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PHILOSOPHY

Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844

Marx at twenty-six, in three Paris notebooks he never finished and never published: the theory of estranged labour, the pages on money, the reckoning with Hegel. The full Moscow edition in Martin Milligan's translation, with Engels's 1843 Outlines appended. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

Marx never published this book, never finished it, and for the last thirty-eight years of his life seems never to have looked at it again. He wrote it in Paris in the spring and summer of 1844, at twenty-six, across three notebooks that break off in mid-sentence, cross out whole passages, and jump from wages to Hegel and back as the reading drove him. It sat in his papers, then in the archives, until the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow printed the German original in 1932, in its Gesamtausgabe — the complete edition — nearly half a century after his death. So the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 are the strangest of the classics: a private workbook that its author abandoned, published by the state that claimed him, and then read by almost everyone except that state as the answer to it. This edition is worth having because it lets you see why a rough draft of 1844 became, in the twentieth century, the most dangerous thing in Marx's name that a bureaucratic regime could be asked to print.

The present text is the Moscow one: first put into English by the Foreign Languages Publishing House in 1959, in Martin Milligan's translation, and issued here by its successor, Progress Publishers, in a revised edition whose wording is drawn from Volume 3 of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels. It is a full working edition. It carries Marx's own Preface; the three manuscripts, with the editors' section headings supplied in square brackets and the Roman sheet-numbers of the original leaves reproduced in the margin (set here as II, II and so on) so the reader can see how fragmentary the thing really is; Engels's 1843 essay Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy as an appendix, the piece that first turned Marx to economics; the notes of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, numbered here [Note 1] and following; and four indexes. The page-bottom notes are Marx's own, marked with an asterisk, and the editors', marked with a letter and closing "—Ed.". It is a scholarly edition in every respect, and, as so often, its apparatus is where the real argument lies.

What the book does — the thing it does so well that no later work of Marx's replaced it — is describe estranged labour. Marx starts, dutifully, from the categories of the economists, but he keeps asking the question they never ask: what does the wage-relation do to the human being who lives it? His answer is the theory of alienation, and it is stated in sentences of terrible plainness. "The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size," he writes; "the devaluation of the world of men is in direct proportion to the increasing value of the world of things." The labourer puts his life into the object, and the object confronts him as something alien and hostile; the more he produces, the less he is. Marx breaks the estrangement into layers — the worker is estranged from the product of his labour, from the act of labouring, from what Marx calls his species-being (his human nature as a conscious, universal, self-creating being), and, through all of these, from other people. It is the most influential single idea in the book, and it is the reason students who never open Capital have read these pages.

Two further things in the manuscripts have never lost their force. One is the section on money — "Money is the procurer between man's need and the object, between his life and his means of life," Marx writes, and then lets Goethe's Faust and Shakespeare's Timon of Athens say the rest: money is the alienated power of humanity, the visible god that turns loyalty into betrayal and ugliness into beauty because it can buy them. The other is the confrontation with Hegel that closes the third manuscript, where Marx credits Hegel with grasping "the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle" — the insight that a thing develops by producing and overcoming its own opposite — while charging him with making that whole drama happen inside thought rather than in the world. Both passages show the young Marx at full stretch, using philosophy to cut into economics and economics to cut into philosophy.

And yet the honest reader has to say plainly what the book is not. It is not finished, and it is not settled. The framework of

"species-being" is borrowed almost whole from Ludwig Feuerbach, and it rests on the idea of a fixed human essence from which man has been separated and to which he will return. Within a year Marx had turned against exactly this. The Theses on Feuerbach of 1845 deny that there is any human essence "inherent in each single individual" and locate human nature instead in the changing ensemble of social relations; the German Ideology of 1845-46 drops the vocabulary of alienation almost entirely. There is a real question, then, about how much of the 1844 language Marx himself would have stood by, and the mature analysis of Capital — the fetishism of commodities, the sale of labour-power, surplus value — is in one sense the theory of alienation done again without the Feuerbachian scaffolding. The manuscripts are a beginning, brilliant and unstable, not a conclusion; to read them as Marx's last word is to freeze him at twenty-six.

Which brings us to the question this edition cannot escape. Was the state that printed it consistent in its use of it? The answer is that it was deeply, revealingly uneasy. These manuscripts surfaced in 1932, at the precise moment when Stalinism was hardening the whole of Marx's thought into a catechism — "dialectical and historical materialism," soon to be codified in the Short Course of 1938. A text about how labour under private property dehumanises the labourer, written by a Marx who had not yet heard of dialectical materialism, was an embarrassment to a regime presiding over forced collectivisation, the camps, and a factory discipline modelled on the American assembly line. The official response was not to suppress it — it could not suppress a canonical Marx text — but to manage it: to file the 1844 Marx as "immature," a not-yet-Marxist stage superseded by the "scientific" Marx of Capital, and so to be honoured and quietly set aside. The Publisher's Note to this very edition performs the manoeuvre in its first sentence, calling the work "the rough draft of Marx's earliest economic study... based on his dialectical-materialist and communist conclusions" — projecting the later doctrine back onto a text that predates it, the better to absorb the humanist Marx into the official one.

The reason for the unease is not hard to find, and it is the sharpest test of consistency in the whole programme. Turn the theory of estranged labour homeward. Under the Soviet system the worker was still estranged from his product — the state took it — still estranged from the act of labour, driven by Taylorism, one-man management and the Stakhanovite speed-up, and still estranged from any control over the process, which a bureaucracy ran in his name. The concept the regime was obliged to print condemned the regime that printed it. Marx had even described the outcome in advance. In the

section on communism he distinguishes true communism from what he calls "crude communism," the mere levelling that abolishes private property only to generalise it — where society becomes "a community of labour, and equality of wages paid out by communal capital — by the community as the universal capitalist." A regime that had made itself the universal capitalist, the single employer of a whole society, was holding in its hands the young Marx's exact portrait of its own crude counterfeit of the thing he wanted, which he defined instead as "the positive transcendence of private property... the complete return of man to himself."

So it is no surprise that the manuscripts did their real twentieth-century work outside the Soviet frame, and largely against it. In the West they became the founding text of "Marxist humanism" — Herbert Marcuse wrote on them the year they appeared, Erich Fromm built a book around them, and the New Left read alienation as the key to a world of full shops and empty lives. More pointedly, in the East they became a weapon in the hands of reform communists and dissidents: the Yugoslav Praxis group, the Prague Spring's demand for "socialism with a human face," the Marxists who asked why, if socialism was meant to end alienation, the workers of the workers' states were as alienated as ever. This is the reflexivity the apparatus was built to prevent. The Fourth International had made the same move on firmer ground: Ernest Mandel and George Novack insisted that alienation was not a youthful phase Marx outgrew but a category he deepened — the commodity fetishism of Capital is alienation given its economic anatomy — and that it persisted under bureaucratic rule precisely because commodity production, the wage-form and the division of labour persisted there. On that reading the malaise of "actually existing socialism" was not a betrayal of the young Marx by the old, but the young Marx coming true in the country that had buried him.

None of this is a charge against Marx, and none of it against the revolution. The estrangement Mandel diagnosed in the Soviet Union was the mark of a workers' state deformed by isolation and scarcity and then usurped by a bureaucratic caste — the degeneration Trotsky traced to the failure of the revolution to spread, not to any flaw in the emancipation Marx described. The tragedy is exact: the doctrine that embalmed Lenin and recited "Marxism-Leninism" as a liturgy could print, in millions of copies, a text whose whole subject is the reduction of the human being to a thing, and never once let the category look in the mirror.

What, then, is this rough draft worth now? More than ever, and for the reason it was always read against the grain. The theory

of estranged labour speaks directly to a world of precarious and gig work, of lives measured in output, of a consumerism that offers things in place of the human relations it has hollowed out; it remains, for good reason, the most widely read thing Marx wrote. Against the Stalinist picture of a science without a human subject, and against the liberal celebration of the market that succeeded it in the same countries, the young Marx keeps insisting that the point is human emancipation — "the complete return of man to himself" — and that a socialism which changes the owner while leaving the wage, the plan-as-master and the division of labour intact has produced only the community as universal capitalist. That warning was written in 1844, in a notebook the author threw in a drawer. The regime that finally published it proved him right by the way it read him. Read him instead as he meant to be read — as a beginning to be carried forward, not a relic to be catalogued — and the Manuscripts remain what they have always secretly been: the measure of every socialism that forgets it is about people.

HISTORY

The Condition of the Working-Class in England

Engels at twenty-four, twenty months in Manchester walking the cellars and reading the blue books: the first great work of social investigation, and the birthplace of "social murder". With the 1885 and 1892 prefaces in which the old Engels audits the young one. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Frederick Engels

Introduction to This Edition

Friedrich Engels was twenty-four when he finished this book, and he had done something no socialist writer had done before him: he had gone to look. Sent by his father in late 1842 to the family firm of Ermen & Engels in Manchester, he spent twenty months in the world capital of the factory system not as a tourist of misery but as an investigator, walking the courts and cellars of the Old Town, reading the parliamentary blue books and the factory inspectors' reports, and — as he tells the English workers in his dedication — deliberately turning his back on his own class to do it. "I forsook the company and the dinner-parties," he writes, "the port-wine and champagne of the middle-classes, and devoted my leisure-hours almost exclusively to the intercourse with plain Working-Men." Out of that immersion came *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*, written at Barmen between September 1844 and March 1845 and published that year in Leipzig. It is the first great work of what would later be called social investigation, and it was written before Engels had met Marx as a collaborator — before "Marxism" existed. The edition in your hands is the Progress Publishers reprint (Moscow; first printing 1973), which follows Engels's own authorised English text of 1892 and gathers around it his prefaces to the German, American and English editions.

What the book does supremely well is refuse abstraction. Engels does not deduce the proletariat from a principle; he counts it, houses it, feeds it, sickens it and buries it. He gives the mortality figures for the factory towns, the adulteration of bread and meat, the diseases bred in the cellar dwellings, the maiming of children in the mills. And he draws from the accumulated facts a charge that has never lost its force. When the individual kills, he writes, we call it manslaughter or murder; but "when society places hundreds of proletarians in such a position that they inevitably meet a too early and an unnatural death," and "permits these conditions to remain, its deed is murder just as surely as the deed of the single individual; disguised, malicious murder, murder against which

none can defend himself, which does not seem what it is, because no man sees the murderer." The concept of social murder — death caused by no single hand yet by a whole social order, and traceable to the class that profits from it — is Engels's permanent contribution, and it is an empirical concept, earned page by page from the evidence. Alongside it he anticipates, years before *Capital*, the "reserve army" of the unemployed that competition holds ready to discipline those in work; and, crucially, he sees the working class not only as a heap of victims but as the coming agent of its own emancipation, already learning solidarity in its unions and its Chartism.

It also has the weakness of a young man's masterpiece, and Engels was the first to say so. The book of 1845 predicted an imminent and violent revolution in England; that revolution did not come, and the honest record of Engels's second thoughts is bound into this very edition. In the prefaces of 1885 and 1892 he explains why he had been wrong: England's long industrial monopoly had allowed even sections of the workers — above all the skilled trades and the great unions — to share, for a time, in the spoils of empire, producing what he elsewhere called a "bourgeois" stratum within the proletariat. He also concedes that the book "exhibits everywhere the traces of the descent of modern Socialism from one of its ancestors, German philosophy," and that its confidence in the swift ripening of the class struggle was premature. This is not a flaw to be hidden but the finest thing about the mature Engels: he treated his own great book as a document to be tested against history, and let the correction stand beside the original. The reader who takes the prefaces seriously gets both the young revolutionary and the old one auditing him.

Was the state that canonised this book faithful to its method? Here the Soviet edition invites exactly the question it cannot answer. Progress and its Institute of Marxism-Leninism present *The Condition of the Working-Class* as a founding classic — the model, in the Soviet phrase, of the scientific study of the proletariat. But the book's method is not a set of conclusions to be revered; it is an instruction: go to where the

workers live, count the dead, read the inspectors' own reports, and name what you find. Turn that instruction on the Soviet Union of the First Five-Year Plan and it becomes unbearable — the barrack housing and the overcrowding, the industrial accidents driven by tempo and the Stakhanovite over-work, the famine of 1932–33, the adulterated statistics, the labour camps whose mortality no factory inspector was allowed to report. A book that taught investigators to indict a ruling class for social murder could not be allowed to teach them to investigate the workers' state, and so the apparatus fixes it safely in the past: a true account of capitalist England in the 1840s, its findings sealed off from the present tense. The notes historicise; they do not turn the method homeward. Even Engels's late analysis of the labour aristocracy, which the edition rightly connects to Lenin's theory of imperialism and opportunism, is deployed outward — a stick to beat Western social democracy with — never as a mirror in which a privileged Soviet officialdom might have recognised a stratum living off the labour of others. The consistency test is the one the book itself proposes, and the canonising state fails it precisely by canonising: it kept the classic and quietly retired the method.

That is why the living core of this book is not any of its dated prophecies but its way of working, and that way of working still speaks. Wherever the deaths caused by a whole order are attributed to accident or misfortune — the tower block that burns because cladding was cheaper, the warehouse and the gig-economy round timed to the second, the delivery rider and the meat-packer worked past exhaustion, the health gap that opens a decade of life between a rich district and a poor one a mile away — Engels's category names the crime that the language of accident conceals. His insistence on empirical witness is a rebuke to two opposite evasions at once: to the market's denial that anyone is responsible, and to the bureaucracy's suppression of the figures that would show who is. The revolutionary tradition that outlived Stalinism understood this. Trotsky, dissecting in *The Revolution Betrayed* a regime that hid its own workers' conditions behind falsified output figures, and Ernest Mandel after him, kept faith with the Engels who believed the workers' movement had the right and the duty to know the truth about itself. Read in that spirit — as a method belonging to the labouring class and not to any state that has embalmed it — *The Condition of the Working-Class in England* is not a monument to be filed under the history of the 1840s. It is a standing summons to go and look, to count, and to call social murder by its name.

PHILOSOPHY

The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism

Marx and Engels's first joint book: a demolition of the Berlin "Critical Critics" who took pure thought for the motor of history. Where "History does nothing ... it is man, real, living man who does all that" first appears. Translated by Richard Dixon and Clemens Dutt. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Introduction to This Edition

The title is a joke, and it is worth pausing on before anything else, because the joke turned out to be prophetic. "The Holy Family" was the mocking nickname Marx and Engels hung on Bruno Bauer and his circle of Berlin intellectuals — a self-anointed priesthood of "Critical Criticism" who had persuaded themselves that pure thought, carried on in a little review by a handful of initiates, was the real motor of history, and that the mass of ordinary human beings were so much inert matter waiting to be enlightened. The book, written in Paris in the autumn of 1844 and published in Frankfurt in February 1845, is the two young men's first joint work and their first sustained act of demolition. It is also, though they could not have known it, an unwitting portrait of a danger their own movement would one day embody: the danger of a coterie that sets itself above the people in the name of the people, and mistakes its own doctrine for the world.

The present text is the Progress Publishers edition of 1975, translated from the German by Richard Dixon and Clemens Dutt, first issued in Moscow in 1956 and here reprinted. It is a handsome, scholarly volume, and it needs to be, because The Holy Family is a difficult book — much of it a line-by-line settling of scores with figures the twentieth century has entirely forgotten, Herr Faucher and Herr Jungnitz and Szeliga, whose names survive only because Marx thought it worth the ink to ridicule them. A reader coming to it cold should be warned: this is not the lucid Marx of the Manifesto. It is Marx and Engels in transit, still shaking off the Hegelian scaffolding, and the polemic is often buried under the rubble of the thing it demolishes.

Take first what the book does that nothing before it had done. Its whole thrust is to bring philosophy down out of the clouds and stand it on the ground of real human activity. Against Bauer's cult of the disembodied "Idea," Marx lays down a sentence that is the hinge of his entire life's work: "History

does nothing ... it is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights." Ideas settle nothing by themselves — "Ideas can never lead beyond an old world order but only beyond the ideas of the old world order. Ideas cannot carry out anything at all." What carries things out is people, in their material circumstances; and here, for the first time, Marx names the people who will carry out the decisive thing. The proletariat, he argues, is driven to emancipation not by its ideals but by its situation: "it cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation." The point is pressed with a rigour that would define the tradition — the question is not what this or that worker imagines, but "what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with this being, it will historically be compelled to do." And in the book's finest stretch, the "Critical Battle against French Materialism," Marx traces the descent of socialism from the materialist philosophers of the Enlightenment and states the programme in a line still worth carrying: "If man is shaped by environment, his environment must be made human." For all its clutter, the book contains in embryo the two ideas everything else would grow from — that circumstances make people and people remake circumstances, and that the working class is the agent capable of doing so.

What has worn less well is everything the youth of the authors could not yet discipline. The book is too long by half; its wit, real and often savage, is spent on targets no longer worth the effort of following; and Marx himself, looking back from 1867, remarked on how strange its residual "cult of Feuerbach" had come to sound. It is a work of transition, and it reads like one — the materialism is announced more often than it is demonstrated, and the reader must supply from later Marx the framework that would make these flashes into a system. None of that is a reproach; it is simply the honest measure of a first book. But it means The Holy Family is a text to be read for its openings, not for a finished doctrine — which makes what was later done to it all the more revealing.

For here the reflexive question — was the state that canonised

this book faithful to it? — has an almost cruel exactness, because the book is about the very posture that state assumed. Bauer's "Critical Criticism" is a self-selected elite that treats itself as the active principle of history and the masses as passive material; the whole polemic is Marx's insistence that this has it exactly backwards. Now read the note the Institute of Marxism-Leninism placed at the front of this edition. It rightly foregrounds the book's great theme — "the mass, the people, is the real maker of the history of mankind" — and it adds, with evident pride, that "Lenin especially stressed the importance of this thought and described it as one of the most profound and most important theses of historical materialism." Every word is true. And every word indicts the apparatus that wrote it. For the Soviet state honoured "the masses" as a slogan on a banner while it disenfranchised the actual masses, and it did so through precisely the mechanism Marx was mocking: a bureaucratic caste, custodian of an infallible "Criticism" now called Marxism-Leninism, standing above society as the one competent judge of what the people's real interests were. Marx's proof that the proletariat "will historically be compelled" to act was turned inside out — into the doctrine that the Party, reading the laws of history, knew what the class was compelled to want better than the class did, and could therefore act in its place and, when necessary, against it. The satire on a priesthood of the Idea became the self-portrait of a priesthood of the Idea.

The irony did not stop at the argument; it reached the very form of the cult. Marx and Engels named their enemies "the Holy Family" to ridicule the pretension of turning a group of thinkers into an object of reverence. The state that reprinted this ridicule built its own Holy Family and worshipped it in earnest: the fixed quartet of Marx–Engels–Lenin–Stalin ranged along every platform, the embalmed founder in his mausoleum, the catechism recited in every school, the "classics" that could be quoted but never questioned. A book whose entire method is the refusal to let any doctrine float free of the living people who make and remake it was enrolled among the sacred texts of a religion of doctrine. There is no sharper illustration in the whole Progress catalogue of the gap between what these books say and what was done in their name.

None of this is the young Marx's failure; it is the measure of a betrayal, and the Fourth International's reading has always insisted on the distinction. The line that runs from The Holy Family is the line of self-emancipation — the conviction, which Marx would soon write into the statutes of the International, that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the workers themselves and that no benefactor

above the class can free it. Against the substitutionism that let a bureaucracy speak and rule in the proletariat's name, that principle is the standing indictment; it is why Trotsky could wield the founders against their embalmers, and why the humanist current that rediscovered the young Marx in the 1950s and 1960s frightened the guardians of official dialectical materialism. The materialism of The Holy Family was always a weapon that could be turned homeward, and the men who kept it under glass understood as much.

So the book is worth far more than its place on the shelf of relics. Read it for its openings and read it against its shrine. Its lasting claim is the one thing the Soviet century could not practise while it preached it: that emancipation is the self-activity of real, living people, and that every Holy Family — every self-appointed guardian of the Idea who mistakes his doctrine for the movement of the world and the masses for his raw material — is to be laughed off the stage. Marx aimed that laughter at Bruno Bauer. History aimed it, in the end, at the state that turned Marx into a saint. The book asks only to be taken at its word: not as scripture, but as a summons to the living.

Theses on Feuerbach

Eleven paragraphs jotted in a Brussels notebook in 1845, forgotten for forty-three years, and the germ of everything after: practice, social relations, and the point that is to change the world. With the Institute's note on how much of the famous wording is Engels's. New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

These eleven paragraphs are the shortest famous text in the whole of Marxism, and among the most consequential. Marx jotted them in a notebook in Brussels in the spring of 1845, under the plain heading "Concerning Feuerbach," and then forgot them. They were never meant for a reader. He was settling accounts with the philosopher who had freed him from Hegel — Ludwig Feuerbach, whose *Essence of Christianity* had dissolved God into a projection of human longing — and marking the point where he had to leave Feuerbach behind. The notes stayed in a drawer for forty-three years. It was Engels who found them again after Marx's death and printed them, lightly edited, as an appendix to his own 1888 essay *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, calling them "the first document in which is deposited the brilliant germ of a new world outlook." That germ is the idea the theses turn on: that reality is not something the mind contemplates from a safe distance but something human beings make, and can therefore remake. Marx's word for it was practice (in the German, *Praxis*) — activity that is at once material and thinking, the point where knowing and changing meet.

The volume this edition draws on is the Progress Publishers *Selected Works*, where the theses sit as a coda to *The German Ideology*, in the text Engels prepared and with a few refinements — italics and quotation marks — restored from Marx's manuscript by the Soviet editors. The reader should know at once that the famous words are, in their famous form, partly Engels's. The Institute of Marxism-Leninism says so with unusual candour in its note: Engels "made certain editorial changes to render the document, which Marx had not intended for publication, more comprehensible," and even "The title 'Theses on Feuerbach' has been supplied by the Institute" — Marx gave them no title at all. The most quoted sentence in all of Marxism carries the mark of this editing. Marx's own notebook ended the last thesis without the pivot the world knows; the adversative "however" in "the point,

however, is to change it" is Engels's touch, sharpening a rough note into an epigram. Nothing is falsified by this — Engels was the most faithful of editors — but a text canonised as pure Marx is in fact Marx read through Engels, and an honest edition should say so rather than let the scripture stand seamless.

What the theses do, even in a page and a half, is enormous, and what they leave undone is the price of their brevity. The break with the old materialism is total: its defect, Marx writes in the first thesis, is that reality "is conceived only in the form of the object ... but not as human sensuous activity, practice." From that single move everything follows — that "Social life is essentially practical"; that truth is not contemplated but proved in the doing; that the human essence "is no abstraction inherent in each single individual" but "the ensemble of the social relations," so that to change the relations is to change the human being. This is the founding gesture of a Marxism that is neither a mechanical materialism nor a dressed-up idealism, and it has fed everything alive in the tradition since. But the theses are notes, not a doctrine. Their compression is exactly what makes them quotable and what makes them contestable: a century of readers — the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, Sartre, Althusser — has drawn opposite systems out of the same eleven paragraphs. And buried in the third thesis is a warning Marx never developed, which would come to indict much that was done in his name. Against the reformers who dreamed of educating society into virtue, he objects that their doctrine "necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, of which one is superior to society," and adds the sentence that ought to hang over every vanguard: "the educator himself needs educating."

Did the state that made these theses holy actually live by them? The eleventh — "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" — was carved on banners, set over lecture-hall doors, recited by every schoolchild in the Soviet bloc. And the regime that recited it most had turned Marxism into precisely the thing the first thesis condemns: a contemplative system,

"dialectical materialism," a catechism to be memorised and professed, its truths settled in advance by authority rather than proved in practice. The philosophy of doing became a philosophy of reciting. Worse, the third thesis reads, in hindsight, like a diagnosis written before the disease. A party that placed itself above the class as the sole possessor of correct consciousness, that undertook to re-educate a whole society from above while never submitting to education itself, had made itself the part that stands "superior to society," the one Marx warned against — the educator who would not be educated. Marx had aimed the point at Robert Owen's benevolent factory-owner; it landed on the Stalinist bureaucracy. And the sixth thesis, which denies that there is any fixed human essence apart from social relations, was inverted into its opposite: the decreed "New Soviet Man," an essence handed down from the top, the very abstraction Marx had abolished.

The theses keep their value because they are the charter of the anti-fatalist Marxism the bureaucracy could not use. Gramsci called Marxism itself the philosophy of praxis, and the phrase is only the eleventh thesis made into a name: a doctrine that refuses to wait on History, that holds circumstances are changed by human activity and not by an iron law grinding toward its appointed end. This is the Marxism the Fourth International carried against both the evolutionism of the Second International and the mechanical determinism of the Third — Trotsky's insistence that the revolution is made by living people and can be betrayed by them, that the bureaucracy is not a new human essence but a set of social relations, and that what is made by human activity can be unmade by it. Read against its own ossification, the last thesis turns homeward with full force. The point is not to interpret the world, nor to administer it, nor to recite the correct interpretation of it — but to change it, including the world the administrators built in Marx's name. That is the sense in which these eleven paragraphs, scribbled and abandoned in 1845, are still unfinished business.

PHILOSOPHY

The German Ideology

The book Marx and Engels abandoned to "the gnawing criticism of the mice", and which became a founding scripture anyway. Where "ideology" gets its meaning, opening with the man who believed people drowned because they believed in gravity. The full Progress edition, both volumes, addenda and four indexes.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Introduction to This Edition

Two young men wrote this book and then let the mice eat it. Marx was twenty-seven, Engels twenty-five, and in the winter of 1845–46 they sat in Brussels — Marx newly expelled from Paris by the French government, Engels down from Barmen — and set out to settle accounts with the philosophy they had grown up inside. The manuscript they produced was never published in their lifetime. No publisher in Germany would touch it; the police made sure of some of that, and the trends it attacked made sure of the rest. Years later Marx remembered the decision to abandon it almost cheerfully: they had achieved their main purpose, which was to clear their own heads, and they left the pages "to the gnawing criticism of the mice" all the more willingly for that. The *German Ideology* is, in other words, a book its authors thought they could afford to lose. The strange fate of Marxism in the twentieth century is that this discarded settling of accounts became one of its founding scriptures — and that the state which canonised it as scripture was, in the exact sense the book invented, a machine for producing ideology.

That is the paradox to hold in mind while reading. The phrase in the title is a coinage and an insult. "The German ideology" is what Marx and Engels called the habit of German intellectuals of taking the ideas in their own heads for the moving forces of history — of imagining that if you changed people's thoughts about the world you would change the world. The book's whole polemical purpose is to puncture that illusion, and it does so with the most economical image in all of Marx's early writing. It opens, in the Preface, with a joke: "Once upon a time a valiant fellow had the idea that men were drowned in water only because they were possessed with the idea of gravity." Knock the idea of gravity out of their heads, declares this fellow, and drowning will cease. That, say the authors, is precisely what the Young Hegelian philosophers propose to do about the real relations that oppress real people: fight them as ideas. The book is the antidote to that fantasy. It is worth remembering, when we reach the apparatus that

framed it in Moscow, that a good deal of official "Marxism-Leninism" fought gravity for a living.

This edition, prepared by Progress Publishers in Moscow, is the standard English one, its text corresponding to Volume 5 of the *Collected Works* and translated from the German. It is generously equipped. It carries the Institute of Marxism-Leninism's long Introduction; both volumes of the work as Marx and Engels planned them; Engels's essay "The True Socialists", written as a continuation; four pieces of addenda, including the two versions of the celebrated "Theses on Feuerbach"; a hundred and fifty-six numbered notes; and four full indexes. It is a proper scholarly edition, and — as with any Moscow edition of a classic — its scholarship is exactly where the argument of this introduction has to be made.

What the book achieves, and where it thins out

What the book achieves is the materialist conception of history, stated for the first time as a connected whole. Before *The German Ideology* the idea exists in Marx in flashes; here it is set out as a method. Its premises, the authors insist, are not dogmas but "real individuals ... their activity and the material conditions under which they live"; and its governing reversal is stated in one sentence that a century of argument has not worn out: "It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness." From this follows the analysis of the division of labour, the account of how successive forms of property arise from successive stages of production, and the compact, devastating proposition about culture and power that would echo through every later debate about the sociology of ideas: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force." Read that sentence, and then look again at the imprint page in front of you. The book hands you the instrument for reading it.

Two further things the book does supremely. It gives the most

human picture of communism Marx ever drew — the passage, mocked and loved in equal measure, in which the abolition of the fixed division of labour would make it "possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind." And it gives the definition of communism that matters most for judging what was later done in its name: "Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things." Communism is a movement, not a condition; a direction of travel, not a destination one can announce has been reached. Keep that sentence. We will need it.

Where does the book thin out? First, in its sheer bulk. The section called "Saint Max" — the demolition of Max Stirner's *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (The Unique and His Property, better known in English as *The Ego and Its Own*) — runs to some three hundred pages, longer than everything else combined, and it is a line-by-line pursuit of a book almost no one now reads. There is brilliant matter buried in it, but it is buried, and the reader who wants the living Marx should go first to the Feuerbach chapter and the Preface and treat the rest as a quarry. Second, the theory itself sometimes leans harder on the "productive forces" than the authors' own practice warrants, so that history can look as though it is pushed from behind by technology rather than fought out by classes — a tilt that later, in less careful hands, would harden into a fatalism the mature Marx never held. And third — most important for what follows — the great Feuerbach chapter was never finished. It survives as a bundle of drafts, some in Marx's hand and some in Engels's, without a settled order. That unfinished state is not a footnote. It is the thing the Soviet apparatus had to do something about, and what it did is the heart of this book's later history.

Was the state that printed it faithful to it?

Turn to the Publishers' Note at the front of this very volume and you will find an admission made in the flat voice of routine. "The text of Chapter I, in particular, has been rearranged," it says, "so as to make it correspond as nearly as possible to the original manuscript"; and "the arrangement of this chapter follows that of the Russian edition published in 1965 by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Central Committee of the CPSU." Read slowly, that is a remarkable sentence. The Feuerbach chapter — the most important forty pages Marx and Engels wrote in the 1840s, the fountainhead of

historical materialism — reaches the reader in an order chosen by a committee in Moscow in 1965. There was an earlier order, the one David Ryazanov used when he first gave the chapter to the world in the 1920s; there was another in the 1932 collected edition; there is this one. The manuscript itself dictates none of them cleanly. This is not a scandal — an unfinished text has to be arranged somehow, and honest editors say so, as this note half-does. It is, rather, the perfect emblem of the whole relationship. The state that presented itself as the custodian of an unaltered, authoritative Marx was in fact, and unavoidably, arranging him; and it arranged him without ever inviting the reader to notice that the arrangement was a choice.

The deeper irony is reflexive, and it is the point of reading this book today. The German Ideology is the founding text of the critique of ideology — of the claim that a ruling class projects its own interests as universal truths and teaches them as the natural order of things. In the Soviet Union that critique was turned into its own opposite. "Marxism-Leninism" became a state doctrine, taught by rote, policed for deviation, printed in millions of copies in every language, and enforced as the settled framework within which all thought had to move. It was, precisely, a ruling idea of a ruling stratum: the intellectual force of the bureaucracy that had raised itself above Soviet society and needed a universal justification for its rule. The book that coined "the German ideology" as a term of abuse was made the cornerstone of a Soviet ideology in the identical sense — a set of ideas mistaken for, and imposed as, reality. The valiant fellow fighting the idea of gravity found his twentieth-century heir in a state that denounced "bourgeois ideology" from within a doctrine that had itself frozen solid.

And measure the state against the two sentences we were told to keep. Communism, the book says, is "not a state of affairs which is to be established" but "the real movement which abolishes the present state of things." In 1936 the Soviet constitution announced that socialism had been established — a state of affairs, achieved, complete, to be defended rather than moved through. The book looks forward to the abolition of the division of labour and, elsewhere in Marx and Engels, to the withering away of the state; the Soviet state entrenched the division of labour as a hierarchy of privilege and swelled the state into the most powerful apparatus on earth. On every count where the young Marx pointed one way, the mature bureaucracy went the other, and printed the young Marx while it did so.

None of this is an argument against Marx, and it is emphatically not the liberal argument that the doctrine

contained the tyranny in embryo. The men who wrote this book were revolutionaries, and the first workers' state was born into a catastrophe — civil war, foreign invasion, blockade, famine, the physical destruction of the very working class that had made the revolution — and left isolated when the revolution it counted on in Germany failed. The degeneration has objective roots in that isolation and backwardness, and a subjective author in the bureaucratic caste that, under Stalin, usurped the revolution and rewrote its meaning. The proof is written into the history of this very text. The scholar who first rescued *The German Ideology* from the mice and gave it to the world was David Ryazanov, founder of the Marx-Engels Institute and the greatest editor the movement has produced. In 1931 he was arrested, expelled from the Party, and exiled; in 1938 he was shot. The man who published the critique of ideology was destroyed by the ideology-state, and Trotsky, who defended him, understood exactly what the murder meant. The canonised text is not the cause of the betrayal. It is the measure of it.

them, the sharpest possible lesson in how to use them. The book that its authors abandoned to the mice turns out to be the one that best explains what devoured the revolution made in its name, and the one that still, page for page, points past it.

Why this Marxism is still worth reading

The value of *The German Ideology* now is that it is the best weapon ever forged against the thing it was made to serve. Its critique of ideology cuts most sharply when it is turned on "Marxism-Leninism" itself: apply the book's own test — whose material interests does this ruling idea universalise? — and the embalmed doctrine dissolves into what it always was, the self-justification of a privileged stratum. Its definition of communism as a real movement, not an established state, is the standing refutation of every regime that declared the future already present and demanded to be defended rather than surpassed. Its horizon — the abolition of the division of labour, the reunion of the many-sided human being scattered by class society — remains the most radical thing anyone has said about work, and it has lost none of its force in an age that divides labour more minutely than Marx could have imagined. And its method, used as Marx used it, is an invitation to inquiry that must earn its results, not a set of results announced in advance and defended with a truncheon.

That living, restless, anti-dogmatic Marxism was kept alive, against the embalmed one, by the tradition that runs from Trotsky's insistence that the revolution had been betrayed rather than fulfilled through to Ernest Mandel's patient reconstruction of Marx's method. Read against its Stalinist ossification, *The German Ideology* is not a monument but a workshop — two young men clearing their heads in public, leaving us the tools and, in the fate of the state that printed

The Poverty of Philosophy

Marx's answer to Proudhon, written in French in a hurry and in anger, and the first public appearance of the mature method: "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." With the Annenkov letter and the free-trade speech appended.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

Marx wrote this book in French, in a hurry, and in anger.

In 1846 Pierre-Joseph Proudhon — the most famous socialist in France, the man who had declared that property was theft — published a fat two-volume work called *Système des contradictions économiques, ou Philosophie de la misère* (System of Economic Contradictions, or the Philosophy of Poverty). Marx read it, decided it was a disaster dressed up as a discovery, and answered it the next winter with a book whose title simply turned Proudhon's upside down: *Misère de la philosophie* — The Poverty of Philosophy. It came out in Brussels and Paris in July 1847. It was never reprinted in Marx's lifetime as a French book, and for decades it was among the least read things he wrote. It is also, as Engels kept insisting, the place where the mature Marx first shows his face in public — a year before the Communist Manifesto, and twenty years before Capital. This edition is worth having because the young polemic contains, in miniature and at speed, both the method Marx would spend his life perfecting and a warning that the state which later canonised him spectacularly failed to hear.

The present text is the Moscow one: Progress Publishers' edition, made from the French of 1847 with the corrections Marx pencilled into a copy in 1876 and the further corrections Engels made when he edited the first German edition of 1885, for which he also wrote the two prefaces printed here. It is a well-found volume. Around the two chapters it gathers Marx's own foreword, four appendices — his famous letter to Annenkov of December 1846, which sketches the whole argument in advance; his 1865 letter to Schweitzer taking the measure of Proudhon after the man's death; a short excerpt from A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy; and the 1848 Brussels speech On the Question of Free Trade — and it closes with the numbered notes of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism and a name index. Reference marks appear here as [Note 1] and so on; the asterisked footnotes are the author's, Marx's own and the handful Engels added for the

Germans. No translator is named on the title page, and none is invented here: the English is the Institute's, and it is the standard one.

What the book does supremely is method, and the method is stated in a single sentence that has never been bettered. Against Proudhon — who treated the categories of economics as eternal ideas descending in a Hegelian order, "constituted value" giving birth to money giving birth to competition — Marx puts the categories back on the ground they grew from. "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist," he writes, and then draws the general conclusion: "The same men who establish their social relations in conformity with their material productivity, produce also principles, ideas and categories, in conformity with their social relations. Thus these ideas, these categories, are as little eternal as the relations they express. They are historical and transitory products." That is the materialist conception of history, three years before Marx would use the word, delivered as a hammer-blow in the middle of a book review. Everything that later hardened into "dialectical materialism" is here still molten, still doing work — the claim that the way people make their living shapes the way they think and rule, offered not as a law of nature but as a reason to study each economy in its own historical motion rather than to deduce it from a philosopher's table of contents.

The other thing the book does supremely is refuse a temptation. Proudhon's whole scheme was that the good side of each economic category could be kept and the bad side legislated away — that value "constituted" by labour-time could be turned, by clever institutional design and a species of labour-money, into a just and painless economy without touching the relations of production underneath. Marx's demolition of this — running through the English "labour-money" utopians, Gray and Bray, whom Proudhon had unknowingly rediscovered — is the first appearance of a conviction he never abandoned: that you cannot decree a new economy into being on top of the old relations, that value is not an accounting choice but the expression of a definite form

of society, and that to abolish its evils you must transform the form and not the bookkeeping. It ends, in the great fifth section on strikes and combinations, with something warmer than method. Here Marx defends the workers' right to combine against the economists who deplored it and the Proudhon who thought it futile. "The first attempts of workers to associate among themselves," he writes, "always take place in the form of combinations"; competition divides them, the defence of wages unites them, and in that struggle a scattered "mass" that "is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself" at last "constitutes itself as a class for itself." The book that opens with a joke at Proudhon's expense closes on the self-organisation of the working class as the agent of its own emancipation.

It is an early book, and honesty requires saying where it is early. The economics is pre-Capital: Marx here still argues largely on Ricardo's ground, with labour-time as the measure of value, and the decisive distinction that founds the whole later system — between labour and labour-power, the distinction that reveals where profit comes from — is not yet in his hands. Engels's prefaces, printed here, half-admit as much even as they defend the book, and they spend a surprising amount of energy on a priority-quarrel with the German economist Rodbertus that mattered enormously in 1885 and not at all now. The polemic, too, is a young man's: dazzling, unfair in places, so intent on scoring against Proudhon that it sometimes flattens what the older man was groping toward. None of this is a reason to discount the book. It is a reason to read it as what it is — the workshop sketch, not the finished canvas — and Engels was right that the finished canvas is unmistakably drawn in it.

Which raises the question this edition, for all its apparatus, never puts to itself: was the state that printed *The Poverty of Philosophy* in its millions consistent with the book? On two points it was the book's living refutation. The first is the labour-money utopia Marx destroyed. The Soviet economy became, in its own bureaucratic key, precisely the thing Marx mocked Proudhon for dreaming: an order in which a central office — Gosplan, the state planning agency — would fix values and quantities by administrative decree and settle accounts in what amounted to labour-tokens, socialism reduced to a gigantic exercise in bookkeeping imposed from above on relations of production it had not transformed but merely nationalised. Marx's charge against Proudhon — that a schema drawn up in the head and clamped onto real social relations is idealism wearing the costume of economics — turns on the planners' cabinet as sharply as it ever turned on the Frenchman. The doctrine took the hand-mill sentence as a

licence for productive-forces worship, as though building the steam-mills would by itself deliver socialism; Marx's actual point was the opposite, that relations, not machines alone, make a society what it is, and the relations the Soviet state built were relations of command.

The second and sharper inconsistency is the fifth section. *The Poverty of Philosophy* ends by celebrating the workers' combination, the strike, the coalition formed independently of and against the employer — the moment the class constitutes itself "for itself." The state that canonised this text outlawed the strike, dissolved the independent unions into what were frankly called transmission belts of the Party, and jailed those who tried to combine on their own account. It embalmed the theorist of working-class self-emancipation while abolishing the thing itself. The apparatus of this very edition is scrupulous about which French edition a passage comes from and which novel George Sand took a line from, and entirely silent about the one chapter its own publisher's practice most flatly contradicted. That silence is not an oversight. It is the reflexivity test — can a doctrine's own weapons be turned on the society that holds it? — being failed by omission.

None of this is a charge against Marx, and the anti-bureaucratic reading is not a modern imposition on the text; it is the text. The tradition that defended the October revolution while refusing to worship its degeneration used exactly this method against exactly this state. Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed* reads the USSR the way *The Poverty of Philosophy* reads any economy — as a historical and transitory form, contradictory, to be explained by its real relations and not by its official self-description — and concludes that a bureaucracy commanding a nationalised economy is not the classless society but a usurpation sitting on top of the workers' conquests. That the same regime which taught the hand-mill sentence in every school also anathematised Trotsky is the whole story in one line: it needed the method as scripture and could not survive the method as inquiry. The degeneration itself had causes a Marxist can name without flinching — isolation after the revolutions in the West failed, the ruin and hunger of the civil war, the near-destruction of the very working class that had made 1917 — but the outcome was a stratum that ruled in Marx's name against everything the fifth section of this book stands for.

So what is *The Poverty of Philosophy* worth now? Its value is the value of a method that keeps the mind free of eternities. Its enduring gift is the flat refusal to let any economic arrangement present itself as natural, permanent, or beyond politics — the categories are "as little eternal as the relations

they express," and that sentence is as lethal to the market's claim that there is no alternative as it once was to Proudhon's providential harmonies, and as it is to any bureaucracy's claim to be socialism completed. Read the book with its fifth section left in, and it turns out to contain its own standard of judgement. Marx closes it by insisting that so long as classes exist, "the last word of social science will always be" the line he borrows from George Sand — combat or death, bloody struggle or extinction, the question inexorably put. The state that printed those words in the languages of the world had, by the time it printed them, made very sure that no one in its own factories could put the question at all. The book supplies both the method and the measure; the measure falls, as it happens, on the publisher.

MARXISM

Manifesto of the Communist Party

The pamphlet almost nobody read in 1848, in Samuel Moore's 1888 translation edited by Engels, with six of the authors' own later prefaces correcting it as events overtook them. "All that is solid melts into air." New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels

Introduction to This Edition

In the autumn of 1847 a small international society of émigré artisans, meeting in London under the name of the Communist League, asked two young Germans to write down what the League believed. The elder was twenty-nine, the younger twenty-seven. They took their time — long enough that the League's committee sent a sharp reminder — and the finished text reached the printer only weeks before the revolutions of February 1848 broke across the continent. It was published in German, anonymously, as a pamphlet of twenty-three pages. Almost nobody read it. The risings of 1848 were made and defeated without it; for two decades it survived as what the 1882 preface printed here calls, with some bitterness, "a literary curiosity". That a document so overtaken by events should have become the most widely circulated political text ever written after the Bible is one of the stranger facts of modern history, and it is worth holding onto while reading, because the Manifesto is a young work, written at speed for an occasion that passed, and its authors knew it better than its later custodians did.

The edition in your hands is Moscow's: Progress Publishers' Selected Works in three volumes, Volume One, first printed in 1969 and reprinted in 1973, prepared from a Russian edition of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism attached to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. The English text is not a Soviet translation. As the note at the foot of the last page states, it is "printed according to the 1888 English edition" — the translation Samuel Moore made and Engels edited and annotated five years after Marx's death, which remains the standard English Manifesto. What Moscow supplied around it is the apparatus: six of the seven prefaces the authors wrote for later editions, and a set of endnotes from the Institute. That apparatus is the proper subject of an introduction to this edition, and it repays attention, because a canon reveals itself as much in what it arranges and omits as in what it prints.

Begin with what the work does that nothing else has done as

well. The first section, "Bourgeois and Proletarians", is a description of capitalism written while capitalism was still young, and it has dated less than descriptions written yesterday. Marx and Engels grasped that the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class — that it "cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production", and that in doing so it tears up every settled relation: "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind." They saw that this revolutionising could not stay within borders. "The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world-market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country" — a sentence that reads today less like prophecy than like the morning news. And they saw the sting in it: that the same process which builds a world market builds the class that will end it, so that what the bourgeoisie "produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers." Strip away the confidence of that last clause and the analysis underneath is still the sharpest short account we have of why the society that produces unprecedented wealth also produces unprecedented instability.

That instability the Manifesto named with a precision no economist of the day matched. Modern industry, it observes, is convulsed by "commercial crises that by their periodical return put on its trial, each time more threateningly, the existence of the entire bourgeois society." In these crises "there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity—the epidemic of over-production." Society is starved not by scarcity but by abundance — "too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce." A century and a half of boom and slump has not improved on that as a description of what a capitalist crisis feels like from the inside, and every financial panic since has been, in this exact sense, a crisis of too much rather than too little.

Here is the honest place to name the pamphlet's deepest weakness, which is not an error of fact but a habit of

confidence. The Manifesto does not merely predict the fall of the bourgeoisie; it calls that fall, and the victory of the proletariat, "equally inevitable." The word does a great deal of quiet damage. A future guaranteed by history is a future one can afford to wait for, and the mass parties that took the pamphlet as their charter learned, across the long peace of the Second International, to wait — to treat the deepening of capitalism's contradictions as a substitute for the building of a revolutionary will rather than its occasion. Marx and Engels were not fatalists; the whole point of writing a manifesto is that people must act. But the language of inevitability, laid over a movement growing patient and prosperous, curdled into the fatalism that broke in August 1914, when the parties of the International, told to choose between their class and their flags, chose their flags. The confidence that made the pamphlet thrilling to write made it, in weaker hands, an alibi. That is a charge against the readers more than the authors — but the seed is in the text, and honesty requires saying so.

The famous compression — "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" — is doing real work and not only rhetoric. It proposes that the way people fight is decided by the way they produce, and it turns the reader's attention from the ideas an age tells itself to the material relations underneath them. Section II carries this into the deepest thing in the pamphlet: the claim that communism is not a plan to be imposed but the abolition of a condition, and that its measure is human freedom. The goal, they write, is "an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." That formula is the ethical centre of the whole tradition, and everything the twentieth century did in its name has to be measured against it.

The weaknesses are as real, and the honest place to find them is in the authors' own later prefaces, which this edition prints. By 1872 Marx and Engels were telling their readers not to take the pamphlet as gospel. Of its ten-point immediate programme — the graduated income tax, the central bank, the state ownership of transport — they wrote that "no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded today." They had watched a real revolution in the meantime, and it had taught them something the Manifesto did not know. "One thing especially was proved by the Commune," the 1872 preface goes on, "viz., that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery, and wield it for its own purposes.'" That is a large admission. The Manifesto had named, among the Communists' aims, the "conquest of political power by the proletariat", without asking what kind of power, or whether the existing

state could simply be captured and used. The Paris Commune of 1871 answered the question the pamphlet had left open, and the answer was that the old state must be broken up and replaced by something closer to society itself — elected officials, subject to recall, paid workmen's wages. The most important correction to the Manifesto was made by its own authors, and it pointed away from the state, not towards it. Hold that thought.

There are other limits. The polemics of Section III, against the "Feudal", "Petty-Bourgeois" and "True" Socialisms of the 1840s, are the most dated pages in the work, aimed at opponents nobody now remembers. The pamphlet underrated the staying power of nationalism, which it expected the world market to dissolve, and it has almost nothing to say about the peasantry, then still the great majority of humankind. On this last point, too, the authors corrected themselves, and the correction is printed here in the most remarkable of the prefaces.

That is the preface of 1882, to the Russian edition, the last thing Marx and Engels signed together and one of the least Soviet documents the Soviet edition contains. Russia, they note, is the one country where the Manifesto's assumption of an advanced capitalism does not hold: there, "more than half the land owned in common by the peasants." So they pose a question the pamphlet's scheme of history had seemed to rule out. "Can the Russian obshchina, though greatly undermined, yet a form of the primeval common ownership of land, pass directly to the higher form of communist common ownership? Or, on the contrary, must it first pass through the same process of dissolution as constitutes the historical evolution of the West?" Their answer is a conditional, and it is the hinge of everything that came after: "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that both complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting-point for a communist development." A backward country might not have to repeat the whole punishing march through capitalism — but only if its revolution set off, and was rescued by, revolution in the developed West. Marx and Engels never imagined a socialism that could be built in one poor and isolated country. They staked the Russian road on the German one.

Which is the natural place to ask the question this series always asks: was the state that canonised the Manifesto consistent with it? The answer is written into the very passages the edition reproduces. Take the 1872 correction first. The whole thrust of the Commune lesson — that the workers "cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery"

— was inverted by the Soviet state, which did not break the old machinery of administration and coercion so much as inherit it, staff it, and swell it into something the tsars could not have dreamed of. The Manifesto under Stalin was printed in millions while its authors' warning against the ready-made state was left to gather the dust of a preface. And set beside it the measure from Section II: "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." No sentence in the founding texts sits in sharper judgement on the society that made the sentence a slogan. A state that shot its own revolutionaries, emptied its congresses of debate and filled its camps had not misplaced this idea; it had stood it on its head, making the development of all the enemy of the free development of each.

Then take the 1882 conditional. Marx and Engels had made the Russian road depend on Western revolution. When the German revolution of 1918–23 failed and the Russian one was left alone — besieged, blockaded, its working class scattered and killed in a civil war fought under foreign intervention — the material premise of their answer was gone. What was built afterwards was built on the missing half of their sentence. To turn the isolation into a doctrine — socialism in one country — was to keep the Manifesto's prestige while discarding the internationalism that was its first and last word: the pamphlet opens by having Communists of all nations sketch a common programme and closes on "Working men of all countries, unite!" The Soviet apparatus resolved the contradiction the way apparatuses do — by editing. This volume prints six prefaces and drops one: the 1888 English preface by Engels, even though the text it prints is the 1888 English edition. It gives the 1890 German preface only as an extract, "From the Preface". And it frames the whole with an endnote, the first of the Institute's notes to this work, that tells you how to read before you have read: the Manifesto, it explains, quoting Lenin, "with the clarity and brilliance of genius... outlines a new world-conception". This is canonisation in miniature — the living, self-correcting document of two young men fixed, by the authority of a later leader, into a scripture whose conclusions are known in advance. The prefaces, where Marx and Engels change their minds, are exactly where a scripture is least comfortable, and it is the prefaces the apparatus trims.

None of this is an argument against the Manifesto, and it is emphatically not the liberal argument that reads the whole tradition as a rough draft of the Gulag. The degeneration of the Russian Revolution has causes, and they are first of all material: a workers' state stranded in a peasant country, its revolution unrelieved by the West, its working class consumed in the fighting that saved it, an administering caste rising out

of the scarcity to make its privileges permanent and then to require that the founders be made to agree. Trotsky, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, gave the classic account of how a bureaucracy usurped a revolution it had not made, and the evidence that it never truly superseded Marx is precisely that it went on printing him — in millions, in every language — long after it had betrayed him. A regime that had genuinely outgrown the Manifesto would have had no need to keep it in print. The canonised text is the measure of the betrayal, not its cause. The dictatorship of the proletariat that the Manifesto implies and the Commune defined was a more democratic form than the parliamentary state, not a licence for a party above society; that it was made to mean its opposite is a fact about Stalinism, not about the pamphlet.

So what is this Marxism worth now, read against its own ossification? The description of the world market is worth more than when it was written — a global division of labour that dissolves borders, uproots settled ways of life, and delivers wealth and crisis in the same motion is not a nineteenth-century memory but the water we swim in. The insistence that the way we produce shapes the way we think, and that the ruling ideas of an age are the ideas of its ruling class, is a standing warning against taking any society's account of itself at face value — including the Soviet one. The test of the state — is it an organ raised above society, or one subordinate to it? — is still the right test, and the Manifesto and the prefaces that correct it supply it; it can be turned on Moscow in 1973 as readily as on Washington or on any state since. And the closing summons is still the one the twentieth century most needed and least heeded: that the emancipation of the working class is the work of the working class itself, across borders, or it is nothing. "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win." Moscow printed those words on the cheapest paper and in the largest editions, and could not make them mean what it did. They are still legible, and they still do not say what the state that canonised them wanted them to say.

POLITICAL ECONOMY

Wage Labour and Capital

Marx's plainest account of the wage relation, written as newspaper articles in 1849 and broken off when the counter-revolution shut the paper. In Engels's 1891 revision, which he openly flagged as "not the pamphlet as Marx wrote it". New critical introduction by Dmitry Chasovennikov.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

In April 1849 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the Cologne daily Marx edited through the revolution, began printing a series of leading articles under the title *Wage Labour and Capital*. They were drawn from lectures Marx had given two years earlier to the German Workers' Society in Brussels, and they were meant to give ordinary readers, in plain language, the economics underneath the political battles then raging across Europe. The series was never finished. In May the counter-revolution closed in — the Russians invaded Hungary, risings broke out from Dresden to Baden, and the paper itself was suppressed on the 19th. The words "To be continued" at the foot of the last instalment were never made good, and the concluding chapters were not found among Marx's papers after his death. What survives is a fragment: the most lucid short account of the wage relation Marx ever wrote, broken off exactly where it was about to turn from description to consequence.

The edition in your hands is Moscow's — Progress Publishers' *Selected Works* in three volumes, Volume One, first printed in 1969 and reprinted in 1973, prepared from a Russian edition of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism attached to the Central Committee. But it comes with a complication printed at its own head, and an honest introduction has to begin there rather than hide it. The text reproduced here is not the text Marx wrote in 1849. It is the version Frederick Engels prepared in 1891, more than forty years later and eight years after Marx's death, for a mass propaganda pamphlet "to be circulated in not less than 10,000 copies". Engels says so himself, with a frankness the later custodians of the canon rarely matched. "I therefore tell the reader beforehand," he writes in the Introduction printed here, "this is not the pamphlet as Marx wrote it in 1849 but approximately as he would have written it in 1891."

What Engels changed, he also explains. "My alterations all turn on one point. According to the original, the worker sells

his labour to the capitalist for wages; according to the present text he sells his labour power." In 1849 Marx had not yet drawn the distinction on which his mature economics would turn — between labour, the activity, and labour-power, the capacity to work that the worker actually sells. That distinction is the hinge of *Capital*, and Engels, editing for workers who would read this before they read anything harder, quietly brought the young text into line with it. It is a defensible thing to have done, and Engels did it in the open. But it means the *Wage Labour and Capital* that the twentieth century read by the million is a hybrid: Marx's 1849 exposition, corrected at its decisive point by the Engels of 1891. The reader should know whose voice is speaking on the question that matters most.

Set that complication aside for a moment, because what remains is genuinely magnificent as a primer. Nowhere else did Marx state the core of his economics so briefly and so clearly. Wages, he insists, are not payment for a share of what the worker makes; they are the price of a commodity, and a peculiar one. "Wages are only a special name for the price of labour power, commonly called the price of labour." *Capital*, likewise, is not a thing but a social relation: it exists only because there is a class with nothing to sell but its capacity to work, and that class exists only because the means of production are owned by someone else. Marx compresses the whole mutual dependence into two sentences that a factory hand could carry home from a lecture: "capital presupposes wage labour; wage labour presupposes capital. They reciprocally condition the existence of each other; they reciprocally bring forth each other." The book's power is that it makes an abstract relation feel like a lived one — the worker who "sells himself, and, indeed, sells himself piecemeal", auctioning "eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his life, day after day, to the highest bidder".

Its finest passage is also its most easily misread, and it will matter later in this introduction, so it is worth quoting whole. Marx is explaining that a worker's position is measured not by the absolute size of the wage but by its size relative to the wealth around it. "A house may be large or small," he writes;

"as long as the surrounding houses are equally small it satisfies all social demands for a dwelling. But let a palace arise beside the little house, and it shrinks from a little house to a hut." Real wages may rise, he argues, and the worker's relative share still fall; the gap between the classes can widen even as the cottage gets a second room. This is a theory of relative deprivation, and it is one of the most durable things in the book, because it describes precisely a world — ours — in which absolute living standards climb and the distance between top and bottom climbs faster.

Now the honest ledger of what the work does not do. It is a fragment, and it shows: because it breaks off before the promised continuation, there is no account here of how surplus value is actually pumped out in production — the thing that would make Capital — only the ground cleared for it. Engels's Introduction fills part of the gap by summarising the mature doctrine, but that is Engels lending the young text his later knowledge, not the text earning it. And the 1849 core carries the marks of its date: it still moves, as the economics of its day did, between "labour" and "labour power" without the vocabulary to keep them apart, which is exactly why Engels felt he had to intervene. These are not faults to hold against a newspaper series written at speed in a besieged revolution. They are the reason the pamphlet is a doorway and not a destination — and the reason it has always been handed to beginners.

The distinction that Engels retrofitted is worth pausing on, because it is where Marx as a thinker is best and least finished at once. The strength of *Wage Labour and Capital* is a way of seeing that never left him: the refusal to treat economic things — wages, capital, price — as natural objects, and the insistence that each is a frozen social relation between people. That is the mind that would write *Capital*, already fully formed in 1849. What was not yet formed was the single concept that would let the relation be measured: that the worker sells not his labour but his labour-power, and that the difference between what that power costs to maintain and what it produces in a day is the whole secret of profit. Without it, the young Marx could describe exploitation vividly but could not yet prove it; with it, he could. Engels's edit is therefore not cosmetic tidying but the importation of the finished discovery into the unfinished text — a kindness to the reader that is also, if one is exacting, a small anachronism, the 1867 answer written into the 1849 question. A reader who wants the real Marx of 1849, feeling for a distinction he has not yet grasped, will not find him here; he was edited into his own maturity by the friend who knew what he had been reaching for.

Which raises the question this series always puts to a Soviet edition: was the state that canonised *Wage Labour and Capital* faithful to it, or did it print the book and invert its lesson? Begin with the apparatus around the text. The Institute's first endnote to the work — the frame a reader meets before the first line — announces that Marx's purpose was "to arm the proletariat with a theoretical weapon", a "profound scientific understanding" of "wage slavery of the workers in capitalist society", and that in it Marx "formulated a general thesis on the relative and absolute impoverishment of the working class under capitalism". That last phrase is the tell. The doctrine of absolute immiseration — the claim that workers under capitalism grow poorer in absolute terms — was Soviet orthodoxy, endlessly repeated, and endlessly embarrassed by the visible fact that real wages in the developed capitalist countries rose across the twentieth century. It is also, tellingly, not what the text says. Marx's house-and-palace passage is an argument about relative position precisely because he grants that the little house may grow; the note has bolted the Soviet dogma of absolute impoverishment onto a text whose most famous page teaches the subtler and truer relative version. The apparatus does not read the work; it recruits it.

There is a second, quieter distortion in the very fact of the edition's ubiquity. *Wage Labour and Capital*, precisely because it was short, clear and finishable in an evening, became the first economics most Soviet workers and students ever read — the primer that opened the course, the pamphlet issued in print runs a Western publisher could only dream of. A whole population was taught to see the wage as a mask over exploitation, to look under the wage for the unpaid hours beneath it. This was a genuine education, and it is to the Soviet system's credit that it gave it. But an economics primer teaches a habit of attention, and a habit of attention does not know where its owner has been told to stop. The regime armed tens of millions with a lens for seeing surplus extraction and then required that the lens be pointed only across the border.

The deeper inconsistency is not in a footnote but in the silence the whole edition keeps. *Wage Labour and Capital* is an anatomy of the wage: a class that owns nothing but its labour-power, that must sell that capacity to whoever owns the means of production, that works part of the day to reproduce its own wage and hands the rest over unpaid to the owner. Every term of that analysis was still in force in the Soviet Union of 1973. Workers there still sold their labour-power for a wage; they still worked to norms, under piece-rates, driven — in the Stakhanovite years — to intensities a Manchester manufacturer would have envied; and the surplus they produced above their wage was appropriated and allocated not

by them but by the ministries and the caste that ran them. The one book most likely to prompt a Soviet worker to ask who takes the difference between what I produce and what I am paid? was placed in his hands as a weapon to point only outward, at the foreign capitalist, never homeward at the state that was his universal employer. The analysis was published in millions and forbidden to reflect. It was Trotsky, in *The Revolution Betrayed*, who insisted that the categories of Marx's economics did not stop at the Soviet border — that a bureaucracy which controlled the state and distributed the surplus was a privileged stratum living off the labour of others, whatever the map called the system. The proof that the regime never truly transcended Marx is that it went on printing him: a state that had abolished exploitation would not need to keep the textbook of exploitation permanently in stock, nor to edit its frame so carefully so that the weapon could not turn.

None of this is the liberal case that reads Marx as the author of his own distortion. The fault is not in *Wage Labour and Capital*; it is in the hands that canonised it while gagging it. Marx wrote a tool for seeing through the wage form wherever it appears, and the measure of Stalinism is that it had to keep the tool in print — the schools needed it, the ideology was built on it — while ensuring it was never used on the room it was read in. The book is the standing indictment of the state that mass-produced it, not its accomplice.

So what is this small, unfinished, twice-authored book worth to a reader now, held up against its own ossification? A great deal, because the relation it describes has not aged. Labour-power is still a commodity; most people alive still live by selling their capacity to work, by the hour or the piece, to those who own the place they work in. The reciprocal bind Marx names — that "capital presupposes wage labour; wage labour presupposes capital" — is not a nineteenth-century curiosity but the frame of every argument about work, wages and automation now being had. And the house-and-palace passage has quietly become the truest thing in the book: an age of rising output and widening inequality is exactly the world in which the cottage grows and shrinks to a hut at the same time. Above all, the pamphlet's real gift is the reflex it trains — to look past what a worker is paid to what a worker produces, and to ask, of any economy whatever, who pockets the difference. That question was dangerous to the capitalist it was aimed at. It was more dangerous still to the state that reprinted it and hoped no one would turn it around. Marx, characteristically, put the point in an image no censor could quite defuse: the workers' movement, if it settles for higher wages inside the system, is "content with forging for itself the golden chains by which the bourgeoisie drags it in its train." The chains are still

golden, and still chains, and the book that says so is still legible against every hand that has tried to hold it the wrong way up.

HISTORY

The Peasant War in Germany

Engels on the German peasant rising of 1525, written months after the defeat of 1848 and reading a war of religious banners as a war between classes. Source of the warning about the leader compelled to govern before his class is ready. With the 1870 preface and the 1874 supplement.

Frederick Engels

Introduction to This Edition

Frederick Engels wrote *The Peasant War in Germany* in London in the summer of 1850, with the wounds of the just-defeated revolution of 1848–49 still open. It was, he says in the preface, "written in London in the summer of 1850, while still under the immediate impression of the counter-revolution just then completed," and it appeared that year in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* review that Marx edited from Hamburg. It is a short, fierce book about a distant event: the great rising of German peasants and plebeians in 1525, which Marx had called "the most radical fact of German history." Engels leaned heavily on the liberal historian Wilhelm Zimmermann for his facts and his chronology, and said as much; his originality lay not in the archive but in the reading of it. Twenty years later he added a preface for the book edition of 1870, and in 1874 a long supplement on the German workers' movement of his own day. The edition in your hands — Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, the house that would shortly become Progress Publishers — reprints that text with an introduction by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, and gathers round it four appendices: Engels on "The Mark," his sketch of the history of the Prussian peasantry, a selection of his and Marx's letters, and drafts from his unfinished manuscripts.

What the book does supremely well is to read a war fought under religious banners as a war between classes. To the "home-bred historians" Engels mocks, the Reformation was so much "violent theological bickering"; he shows that behind Luther, behind Thomas Münzer and his millenarian — thousand-year-kingdom — communism, behind the princes and the timid town burghers, stood the hard material interests of a society straining out of feudalism. He sorts the confusion of the age into three great camps: the Catholic reaction, the moderate Lutheran burghers who wanted reform without revolution, and the revolutionary party of peasants and plebeians. Around "the magnificent figure of Thomas Münzer" he builds a tragedy — the revolutionary who saw further than

his class or his century and was broken for it — and from Münzer's ruin he draws a political lesson of permanent, and dangerous, clarity: "The worst thing that can befall a leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over a government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents." It is one of the great sentences of the socialist tradition, and it was written out of the defeat Engels had just lived through, not from the safety of hindsight.

It has, too, the marks of a young revolutionary's polemic. Its facts are Zimmermann's, corrected here and there by the edition's own notes; its parallels between 1525 and 1848 are drawn with a broad brush, so that the sixteenth-century burgher becomes an almost too-tidy ancestor of the cowardly liberal of 1849, who "betrayed the insurgent peasantry and went over to the side of the feudal gentry." And the supplement of 1874 carries the seed of a later trouble: Engels's growing — and, in its own terms, well-earned — confidence in the lawful, organised advance of German Social-Democracy. That confidence the Second International would harden, after his death, into a fatalism of automatic progress, a faith that the future would arrive of itself, which the catastrophe of 1914 blew apart. None of this is concealed by the book. The honest reader watches Engels both make the argument and, in the prefaces, temper it — which is the finest thing about him.

Then comes the passage the canonising state could not read in front of a mirror. A leader thrust into power before his class is ready, Engels goes on, "is compelled to represent not his party or his class, but the class for whose domination the movement is then ripe. In the interests of the movement he is compelled to advance the interests of an alien class, and to feed his own class with phrases and promises, and with the asseveration that the interests of that alien class are their own interests." And the verdict: "Whoever is put into this awkward position is irrevocably lost."

Written of Münzer in 1525, it reads like a warning addressed

across four centuries to October 1917 — to a workers' party that took power in a peasant country, encircled, blockaded and starving, in exactly the epoch when, in Engels's words, "the movement is not yet ripe." The revolutionary current that Trotsky founded took the warning to heart, and located the Soviet degeneration where Engels's own logic points: first in objective conditions — the isolation of the revolution once Germany failed to follow it, the destruction of the working class in the civil war, the backwardness of the country — and then in the bureaucracy's usurpation of the state the workers had made. What that current did not do was pretend the danger away. The Institute of Marxism-Leninism did. Its introduction files the book safely as a study of "the early bourgeois revolution," a closed episode of the German past, and enlists Münzer as a heroic forerunner of Bolshevism — while the sentences about the leader who must feed his own people with the asseveration that an alien interest is theirs are left lying on the page, uninterpreted, unturned. They could not be turned, because to apply them was to describe the regime that was printing the book. The state that published Engels so carefully on the German peasants' war of 1525 had, within living memory of 1956, waged its own war on its peasants — the forced collectivisation and the famine of 1932–33 — and no note in this volume lets the one throw any light on the other. The reflex runs deeper than a single silence: an edition that could print Engels on "The Mark" and the fate of the peasant commune had, close at hand, Marx's own late writings on the Russian commune and the drafts of his letter to Vera Zasulich, which asked whether Russia might reach socialism through the village commune rather than over its corpse — and those the canon quietly kept out of circulation. The peasant question that Engels studied with such care was, in the USSR, not studied but settled by force.

Read against that silence, the living Engels is easy to find. He is the materialist who refuses to mistake a banner — a cross, a red star — for the class content beneath it, and who insists that even the boldest will is bounded by "the level of development of the material means of existence." He is, above all, the sober analyst of revolutionary timing, who understood that the tragedy of the premature revolution is not cowardice or treachery but a trap sprung by history — and who therefore armed his heirs to recognise the trap, rather than to canonise the men caught in it. Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*, and Ernest Mandel after him, read the fate of the October revolution in exactly these terms: a revolution betrayed by its isolation and its bureaucracy, not an original sin of Bolshevism, and they kept this book's warning alive as living analysis instead of embalming it as scripture. That is how to read *The Peasant War in Germany* now — not as a monument

to a heroic defeat safely locked in the sixteenth century, but as Engels meant every line of it: a manual for finding the class struggle beneath its disguises, and an unsparing meditation on what it costs to move too soon.

HISTORY

The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850

Where "the dictatorship of the proletariat" and "the permanence of the revolution" first appear: Marx reckoning with the defeat of 1848 while it was still warm, and testing the method of Capital on events in progress. With Engels's contested 1895 Introduction.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

Two phrases enter the Marxist vocabulary in this short book, and the history of the twentieth century turns on both. The first is "the dictatorship of the proletariat"; the second is "the permanence of the revolution." Marx set them down almost in passing, in a run of newspaper articles written in the first months of 1850, while the defeat of the 1848 revolution was still fresh and he was trying to understand why the workers of Paris, who in June 1848 had "held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Paris National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed in from the provinces," had nonetheless been crushed. The *Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* is the record of that reckoning. It is, as Engels wrote when he collected the articles for a separate edition in 1895, "Marx's first attempt to explain a section of contemporary history by means of his materialist conception, on the basis of the given economic situation" — the method of *Capital* tried out, for the first time, on events still warm.

Marx wrote the four articles for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-oekonomische Revue* (the New Rhenish Gazette. Political-Economic Review), the London-based monthly he ran after the Prussian authorities shut his newspaper. The present text is the Progress Publishers edition prepared in Moscow and carried in the *Selected Works*; it is the standard English translation. Its most valuable feature is that it prints, in front of Marx's articles, Engels's Introduction of 1895 — written in the last months of his life, and often called his political testament. That Introduction, and the way this edition frames it, is where the argument of these pages has to be made, because the story of what was done to Engels's last essay is the story of what would be done to the whole tradition.

Take first what the book itself does supremely. It reads politics off economics without ever making politics a puppet. Marx begins from the world market and the commercial crisis, traces the rule of the "finance aristocracy" — which he skewers as "nothing but the rebirth of the lumpenproletariat" (the "ragged"

underclass) at the top of bourgeois society — and shows how each turn of the business cycle moved the ground under the parties. Out of that analysis he dissects the classes of France with a precision no one had matched: the split between finance and industrial capital, the wavering of the petty bourgeoisie, the weight of the conservative peasantry. And at the two peaks of the book he names what the workers' movement is for. In the depths of the June defeat, "in place of its demands, exuberant in form, but petty and even bourgeois still in content," there appeared, he writes, "the bold slogan of revolutionary struggle: Overthrow of the bourgeoisie! Dictatorship of the working class!" And in the third article, in a single dense sentence, he sets out the whole strategy: "This Socialism is the declaration of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat as the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally." The "dictatorship" he means is not a dictatorship over the workers but the rule of the working class as a majority, the transitional power he would later find embodied in the Paris Commune — the self-government of the associated producers, not a police state. The internationalism is just as bracing: the coming revolution, he insists, "is forced to leave its national soil forthwith and conquer the European terrain, on which alone the social revolution of the nineteenth century can be accomplished." And the book ends on the note that gives it its nerve: "The revolution is dead!—Long live the revolution!"

Not everything in it has worn equally well, and Marx was the first to say so. Written in the trough of defeat, the articles expect the next revolutionary wave to arrive almost at once, on the next turn of the economic cycle. Marx ties the two together mechanically — a new rising will come, he assumes, with the next slump — and by the autumn of 1850 he had corrected himself, breaking with those in the exile leadership who mistook wish for prospect and warning that "a new revolution is possible only in consequence of a new crisis." The prophecy of an immediate European upheaval was wrong; the tempo was the young theory's weakness, not its foundation. But the analysis of why the revolution failed — the isolation of the

Paris proletariat, the treachery of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the counter-revolution of the peasant vote — is permanent, and it is what makes the book live.

Now the question this edition, for all its scholarship, does not put to itself. Engels's 1895 Introduction was mutilated before it ever appeared. Fearing the renewal of the anti-socialist laws, the Executive of the German Social-Democratic Party pressed the dying Engels to soften the essay, and — as this edition's own note frankly records — "under pressure from the Executive Engels was compelled to delete some passages in the proofs and change some formulations." The cuts fell on exactly the militant passages; what was left made Engels sound like a convert to pure legality. The famous line survived — the workers should turn the enemy's own weapon against him, so that with Odilon Barrot the reaction would wail "legality is the death of us," "whereas we, under this legality, get firm muscles and rosy cheeks and look like life eternal." Torn from its setting, that irony could be read as a renunciation of revolution, and it duly was: "some leaders of Social-Democracy," the note continues, "made an attempt to present Engels as a defender only of a peaceful assumption of power by the working class... as a worshipper of 'legality quand même'" — legality at any price. Engels, "filled with indignation," fought to have the full text printed, and the Progress edition restores it, first published complete in the Soviet Union in 1930, with the deletions given in the footnotes. On its own terms this is exemplary editing, and the note deserves credit: it catches the opportunists in the act and hands the reader the evidence.

And here the reflexivity fails, exactly where it matters. The doctrine could see, with perfect clarity, a party leadership in 1895 bending Engels toward parliamentarism and passing off the tactician of "non-peaceful forms... when the ruling reactionary classes resort to violence" as a worshipper of legality at any price. It could not see itself doing the identical thing. From the Twentieth Congress of 1956, "the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism" and "peaceful coexistence" became the official line of the world Communist movement, the strategy pressed on the Western parties — the very caricature of the late Engels that this edition's own note holds up to scorn. Read the note's summary again with that in mind: Engels, it says approvingly, "underlines the necessity of revolutionary utilisation of all the legal means" and of "subordinating" the democratic struggle to the socialist one — the emphasis quietly shifted onto the legal, the gradual, the safely staged. The apparatus that exposed the German bowdlerisers had become their heir. And the deeper inversion runs through the book's own coinage: the "dictatorship of the

working class" that Marx first named here as the rule of the majority had been turned, in the state that reprinted it, into the dictatorship of an apparatus over the workers in whose name it spoke — the Commune stood on its head.

What, then, is *The Class Struggles in France* worth today, beyond the two phrases it gave the language? Its value is the value of a method and of an honesty the tradition later mislaid. The method is the reading of politics through the economic conjuncture without ever dissolving human agency into it — the model Trotsky would extend when he took Marx's "permanence of the revolution" and built from it the theory of permanent revolution, the argument that in a backward country the workers cannot stop at a "bourgeois" stage but must carry the revolution through and outward or lose it. The honesty is Engels's real one, once the cuts are read back in: that revolutionary strategy must change its forms with the times — that the barricade of 1848 was "today obsolete in every respect," that the movement must win the majority through the fullest use of every legal opening — without ever pretending that a ruling class will surrender its power to a ballot. That is the argument against both of the readings that buried it: against the reformism, of Bernstein's day and of Eurocommunism's, that made Engels a prophet of the parliamentary road; and against the Stalinism that kept the word "dictatorship of the proletariat" while emptying it of the workers' democracy that was its whole content. Restored to itself, the book is what Marx wrote it to be — not a quarry for slogans about permanence and dictatorship, but a demonstration that the class struggle can be read even in a defeat, and a standard against which every custodian of the phrase, including the one that printed this edition, can be measured.

HISTORY

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany

Nineteen articles published under Marx's name in the New-York Daily Tribune, and written entirely by Engels - a fact not established until 1913. The materialist method turned on the defeat of 1848, closing with the chapter on insurrection that would be quoted for a century.

Frederick Engels

Introduction to This Edition

For sixty years this book was read as Marx's. The nineteen articles collected here appeared in the New-York Daily Tribune across 1851 and 1852 over Marx's signature — he was the paper's contracted correspondent — and only in 1913, when the Marx-Engels correspondence was published, did it emerge that Engels had written every word. Marx, this edition's own note records, "at that time was engaged in economic research"; Engels, who had the German events at his fingertips and wrote quick, muscular English, supplied the copy. It is a small fact with a long shadow, and it is the right place to begin, because *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* became one of the founding documents of what the Soviet century would call "the Marxist teaching on armed insurrection" — and the teaching was built for two generations on a text whose author the movement had wrong.

The present text is the Progress Publishers edition carried in the Moscow Selected Works, the standard English version. Its chapters carry titles — "The Prussian State," "Panslavism. The Schleswig-Holstein War," "Insurrection" — but those titles are not Engels's either: the Tribune printed the articles without subheadings, and the divisions here were supplied by Marx's daughter Eleanor Marx-Aveling for the first separate English edition of 1896. What the reader holds, then, is a work shaped by three hands after the fact — the author unnamed, the editor uncredited on the page, the apparatus Soviet — and it repays keeping that in mind.

Take first what the book does supremely well. It is the materialist method turned on a defeat, and its opening is a manifesto against the whole idea that history is made by wire-pullers. "The times of that superstition which attributed revolutions to the ill-will of a few agitators, have long passed away," Engels writes; "wherever there is a revolutionary convulsion, there must be some social want in the background, which is prevented by outworn institutions from satisfying itself." The upheavals of 1848 "were not the work of single

individuals, but spontaneous, irresistible manifestations of national wants and necessities." From that footing he dissects the classes of Germany with the confidence of a man who had watched them at close range: the big bourgeoisie too timid and too tied to the old order to make its own revolution, the petty bourgeoisie forever "vacillating," the peasantry inert, the young working class advanced in a few centres and absent elsewhere. His verdict on the German liberals — that they wanted the fruits of a revolution without the revolution, and so betrayed it at every turn — is the seed of a thesis Marxists would carry into the twentieth century: that in a belated bourgeois society the bourgeoisie cannot be trusted to complete even its own revolution, and the task falls to the classes below it.

And then there is the passage that made the book immortal, the pages on insurrection at the end. "Now, insurrection is an art quite as much as war," Engels writes, "and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them." He sets down the rules like a soldier: "never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play"; once begun, "act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive," for "the defensive is the death of every armed rising"; keep the initiative, "force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you"; and, in the phrase he borrows from Danton, "de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!" — boldness, boldness, always boldness. In September 1917, on the eve of October, Lenin copied that argument almost verbatim into "Marxism and Insurrection," insisting that insurrection be treated "as an art." The most consequential revolution of the century took its operating manual, in part, from these paragraphs. That is not a small thing to have written.

Not everything has worn as well, and the book carries one real disfigurement that honesty requires naming. In the chapters on the nationalities — above all "Panslavism" — Engels turns his analysis of the small Slav peoples into contempt. The Czechs, Croats, and the rest he calls "dying nationalities," "scattered

remnants of numerous nations, whose nationality and political vitality had long been extinguished," peoples destined to be absorbed by the more "energetic" Germans and Magyars as the Welsh were absorbed in England. There is a sharp insight tangled in the prejudice: he saw that Panslavism was less a movement of liberation than an instrument of tsarist reach, that behind the "ludicrous theory" of Slav brotherhood "stood the terrible reality of the Russian Empire... that empire which, for the last 150 years, has never lost, but always gained territory by every war it has commenced." As a warning about the uses to which pan-nationalism could be put, it was prescient. But the doctrine of peoples without history, of small nations rightfully dissolved into big ones, is indefensible, and the tradition knew it: Lenin's whole insistence on the right of nations to self-determination, worked out against exactly this current, is the correction. A serious edition would set the two Engelses of these pages side by side — the diagnostician of empire and the German who wrote off the Slavs — and let the reader weigh them. This one does not.

Which brings us to the question the edition, for all its scholarship, never puts to itself: was the state that canonised this book faithful to it? On insurrection, the note before us is proud — the work "lays the foundations for the Marxist teaching on armed insurrection." True enough for 1917. But a teaching about seizing power from below became, in the hands of the power that resulted, a relic to be recited rather than a thing anyone was permitted to practise. The rules Engels drew for insurgents — surprise, audacity, the offensive against a state's armed force — were precisely what the Soviet state suppressed when they were turned against it, at Kronstadt in 1921, in the German and Hungarian risings its diplomacy strangled, in Budapest in 1956. The doctrine was embalmed and the deed forbidden; "armed insurrection" survived as a chapter heading and a Party-school topic, safely pointed at other people's governments.

The inversion is sharper still on Panslavism. Engels wrote his polemic against the Russian Empire's claim "of considering all Europe as the domain of the Slavonic race" — against tsarist expansion dressed as Slav solidarity. Yet the state that reprinted these words was the heir of that same empire, and in the 1940s it revived Panslavism itself, convening an All-Slav Committee and preaching "Slav brotherhood" while it gathered exactly the territory and the satellites Engels had described the Tsars gathering. The IML note treats Panslavism as a dead nineteenth-century reaction; it never turns Engels's lens on the Great-Russian chauvinism that Lenin, in his last struggle over Georgia, had begged the Party to resist. The apparatus could quote Engels against the Romanovs' expansionism and stay

perfectly silent about its own. Reflexivity stops, here as everywhere in this literature, at the door of the ruling power.

What, then, is Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany worth today, beyond its place in the history of a slogan? Its value is the value of a method held to honestly. It reads a crushing defeat not as bad luck or betrayal by a few, but for its class causes, and it insists — against the reformism that treats revolution as an anachronism and against the fatalism that waits for history to do the work — that revolutionary action is a serious art with rules, neither adventure nor prophecy. Read whole, with Eleanor Marx-Aveling's subheadings recognised as hers and the authorship set right, it is Engels thinking aloud about how a revolution is lost and how, next time, it might not be. Even its worst pages instruct, if the reader is trusted with them: the "dying nationalities" passage is the tradition's own founder caught in the developmental arrogance of his century, and the fact that later Marxists could name it as an error — could correct Engels on the nations as Lenin did — is a measure of a living current's health. That capacity for self-correction is exactly what the canonising state destroyed when it turned these articles into scripture and their author into a bust. The book is better than its shrine. It asks to be read as what it was written to be: a reckoning, not a relic.

HISTORY

The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte

Tragedy, then farce; men make their own history but not as they please; the dead generations weighing like a nightmare. The book everyone quotes and few read - Marx taking one squalid coup and exposing the whole machinery of class, state and illusion beneath it.

Karl Marx

Introduction to This Edition

Everyone knows the first sentence, and almost no one reads the book it opens. "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce." A few lines on comes the other line everyone knows — "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" — and then the image that has outlived the book: "The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living." The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte is quoted more than it is read, and that is a loss, because between its famous opening and its half-forgotten close Marx does something he never did at this length again: he takes a single, shabby political event — the coup by which Louis Bonaparte, nephew of the great Napoleon, made himself dictator of France on 2 December 1851 — and shows the whole machinery of class, state and illusion working underneath it. The title names the parallel: the eighteenth Brumaire was the day in the French revolutionary calendar on which the first Napoleon seized power in 1799. The nephew restaged the coup as farce.

Marx wrote the work at white heat, in London exile, between December 1851 and March 1852, for a little German-American monthly, *Die Revolution*, that his friend Joseph Weydemeyer was trying to launch in New York. It was journalism against the clock, and it is the finest thing of its kind ever written. The present text is the Progress Publishers edition prepared in Moscow, printed from the 1869 edition and checked against those of 1852 and 1885; it is the standard English translation carried in the *Selected Works*. It is well equipped. It opens with Marx's own Preface to the second edition of 1869, in which he distinguishes his method from the two rival pamphlets on the coup — "Victor Hugo's *Napoleon* the Little and Proudhon's *Coup d'Etat*" — the one a shower of

indignation, the other a covert apology; Marx, by contrast, sets out to "demonstrate how the class struggle in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part." It carries, too, Engels's Preface to the third German edition of 1885, which claims for the book the honour of a first test — Marx "had first discovered the great law of motion of history, the law according to which all historical struggles... are in fact only the more or less clear expression of struggles of social classes" — and it closes with the Institute of Marxism-Leninism's notes. The apparatus is where the argument of this introduction has to be made, because the trouble with the *Brumaire* is not the book but what its owners would not let it say.

What the book does supremely, first, is method turned on the living moment. The opening pages are the most balanced statement Marx ever gave of how history is made — neither by great men imposing their will (the illusion the Bonapartes traded on) nor by impersonal forces grinding out a predetermined result (the fatalism his own followers would later manufacture), but by real people acting under inherited constraints they did not choose. He then applies it without mercy: the revolutionaries of 1848 borrow the costumes of 1793, the bourgeoisie discovers it would rather be ruled than rule, the peasants vote for a name, and a "grotesque mediocrity" walks through the wreckage to a throne. The famous distinction between bourgeois and proletarian revolutions is here — the first storming "swiftly from success to success," the second doomed to "recoil ever and anon from the indefinite prodigiousness of their own aims" — and it is one of the deepest things Marx wrote about the difference between a revolution that only has to seize a state and one that has to remake a society.

The second thing the book does supremely, and the thing that matters most for what follows, is its analysis of the state. Watching the coup, Marx sees something his own theory had not yet fully named: that the state apparatus can float free of every class and stand over society as a power in its own right. "This executive power with its enormous bureaucratic and

military organisation, with its ingenious state machinery, embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic body, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores." And the sentence that would become a slogan of the revolutionary tradition against every reformism: "All revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it." Here is the germ of the whole later Marxist theory of the state — the theory Lenin would draw out in *The State and Revolution* — and here, in the figure of Louis Bonaparte balancing between exhausted classes, is the category that the twentieth century would need most: Bonapartism, the rule of a strong man and his apparatus raised above a society whose contending classes have fought each other to a standstill.

Not everything in the book is of one temperature. Marx is at times a ventriloquist, letting each class speak a settled part, and the analysis of the small-holding peasants — the mass on whose votes Bonaparte rode — carries a genuine condescension that has aged badly: "They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented. Their representative must at the same time appear as their master, as an authority over them... that protects them against the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above." As prophecy the book also overreached: its closing promise that when the imperial mantle finally fell on Bonaparte "the bronze statue of Napoleon will crash from the top of the Vendôme Column" came true only twenty years later, and by the hands of the Paris Commune rather than by the logic Marx had traced. These are the marks of a brilliant pamphlet written at speed, not defects that sink it. What sinks nothing, and explains everything, is the state analysis — and it is exactly the state analysis that the book's Soviet custodians could not afford to have read straight.

For here is the question this well-equipped edition does not put to itself: was the state that canonised the *Brumaire* as the model of Marxist political analysis able to apply the *Brumaire*'s own central discovery to itself? The book teaches that a bureaucratic-military apparatus can raise itself above society and become an "appalling parasitic body"; that a possessing class, terrified of the risks of ruling in its own name, will hand its political power to that apparatus in exchange for the quiet enjoyment of its social power — the party of Order, Marx writes, "longed to get rid of its own political rule in order to get rid of the troubles and dangers of ruling." Turn that instrument homeward and it describes, with uncomfortable precision, the Soviet state under Stalin: a swollen apparatus of officials, standing over a working class in

whose name it ruled and which it had relieved of all power; an arbiter risen above the classes once the revolutionary energy of October had ebbed and the international revolution had failed to come to its aid; a plebiscitary dictator resting on a cult, the "grotesque" heir dressing his usurpation in the costumes of the founders — Stalin as "the Lenin of today," the embalmed Lenin as his warrant. The *Brumaire* had written the analysis of his regime three-quarters of a century before he built it. And so the one Marxist classic most exactly aimed at his own kind of power was printed in millions, praised as method, and never once turned on the society that printed it.

It was turned there, and by the man the Soviet apparatus most needed silenced. Trotsky reached for precisely Marx's category to name the thing that had happened to the revolution: in *The Revolution Betrayed* and in the 1935 essay "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," he analysed the Stalin regime as a Soviet Bonapartism — a bureaucracy that had lifted itself above the proletariat and the remnants of the old classes alike, balancing between them, arbitrating, and living off the surplus of a society it commanded but did not own. The parallel was not a polemical flourish; it was the *Brumaire* used as its author meant it to be used, as an instrument for recognising the autonomy of a state machine that no textbook class "owned." That the same regime which reprinted the *Brumaire* as scripture hunted down the analysis it licenced is the whole story in miniature. This is not, it must be said plainly, a charge that the degeneration was written into Bolshevism or into Marx. The Soviet Thermidor had objective roots the *Brumaire* itself would have insisted on — the isolation of the revolution once the German rising failed, the ruin of the working class in the civil war, the backwardness and siege of a peasant country encircled by its enemies. Men made that history, but not in circumstances of their choosing. The point is narrower and sharper: the doctrine froze the one book that could have diagnosed its own state into a set of quotations about tragedy and farce, and struck out the diagnosis.

So what is the *Eighteenth Brumaire* worth now, beyond the sentences everyone can recite? Its value is the value of a method that refuses both of the consolations Marxism was later sold. Against the fatalism that made revolution a matter of waiting for the productive forces to ripen, it insists that men make their own history — that the outcome in December 1851 turned on what people did, on nerve and illusion and the concrete balance of forces, not on a timetable. Against the voluntarism that imagines a strong will can leap over every constraint, it insists just as firmly that they do not make it as they please. And it hands the tradition a working concept —

Bonapartism — that the Fourth International would use to read the rise of fascism, the "strong states" of the post-colonial world, and above all the bureaucratic dictatorships that flew the red flag: the recurring modern spectacle of an apparatus standing over a society and calling itself the society's servant. Read with its state analysis restored to the centre, and the peasant chapter and the closing prophecy read as the ambitious excesses of a young pamphlet, the Brumaire stops being a quarry for epigraphs and becomes what Marx wrote it to be: proof that the class struggle can be read even in a farce, and a standard by which the readers of it — including the state that made it holy while forbidding anyone to hold it up to the mirror — can themselves be measured.