the rumour that he was of Jewish descent; and when Bismarck came to Vienna in 1852, he heard much in the circles in which he moved about the Jewish ruling clique led by Bach. Of course: the minister who facilitated the transition from a

natural to a money economy had to be, in the view of his adversaries, connected in some way with Israel." Heinrich Friedjung, *Österreich von 1848 bis 1860*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1908–12), 1:361.

32. *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 158, 2 December 1848, p. 2, col. 3. See also the dispatch from Poznań in *ibid.*, no. 130, 31 October 1848, p. 2, col. 3, which emphasizes how necessary it is "that the Polish *estate owners* think about establishing a financial institute that would protect individual proprietors in debt from expropriation." Here, too, the wicked Jews are to blame for everything! "The creditors are almost exclusively *Jewish* inhabitants of the Grand Duchy of Poznań. Behind this is the resolution most of them have made that, after they snatch up all there is to snatch up (*zusammenraffen*) [*das raffende Kapital*!], they will abandon not only the Grand Duchy of Poznań but even the whole continent that is now so shaken at its foundations."
33. *Ibid.*, no. 230, 24 February 1849, p. 1, col. 3.
34. Boris Nicolaievsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen do Marx a great disservice when they consider him responsible for "every word" of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. "The paper's policy was determined by Marx and Marx alone. Marx edited it as he had edited the *Rheinische Zeitung* five years before. Just as behind every word of the *Rheinische Zeitung* there had been the voice of Marx, so did he now make every word of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* his own." *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1936), p. 167.
35. "Windischgrätz.—Jews and Southern Slavs," *Collected Works*, 8:415 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 228, 22 February 1849). Windischgrätz said in this proclamation: "Finally, I would like to warn the Jews of Ofen and Pest, but particularly those of Old Ofen, to refrain from entering into any understanding under any name whatever with the traitor Kossuth... and the rebel assembly, for it has come to my knowledge that it is in fact mainly Israelites who allow themselves to be used as spies and suppliers of the rebels, and that they also make it their business to spread false and bad news about the alleged victories of the rebels...." *Ibid.*, 8:415–16.
36. "Confessions of a Noble Soul," *Collected Works*, 8:32 (*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 145, 17 November 1848). [The editors of the *Collected Works* ascribe the article to Marx.—*Trans.*]
37. What a blunder the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* committed by making Müller-Tellinging its Austrian correspondent was made quite clear when this gentleman, as early as 1850, attacked Marx in an anti-Semitic pamphlet, *Vorgeschmack in die künftige deutsche Diktatur von Marx und Engels* (Cologne). But what has hitherto not been known is a fact recorded in the files of the Viennese police department: that in 1846 Müller-Tellinging had applied to Metternich to be admitted into the Austrian state service; his request at that time was turned down. Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, "Polizeihofstelle," 1846, Karton 1638, Nr. 57.
38. Abram Leon, *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970), p. 247. The book was written during World War II; the author perished in Auschwitz in 1944.
39. World-Historical persons "are great men, because they willed and accomplished something great; not a mere fancy, a mere intention, but that which met the case and fell in with the needs of the age. This mode of

considering them also excludes the so-called 'psychological' view, which—serving the purpose of envy most effectually—contrives so to refer all actions to the heart—to bring them under such a subjective aspect—as that their authors appear to have done everything under the impulse of some passion, mean or grand—some *morbid craving*. . . . These psychologists are particularly fond of contemplating those peculiarities of great historical figures which appertain to them as private persons. Man must eat and drink; he sustains relations to friends and acquaintances; he has passing impulses and ebullitions of temper. 'No man is a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*,' is a well-known proverb; I have added: . . . 'but not because the former is no hero, but because the latter is a valet.' He takes off the hero's boots, assists him to bed, knows that he prefers champagne, etc. Historical personages waited upon in historical literature by such psychological valets, come poorly off; they are brought down by these their attendants to a level with—or rather a few degrees below the level of—the morality of such exquisite discerners of spirits." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), pp. 31–32.

40. Solomon F. Bloom was correct in saying: "Although it may appear paradoxical it is fairer to say that Marx absorbed, without much independent reflection, the prevailing prejudice of his time and environment than that he made the Jews the scapegoat of his personal disillusionments and frustrations." "Karl Marx and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 6 (1942): 16.
41. See Edmund Silberner, "Charles Fourier on the Jewish Question" and "The Attitude of the Fourierist School towards the Jews" in *Jewish Social Studies* 8 (1946): 245–66, and 9 (1947): 339–62.
42. Here we leave aside the tremendous *practical* distinction: that Marx and Engels, as well as all later socialists, championed the complete emancipation of the Jews.
43. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," *Early Writings*, The Pelican Marx Library (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with New Left Review, 1975), p. 239.
44. Marx, *Capital*, 3 vols. (New York: International Publishers, 1967), 3:330.
45. Leon, *Jewish Question*, p. 74: "Above all the Jews constitute historically a social group with a specific economic function. They are a class, or more precisely, a *people-class*. The concept of class does not at all contradict the concept of people. It is because the Jews have preserved themselves as a social class that they have likewise retained certain of their religious, ethnic and linguistic traits."
46. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," p. 238.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
48. *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 240. In one of his poems, the Austrian poet Karl Kraus thus characterizes his relationship to Judaism: "I am not enough of a *Christian* to be a *Jew*."
49. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," p. 241.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 236.
51. See Franz Mehring, "Einleitung," *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart, 1913), 1:356.

52. Marx, "On the Jewish Question," p. 238.
53. Ibid., p. 236.
54. The main thrust of the essay, of course, is something else: a magnificent analysis of the difference between "political" and "human" emancipation as well as an insightful critique of the state. The "Jewish question" only serves Marx as a *pretext*, not as the principal theme.
55. Arnold Ruge's judgment about another of Marx's works from the same period, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right"; see Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of His Life*, trans. Edward Fitzgerald (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1936), p. 68.
56. Gustav Mayer, "Early German Socialism and Jewish Emancipation," *Jewish Social Studies* 1 (1939): 417, 419.
57. Leon, *Jewish Question*, p. 195.
58. The ex-Fourierist Alphonse Toussenel wrote in an anti-Semitic pamphlet in 1847: "I call as the people with that contemptuous name of Jew all those who traffic in money, all unproductive parasites living off the substance and labor of others. Jew, usurer and trader are synonyms for me." *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque*, cited by Silberner, "Attitude of the Fourierist School," p. 344.
59. Mayer, "Early German Socialism," p. 420.
60. These were the Jews Marx had in mind when he wrote: "... When the Jew recognizes ... his practical nature as null and works to abolish it, he is working outwards from his previous course of development in the direction of general human emancipation and turning against the supreme practical expression of human self-estrangement." "On the Jewish Question," p. 237.
61. See note 32 of this chapter.
62. See the uncritical praise Engels gave to the obscure French pamphlet *Histoire édifiante et curieuse du Rothschild Ier, Roi des Juifs* (in *The Northern Star*, 5 September 1846); "[Government and Opposition in France]," *Collected Works*, 6:62–63. Even in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, no. 127, 27 October 1848 (supplement), p. 1, cols. 2–3, we find an ironical dispatch about "his Hebraic holiness," Rothschild.
63. See above, p. 187, note 13.
64. If we could still kneel, we'd get down on our knees; If we could still pray, we'd pray for Vienna.
65. See the interesting (but very one-sided) works by Edmund Silberner and Zosa Szajkowski in *Jewish Social Studies*, 1946–47.
66. The full text of this proclamation is given in S. Valk, "G.G. Romanenko. (Iz istorii 'Narodnoi voli')," *Katorga i ssylka*, no. 48 (1928): 50–52.
67. See Mykhailo Buzhyn's'kyi, "Revoliutsiini vidozvy v 1883 rotsi na Poltavshchyni," *Za sto lit* 3, Zapysky istorichnoi sekti Ukrain's'koi akademii nauk, 29 (Kiev, 1928): 123–24, and Serhii Kozlov, "Z zhyttia hurtkiv 'Narodnoi voli' na Romenshchyni," *Za sto lit* 6, Zapysky, 38 (Kiev, 1930): 166–91.
68. Plekhanov wrote in 1901: "This attitude towards the pogroms against the Jews was by no means merely the opinion of some individual party member; in 1881 this was, so to speak, the official interpretation of the Narodnaia volia party.... One can say without any exaggeration that the psychological effects of the Jewish pogroms of 1881 have not ceased to do damage to our

socialist movement in the whole twenty-year period since they took place." G.V. Plekhanov, "Vremena meniaiutsia," *Sochineniia*, ed. D. Riazanov, 2nd ed., vol. 12 (Moscow, n.d.), pp. 370, 367.

69. Cf., however, the significantly evasive or downright negative attitude of the French, German and Austrian delegates at the international socialist congress in Brussels in 1891 when a resolution condemning anti-Semitism was proposed; see also the polemic against it in the Russian *Sotsial'-demokrat* (Geneva) 4 (1892), supplement: *Sovremennoe obozrenie*, pp. 105-08.
70. Jean-Paul Sartre was, of course, right, in *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 37, when he characterized anti-Semitism as a typically *bourgeois* ideology. But it does not follow *from this* that one can assert, as Sartre did two pages before, that "we find scarcely any anti-Semitism among workers." This would only be so if the proletariat were impervious to the influence of bourgeois ideology. But this influence is sometimes very strong and lasting.
71. This appendix was written early in 1948.

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