

THE  
World of Nations

A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL  
IMPLICATIONS IN THE  
WORK OF KARL MARX

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TO MY MOTHER

## PREFACE

THE criticism of those who were kind enough to read this essay in manuscript has been of great value to me. Throughout the investigation I had the privilege of discussing its problems with Professor Carlton J. H. Hayes of Columbia University. His was the challenge that helped me to clarify my interpretation. Professor Geroid Tanquary Robinson, also of Columbia University, gave me the benefit of his meticulous scholarly and editorial judgment. I took some knotty issues in Marxism to my colleague Professor Arthur Rosenberg and came away much enlightened. Professor Robert C. Binkley of Western Reserve University, who died in his prime last year, showed a characteristically warm interest in the study.

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My sister Adele Bloom has shown me, in numberless ways, a rich and rare loyalty. She will surely forgive me my debts, for they cannot be repaid.

S. F. B.

Brooklyn College  
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# I

## UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF MAN

A THEORY of human nature is implicit in every social philosophy. Anyone who thinks about society at all is bound to consider the character of its ultimate unit—man himself. The social philosopher must form a conception of human potentialities and limitations. He must distinguish between the inherent and the transitory traits of man. Men obviously have a good deal in common, but they have always belonged to groups set apart from each other by all sorts of distinctions. The philosopher must determine with some precision in what sense mankind may be regarded as a homogeneous mass and in what respects it may be treated as the sum of many heterogeneous parts. He must assay the significance and incidence of the traits that bind and the traits that divide men.

This is especially true of a thinker like Karl Marx, who not only propounded a social theory but strove to be effective in the practical world as well. He sought to influence and guide widely variegated groups—more particularly the lower classes of many countries—toward a uniform solution of their economic problems. Marx was aware that the socialist idea must be tested by its implied judgment of human nature. He frequently stopped to reflect on man, and these reflections, though he never elab-

orated them systematically, formed an integral part of his picture of the world.

At first glance his view of humanity seems quite paradoxical. He once asserted that history was “nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature,”<sup>1</sup> suggesting that one could not speak of human nature as such. Yet he also discussed “human nature in general” (“die menschliche Natur im Allgemeinen”<sup>2</sup>) and described its fundamental characteristics. His conception of man was the touchstone of some important social and historical conclusions. A note on *Das Kapital* yields the key to this apparent contradiction. Marx was condemning Jeremy Bentham for the error of “excogitating” the nature of man from a general principle, in this case the principle of utility. He went on to remark that he who would pass judgment on the human scene must “first become acquainted with human nature in general, and then with human nature as modified historically in every age.”<sup>3</sup> If this proposition applied to Marx as well as to Bentham—and there is no reason why it should not have—then Marx drew here a crucial distinction. He separated the characteristics of human nature into two categories, which we may take the liberty of naming “generic” and “historical.” Although he did not always seem to maintain this distinction, it was implicit in his writings and was quite essential for the clarification of his position on human nature. Take this passage from *Das Kapital*, for example: “Labor is primarily a process between man and nature, a process in which man adjusts, regulates, and controls, by his own activity, the material reactions between himself and nature. He confronts matter, himself a natural force. He sets in motion the natural instruments

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke (Gesamtausgabe, Pt. 1)*, VI, 207.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 476, 573n.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 573n.

of his body—arms, legs, and hands—in order to assimilate matter in a form suitable for his own needs. By thus acting upon the external world and changing it, he changes his own nature at the same time. He develops the potentialities that slumber within it, and subjects the play of its forces to his own sway.”<sup>4</sup> Here is implied a man who acts in obedience to profound and inherent drives and another man who undergoes change and yet somehow does not alter the direction of those drives. This statement is anything but clear; it must also be put down as contradictory or mystical unless it is understood to assume a distinction between “generic” and “historical” characteristics. The creature that exercises will and control and has definite potentialities is “generic” man. The plastic constituents which change with the environment, and hence with human activities, are the stuff of which “historical” man is made. It is “historical” and not “generic” man who is subject to “continuous transformation.”

This view of two different aspects of human nature served important functions in the thought of Marx. The concept of “generic” humanity as one and invariant enabled him to justify his social theory in terms of a set of traits belonging to a homogeneous mass. He could condemn as backward societies which frustrated the noblest traits and potentialities of “generic” man, and could vindicate socialist society by showing how it would realize and fulfill them. The complementary concept of “historical” human nature as plural and changeable made it possible to explain the actual variety of traits in different ages and places. It provided the foundation for the contention that some old traits could be abolished and new traits developed in accordance with the requirements of progress.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

“Generic” man is a creative, purposeful, versatile, and social being. These qualities together lift him above other species. Marx had a pervading sense of the essential dignity and worth of humanity.<sup>5</sup> The tendency of certain materialists to degrade mankind to the level of other fauna was thoroughly repugnant to him. In his own sense of values, the difference between the human and the non-human is deep, qualitative, unbridgeable.<sup>6</sup> Men consciously differentiate themselves from animals “as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of existence, a step which is conditioned by their bodily organization. By producing their means of existence, men indirectly produce their material life itself.”<sup>7</sup> Man is a unique natural force which distinguishes itself from other forces and deliberately seeks to bend them to its own will.<sup>8</sup> The result is production, and production gives new meaning even to biologic drives. “Hunger is hunger,” Marx once observed, “but the hunger that is appeased by cooked meat eaten with fork and knife is another sort of hunger than the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails, and teeth.” Consumption is, in a manner of speaking, “produced by production.”<sup>9</sup> The production of art, for example, develops public taste and therefore “consumption.” Man alone of all creatures fashions suitable tools and instruments to realize his aims.<sup>10</sup> The intentional abuse of tools, no less than their use, is his characteristic prerogative. The slave contrives to make the dif-

<sup>5</sup> New York *Tribune*, June 25, 1853, p. 5; *Sämtliche Werke*, I<sup>1</sup>, 561-62; V, 67, 417.

<sup>6</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, p. 4; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 318; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 139; *Das Kapital*, I, 304, 321, 596; III<sup>1</sup>, 61.

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 10; III, 87-88, 546-47; *Das Kapital*, I, 476.

<sup>8</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 140-42.

<sup>9</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 226.

<sup>10</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 142.

ference between himself and his beasts perfectly plain by “misusing and destroying them *con amore*.”<sup>11</sup>

The idea of work is central in the picture of “generic” humanity. Man is rooted in nature and lives by working.<sup>12</sup> His labor is peculiarly a compound of physical and mental effort.<sup>13</sup> It involves the exercise of skill. Skill, however, is not a human achievement, some animals and insects being much more skillful than man. What clearly distinguishes man is his creative imagination. The mental pre-construction of the final result at once ranks the worst weaver above the ablest spider and the most incompetent architect above the most accomplished of bees.<sup>14</sup>

Man is richly versatile by nature.<sup>15</sup> Change of activity delights and refreshes him; continuous uniform tasks dampen the “intensity and buoyancy” of his animal spirits.<sup>16</sup> Marx evidently subscribed to Hegel’s dictum that an educated person is one who can do “everything that others do.”<sup>17</sup> “When a watchmaker invented the steam-engine (Watt); a barber, the spinning frame (Arkwright); and a working jeweler, the steamship (Fulton), ‘Let the cobbler stick to his last,’ that *ne plus ultra* of handicraft wisdom, became sheer nonsense.”<sup>18</sup> It was the vision of man as a versatile and integral being that inspired the bitter attacks of Marx on the extreme subdivision of labor which prevailed in the system of “manufacture” before the introduction of modern machinery. That system not only put a premium upon partial and one-sided specialties, but, by producing a class of un-

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159n.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10, 142, 146; III<sup>2</sup>, 361; *Sämtliche Werke*, III, 87; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 388, 472.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140; cf. pp. 304-5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 305, 318-19, 326, 448-49; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 204-5; *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 305.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329n.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 454.

skilled workers, elevated the absence of skill into a new sort of specialty.<sup>19</sup> The worker was forced to overdevelop his dexterity at some minute task while a world of latent powers and abilities was suppressed; “. . . in Argentine they slaughter a whole beast in order to get its hide or its tallow.”<sup>20</sup>

Marx recognized that a certain degree of division of labor was essential if the increasingly complex work of an industrial society—or indeed complex labor of any sort—was to be accomplished.<sup>21</sup> He insisted, however, that it must not be a division into specialties so narrow and permanent as to interfere with the rounded development of the individual. Marx had enormous faith in the human possibilities inherent in large-scale industry, and especially in the modern machine. Machine production seemed to hold the answer to two basic problems of civilization: the material problem of the creation of adequate riches to support an advanced culture, and the humanistic problem of the harmonious cultivation of varied abilities. The vital need of large-scale enterprises for a labor supply that could be shifted conveniently from industry to industry and job to job, a working day made shorter by the planned production of a socialist order, the increasingly automatic and simplified character of human operations required by machines, the similarity of these operations in turning out the most varied products, and an educational system which would provide technical and scientific training alongside of academic instruction from the earliest years; all these, Marx hoped, would make it possible to create abundance without condemning mankind to life-long concentration on trivial occupations.<sup>22</sup>

Was that hope justified? It is too early to say, since

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 324, 727.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257, 314, 325.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 334, 386–87, 452–53.

some of the factors assumed by Marx—technical education for all, for example—have not yet been supplied by any great industrial society. However, it is sufficiently evident that advanced technology has not done away with the need of specialization quite to that degree which Marx, on the basis of his observations of the earlier Industrial Revolution, had been led to expect. The idea that modern industry would mediate a fateful union between productivity and versatility was one of his most important motivations. The capitalist system failed to develop versatility and was therefore unable to shift labor easily from industry to industry, even if it wished to do so. There was recourse instead to the “monstrosity of an unhappy reserve army of labor kept at the disposal of capital for its varying needs in the way of exploitation.” In a socialist society, the “fragmentary man” would be replaced by “the completely developed individual, one for whom different social functions are but alternative forms of activity.”<sup>23</sup> Men would fish, hunt, or engage in literary criticism without becoming professional fishermen, hunters, or critics.<sup>24</sup>

The potentialities of “generic” man could be realized only in society. By cooperating with his fellows, man was able to transcend his individual limitations and develop “the capacities that are his as a member of the species.”<sup>25</sup> Marx’s concepts of skill, labor, class, production, economic value, and private property presupposed societies. Individuality itself was a social function, for it was in society that men distinguished themselves as individuals.<sup>26</sup> Since “nothing can be its own symbol,”<sup>27</sup> man needs a

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 453.

<sup>24</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 22, 373.

<sup>25</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 293. On the subject of cooperation, see *ibid.*, pp. 290, 295, 297, 472–73; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 206.

<sup>26</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 290; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 217.

<sup>27</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 103.



mirror, so to speak, in order to establish his identity, and that mirror must be another man.<sup>28</sup> Man can be egoistic only in society<sup>29</sup>; on the other hand, it is only by living among free men that he can be free.<sup>30</sup>

"Generic" man is not English or Chinese, bourgeois or slave, black or white, ancient or modern man, but rather the qualities they all share. The thought of Marx rests on the homogeneity of the species. He assumed an undifferentiated humanity whose fundamental traits transcend the race, the nation, and the historic age no less than the individual.<sup>31</sup> "Generic" man stands at the center of his theory of progress. The necessary condition for human self-development, the only end in itself accepted by Marx, is the conquest of nature.<sup>32</sup> The means for achieving that conquest is the establishment of socialist production. The general path is the growth of productive forces through a succession of class societies culminating in a society without class distinctions.

"Historical" man cannot be described so specifically as "generic" man. He must be drawn in broad lines. Man has always lived and acted, not in nature and society in general, but in specific natural environments and in given societies. He has had to adjust himself to the peculiarities, the demands, and the opportunities of the natural and social environment about him. To the multifariousness of that environment he has reacted by improvising convenient habits, traits, and customs. Here, he might be compelled to overemphasize some of his generic traits; there, to neglect and stunt other generic traits. The series

<sup>28</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 19n. <sup>29</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 208. <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, I<sup>1</sup>, 594.

<sup>31</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 4, 5, 151-52; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 13, 14, 15.

<sup>32</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 355; see also I, 555; "Lettre sur le développement économique de la Russie," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, VII, 971; *Correspondence*, pp. 90-91.

or summation of the impermanent human molds which reflect the variety of natural and social surroundings is "historical" man. It is an understatement to say that Marx was aware of that variety. He insisted that the original heterogeneity of the physical environment is a factor of heavy import in history. More than once he pointed out, for example, that capitalism could have arisen only in the temperate zone, with its relative hardships and variety of produce, and not in the over-luxuriant tropics. Where nature is too bountiful and keeps man in "leading strings," he is not moved to exploit his powers. In order to become the master of nature, he must be spurred by the environment to diversify his needs and abilities and his means and methods of work.<sup>33</sup>

Marx gave many illustrations of the interaction of natural and artificial differences between countries. A climate niggardly to agriculture may favor home industries.<sup>34</sup> Human effort may alter the effects of the natural environment, and while abolishing old distinctions may introduce new ones. Modern technology destroyed differences arising from isolation and distance. But when some countries were freed from dependence on their own raw materials, fresh differences arose. Industry linked various countries into a single economic unit by distributing economic functions among them. "Thanks to the machine, the spinner can live in England while the weaver remains in the East Indies."<sup>35</sup> The machine made it possible for the English spinner to become enormously more productive than his fellow spinner in China.<sup>36</sup> England and Asia became distinguished from each other in a new fashion. The "national intensity and productivity" of labor varies with

<sup>33</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 477-78; II, 126; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>1</sup>, 127; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 219-20.

<sup>34</sup> *Das Kapital*, II, 212-13.

<sup>35</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 201.

<sup>36</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 570.

the economic development of each country.<sup>37</sup> Railroads changed the relative location of markets and centers of production.<sup>38</sup> The extent to which machinery was introduced was itself affected by previous natural and historical distinctions. One of the reasons why continental European countries adopted modern industrial methods was the necessity for meeting English competition. However, the United States was impelled by an additional powerful motive—the relative scarcity of labor. In time, the latter country came to utilize more machinery than the “overpopulated” home of the Industrial Revolution.<sup>39</sup>

Differences among men are traceable, in general, to the complex and mutually interacting differentiation of nature and production. While “generic” traits are never less than latent, “historical” traits are never more than temporary. The mosaic of “historical” humanity is open to further change.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 522–23.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 223.

<sup>39</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 11; see also *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* p. 30; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 370–71. For other examples of differentiation, see *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 129–30, 194–95, 437.

## 2

## THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF THE MODERN NATION

IT is one thing to say that Marx held a view of human nature broad and flexible enough to take account of the generic and specific traits of man, and quite another to construct from his writings a systematic theory of the subdivisions of mankind, whether a theory of race or nationality. The conception of “historical” man described the basis of differentiation in terms too general to serve as a means of classifying human groups or characterizing them satisfactorily.

In his youth, before he formulated the views that became associated with his name, Marx accepted rather uncritically conventional judgments of the character of various nations. He thought of the Germans as a “philosophical,” of the French as a “political,” and of the English as an “economic” nation. He remarked in 1844 that the German proletariat was “the *theoretician* of the European proletariat, as the English proletariat was its *economist*, and the French proletariat its *politician*.” It must be admitted, he added, that “Germany possesses a *classic* mission for the *social* revolution in the same degree that she is incapable of a *political* one. . . . A philosophical nation can find its suitable practice only in socialism and the active element of its emancipation only

in the proletariat.”<sup>1</sup> In the same vein he put down the difference between French and English materialism to the difference between the two nationalities. “The French endowed English materialism with *esprit*, with flesh and blood, with eloquence. They lent it what it still lacked—temperament and grace. They *civilized* it. In Helvetius, who stems from Locke, materialism received the special character of the French.”<sup>2</sup>

Before long Marx ceased to draw these particular national distinctions. He came to regard the social and economic thought of Germany as quite backward. He began to trace intellectual and cultural differences to economic and historical differences between countries. As early as 1845, the crucial year of his transition to materialism, he came to the conclusion that the emphasis of German thinkers on idealist interpretations of human affairs was not due to any special natural aptitude or tendency, but simply to the circumstance that Germany had not developed adequately in the economic realm; she lacked the earthly basis for history, as he put it.<sup>3</sup> His remark in *Misère de la philosophie* two years later that “if the Englishman transforms men into hats, the German transforms hats into ideas” was hardly intended as a compliment to the German. “Now we are in Germany! We shall now have to talk metaphysics while discussing political economy.”<sup>4</sup> Later, he reduced the difference between the economic thought of England and of France to a difference of economic development.<sup>5</sup>

On occasion, however, Marx continued to ascribe conventional traits to various groups in an offhand fashion. He referred to the Slavs as an “inland,” “anti-maritime”

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, III, 18; I<sup>1</sup>, 611–12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 306.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 17–18, 453–54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 175; cf. III, 18.

<sup>5</sup> See below, pp. 122–23.

race.<sup>6</sup> He observed that the English were empirically minded and lacked “the spirit of generalization,” although his own opinion of the power of generalization of the English classical economists was extremely high.<sup>7</sup> He contrasted the “revolutionary ardor of the Celtic worker” with “the solid but slow nature of the Anglo-Saxon worker.”<sup>8</sup> Like everybody else he thought of the Americans as a practical people.<sup>9</sup> The Russian economic writer V. V. Bervy (“N. Flerovsky”) appeared to show “great feeling for national characteristics” in descriptions such as these: “the straightforward Kalmuck,” “the Mordvin, poetical despite his dirt,” “the adroit, epicurean, lively Tartar,” or “the talented Little Russian.” Bervy reminded Marx of A. A. Monteil, whose curious *Histoire des français des divers états* contained some sharp national delineations.<sup>10</sup>

While he shared current opinions of the capacities and traits of certain nations and races, Marx did not develop any generalization on such traits, nor did he regard them as permanent and unchanging. He once noted that in the settlement of the American West the “nationality of the immigrants asserted itself” in the choice of lands. His illustrations showed that “nationality,” as used here, was the result of the physical environment of a people: “The people from Norway and from our German high forest lands sought out the rough northern forest land of Wisconsin; the Yankees, in the same provinces, kept to the

<sup>6</sup> *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 86; see also *New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852, p. 7; *Sämtliche Werke*, VII, 288.

<sup>7</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelman,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 477; *Das Kapital*, I, 368n.

<sup>8</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelman,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 478; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 235; *Das Kapital*, I, 673.

<sup>9</sup> See below, p. 172.

<sup>10</sup> *Briefwechsel (Gesamtausgabe, Pt. 3)*, IV, 279–80; A. A. Monteil, *Histoire des français des divers états* (Paris, 1853), III, 1, 69, 145 ff., 416–17.

prairies. . . .”<sup>11</sup> If Marx had generally used the term in that sense, one might infer that “Yankee” character was simply a function of prairie life; but he did not. He once spoke of “genuinely commercial peoples”<sup>12</sup> without intending to imply the existence of innate group qualities. All peoples did not show “the same tendency to capitalist production”; “certain primitive peoples,” like the Turks, appeared to possess “neither the temperament nor the disposition” for capitalist enterprise. These were “exceptional” cases, for the development of capitalism resulted in the establishment of an average level of “temperament and disposition” among various peoples.<sup>13</sup> To say that certain races, abilities, climates, and natural conditions, such as proximity to the sea or the fertility of the soil, were better adapted for production than others, was but to say that it was easier to create wealth in proportion as the necessary factors were present “subjectively and objectively.” That was a tautology and not a racial or national explanation of productivity.<sup>14</sup>

One must not be misled by the fact that Marx frequently spoke of nations and races as “natural” entities, referred to “innate race characteristics,” and speculated on the “natural basis” of national and racial differences.<sup>15</sup> The “natural” was not, in his usage, a constant or fixed factor. He applied that qualifier, as a rule, to conditions and relations as they existed before, or in the absence of, conscious human control and interference.<sup>16</sup> So far was he from regarding the “natural” as the inevitable or the immutable that he could say that “even the natural differ-

<sup>11</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 248.

<sup>12</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 46; III<sup>1</sup>, 317.

<sup>13</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 519; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 240–41.

<sup>14</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 219–20.

<sup>15</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 324–25, 327; I, 476; *Briefwechsel*, III, 355–56.

<sup>16</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 12, 20, 49–50, 55 ff., 325; *Das Kapital*, I, 316; Karl Korsch, *Karl Marx* (London, 1938), pp. 193–95.

ences within the species, like racial differences . . . can and must be done away with historically,” that is by human effort.<sup>17</sup> In a discussion with Engels on the theories of Pierre Trémaux, Marx gave “naturalness” a very broad connotation. The French scientist had argued, in a book published in 1867, that racial differences were produced by differences in the geologic formations of the earth. Without distinguishing between race and nationality, Marx commented that “for certain questions, like nationality, etc., it is here alone that we may find the natural basis.” One might conclude that the nation was to be regarded as a function of an invariant characteristic of nature—a factor invariant over long geologic eras, at any rate. Engels asked ironically whether Trémaux could explain linguistic differences by geology. Marx ignored the issue of language but amplified his position. He had been impressed by the view of Trémaux that distinctions between races (Marx added, between “nations” as well) should be traced to differences in the material environment rather than to differences in the blood stream. “Tartars” and “Russians” were not born but made by different soils. However, Marx made it plain that he would not interpret the “environment” which thus fashioned races and nations in a strictly geologic sense. He thought of it broadly, as including resources with the related industries. The “natural” basis of nationality turned out to be the natural and artificial, material surroundings—perhaps, as Marx would say, the whole system of production.<sup>18</sup>

Marshaled together, these speculations on national theory assume a somewhat disproportionate significance. In the context of Marx’s work, they were random and informal reflections. They betrayed the casual manner of

<sup>17</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 403.

<sup>18</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 355–56, 361–63.

a man of catholic tastes and lively intellectual interests pursuing a line of thought peripheral to his principal concerns. Such remarks cannot be treated on the same plane as his views on economics or social politics. In short Marx was only very incidentally a theorist of nationality or race. He never attempted definitions of the race or the nation that would distinguish them from other aggregates of men. He used terms like "national" and "nation" with considerable looseness. Sometimes "nation" was a synonym for "country"; sometimes for the quite different entity, the "state." Occasionally "nation" stood for the ruling class of a country.<sup>19</sup>

That is not the whole story, however. When Marx spoke of certain classes as "national," when he discussed "national" economies and states, he implied a definition of the nation. If Marx concerned himself with theories of nationality only indirectly, he concerned himself quite closely with the character and problems of specific modern nations. He was interested particularly in the experiences, history, and traits of the important nations of the Western world. It is submitted that his observations on these nations add up to a distinctive attitude toward national questions. Marx was necessarily exercised over the bearing of national differences upon his theory of class struggle and revolution. As a radical political leader, he took a position on the national issues of the day. He attempted to reconcile that position, however implicitly or roughly, with his economic and political outlook. If one may, therefore, speak of the Marxian theory of nationality at all, it must be in the sense of a generalized description of the peculiarities of modern Western nations—and the relevance of such description to national questions in other parts of the world.

<sup>19</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 201, 446, 447, 529, 530; *Das Kapital*, I, 719; III<sup>1</sup>, 318; III<sup>2</sup>, 56.

So viewed and so limited, the "nation" of Marx may be described as an individual society which functions with a considerable degree of autonomy, integration, and self-consciousness. This definition supplies the connotation the words "nation" and "national" had when he used them in a significant relation to his economic and political views.<sup>20</sup> When he spoke of feudal nations or bourgeois nations, advanced or backward nations, he might just as well have spoken of individual societies characterized by feudal, bourgeois, advanced, or backward economies. The feudal or aristocratic nation discussed in *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei* was marked by economic isolation, handicraft industry, guild control, serfdom and its vestiges, and the social and political domination of the aristocracy. The bourgeois nation that succeeded it was distinguished by the special social division between bourgeois and proletarians, by industrial and commercial integration on a large scale, and by international rivalries for markets and profits. In the proletarian nation, production would be socialized and class distinctions would disappear. The terms "nation" and "society," "national" and "social," became virtually interchangeable, as in the remark in *Das Kapital* that "even a whole society, a nation, and indeed all societies together, are not the owners of the earth" but only its temporary occupiers.<sup>21</sup>

If the nation was to be regarded as an example of "a

<sup>20</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 110; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 228; *Das Kapital*, I, 719; III<sup>2</sup>, 376. For definitions by followers and students of Marx, see Bauer, *Die Nationalitäten und die Sozialdemokratie*, pp. 6, 24–25, 112–13, 135; Karl Kautsky, *Nationalität und Internationalität*, pp. 3, 6, and "Krisis in Österreich," *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>1</sup>, 39–42; Heinrich Cunow, *Die Marxsche Geschichts-, Gesellschafts-, und Staatstheorie*, II, 11 ff.; Werner Heider, *Die Geschichtslehre von Karl Marx*, pp. 123, 138; Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 8; "Die Arbeiterbewegung, das Genossenschaftswesen und die Revolution," *Der Vorbote*, March 1870, p. 35.

<sup>21</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 309.

whole society," then national character must reflect the particular experiences and adjustments of a social group as it functioned within, or fitted into, a particular physical and historical environment. Marx frequently discussed human society as a whole for speculative purposes, but his world was nevertheless divided into a number of actual societies. In some respects, and over large surfaces of the globe, human society was indeed an increasingly integral unit; in others, however, it was not one but many. The nation was the special case of society, the concrete embodiment of modern social life in a specific setting.

A national theory which started with the view of the nation as a society necessarily covered a good deal of ground. Apart from questions relating to unification, defense, patriotism, and the treatment of minorities, such a theory must concern itself with the many issues which arise from the influence of background, tradition, and history upon social forces, and the interplay between social forces and their specific locale in general. A host of social and economic questions must be discussed as national questions, and vice versa. Every social issue became national to the extent that it was modified or colored by its geographic and historical framework.

Since society was, to Marx, a flexible, changing, and dynamic entity, the nation was a historical phenomenon par excellence. It was not, of course, a biologic phenomenon. From the point of view of biology, mankind seemed to Marx distinctly singular rather than plural. He spoke approvingly of Trémaux's view that biologic crossings produced "the typical unity of the species" and not its variations.<sup>22</sup> The theory of evolution would therefore have reference to the development of "generic," or typ-

<sup>22</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 355.

ical man, and not to "historical" man, whether "national" or "racial." Marx seemed to have been as much interested in the negative proposition of Trémaux that races and nations were not biologic phenomena, as in the positive proposition that they were products of the environment. Blood ties and relationships had significance only among primitive groups. To become mature, man must sever the purely biologic and tribal connections with his fellow men.<sup>23</sup>

Nor was the nation a linguistic category.<sup>24</sup> Not all people who spoke the same tongue belonged, or properly should belong, to the same social entity; not all people who belonged to the same group necessarily spoke the same language, although they were very likely to do so eventually under modern conditions. To deal with the political and economic world in terms of distinctions of language seemed unrealistic to Marx. When it was suggested that the German-speaking members combine to form a unit within the organization of the First International—German-speaking Alsatians, for instance, being grouped with the German rather than the French section—Marx protested that classification by countries was much more "natural." The proposal would substitute "an artificial contrivance of arbitrary lingual connections" for "the actual state and national connections." "Nation" was not to be equated with language.<sup>25</sup> Marx's newspaper *Neue rheinische Zeitung* noted that German-speaking groups who lived in Poland, Hungary, or America, were to be regarded as belonging to the Polish, Hungarian, or

<sup>23</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 46, 298, 316-17; "Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx," *Marx-Engels Archiv*, I, 321.

<sup>24</sup> Marx did not attempt to correlate closely literary or artistic forms with economic stages. See *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 246-47.

<sup>25</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 213, 215; "An die deutschen Sozialdemokraten," *Der Vorbote*, July 1869, p. 105; "Zur Geschichte der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association," *ibid.*, p. 109.

American, and not to the German, nation. The German settlers in Hungary, for example, had become in all important respects—inclination, character, manners—Magyars, although they still spoke German; only the recently-settled Saxons and Jews in that country still insisted upon “preservation of an absurd nationality within an alien country.” Similarly, the French colony in Berlin was German, and the French colony in, let us say, Montevideo, Uruguayan. All these groups functioned within larger societies. Language is the creature of circumstance. The great modern languages are products either of the historical development of old languages, as in Romance and Germanic countries, or of the fusion of various dialects and tongues by the process of political and economic consolidation, as in the case of England.<sup>26</sup>

A common language, even if allied to an old culture and historical tradition, is not a sufficient guarantee of national unity or of the continuance of national life. The successful operation of a people’s economic system is a more important factor. The fate of any civilization, whether national or not, rests upon the vitality of the economy within which it flourishes. The civilization of medieval Provence, although superior to contemporary northern French civilization, succumbed to the latter because the North had the decisive advantage of a more progressive economy.<sup>27</sup>

The geographic limits of the nation should be determined by the needs governing the operations of an advanced economy, and not by historical, traditional, or legal factors; nor by considerations of military defense, fear of aggression, or conquest. When it became known in 1871 that Prussia would demand the cession of Alsace

<sup>26</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 136, 238–39; *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 404–5.

<sup>27</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 172–73.

and Lorraine by France, Marx denied the validity of territorial claims based on historical rights. The fact that these provinces had once belonged to the late Holy Roman Empire did not give Germany the right to annex their soil and “the human beings grown upon it.” The invocation of historical rights would lead to the return of the Prussian dominions of the Hohenzollern dynasty to Poland. Military requirements were no better guide for the adjustment of national boundaries. The leaders of the Prussian army had demanded Alsace and Lorraine on the ground that Germany needed a better defense line against France. Marx argued that Germany could be defended more easily against France than France against Germany.

But honestly, is it not in general absurd and anachronistic to raise military considerations to a principle for the determination of national boundaries? If we followed that rule, Austria would still have a claim to Venice and the line of the Mincio River, and France to the line of the Rhine, in order to protect Paris, which is certainly more open to attack from the northeast than Berlin is from the southwest. If boundaries are to be fixed by military interests, there will be no end to claims, for every military line is necessarily faulty and may be improved by the annexation of further territory; besides, such a line can never be fixed definitively and justly, because it is always imposed by the conqueror upon the conquered and therefore carries within it the seed of a fresh war.<sup>28</sup>

Nationality was not an indissoluble bond. The influence of social change and the more direct pressure of conquest, diplomacy, and state policy might or might not result, depending on circumstances, in the nationalization or denationalization of populations. A combination of historical events shifted the line of demarcation between the German and Polish nations eastward.<sup>29</sup> Direct and forced

<sup>28</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 35, 36–37.

<sup>29</sup> *New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852, p. 7.

efforts at nationalization were not always effective. Marx pointed to the discovery of the Czarist Government that the Poles would not yield to the attempt to merge them into a "Slav-Russian nationality."<sup>30</sup> He saw no intrinsic reason why a person could not change his nationality; rather there was good reason for doing so under certain conditions.<sup>31</sup> If the nation was a society, the test of nationality was vital participation in the activities of the society in which one lived. Regardless of past culture, background, language, or tradition, national affiliation was determined by one's ties with the economy, class structure, and polity of a given society. Nationality was an objective condition, not a subjective preference.

Such were the conclusions which flowed from Marx's conception of the modern nation. That nation was a complex product and function of environmental, economic, historical, and other influences. The physical character of the environment, the degree and fashion of its development; the general features of the prevalent method of production, together with the special local modifications, divergences, and peculiarities; the number, functions, and interrelationship of the important social classes and especially the character of the ruling or dominant class; the institutional and political experiences of the past; and the distinctive culture and traditions—all these factors affected the character and development of the nation.

Marx accepted national peculiarities and differences as substantial factors in history. He was equally impatient with conservative critics who regarded all radicals as anti-national and with radicals who pooh-poohed the importance of nationality. The *Manifest* dismissed the common taunt that the socialists proposed to abolish nationality

<sup>30</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 448.

<sup>31</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 150.

as unworthy of serious consideration.<sup>32</sup> The charge was of a piece with the notion that socialism would abolish all private property, put an end to liberty and culture, and destroy the family. Far from wishing to uproot these institutions and values, the socialists proposed to invest them with greater meaning. Marx and Engels treated the question of property in this spirit. The socialists planned to abolish the system of bourgeois property, under which only a small minority of the people could own anything at all. They did not intend to deprive anyone of the power of appropriating goods. They would abolish private property only in those means of production which, because they are vital to society, can be used to exploit labor. Similarly, they would destroy "bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom," and not these values in themselves. The socialists would put an end to that form of the institution of the family, or that "distortion" of it, which prevailed under capitalism. To Marx the "bourgeois family" was an arrangement which provided the upper class with the advantages of family life, supplemented these advantages with widespread public prostitution, and degraded the family life of the proletariat. In *Das Kapital* he spoke with emotion of the deprivation of family joys and decencies to which the workers were being subjected. As matters stood, they found it no more possible to lead a full and wholesome family life than to enjoy the blessings of private property or of liberty.<sup>33</sup>

The *Manifest* followed the same reasoning on the question of nationality. The proletarians could not call their country their own so long as it remained under the

<sup>32</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 539 ff.; *Das Kapital*, I, 728; see also D. Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto* (New York, 1930), pp. 291-92.



domination of the bourgeoisie. The whole tenor of the discussion was a denial that socialists were opposed to nations as such. We are accused, Marx and Engels wrote, of wishing to do away with the "fatherland," and with "nationality." The "fatherland" has meant a country dominated by exploiting classes, in modern times by the bourgeoisie. In that sense, plainly, "the workers have no fatherland." "We cannot take from them what they have not got."<sup>34</sup>

This blunt statement has been the object of much conservative criticism and radical speculation. It has been frequently taken to affirm precisely what Marx was at pains to deny: that nationalities had no real existence, that they should not exist, that the emotion of patriotism was foreign to the proletariat, and that the doctrine of "scientific socialism" implied some rather special attitude toward nationalism. The point of the *Manifest* was simply that the question of nationalism was bound up with the question of a stake in one's country. This idea was current coinage in liberal and radical circles. In 1846 Marx had read F. Villegardelle's *Histoire des idées sociales avant la Révolution française*, which had just been published. As was his indefatigable wont throughout life, he excerpted and summarized important passages. Among them was a quotation from an essay written in 1787 by Brissot de Warville, Girondin leader in the great Revolution, in criticism of the royal administration.<sup>35</sup> The following is the passage Marx translated freely in his notebook with an insertion, in parentheses, of a section that Marx omitted but must have read:

It is a reflection that does not occur at all to those who frame plans of education for the people that there cannot be a good plan

<sup>34</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 616-17.

where that people hasn't any property; because without property, it has no country at all; without property, everything is against it [the people], and, in turn, it must be armed against everybody. . . . (Society cries to the people: "Respect the goods of your rich neighbor." The people could reply: "Have you yourself respected my primitive right to property?") Government cries to the people: "The enemy is coming to seize my possessions, arm yourself, defend me, die, if need be." "Die, and what for?" the people could answer. "Do I own a single foot of soil? If the enemy becomes my master, will he be harsher than you? Could he do me more harm than you are doing? Could he impose a double burden on me?" Ethics and religion cry to the people: "Love your wife, support her, raise your children properly, be pious, love your God, He is your Father." "Alas," the people could still reply, "can one love when one is sunk in poverty? Is it possible to support and raise children when one has nothing? Or to be pious? Can one love the Being that seems to sentence him to poverty?)" . . ."

I do not know, but it seems impossible to reply to this reasoning of the poor. And, since that is the fate of three-quarters of society under despotic and monarchical governments, it follows that these three quarters can have neither religion, nor ethics, nor attachment to the government and to society; it follows that any plan for sound education is incompatible with this form of administration; it follows that before one can think of educating the people, one must assure it a property ["une propriété"]. But through the very force of abuse that remedy is impossible. It is necessary either to destroy the machine entirely if the rights of the people are to be restored to it, or to continue to despoil the people, if that machine is preserved. Therefore, again, moral and political education is a chimera in monarchical states.<sup>36</sup>

One need hardly go beyond the *Manifest* to show that the statement on the fatherland did not mean that the workers would not like to have a fatherland of their own, or that they were dead to the emotion of attachment to one's homeland. There was a sense in which Marx not only accepted the national entity as real, but, having given

<sup>36</sup> F. Villegardelle, *Histoire des idées sociales avant la Révolution française* (Paris, 1846), pp. 124-26.

it his own interpretation, claimed a national sanction for the proletarian program. A most significant declaration, which implied that the workers were the true patriots of modern times, followed immediately upon the statement that they had no fatherland: "Since the proletariat must first of all win political power, become a national class, and constitute itself as the nation, it is, so far, itself national, though by no means in the bourgeois sense of the word."<sup>37</sup>

We shall explore later the implications of this broad contention: what Marx understood by a "national class," a concept barely adumbrated in the *Manifest*; what he regarded as the bourgeois meaning of "national" and what the proletarian; and how he proposed to reconcile the national with the socialist point of view. Meanwhile a serious objection must be met. Did not Marx in fact predict, in the *Manifest* and elsewhere, the imminent disappearance of nations? Did he not assert that the bourgeoisie had begun to iron out the distinctions between the nations, and that the proletariat would complete the process and establish a uniform world? Certain statements of the *Manifest*, taken by themselves, seem to bear out such an interpretation. The *Manifest* is a cryptic and epigrammatic document and therefore easily misread. What the authors foresaw was not the complete disappearance of all national distinctions whatever, but specifically the abolition of sharp economic and social differences, economic isolation, invidious distinctions, political rivalries, wars, and exploitation of one nation by another.

The kinds of difference that were doomed to disappear were already being undermined by the bourgeoisie. That class, we read in the *Manifest*, was sweeping away "all

<sup>37</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543. See the interpretation of Arthur Rosenberg, *A History of Bolshevism* (London, 1934), pp. 10-11.

fixed, frozen relations with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions." It became impossible for industry to rest on a merely national foundation: long-established national industries were constantly being dislodged by new industries, which no longer used the raw materials of the home country, but drew them from the remotest areas, and sold their products in all parts of the world. Old wants, satisfied by native products, were being replaced by new wants calling for the importation of the goods of distant lands and climes. A many-sided intercourse and interdependence of nations was taking the place of local and national self-sufficiency. Intellectual life was undergoing a similar change. "National one-sidedness and narrowness" were becoming increasingly impossible and out of the many national and provincial literatures, a world literature was arising.<sup>38</sup>

In a subsequent passage, Marx and Engels wrote: "National differences and antagonisms between peoples are already tending to disappear more and more, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie, the growth of free trade and a world market, and the increasing uniformity of industrial processes and of the corresponding conditions of life. The rule of the proletariat will efface these differences and antagonisms even more." Much hangs on the connotation of the opening phrase, "die nationalen Absonderungen und Gegensätze der Völker." To judge by the whole context of the *Manifest*, this phrase had reference to undesirable and invidious differences, especially antagonisms, and not to distinctions in general. The same trend of thought was apparent in a further statement: "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is done away with, the exploitation of one nation by another will also come to an end. The disappear-

<sup>38</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 529, 543; V, 59-60.

ance of class oppositions within the nations will put an end to the hostile attitudes of nations toward one another.”<sup>39</sup>

There is good reason to assume that when, in the early period of his activity, Marx spoke of the “abolition of old nationalities,” he meant the isolated, particularist, fairly self-sufficient, and backward societies of the Old Regime. The statutes of the secret Universal Society of Communist Revolutionaries, which Marx and other radical leaders endorsed in 1850, were another indication of his real position. The members of the Society pledged themselves to break down “the divisions of nationality in conformity with the principle of republican fraternity.”<sup>40</sup> The sentiment was in the French revolutionary tradition, which hardly called for the abolition of all national distinctions. In 1871, Marx denied that the “unity of the nation” would be disturbed by the victorious proletariat.<sup>41</sup>

Two decades after the defense of his view of nationality against conservative reproach, in the *Manifest*, Marx upheld it against radical skepticism within the ranks of the First International. His letter to Engels on a discussion of national questions in the General Council of that body in 1866 conveys the flavor of Marx’s attitude:

Yesterday there was a discussion in the International Council on the present war between Prussia and Austria . . . The discussion wound up, as was to be expected, with “the question of nationality” in general and the attitude we should take towards it . . . The French, very numerous, represented, gave vent to their cordial dislike of the Italians. Moreover, the representatives of “young France” (non-workers) came out with the announcement that all nationalities and even nations were “antiquated prejudices.”

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 543.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 447, 529; Boris Nikolaievsky and Otto Mänchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx* (Philadelphia, 1936), p. 209.

<sup>41</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 66.

The implied distinction here (“even nations”) was apparently between small and large nations. The Frenchmen stood convicted of “Proudhonized Stirnerism”:

Everything to be dissolved into little “groups” or “communes” which will, in their turn, form an “association” but no state. And indeed this “individualization” of mankind and the corresponding “mutualism” are to proceed while history comes to a stop in all other countries and the whole world waits until the French are ripe for a social revolution. They will then perform the experiment before our eyes, and the rest of the world, overcome by the force of their example, will do the same. Just what Fourier expected of his model phalanstery. Moreover, everyone who encumbers the “social” question with the “superstitions” of the old world is “reactionary.”

Marx joined in the discussion:

The English laughed very much when I began my speech by saying that our friend Lafargue, etc., who had done away with nationalities, had spoken “French” to us, i. e., a language which nine-tenths of the audience did not understand. I also suggested that by the negation of nationalities he appeared, quite unconsciously, to understand their absorption into the model French nation.

The anti-nationalism of the French members was thus reduced to anarchism, to a lack of appreciation of the larger social entity and of the importance of the state, and to national vanity. Whether you liked it or not, Marx was saying in effect, the nation—certainly the large nation—was a real fact; it would not do at all to treat it as a fantasy.<sup>42</sup>

Marx’s program for the seizure of political power, the transformation of political and social institutions, and the introduction of socialist planning, was meant to apply not to the world in general or even to the Western world, but concretely to the various countries into which it was divided. The individual countries, which were the integral

<sup>42</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 341-42.

parts of the capitalist market,<sup>43</sup> were also the integral parts of the socialist program. As an immediate measure for transition to socialism, Marx proposed the organization of credit through national banks and the "increase of national factories."<sup>44</sup> In the Inaugural Address of the First International, he struck the note of international fraternity and coöperation and did not regard it as inconsistent to point out that "coöperative labor ought to be developed to national dimensions, and, consequently, to be fostered by national means."<sup>45</sup>

Yet, regardless of his own opinion on the subject, would not the prediction of economic uniformity and interdependence involve the obliteration of all distinctions and of all frontiers? Has not Marx laid himself open to a serious contradiction? On the basis of his theory of society and history, must not economic uniformity bring in its train political, cultural, and legal uniformity, as well as the unification of mankind?

The relation between economic and non-economic forces is, of course, a question of the first importance. It would require a long essay to do it justice. For our present purpose a few remarks may perhaps suffice. Marx expressed his economic interpretation of society most directly in the preface to *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*:

In the social production which men carry on, they enter into definite relations which are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life conditions

<sup>43</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 522.

<sup>44</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 545; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 69.

<sup>45</sup> G. M. Steklov, *History of the First International* (London, 1928), p. 444.

the general character of the social, political, and intellectual processes of life.<sup>46</sup>

But if anyone thought that, having determined the general character of the economic system of a country to be, let us say, capitalistic, he could deduce the actual form of legal or other institutions, he would not only fly in the face of facts but also in the face of the author's explanation and applications of his theory. Two years before the publication of the words just quoted, Marx had written a sketchy memorandum which is essential for their proper understanding. He referred to the "unequal," or dissimilar, relation between material and artistic production. An advanced art might correspond to a low stage of economic development; in fact, such forms of art as the *epos*, for example, were possible only in a backward economy. Presumably, the reverse might be true, and a low artistic development might occur alongside of economic progress. Certainly, the correlation between economy and art was not simple or direct. Marx was not especially concerned with the "disproportion" between economic and artistic forms, which seemed less "important or difficult" to understand than the "disproportions" or "inequalities" (absence of correlations) in the realm of social relations. He cited, rather obscurely, "the relation between education in the United States and Europe," apparently implying that it was a relation not easily accounted for by economic factors.

At any rate, his tone was thoroughly skeptical. He went on to make an important qualification: "The really difficult point to be explained here, however, is how the relations of production develop unequally with legal relations. As, for example, the relation of Roman civil law (this is less true of the criminal and public law of Rome)

<sup>46</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 5.

to modern production." In other words, since Roman and modern production differed considerably from each other, one could hardly explain the influence of Roman law in modern times in terms of those differences.<sup>47</sup> This penumbra of Marx's thought before he wrote his famous preface became much more explicit in the notes which Engels edited and published as the third volume of *Das Kapital*, after the death of his friend. In connection with a discussion of the relation between economic and political or state forms, Marx noted that the same economic basis or system might show "infinite variations and gradations" in its appearance, due to "innumerable and varied empirical circumstances, natural conditions, race relations, outside historical influences, and so forth. . . ." In order to determine the economic structure of a country, it would be necessary to study these specific, local factors, in addition to certain basic elements which might make that structure analogous to other structures.<sup>48</sup>

We must conclude that Marx did not establish a formal correlation between economic and non-economic factors. He pointed to important non-economic phenomena which did not grow out of economic phenomena.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, the economic basis of any particular society could not be adequately described without considering its special peculiarities. Within the same type of economic structure there are quite important differences as one passes from one country to another. The implication for the problem of nationality is evident: There is room for variety in the world, even if its economic systems should approach uniformity.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246-47.

<sup>48</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 325. See also Engels' conception of the relation between economic and non-economic factors in *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 374-76, 382.

<sup>49</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 67.

## 3

## SIZE AND STATEHOOD

THE HUMAN WILL had a limited effectiveness in the world of Marx. Someday mankind might enjoy the luxury of impressing its desires upon the environment. Meanwhile, the iron necessities of material progress set narrow bounds for the fulfillment of conscious wishes. A social group could hardly decide, by a sheer effort of the will, how an economy or a culture should be developed. Whether it was possible or desirable that a people should undertake to set up an independent polity, could not be determined by consulting its predilections or its hopes. In drawing boundaries, statesmen might reasonably be expected to show some regard for the inclinations of the populations affected. People are not chattels to be bartered back and forth by diplomats and warriors.<sup>1</sup> This did not mean that, for Marx, the problem of the political organization and division of the world was one that could be solved by a series of national polls.

Unlike some of his followers, Marx did not believe in the principle of self-determination of nations.<sup>2</sup> The proper conditions for national existence were defined for him by the view of the modern nation as a rounded individual society, and of the relation of individual societies to each

<sup>1</sup> *New York Tribune*, August 4, 1859, p. 4; November 8, 1859, p. 6; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> See J. P. Becker's (?) "Zur Klärung unserer Aufgabe," *Der Vorbote*, February 1866, pp. 17-19, and "Zur Geschichte der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association," *ibid.*, August 1868, pp. 119-20.

other. National discrimination was but one case of human oppression, and oppression had its principal source in the exploitation of class by class. The abolition of class distinctions and class struggles through industrialization and proletarian victory should therefore be the paramount consideration of those who loved liberty and toleration. "The Hungarian shall not be free, nor the Pole, nor the Italian, as long as the worker remains a slave."<sup>3</sup> If a movement for national emancipation had the effect of retarding the advance of the world toward a classless society, that movement would eventually destroy itself.

The emancipation of labor presupposed intense economic development. There were certain requirements of industry which had a good deal of bearing upon national ambitions. In the past, the limitations, isolation, and backwardness of the various methods of production which had functioned side by side in a divided world, had permitted, or at any rate had not been inconsistent with, the existence of many kinds of nations, differing in size, integration, relation to the world at large, and development. Modern change made that Joseph's coat impossible. Avid of elbow room, industry rejected the small, loosely-organized, isolated, and provincial society in favor of the large and articulated society with far-flung international connections.

Neither blood, numbers, geography, consciousness of common traditions, nor common culture, could by themselves create or validate the right to separate statehood. To have practical significance, that right must be implemented by an advanced economy. Political justification derived from a competence to defend and to promote further economic progress. "The very first conditions of

<sup>3</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 62; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543.

national existence" were indeed "large numbers and compactness of territory," but these were necessary rather than sufficient conditions; the broader requirements included the resources, ability, specialization, social organization, and scientific advance basic to the creation of a rich and proliferated society.<sup>4</sup> The political right of way belonged, quite naturally, to the great society.<sup>5</sup>

The political self-determination of all national groups would not necessarily promote the growth of advanced societies. It was hardly surprising that a materialistic thinker and statesman should be swayed by considerations of size in judging national issues. Other things being equal, the question of when and where the establishment of a separate national state was desirable or practicable was essentially a question of whether an industrialized economy could be organized within the confines of the proposed political unit. Marx therefore distinguished sharply between small and large nations in determining the right to separate statehood. That right belonged only to nations, or to combinations of nations, which were in a position to develop modern economies. Needless to say, the line between the too-small and the large-enough nation was not easy to draw; there were borderline cases. There was no doubt in Marx's mind that nations as large, as compact, and as well-endowed territorially, as the German, the Italian, the Polish, and the Hungarian (not to mention the English, the French, the Russian, and the American nations, which already had states) fulfilled the conditions of statehood. On the other hand, smaller na-

<sup>4</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 24, 1852, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Engels' view, Ryazanov, "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels über die Polenfrage," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, VI, 212-19; "Einheitsbestrebungen und Einheitsaussichten bis Anfang der sechziger Jahre," *Neue Zeit*, XIV<sup>1</sup>, 679.

tions like the Slavic groups in the old Austrian and Turkish Empires could not lay claim to a polity of their own or defend that claim effectively.

Issues of national emancipation were complexly related to the interests of international progress. Marx tended to look upon national interest, if properly conceived, as harmonious with the international aims of socialism. He showed how, in the Revolution of 1848, the outcome of the campaigns for national emancipation was bound to the fortune of democratic and proletarian movements, and how the conservative monarchies (Russia, Austria and Prussia) which subdued the social revolutionists also defeated the national revolutionists.<sup>6</sup> There were times, however, when national movements, whatever the size of the nation involved, ran counter to the wider aims of the international proletariat. In such cases, international interests should always take precedence. If a particular national movement be directed by a class whose rule in the given economic stage of a country would, according to Marx's picture of social development, spell retrogression, the movement must be opposed; otherwise, not. If the movement were in itself desirable but, because of international conditions, would lead to greater harm to countries of larger size or greater importance to world progress, then again it would be "reactionary." Movements of smaller nations for independence were in particular danger of having "reactionary" effect. Almost inevitably they ran afoul of the chief tendencies of progressive development—the establishment of large-scale economies and polities and the assimilation of smaller cultures and languages.

Apart from the question of separate statehood, Marx was in favor of the complete emancipation of all minori-

<sup>6</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 61-62.

ties from civil, social and economic restrictions. He expressed himself most strongly on this point in his early essay, *Zur Judenfrage*. He combated the view that the Jews must abandon their religion in order to qualify for political emancipation. This view seemed too "abstract" to Marx, who preferred to join in a petition for the immediate extension of political and civil rights to the Jews of his native Prussia.<sup>7</sup> He approved unreservedly the principle of freedom and equality for all groups and individuals within a state, whatever their religion or national origin, as proclaimed by the American and French Revolutions. *Zur Judenfrage* contained a criticism of the order introduced by these Revolutions on the ground that it divided society artificially into two spheres: the political, in which man functioned as a tolerant, democratic, liberal, and egalitarian citizen; and the economic, in which he acted as a grasping, competitive, and non-egalitarian capitalist. That arrangement could not hope to solve the social problems of modern times. For man was "not freed from religion; he received religious freedom. He was not freed from property; he received freedom of property. He was not freed from the egoism of trade; he received freedom of trade." Nonetheless, political emancipation, although ultimately inadequate, represented "a great advance." While it was not "the final form of human emancipation in general," it was "the final form of human emancipation within the world order which has existed so far."<sup>8</sup> Later, Marx rejected "bourgeois freedom" and other "bourgeois" ideals as corruptions of the indicated values and not because he held the values themselves in slight esteem.<sup>9</sup>

How strongly he disapproved of the formation of

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, I<sup>2</sup>, 308.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, I<sup>1</sup>, 585, 598; Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>9</sup> See below, pp. 74-75.

small national states was illustrated by his attitude toward Irish independence. He felt that England ruled the Irish by "the most abominable reign of terror and the most reprehensible corruption."<sup>10</sup> In the forties, however, he regarded the separation of Ireland from England as "impossible," evidently because of the small size and economic backwardness of Ireland, and the great advantage of its association with the greatest industrial economy of the time. He looked to the larger and more advanced nations, especially England, to establish socialism and then emancipate the smaller and backward nations politically and help them onto the road of economic and social progress. Poland and, by the same token, Ireland were to be freed not in Warsaw and Dublin, but in London. The triumphant proletariat of England, aided by the Irish workers, would put an end to English landlordism and capitalism in Ireland as well as at home.<sup>11</sup>

This view underwent a decided change in the fifties and sixties. No revolution occurred in England, and Marx, reversing the former order, came to feel that Irish freedom must precede English socialism. The English revolution must begin by abolishing landlordism, the church and the aristocracy in Ireland. The national issue helped to make success more likely there. "The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England itself, because the *land question* has hitherto been the *exclusive* form of the social question in Ireland, and because it is a question of existence, of *life and death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national question*."

The solution of the national problem of a small coun-

<sup>10</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 415.

<sup>11</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 359-60, 384, 577, 652-53; *Briefwechsel*, III, 442; IV, 258.

try became a prerequisite for the solution of the social problem of the most advanced country in the world. Experience would show "later whether a purely personal union between the two countries can continue to exist." "I half believe it can," Marx wrote, "if [emancipation] takes place in time." Meanwhile Ireland needed self-government through a Parliament with real legislative powers, an agrarian revolution to abolish landlordism, and protective tariffs to establish industry. To the end, Marx was loath to advocate complete and final separation. A statement of the First International in 1870 called for the transformation of the "present compulsory union" into "an equal and free confederation." If that were not possible, there was to be complete separation. Even when Marx realized that the once impossible independence had become inevitable, he still insisted that it might be followed by federation.<sup>12</sup>

The case of Ireland showed that no consistent attitude toward national aspirations was possible everywhere and at all times, if a factor as variable and complex as that of the international situation at a given moment was to receive paramount consideration. The same sort of international reckoning might smile upon the independence of some nations but frown upon that of others. The position of the Austrian Slavs seemed particularly unfortunate. Marx became persuaded during the Revolution of 1848 that these groups were not only insufficiently large, compact, and advanced to establish modern economies and states, but that their national self-assertion would strengthen the forces of conservatism. At the outbreak of

<sup>12</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 191, 414-15, 477-78; *Briefwechsel*, III, 442, 456-58; IV, 258-59; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 235-37. See A. Witznitzer, "Marx und die irische Frage," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, X, 49-53; *Karl Marx: Chronik seines Lebens*, p. 288.



the Revolution, he had favored Bohemian, no less than Hungarian, Italian, or Polish independence.<sup>13</sup> He soon changed his mind, however. It will be recalled that the Hapsburg dynasty was saved in that year partly because of the mutual suspicion and friction of its many peoples. The smaller nations sought to free themselves from the influence of the dominant nations as well as from Hapsburg rule. The Czechs criticized the Germans who included Bohemia in the projected Great Germany, while the Rumanians in Transylvania entered claims against the Magyars, themselves in arms against the Hapsburgs. In this several-cornered struggle, the Austrian Slavs played into the hands of reaction. When the government had re-established its position in Bohemia, it was able to suppress the revolution in Vienna, and then, with the aid of Russia, to put down the Hungarian revolution. This victory, in turn, restored Hapsburg influence in Germany and helped to seal the fate of the liberal unification movement. Another factor should be mentioned: the movement of the Austrian Slavs took the form of Pan-Slavism, which was regarded askance by Marx as likely to strengthen Czarism.

This was the background of a series of disparaging attacks on the Austrian Slavs in the *Neue rheinische Zeitung*, edited by him in Cologne in 1848-1849, and later in the New York *Tribune*. Most of the articles in question were written by Engels. A certain portion of them should be discounted, since Engels frequently expressed himself on the aspirations and ambitions of smaller nations with greater severity than Marx. Engels, too, was more given to sweeping generalizations on political subjects. However, on the issue involved here, the two men seem to have been in substantial agreement. They dismissed the claims of the smaller Slavic nations, notably the Czechs, quite

<sup>13</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VII, 181.

cavalierly. The past history and future prospects of these groups were painted in dark colors, while the influence of the Germans and Hungarians was praised in exaggerated terms. The population of Central Europe was divided into "revolutionary" and "counterrevolutionary" or "reactionary" nations, a clearly un-Marxian distinction. The Germans, Hungarians, Poles, and Italians were classified as "revolutionary" nations which had exerted "historical initiative" for many centuries. The Austrian Slavs (excepting the Poles) and the Rumanians and Saxons of Transylvania, who had been at odds with the "revolutionary" Hungarians, were set down as "counterrevolutionary." All these groups were "inert" and "unprogressive"; they lacked a bourgeoisie, and had come to depend on Germans in the north and Hungarians in the south for economic and cultural improvement. The Czechs were a "dying . . . nationality." Unless they were to be incorporated into a great Pan-Slav empire, the Austrian Slavs must succumb to "the action of historical causes that inevitably absorbs [them] into a more energetic stock."<sup>14</sup>

We do not meet such stark dogmatism on the historical role of different nations in the later works of Marx. But some elements of his position unquestionably survived: that small nations were not able effectively to establish independent political existence under modern conditions, and that all national movements must be judged in the context of their effect upon international relations and proletarian hopes. Marx's attitude toward the South Slavs and the Balkan peoples, which in his day were ruled by Turkey, fitted into this pattern of thought. In general, he expected as little economic and political leadership from the smaller peoples in Turkey as from those in Austria. The "splendid

<sup>14</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 109, 236, 238-39, 240, 242-43, 250-51, 253-55; New York *Tribune*, March 5, 1852, p. 7; March 15, 1852, p. 7; April 24, 1852, p. 6; May 7, 1855, p. 4; January 9, 1857, p. 3.

territory" south of the Save and the Danube, he wrote in 1853, had the "misfortune" of being inhabited by "a conglomerate of different races and nationalities, of which it is hard to say which is the least fit for progress and civilization." The ruling Turks were no better; their presence was "a real obstacle to the development of the resources" of the Balkan Peninsula. Since Austrian and especially Russian expansion was undesirable, rule of the Turks futile, and the establishment of small states inexpedient, Marx was left with the alternative of a Balkan federation which, in time, would become integrated around one of its member nations. The Serbians seemed to offer a possibility for future national leadership. Marx spoke of the Peninsula as the "natural inheritance" of the South Slavs who had lived there for twelve hundred years and accounted for seven out of the twelve million inhabitants. The "competitors" of the Slavs, "if we except a sparse population which had adopted the Greek language although in reality of Slavonic descent, are Turkish or Arnaut barbarians, who have long since been convicted of the most inveterate opposition to all progress. The South Slavonians, on the contrary, are, in the inland districts of the country, the exclusive representatives of civilization. They do not yet form a nation, but they have a powerful and comparatively enlightened nucleus of nationality in Servia. The Servians have a history, a literature of their own."<sup>15</sup>

Marx, then, would not always follow existing linguistic or "racial" lines in reorganizing Central and Southern Europe, even where they could be detected. Although he occasionally speculated on the possibility of integrating the Hapsburg Empire through the development of trade and industry and through political reorganization,<sup>16</sup> he gen-

<sup>15</sup> New York *Tribune*, April 7, 1853, pp. 5-6; April 21, 1853, p. 4; September 2, 1853, pp. 5-6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, January 9, 1857, p. 3; August 4, 1857, p. 6.

erally regarded the Empire as hopelessly backward and reactionary. He viewed the future of Turkey with even greater pessimism. In Austria he tended toward a solution which was half, but only half national. The Czechs and neighboring groups would be included in an enlarged and progressive Germany. The Germans in Poland or Russia were to be a part of the Polish or Russian state and eventually the Polish or Russian nation. The Hungarians and the Poles, with the addition of adjacent small nations, would form independent states. The Balkan nations might coagulate around a convenient nucleus, establishing at first a federal state and eventually an integral state. Given liberal constitutions with guarantees of civil and political equality, the operation of economic, political, and cultural forces would result in the formation of several large polities in the center and east of Europe.

The Schleswig-Holstein Question offered another opportunity to emphasize the importance of unitary states of considerable proportions. Leaving aside the genealogic and historical details of that intricate issue, it will suffice here to point out that Marx, in common with most radicals and liberals in Germany in 1848, advocated the annexation of the two duchies to a united Germany and strenuously opposed the armistice of Malmö, by which Prussia had left the duchies to Denmark. He regarded the Prussian war over the duchies as a justifiable "national" and "revolutionary" war. It was "the first revolutionary war" of Germany. The same right by which France had occupied Flemish districts, Alsace and Lorraine and would "sooner or later" seize Belgium, justified the incorporation of Schleswig into Germany—"the right of civilization against barbarism, of progress against stability," in short, "the right of historical development." Several considerations led Marx to take this position: the maritime and commercial

importance of these duchies to German economy and their cultural dependence on Germany, opposition to the growth of another small state by the union of the duchies with Denmark, and the support of Danish claims by Russian, English, and Prussian conservatives. There is ground for thinking that he probably would have favored the annexation of Denmark itself to Germany, for much the same reasons.<sup>17</sup>

The positive criteria for nation- and state-building were illustrated by the Polish Question. The growth and independence of the Polish nation would have served the cause of international progress. Nothing was so calculated to weaken conservatism in Europe as the proposal to carve out a large state from the lands of the three conservative monarchies, Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Since Russia had obtained the lion's share of Poland, its resurrection would have the especial effect of weakening Czarism. The new state would be a wedge in the heart of reaction. That was the principal reason why Marx was a consistent and warm adherent of Polish independence. The development of Europe since the French Revolution seemed to be reflected in the fortunes of three countries. The advance of revolutionary France represented the progress of liberalism and constitutionalism, and the retreat of the old order in the Continent as a whole. The movement of Russia charted the course of European conservatism. The seesaw of the two states, whose enmity became "traditional" in the nineteenth century, described the ups and downs of Europe; French influence spelled progress, Russian influence spelled reaction. The balance between these forces was mirrored in the history of Poland, which was the ratio, as it were, between progress and retrogression. As her extinction had fed the growth of conservative powers in the East, so

<sup>17</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VII, 351-55; see also *Briefwechsel*, III, 158-59.

would her restoration advance the progressive West. The destiny of Poland was one with that of revolutionary France and the larger destiny of Europe. "What has decided me definitely for Poland, on the basis of my latest studies of Polish history, is the historical fact that all the revolutions since 1789 measure their intensity and vitality pretty accurately by their conduct toward Poland. Poland is their 'external' thermometer." Marx wrote these words in 1856, but they expressed his opinion during the preceding as well as the succeeding decades.<sup>18</sup>

Poland was a "necessary" nation in Europe. Her re-establishment as a democratic state was a *point d'honneur* for all democrats, particularly the democrats of those countries which had shared in the partition. The Poles had numbers and compact territory, and if they lacked some of the elements of a modern economy, they might be provided with them. It is worth noting that the *Neue rheinische Zeitung* was less impressed by the "progressive" influence of the Germans in Poland than of those in Bohemia and other Austrian territories. In 1848, Marx favored giving Poland the very considerable boundaries of 1772 with the estuaries of its large rivers, the port of Danzig, and a large coastline on the Baltic Sea. The new state must be no "phantom Poland" but must rest on foundations "adequate to her existence." If that involved the cession of districts with German populations, he saw no harm in it. The prime consideration was the establishment of a large society. There was no reason why Poles and Germans, dealing on a plane of equality, could not reach a friendly understanding through mutual concessions, or why in mixed districts, Germans could not eventually become Poles and Poles Germans. The Germans in Poland, like those in America, he argued, no longer regarded them-

<sup>18</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 157.

selves as belonging to Germany; they had become German-speaking Poles.<sup>19</sup>

Marx subordinated the movements for independence of even large nations to international interests. In 1859 France and Sardinia challenged Hapsburg influence in Italy. The war led to the unification of Italy under the rule of the Sardinian monarchy. Marx engaged in a controversy with Ferdinand Lassalle on the question of the support of Austria by Prussia and other German states. German nationalists were demanding that Prussia declare war on France, her "hereditary" enemy. Lassalle contended that this demand was inspired by hatred of France and that a Franco-Prussian war would not promote the interests of German democracy. While Marx was chary of defending Hapsburg interests in Italy, he insisted that the interests of the revolutionary party in Germany coincided momentarily with the interests of Austria. The defeat of Austria would strengthen the regime of Napoleon III as well as Russia. Moreover, German unification would not be promoted by French intervention in Italy, and Germany was a larger and more advanced country than Italy. Napoleon might be planning to advance to the Rhine after gaining a victory on the Po River. In order to unify Germany democratically, it was more important to weaken Czarist Russia and Bonapartist France than Hapsburg Austria.

Marx admitted to Engels that, under the circumstances, the position of the German radicals was "difficult at the moment, to be sure, but, with some critical analysis of the circumstances, clear nevertheless." "As to the [German]

<sup>19</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 136, 143, 148, 149, 150, 151-52, 163, 176. See also *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 359-61, 410-14, 556; *New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852, p. 7; Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 85; *Karl Marx: Chronik seines Lebens*, p. 255; "Karl Marx et Pierre Lavrov," *Revue marxiste*, May 1929, p. 434; Ryazanov, "Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels über die Polenfrage," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, VI, 192, 196, 207.

'governments,' " he argued, "it is obvious from every point of view, if only for the sake of Germany's *existence*, that the demand must be made to them *not* to remain *neutral*, but, as you rightly say, to be *patriotic*. But the *revolutionary* point is to be given to the matter simply by stressing the antagonism *to Russia* even more than the antagonism to Boustrapa [nickname for Napoleon]." <sup>20</sup> Of course, the demand for a war was meant at least partly as a political tactic in the struggle with the German governments, and since such a demand would be suspect in their eyes, it would not necessarily (as it did not actually) lead to war. Apart from this consideration, it is open to serious doubt whether the judgment of Lassalle was not better grounded than that of Marx.<sup>21</sup> Here, however, we are interested merely in pointing out Marx's motivations and arguments in dealing with national questions.

<sup>20</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 386; see also 372, 383, 386-87, 401; III, 146; *Sämtliche Werke*, VII, 593. Distrust of the motives of Napoleon III was one of the determining factors of Marx's position on the War of 1859; see *New York Tribune*, July 6, 1859, p. 4; July 28, 1859, p. 4; August 4, 1859, p. 4; August 29, 1859, p. 4. For Lassalle's view see his letter to Marx, *Nachlass*, IV, 184 ff.

<sup>21</sup> See Franz Mehring's discussion in *Karl Marx* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 306-14, and Charles A. Dana's interesting evaluation of Marx's *New York Tribune* articles in a letter published as an appendix to *Herr Vogt*, pp. 188-89.

## 4

BACKWARDNESS AND  
EMPIRE

THE EXTENT of a nation's population and territory was only one of the criteria for determining its ability to organize an effective polity. If some nations were too small, others were too undeveloped to establish and maintain an independent political existence. Not even the largest nations could assert a right to independence unless they were able to develop a progressive economy and to exploit their resources in a modern fashion. In the case of European nations, Marx naturally stressed quantity of population, territory, and resources, assuming tacitly that the general progress of the Continent and the intimate relationship of its component parts would supply the other conditions of statehood. However, when he considered the political problems of other continents, notably Asia, he raised the question whether, despite the presence of huge populations and resources, social, economic, and technological deficiencies did not prevent the building of a modern economy. It seemed clear to him that just as some nations were unable to organize such an economy because of their meager proportions, other nations, although large enough, were still unable to do so unaided because of stagnant social systems or past underdevelopment.

Marx did not condemn all conquest and foreign dominion. Whether any particular imperial venture was de-

sirable or not must be determined by the effect upon the victim, the conqueror, and the world at large—a highly variable criterion. If the subject nation or territory lacked the capacity to progress, and if the conqueror possessed both the means and the incentive to supply that want, then foreign dominion was beneficial. Marx distinguished between conquerors who fed parasitically on the subject country without contributing to its economic advance and those who improved the economy while exploiting the population. The forms of imperialism varied with the economic and social conditions of ruler and subject. “A stockjobbing nation . . . cannot be robbed in the same manner as a nation of shepherds”; nor does a stockjobbing conqueror exploit in the same manner as a shepherd conqueror. The ancient Romans and the modern Turks were content to levy tribute, leaving the local economies otherwise undisturbed. The Mongols destroyed and devastated, since their pastoral economy required vast stretches of uninhabited and uncultivated land for grazing. When the German tribes conquered the territories of Rome, two similar economic systems were simply fused.<sup>1</sup>

The effect of capitalist imperialism was not always the same. Capitalism of a purely commercial character fattened on backward economies without helping to transform them. Yet by weakening the exploited economies, it made them more susceptible to change. Commercial capitalism made no positive contribution, and how much it might indirectly promote a forward change depended not on its own activities but on the nature, “solidity, and internal articulation” of the subjected economy. A capitalist system which combined industrial with commercial interests would be impelled to introduce the methods and ma-

<sup>1</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 232–33. See also *Das Kapital*, I, 323n., 695n.

terials of a higher system of production.<sup>2</sup> That was the reason why Marx, whose field of choice was limited, preferred British to Russian expansion in Asia,<sup>3</sup> and American to Mexican dominion in New Mexico and California.<sup>4</sup>

His view of industrial imperialism was expressed in two articles on the rule of the British in India, published in the *New York Tribune* in 1853.<sup>5</sup> They pictured India as a static and stagnant society, rooted in a primitive communal agrarian system and hampered by limited domestic industry, backward methods of production, slight division of labor, old-fashioned handicrafts, little production for exchange, and payment in kind. The result was extreme poverty, religious superstition, social castes, and a cruel morality. The political indifference, disunity, and weakness of the people made possible the arbitrariness, centralization, and power of the despots. Isolated from each other, the small communities were an easy prey to conqueror after conqueror. The conquerors contented themselves with "but three departments of government; that of finance, or the plunder of the interior; that of war, or the plunder of the exterior; and finally the department of public works," for irrigation. The frequent changes of dynasties contrasted vividly with the changelessness of society. Since, to Marx as to Hegel, history in its more profound meaning signified development, India and, of course, other countries similarly situated, might be said to have "no history at all—at least no known history." "What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis

<sup>2</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 309, 311, 312-13, 314-18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 282-83, 318; *Nachlass*, III, 249-50. See Engels' view on the French in Algeria, *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 366-67, 387.

<sup>5</sup> For the polemical background of these articles, see *Briefwechsel*, I, 485-87.

of that unresisting and unchanging society." Weakness and backwardness "predestined" India to conquest and the question was "not whether the English had a right" to conquer her, but "whether we are to prefer India conquered by the Turk, by the Persian, by the Russian, to India conquered by the Briton."<sup>6</sup>

It seemed hopeless to expect the salvation of a stagnant society to come from within.<sup>7</sup> The usury capitalism of Asia, with its hoarding and cheating, maintained the old order only to feed upon it. It had been the misfortune of India to be invaded repeatedly by her inferiors, who borrowed her economy and her culture instead of improving them. The English were the first invaders who were "superior, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindoo civilization." They were fulfilling the "double mission" of annihilating the traditional society and "laying the material foundations of Western society in Asia." Steam, rails, and free trade, even more than fiscal and military control, were consolidating private landlordism—which was "the great desideratum of Asiatic society"—and supplying the tools and methods of large-scale industry. By undermining the two bases of the "small, semibarbarian, semicivilized communities," primitive communalism and the ancient handicrafts, England was bringing about "the greatest, and to speak the truth, the only *social* revolution ever heard of in Asia."<sup>8</sup>

Marx had no illusions about the imperial "revolutionaries." "The aristocracy wanted to conquer India, the moneyocracy to plunder it, and the millocracy to undersell it." The history of the conquest, from "that great robber" Robert Clive onward, revealed "the profound hypocrisy

<sup>6</sup> *New York Tribune*, June 25, 1853, p. 5; August 8, 1853, p. 5. On Asiatic economy, see *Das Kapital*, I, 8, 104, 322-23.

<sup>7</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 318.

<sup>8</sup> *New York Tribune*, June 25, 1853, p. 5; August 8, 1853, p. 5.

and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization" which assumed "respectable forms" only at home. Confiscation, extortion, murder—the masters stopped at nothing.<sup>9</sup> Yet England was forging the political unity of her colony. That unity would be cemented by railways and the telegraph. The steamship would put an end to the external isolation of the country. The English drill sergeant was organizing and training a native army which would prove useful in the future struggle for freedom. A free press and educational opportunities would help to prepare the ground for independence. England herself, such was the "dialectic" of history, was teaching India how to stand on her own feet.<sup>10</sup> But the colony would not reap the full benefits of modern civilization until the English "ruling classes . . . shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or . . . the Hindoos themselves . . . grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether."<sup>11</sup>

Whatever the ultimate result, the immediate cost of the transformation of India was appalling. Worse than foreign oppression was the cruelty inevitable in the process of tearing up a society and culture by the roots. Worse than a progressive change, however brutal, was the cold misery of a static order. While Marx admired the characteristics of the Indians and some aspects of their civilization, he felt strongly that the old system was essentially barbarous.<sup>12</sup> His picture of Indian society and his justification of its forcible change are so significant of his attitude toward the backward society generally and of his sense of the tragedy of history, that they are worth citing textually:

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, August 8, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, June 25, 1853, p. 5; August 8, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, August 8, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> On Marx's sense of the cost of progress, see *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 22; *Das Kapital*, I, 396–98, 424, 716; III<sup>1</sup>, 241–42; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 87; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>1</sup>, 309–10.

Now, sickening as it must be to human feeling to witness those myriads of industrious patriarchal and inoffensive social organizations disorganized and dissolved into their units, thrown into a sea of woes, and their individual members losing at the same time their ancient form of civilization and their hereditary means of subsistence, we must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies. We must not forget the barbarian egotism which, concentrating on some miserable patch of land, had quietly witnessed the ruin of empires, the perpetration of unspeakable cruelties, the massacre of the population of large towns, with no other consideration bestowed upon them than on natural events, itself the helpless prey of any aggressor who deigned to notice it at all. We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence evoked on the other part, in contradistinction, wild, aimless, unbounded forces of destruction and rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindostan. We must not forget that these little communities were contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery instead of elevating man the sovereign of circumstances, that they subjugated man to external circumstances, that they transformed a self-developing social state into a never-changing natural destiny, and thus brought about a brutalizing worship of nature, exhibiting its degradation in the fact that man, the sovereign of nature, fell down on his knees in adoration of Kanuman, the monkey, and Sabbala, the cow.

England, it is true, in causing a social revolution in Hindostan, was actuated only by the vilest interests, and was stupid in her manner of enforcing them. But that is not the question. The question is, can mankind fulfill its destiny without a fundamental revolution in the social state of Asia? If not, whatever may have been the crimes of England, she was the unconscious tool of history in bringing about that revolution.

Then, whatever bitterness the spectacle of the crumbling of an ancient world may have for our personal feelings, we have the right, in point of history, to exclaim with Goethe:

"Sollte diese Qual uns quälen  
Da sie unsere Lust vermehrt,

Hat nicht Myriaden Seelen  
Timur's Herrschaft aufgezehrt?"<sup>13</sup>

The road of progress was fearful to contemplate. Marx shared the feeling of Engels that "history is about the most terrible of all goddesses, leading her triumphal chariot over mountains of corpses, not only in war, but also in 'peaceful' economic development."<sup>14</sup> The Clio of the bourgeoisie dragged "individuals and people through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation." Progress would "cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain," only "when a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world, and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples."<sup>15</sup>

The confidence of Marx that the expansion of European rule would redound to the benefit of the world was far steadier in the forties and early fifties than in subsequent years. He spoke in increasingly severe terms of the economic effects of British imperialism.<sup>16</sup> In 1881, he unqualifiedly condemned it and foresaw "serious complications" in India. "What the English take from them annually in the form of rent, dividends for railways useless to the Hindus, pensions for military and civil service men, for Afghanistan and other wars, etc., etc., what they take from them *without any equivalent* and quite apart from what

<sup>13</sup> New York *Tribune*, June 25, 1853, p. 5. The stanza is from "An Su-leika." A translation follows:

Should this torture then torment us,  
Since it brought us greater joy?  
Did not the rule of Tamerlane  
Myriads of souls destroy?

<sup>14</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 404.

<sup>15</sup> New York *Tribune*, August 8, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> See, for instance, his later judgment on the "absurdity" and inconsistency of British policies in India, *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 318; "Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx," *Marx-Engels Archiv*, I, 338.

they appropriate to themselves annually *within* India, speaking only of the *value of the commodities* the Indians have gratuitously and annually to *send over* to England—it amounts to *more than the total sum of income of the sixty millions of agricultural and industrial laborers of India!* This is a bleeding process, with a vengeance! The famine years are pressing each other and in dimensions till now not yet suspected in Europe."<sup>17</sup> Marx scorned the solemn rationalization that in return for enormous tribute, England exported "good government" to India!<sup>18</sup> We have seen what he thought of English rule in Ireland.<sup>19</sup> English penetration of China seemed unjustified.<sup>20</sup> He was even more opposed to the conquests made by powers less developed economically than England. He protested the attempt of Napoleon III to make Mexico his dependency,<sup>21</sup> and was especially critical of the expansion of Czarist Russia.<sup>22</sup> If one discounted the beneficial influence which an advanced and progressive country might, under certain circumstances, have upon a backward one, conquest and imperialism were reduced to sheer spoliation. The "vital principle of every bourgeoisie" was "to take from others" and the seizure of foreign lands was, "after all, 'taking.'"<sup>23</sup>

While Marx's view of the progressive role of European

<sup>17</sup> *Correspondence*, pp. 385–86. For materials in support of that statement, see *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 121–24, 130; New York *Tribune*, February 9, 1858, p. 6; September 23, 1859, p. 6. For his view of the Mutiny of 1857 and other Indian events, see *Briefwechsel*, II, 199, 274, 375–76. Further judgments of British rule in *Briefwechsel*, III, 295, 297; IV, 531; *Das Kapital*, I, 717–18.

<sup>18</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 122, 123.

<sup>19</sup> See above, pp. 38–39.

<sup>20</sup> New York *Tribune*, January 23, 1857, p. 4; March 16, 1857, p. 6; March 25, 1857, p. 6; March 31, 1857, p. 6; June 2, 1857, p. 4; October 10, 1859, p. 6; October 18, 1859, p. 6; December 3, 1859, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Marx and Engels, *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 92–93, 177–79; New York *Tribune*, November 23, 1861, p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> See below, pp. 154 ff.

<sup>23</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 543.



imperialism underwent considerable change, his ultimate test for all political dominion, whether domestic or foreign, remained the same: economic and social advance. In modern times, progress depended on the industrialization of the nation; later, on its socialization. The earth belonged, by "right," to those classes and peoples which could make it finally fruitful for all men, and thus set them free.

## 5

## THE CONCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL CLASS

**T**HE ACCEPTANCE of the modern nation as a concrete historical phenomenon raised very fundamental issues in a theory of socialism based on class struggle. Was it possible to reconcile the concepts of horizontal division into classes and vertical division into nations?

The doctrine of class conflict was, of course, of central importance in the economics and politics of Marx. With the American anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan, he held that primitive society had been organized communistically.<sup>1</sup> From the breakdown of early communism up to the establishment of modern socialism, society had been, and would continue to be, divided into antagonistic classes.<sup>2</sup> The whole significant history of society was the history of the friction, victories, and defeats of economic classes. Every age, every principal stage in the evolution of the methods of production, had its characteristic ruling and subject classes. "In ancient Rome, we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-burgesses, journeymen, serfs; and within almost all these classes, still further gradations . . . Our own age, the age of the bourgeoisie, however, is dis-

<sup>1</sup> Lewis H. Morgan, *Ancient Society* (Chicago, n.d.), p. 537; Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (Chicago, 1902), pp. 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Sämliche Werke*, VI, 525-26n.

tinguished by the fact that it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is splitting up more and more into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly contraposed to each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat."<sup>3</sup> The characteristic condition of society has thus been struggle and internecine warfare. The concept of the class implied differentiation and disunion. Those who treated the modern nation as a group having "the same interests, the same judgment," seemed to Marx "cultists" of an "imaginary" entity, for the "real people" was reft into classes.<sup>4</sup> It was a "false abstraction" to regard a capitalist nation as an "aggregate body working merely for the satisfaction of national wants."<sup>5</sup> Yet to speak at all of national wants or of the welfare of a nation, argued a potential common purpose hovering, however tenuously, over the battlefield of contending classes. Otherwise, the idea of the nation and the idea of the class excluded each other.

The key to the problem was Marx's view of progress and of the role of social classes. Modern society in general, and the individual nation in particular, were indeed divided against themselves. The past was a collection of the most varied economic systems. There was, nonetheless, a great unifying link in history. It was the development of the means and methods of material production. A higher civilization and greater social happiness presupposed abundance. Progressive enrichment was therefore the social or national interest and, for that matter, the human interest par excellence. For social, political, and institutional progress was dependent on the promotion of that interest. Leon Trotsky, one of the most international-minded of the followers of Marx, defined the "national"

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 525-26.

<sup>4</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 56; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 388.

as "that which raises the people to a higher economic and cultural plane."<sup>6</sup> The class, as Marx conceived it, was more than a summation of the immediate needs, demands, or aims of its members. Each class represented a special policy regarding the organization of production and the content of social, political, and legal institutions. In every historical period, the objective requirements of progress determined the optimum policy. There was always one class whose own advantage coincided, at least for a time, with that policy and hence with the greater interest of society in the improvement and better exploitation of the means of production.

At that point the class met the nation. So long as society was divided into classes, the national interest accorded with the interest of the most progressive class or element in the nation. That class was national which could manage, even while promoting its own interests, to propel society forward. The dominance of a ruling class had national justification so long, and only so long, as it promoted economic progress. In brief, the national class was that class which led the nation, the individual society, along the line of progress.

As methods of production changed, different classes assumed national leadership. In modern times, until the complete establishment of industrialism, the bourgeoisie was the national class. The capitalists were justified in claiming leadership, that is, in governing the nation, while they performed what Marx regarded as their peculiar historical task, the development of modern production. After the middle of the nineteenth century, Marx felt that the bourgeoisie, where it was well developed, was approaching the end of its period of leadership. The continuance of

<sup>6</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (New York, 1925), pp. 94-96, 102, 168, 234.

capitalist rule was becoming inconsistent with the improvement of production; socialization alone could assure further progress. When wealth and security diminished, the national justification of bourgeois rule ceased. "The worker is becoming a pauper," asserted the *Manifest*, "and pauperism is increasing even more rapidly than population and wealth. It becomes evident that the bourgeoisie is no longer fitted to be the ruling class in society or to impose its conditions of existence as supreme law for society at large. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence for its slave even within his slavery; because it is compelled to let him sink into such a condition that it has to feed him instead of being fed by him. Society cannot live any longer under the bourgeoisie, in other words, its life is no longer compatible with society." National leadership, therefore, must pass from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat, the carrier of a new social policy. By obtaining political control, the proletariat will raise itself to the position of "a national class, and constitute itself as the nation . . ." <sup>7</sup>

If one class leads, other classes must follow. In the *Manifest*, Marx implied that there were, or that there would eventually be, but two classes in modern society. He later modified this view and admitted the continued existence of additional classes and groups.<sup>8</sup> In the third volume of *Das Kapital*, he referred to the proletarians, the capitalists, and the landlords, as the "three great classes" of capitalist society.<sup>9</sup> The proletarian-capitalist struggle was, for him, the most significant but not the only modern class struggle. In some countries, for example France of the

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 537, 543. On the question of the "increasing misery" of the modern proletariat, cf. *ibid.*, VI, 172-73, 537 and *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>1</sup>, 169.

<sup>8</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 263-64, 368; *Das Kapital*, I, 411-12, 493.

<sup>9</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 421; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 245.

middle of the last century, the "mass of the nation, standing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie," consisted of peasants and petty bourgeois.<sup>10</sup> The leading class was frequently a minority of the nation. Obviously, the capitalists could never form more than a small fraction of the population. Even the proletarians need not become the majority of the nation in order to guide it toward socialism. The led, therefore, were often the great body of the nation, however socially constituted, whose future was involved in the betterment of the economic system.

National leadership by a class received most concrete expression when a country stood at economic or political crossroads. Vigorous guidance was then most necessary. A noteworthy moment of national union occurred when a progressive class led the majority of the people against another, reactionary class or against an external enemy who threatened to halt further advance of the society. Marx felt that under such circumstances the various groups must suspend their mutual antagonisms. His favorite historical example was the leadership of the French nation by the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy during the great Revolution. The bourgeoisie had stood forth as "the social class which represented the whole of modern society against the representatives of the old society, royalty, and aristocracy," <sup>11</sup> and was therefore supported by other classes and groups. The implicit alliance between the leading class and the people seemed to Marx to be symbolized in the exercise of popular pressure upon the bourgeois assemblies of the Revolution. That pressure supplied the guarantee that the bourgeoisie would not place its own interests before the common cause.<sup>12</sup> National leadership ended when that cause was compromised. Thus "the decided opposition of

<sup>10</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 47. <sup>11</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 212-13.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 195, 211; Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution* (New York, 1933), pp. 141-42.

the bourgeoisie to the people naturally begins only when the bourgeoisie ceases to be opposed, as the Third Estate, to the clergy and nobility.”<sup>13</sup>

The German Revolution of 1848 provided Marx with a practical opportunity to apply his conception of national leadership. On the assumption that social conditions in Germany were similar to those in France in 1789 and that the first task of the revolutionaries was the destruction of royalty and aristocracy, he favored a liberal revolution led by the bourgeoisie and supported by the proletarians and peasants.<sup>14</sup> Such a movement would have national significance. “In the mouth of the people the word revolution has this meaning: You bourgeois are the ‘Committee of Public Safety,’ into whose hands we have placed the government, not so that you will combine with the Crown in your own interest, but so that you will champion our interests, the interests of the people, against the Crown.”<sup>15</sup> Marx held that the interests of the bourgeoisie, if it were to grow freely and rise to eminence, were antagonistic to the old institutions.

During the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, Marx justified united action in Germany to advance the national society against the opposition of external enemies. The welfare of the German proletariat required the establishment of a large integrated state. After Sedan, however, Marx recognized the necessity of defending the liberal bourgeois government of Adolphe Thiers as more progressive than the Bonapartist Empire it had supplanted. He therefore called upon the French workers to do their duty as “citizens” and to refrain from overthrowing a regime under which they could develop their numbers and their strength.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 47.

<sup>14</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 556–57.

<sup>15</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 215–16.

<sup>16</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 40.

As the bourgeoisie had led the nation in the struggle to overthrow feudalism and to establish capitalist economies and liberal states, the proletarians would lead the nation in a movement to destroy capitalism and establish socialism.<sup>17</sup> But the proletariat, like any other class, could assert national leadership only if it were actually in a position to promote the interests of the national society. A class which was too weak or too small (the requisite number varied with the character of the class), or whose functions were not essential to society, could not justly claim the support of its leadership by other groups. The French proletariat in 1848, for example, was too meagerly developed to make its struggle “the national content of the revolution” by including within the scope of its own demands the demands of other elements in the country. The industrial workers “could not take a step forward, could not hurt a hair of the bourgeois order,” unless the great masses of peasants and petty bourgeois also rose against capitalism and attached themselves “to the proletariat as the leader in the fight.” As yet the discontent of the three lower classes in France was not canalized in one direction: the proletarian struggle was directed against the industrial bourgeoisie, whereas the discontent of petty traders and indebted farmers was turned against the financial bourgeoisie.

Only after the development and under the rule of the industrial bourgeoisie could the proletariat attain “the extended national existence, which can raise its revolution to a national one . . .”<sup>18</sup> The proletariat would eventually be able to lead the other lower classes, notably the farmers, in a campaign against capitalism. Although Marx was far from confident that the French workers had risen to the

<sup>17</sup> Marx generally regarded the petty bourgeoisie as incapable of national leadership; for an exception, see Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 135 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 46–47.

position of a national class by 1871,<sup>19</sup> he warmly supported the Paris Commune and insisted that its victory would advance the interests not only of the proletariat but of the mass of the nation. It appeared to him, at that time, that the uprising in Paris was "the first revolution in which the working class was openly acknowledged as the only class still capable of social initiative; acknowledged even by the great bulk of the Paris middle class—shopkeepers, artisans, merchants—the wealthy capitalists alone excepted." The Commune was "the truly national government" because it was "the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society," the elements which had no real stake in capitalism and could therefore follow the proletariat into the new world of socialism.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> See below, pp. 128–29.

<sup>20</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 70, 72.

## 6

## STATE AND NATION

IN THE THOUGHT of Marx, the character of the nation was closely related to the character of the ruling class. The feudal nation was a society whose economic life was dominated and its intellectual life shaped by the landed lords; the bourgeois nation was guided by the interests and notions of the capitalists; and the proletarian nation would be governed economically and influenced intellectually by the industrial workers. "The ruling ideas of an age have always been but the ideas of the ruling class."<sup>1</sup> The influence of that class was exerted partly through the state. An understanding of Marx's view of the state is essential to an understanding of his view of the nation.

He distinguished three broad phases of society: the classless society of early communism, a series of class societies, and the classless society of modern socialism. In the early communal period, the state was organized for the performance of administrative functions, the promotion of common interests, and for defense. The authority of the state was derived from society and was strictly delegated. The state and its agents were subservient to society, which defined and expanded or contracted their functions, and described the scope of the authority necessary to fulfill them.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 543–44; V, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 27. See also Engels, *Herr Eugen Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (Moscow, 1935), pp. 152, 182–83; and *Feuerbach* (Vienna, 1932), pp. 62–63.

After the division of society into classes, authority underwent two transformations. The instrumentality formerly responsive to social needs became domineering in character. Originally the organ of society at large, the state became the organ of the ruling class for the forcible maintenance of its superior position.<sup>3</sup> Marx used the term "state" habitually, though not exclusively, to denote the forms of government peculiar to class societies. He defined "politics" similarly as a function of the self-consciousness and conflict of classes.<sup>4</sup>

The more the state departed from its position of subordination to society, the more did authority lose its original meaning. The authority of the class state, like the leadership of the ruling class, had justification so long and in so far as the state was able to promote the greater social purpose by developing a richer economy. Otherwise, class states were merely variants of class oppression. In ancient times, when the primary social conflict was that of slave owners against slaves, the state was dedicated by the masters to the subjugation of their human property. In the feudal age, another state arose, which was controlled by the nobility. In the succeeding age, the state was the political instrumentality used by the capitalists to assure their supremacy over the proletarians.

In the third volume of *Das Kapital*, Marx made a sweeping generalization on the relation between economic and political forms. He asserted that "the specific economic form in which surplus labor" was "pumped out of the direct producers" determined "the relations of rulers and ruled" and "the specific political form" of the community. One must inquire into the nature of the relation

<sup>3</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 27; Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring* . . . pp. 152, 183; and *The Origin of the Family* . . . pp. 206-8.

<sup>4</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 191, 226-28, 534, 546; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 117.

between the owners and the users of the means of production in order to discover "the inmost secret, the hidden foundation of the entire social construction, and hence also of the political form of the relations of sovereignty and dependence, in short, of the specific forms of state" at a given time.<sup>5</sup>

Nowhere, however, did Marx support this view by stating precisely what state forms were correlated with different forms of exploitation. One difficulty was that the economic basis seemed to him to be subject to "infinite variations and gradations" in its appearance. Now the factors which were responsible for this variation—"historical influences," for example—would, by implication, also affect the forms of the state.<sup>6</sup> It followed that the state, too, would exhibit "infinite variations and gradations." Marx always insisted that the modern state responded to bourgeois pressures directly or indirectly—that was probably "the inmost secret, the hidden foundation" of the modern polity. He also stressed the correspondence between economic development and a considerable amount of centralization.<sup>7</sup> The formal expressions of bourgeois influence and of centralization were not, however, fixed. Marx did not account for the structural difference between the French and English states and their degrees of centralization by pointing to corresponding differences between the French and English economies. He noted that "special historical circumstances" had led to the limitation of centralization in England by traditional local authorities.<sup>8</sup> It is sufficient to recall that he regarded England as more developed economically than France, but France as more centralized politically—England was the "classical" eco-

<sup>5</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 324-25.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 530; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 67.

<sup>8</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 67.

monic, France the "classical" political country—to show how little he followed, or how loosely he interpreted, his theory of the state. Even the notion that the state was the voice of the ruling class was not to be understood literally. There were states, like the July Monarchy of France, which, as Marx observed, did not represent the whole bourgeoisie, but only a segment of that class.<sup>9</sup>

The description of contemporary states in his political writings was, in fact, highly empirical and historical. The state might be a representative mechanism controlled directly by the bourgeoisie and other owning classes through exclusive suffrage requirements. Such a system might have either a republican or a monarchical apex. Marx was referring to undemocratic republics or undemocratic limited monarchies when he characterized the modern state authority as "a committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie as a whole."<sup>10</sup> The parliamentary republic seemed to him the "classical," that is to say the most convenient or fitting form of the state in the bourgeois epoch<sup>11</sup>; but he was too well aware of the peculiarities of the English state to hold that the "classical" polity was a necessary accompaniment of capitalist development. The limited monarchy or the republic might establish democratic suffrage. This type of government, no less than others, lent itself to bourgeois influence.<sup>12</sup> Finally, there was the Bonapartist state. Such a state might be established when the contending classes balanced each other and

<sup>9</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 37; *New York Tribune*, April 7, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 528.

<sup>11</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* pp. 50, 86, 91, 100; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 69, 90, 96, 109–10. These passages deal with France but they express Marx's sense of the fitness of republican parliamentary forms for capitalist rule in general.

<sup>12</sup> Engels, *The Origin of the Family . . .* pp. 209–10; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 26–27; *Briefwechsel*, III, 102, 105–6; F. A. Sorge, ed., *Briefe und Auszüge aus Briefen . . .* p. 387.

none was able to make good its claim to supremacy.<sup>13</sup> The forms of the state varied from country to country and from age to age in the same country.

In the final phase of class society, the proletariat would become the ruler of the nation. The aim of the new ruling class would not be to perpetuate its dominion, but to bring the class struggle to an end by abolishing the class of capitalists. When that was done, the last social distinction would disappear and the proletariat would cease to exist as a separate class.<sup>14</sup> Marx did not discuss what shape the proletarian transitional state might take. He implied repeatedly that it would be democratic. To him, the "dictatorial" measures recommended in the *Manifest* for the gradual introduction of socialism, were not incompatible with the free will of a democratic electorate, although they involved "despotic inroads upon property." "The first step in the revolution of the workers" would be "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to win the battle for democracy."<sup>15</sup> If the proletariat were in a minority, democratic rule would imply the sanction of proletarian leadership by other classes. Engels observed in 1847 that proletarian rule would be "direct" only if it constituted a majority of the population; in England alone did that seem to be the case. In France and Germany, the proletariat would have to secure the support of small farmers and small business men.<sup>16</sup> Marx described the transitional

<sup>13</sup> Engels, *The Origin of the Family . . .* p. 209; and *Wohnungsfrage* (Vienna, 1932), p. 82; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . . passim*, but note particularly p. 116; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 62. For a contrast between Roman and modern Caesarism, see *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* pp. 18–19.

<sup>14</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 546; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 48; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 124–25.

<sup>15</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 545.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 514; *New York Tribune*, May 20, 1858, p. 6; *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, p. 106.

state, almost in the words of Abraham Lincoln, as a government "of the people, through the people."<sup>17</sup>

Will the socialist nation of the future have a state and, if so, what will be the relation between them? The "orthodox" answer is familiar: Marx believed that the state would gradually disappear—"wither away" is the accepted phrase—during the transitional proletarian period, and that the socialist commonwealth would have no state. It is true that he referred to the "abolition of the state," although the formula of "withering away" came from the pen of Engels.<sup>18</sup> In 1872, the two men, together with other comrades, published a statement which savored of anarchism: "What all socialists understand by anarchism is this: as soon as the goal of the proletarian movement, the abolition of classes, shall have been reached, the power of the state, whose function it is to keep the great majority of producers beneath the yoke of a small minority of exploiters, will disappear and governmental functions will be transformed into simple administrative functions."<sup>19</sup>

This statement has frequently been taken to confirm the theory that Marx and Engels were anarchists—so far as the future socialist society was concerned. Even in that regard, the anarchists have never considered Marx as one of them. They could hardly accept the above definition of their doctrine. For them, the crucial question was whether the "simple administrative functions" would involve the exercise of external authority upon the individual; and that was left unanswered. Now Marx, and more explicitly Engels, repudiated the anarchist position of absolute anti-authoritarianism.<sup>20</sup> Marx's sketch of a planned economy

<sup>17</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 67, 68, 73.

<sup>18</sup> *Herr Eugen Dühring* . . . pp. 291-92.

<sup>19</sup> *Les prétendues scissions dans l'Internationale*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>20</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 263-64; Engels, "Über das Autoritätsprinzip," *Neue Zeit*, XXXII<sup>1</sup>, 37-39.

involved the exercise of considerable authority. He emphasized the need for control, direction, coördination, and "one commanding will" in all large-scale coöperative enterprise. While the "despotic" control prevalent in the economic units of class society would become unnecessary, the need for management would increase.<sup>21</sup> The amount of integration and authority required in the economic field would be determined by the character of the productive process; the precise amount was hardly predictable in advance. The discretionary power would finally rest in a democratic electorate.

Whether the administration set up to direct the socialist economy should be called a state or not is a matter of terminology. Marx did not scruple to speak of a state under socialism. Lenin, who defended the "withering away" theory in *The State and Revolution*, was apparently puzzled by Marx's reference, in 1875, to "the future state organization of communist society." Despite Lenin's attempt to avoid it, the implication was that Marx probably foresaw the necessity of a state machinery; it is certain, at all events, that he did not exclude the possibility of one.<sup>22</sup> The only sense in which one might speak of an anarchist tendency in Marx is this: he held that, outside the realm of economic production, the area in which the individual might act without any external restraints should be extended indefinitely; but this tendency is as much a part of the historical tradition of liberalism as that of anarchism.

To conclude: Marx drew a sharp distinction between the state in any of its forms and the nation or society. The early communal state, the class state, or the socialist economic administration, although they differed in many re-

<sup>21</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 295-97; II, 105-6; III<sup>1</sup>, 369, 370, 427-28; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 416-17. On the principle of authority, see also *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 198 ff.; *Das Kapital*, I, 321; III<sup>2</sup>, 324-25, 418.

<sup>22</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, pp. 22, 59 ff.



spects, were all mechanisms and instrumentalities created by forces beyond themselves—society or ruling classes—which prescribed their functions and endowed them with authority. How directly Marx contraposed state and society to each other was indicated by his characterization of counterrevolution as “a reaction of the state against society.”<sup>23</sup> In objecting to the Gotha Program of the German socialists, which had urged the establishment of a “free state,” he asserted that “freedom consists in transforming the state from an organ which dominates society to one which is completely subordinated to it”; that “even today the forms of the state are more or less free in the measure that they restrict the ‘freedom of the state.’”<sup>24</sup> A state which became an end in itself and served its own bureaucracy seemed a monstrous creation. Marx’s figures of speech betrayed his attitude. He described the extremely centralized state of the Second Empire as a “parasitic body” which had acquired “an ubiquity, an omniscience, a quickened capacity for motion, and an elasticity which is only matched by the helpless dependence and the utter shapelessness of the actual body of society . . .” A state which presumed to stand above the nation must be broken, its “purely repressive” organs removed, and its “legitimate functions . . . restored to the responsible agents of society.”<sup>25</sup> He summed up the proper relationship between the state and nation in the remark that the state should not be regarded as “an independent being which possesses its own intellectual, moral, and free bases”; the emphasis must be on “the existing society (and this applies to any future society) as the foundation of the future state.”<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *New York Tribune*, August 21, 1852, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, p. 21.

<sup>25</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* pp. 61, 114–15; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 66–67.

<sup>26</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, p. 21.

The nation or society was its own excuse for being. It was an entity possessing considerable continuity. Society could be profoundly changed only by long-term processes: the promotion of new methods of production, their permeation in the life of the community, the development and satisfaction of new wants, a readjustment of culture, customs, and institutions. State structures might be dismantled, expanded, or reorganized with relative abruptness. One might transform a state by destroying or dismissing a bureaucracy, or by altering the administrative mechanism. The apparatus might pass without much modification from the control of one class to that of another, or it might yield its place to a completely different apparatus.

In his speech from the scaffold, King Charles I of England protested that subject and sovereign were “clean different things.” “Clean different things,” although hardly in the Stuart sense, were also the state and the nation of Marx.

## 7

## NATIONALISM

THE EVIL of economic exploitation was only one of the reasons why Marx insisted that the abolition of classes was necessary for the welfare of society. As a humanitarian, he was revolted both by the misery of the oppressed masses and by the indignity inherent in the position of the upper classes. As an economist, he condemned the waste and absence of planning in the field of production. He rebelled, in his capacity of an intellectual and philosopher, against the perversions of value and distortions of truth which he detected on every hand in the culture of class societies, more particularly in capitalist societies. No matter how contrary to "all the laws of human conscience," a notion might seem perfectly sound to the bourgeois and their theorists.<sup>1</sup> It seemed to Marx that a "mystical veil" surrounded "the life process of society"—production—in class societies and that the veil would not be lifted until that process were carried on by "freely associated men, under their conscious and planned control."<sup>2</sup> The dominating drive of the ruling class was to maintain itself in power. This drive furnished the prevailing standard of moral and intellectual judgments: the ideas and institutions that bolstered class domination were exalted; those that ran counter to the interests of the ruling class were discarded or so transformed as to make them innocuous and meaningless.

<sup>1</sup> New York *Tribune*, March 15, 1859, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 46.

This view explains how Marx could reject the "class forms" of many values and yet cling to what he regarded as their true or potential content. While he condemned "bourgeois property," he was not opposed to individual property, providing the means of production were socialized. His aversion to "bourgeois humanitarianism" was matched by his devotion to humanity.<sup>3</sup> *Das Kapital* was not only a work of economics, a historical treatise, and a philosophy of political action, but also a protest against cruelty, selfishness, and injustice.<sup>4</sup> Because Marx prized moral values so highly, he had contempt for professional reformers. He attacked class "justice," "humanitarianism," and "idealism" as unctuous phrasemongering. For every authentic value, the ruling classes evolved a corresponding distortion.

So it was with love of country. The sentiment of attachment to one's homeland was natural enough in itself. Marx thought, however, that an enlightened patriotism should be directed toward the national society on the road of progress, and should not be a glorification of the past or an apology for the present. No nation in the world had achieved the happy society by virtue of its own special capacities and endowments, nor could it do so unaided. National smugness and airs of superiority were equally unjustified everywhere. Since differences among men were essentially historical and transient, since all nations and races faced the same future, and since mankind was one, its inherent capacities the same and its goal necessarily uniform, invidious distinctions, whether of a racial, national,

<sup>3</sup> Note Marx's shamefacedness when, in order to please his comrades, he inserted idealistic terms ("truth, morality, and justice") in the preamble to the statutes of the First International. He assured Engels that he used these phrases "in such a way that it can do no harm"! *Briefwechsel*, III, 198; see also IV, 258.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, *Das Kapital*, I, 134, 228, 364, 724; also, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 178; *Briefwechsel*, III, 395.

or any other character, were unwarranted intellectually and harmful socially.

Distinctions inspired by narrow class interests were especially obnoxious to Marx. Every class had the tendency to picture the nation, and sometimes the whole species, in its own image. It then proceeded to worship that image. For each class there was a different "fatherland." The Napoleonic *patrie* of the French peasantry expressed its "youthful passion" for property far more than the larger aspirations of French society. The peasants loved the soil of France quite literally. "The uniform was their own state dress; war was their poetry; the small holding, extended and rounded off in their imagination, was the fatherland; and patriotism was the ideal form of the property sense."<sup>5</sup> The petty bourgeoisie was wont to think of itself as "the people," and of its rights and interests as the rights and interests of "the people."<sup>6</sup> Militaristic landed aristocracies cherished a "fatherland" peculiar to their traditions and interests. Marx poked fun at the "typically Prussian" notion that "no one must defend his fatherland except in uniform!"<sup>7</sup>

The bourgeoisie, too, looked into the mirror to discover the "fatherland" of its affections. That "fatherland" was capitalist property writ large. One "had" a country roughly in the sense that one had much land and money, many buildings, stocks and bonds. The bourgeois "fatherland" was not the country from the point of view of its potentialities for progress, or the nation regarded democratically, but the aggregate of institutions, customs, laws, and ideas which sanctified the right to property on a considerable scale. That was the "fatherland" repudiated in the *Manifest*.

<sup>5</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 122.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 374; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelman," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 543-44.

The bourgeoisie conveniently assumed that the "nation" consisted only of capitalists. The country was therefore "theirs"<sup>8</sup> and they proceeded to take charge of its resources. The riches of the "nation" of capitalists were not only not synonymous with, but inversely proportional to, the riches of the real nation. "National wealth," "national interest," "national glory," were symbols of the wealth and interest of the ruling class. Quite rightly from that point of view, bourgeois economists of the nineteenth century came to recognize the "identity between national wealth and the poverty of the people."<sup>9</sup> The "wealth of the nation" signified the "formation of capital and the reckless exploitation and impoverishment of the masses of the people."<sup>10</sup> While the riches belonged to the bourgeois "nation," the obligations of society were deposited on the doorstep of the real nation. Marx recalled William Cobbett's observation that "in England all public institutions are designated as 'royal' but, as a sort of compensation, the public debt is 'national.'" The national debt, which Marx described as "the sale of the state, whether despotic, constitutional, or republican" to the investing bourgeoisie, gave the capitalist era its characteristic stamp. "The only part of the so-called national wealth that really enters into the common possession of modern peoples is their national debt. Hence, very logically, the modern doctrine that a nation becomes richer the more deeply it gets into debt. Public credit becomes the credo of capital."<sup>11</sup> Real national needs were ignored by the bourgeois in search of profits; Marx repeated Ricardo's remark that "even in times of famine, grain is imported not because the nation is starving, but because the grain dealer is making

<sup>8</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 579, 693; II, 337; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 395.

<sup>9</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 691.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330, 684, 730, 736, 737.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 719.

money.”<sup>12</sup> “After me the deluge!” was the watchword of every capitalist and every capitalist “nation.”<sup>13</sup>

Having identified itself with the nation and “bought” the state, the bourgeoisie was in a position to appeal to the emotion of patriotism. The ruling classes played upon national prejudices and squandered the people’s blood and treasure in “piratical wars.” In the name of patriotism, the capitalists called upon the proletariat to help them in their conflicts with the capitalists of other countries. When the bourgeoisie combated the proletariat of its own country, it was again in the name of the “fatherland and society”—the bourgeois “fatherland and society.” The lower classes were taught to sacrifice their interests and give their lives to a “fatherland” that the bourgeoisie itself did not hesitate to sacrifice upon the altar of private profit. When it suited them, the states could shed the “national uniform” and combine against the proletariat.<sup>14</sup>

The exaltation of its “fatherland” was the nationalism peculiar to the bourgeoisie. Marx blamed that class for abusing and exploiting the natural attachment to the native land, for holding a narrow conception of the nation and patriotism, for foisting this conception upon the lower classes, for arousing excessive national vanity and exacerbating national hatred as instruments of domination at home and abroad, and for exalting the state above society in order the better to maintain the bourgeois order.

The worship of the state seemed the worst and most harmful form of nationalism. The state of Marx’s conception was distinctly instrumental in character—the tool of the rulers of a class society or of the democracy of a classless society. To permit that tool to acquire conscious-

<sup>12</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 155. <sup>13</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 232.

<sup>14</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 535; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 56, 112; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 89; Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

ness and ends of its own was a species of idolatry. State adoration was a disease which attacked Bonapartist regimes most virulently.<sup>15</sup>

Another form of nationalism was the tendency to look upon one’s nation as chosen for a glorious, preferably universal, purpose. Sometimes the emphasis was upon historical tradition. “Misunderstood” nationalities anointed their past with “inspired oil.”<sup>16</sup> Particularly odious was the practice of justifying “today’s iniquity by yesterday’s,” as though historical tradition were what legal precedent meant to Jonathan Swift—that “whatever has been done before, may legally be done again.” The serf had no less right to rebel because the knout against which he cried out might be “a hoary, a hereditary, a historical knout.” Marx had little sympathy with the attempt of the German “historical school” of his time to trace some of the most important values of modern civilization—freedom, for example—to the primitive Germans: “. . . good-humored enthusiasts, Teutomaniacs by blood and freethinkers by reflection, search for the history of our freedom beyond our history in the Teutonic primeval woods. But if that history is only to be found in the woods, how is it to be distinguished from the history of the freedom of the boar?”<sup>17</sup> He had as little patience with the proponents of “Nordic” nationalism or “Scandinavism.” His newspaper *Neue rheinische Zeitung* paid its respects to that movement in these terms:

Scandinavism consists in enthusiasm for a brutal, dirty, piratical, old-Nordic nationality, for that deep inwardness which is unable to express its extravagant thoughts and feelings in words, but unquestionably can do so in deeds, namely, in brutality towards women,

<sup>15</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 60 ff. <sup>16</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 152.

<sup>17</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, I<sup>1</sup>, 609.

chronic drunkenness, and teary sentimentality alternating with Berserk fury.<sup>18</sup>

Bourgeois nationalism indiscriminately exploited anything at hand, whether intrinsically praiseworthy or not, in the history, traditions, and special peculiarities of each country. In England, it was economic supremacy and the empire which fed nationalistic sentiment. The prestige of France during the Old Regime and its political leadership of Europe during revolutionary upheavals enabled nationalists to claim for France the title of natural leader of the world. German patriots rationalized the long delay in establishing a national state as a sign of cosmopolitanism. They distinguished the Germans as an essentially peaceful, spiritual, and moral nation, from the "godless, debauched" French who thirsted after military glory. Everywhere, "the sycophants of the powers-that-be poison public opinion by flattery and mendacious self-praise."<sup>19</sup> When Englishmen became indignant over the brutal methods of warfare employed by Prussia in France in 1870, Marx shared that indignation, but was moved to observe that English rulers had themselves behaved brutally in India, Jamaica, and elsewhere. However, he added ironically, "the French are neither Hindus, nor Chinese, nor Negroes, and the Prussian is no heaven-born Englishman!"<sup>20</sup>

And what of the workers? Were they immune to invidious nationalism?

At the beginning of his activity as a socialist in the forties, Marx leaned to the view that nationalism was a bourgeois passion. He observed sweepingly that in all countries "the insistence on nationality is found only

<sup>18</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 188; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 348.

<sup>19</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 38.

<sup>20</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 543; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 87.

among the bourgeois and their writers."<sup>21</sup> The internationalism of bourgeois free traders was highly dubious to him.<sup>22</sup> The fraternity of labor was the only authentic internationalism. The workers seemed, on the whole, free from national prejudices.<sup>23</sup>

Later, Marx became more conscious of the depth of the nationalist feeling of both upper and lower classes. He frequently criticized French radicals and workers for sharing with their bourgeois the fond thought that France was the "model nation" and the true home of civilization. Internationalism was taken to imply that all nations should become one by becoming French.<sup>24</sup> He resented the airs of superiority affected by French radicals when dealing with comrades of other countries. Once, when assisting French leaders to draw up a socialist program, he remarked that "when one wishes to work for Messieurs les Français, one must *do it anonymously* so as not to offend the 'national' sentiment."<sup>25</sup> On another occasion, he called attention to the danger of flattering the "national sentiment" of German artisans.<sup>26</sup> He was deeply disturbed by the antagonism between English and Irish workers of which he became increasingly aware in the fifties and sixties. He confided his distress to his friends. Prejudice against Ireland was "artificially kept alive and intensified by the [English] press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes." Poverty-stricken Irish farmers flooded the English labor market. As a result, Marx wrote in 1870, the ordinary English worker "hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of living. He feels himself to be, as against the Irish

<sup>21</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 454.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 358, 446, 628.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 467; VI, 26, 577, 652-53; Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 22 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 337, 342.

<sup>25</sup> *Sorge*, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72; *Briefwechsel*, III, 421-22.

<sup>26</sup> Mehring, *Karl Marx*, p. 239.

worker, a member of the *ruling* nation and thus turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, with the result that he strengthens their domination *over him*. He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude toward him is about the same as that of the poor whites to the Negroes in the former slave states of the United States." We have a hint of Marx's sense of the profundity of this hostility in the remark that some of the reasons for Irish independence could not be communicated to the English workers.

The Irish worker paid back in the same coin, and "with interest." He looked upon the English worker as the accomplice as well as the "stupid tool" of the rulers of Ireland. This mutual enmity was "the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret of the maintenance in power of the capitalist class, which is entirely aware of that fact." The discord was responsible for much of the friction between the United States and England; it was also "the hidden basis" of the popular antagonism which made "any genuine cooperation" between English and American workers "impossible." "It enables the governments of the two countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge of the social conflict by mutual threats and, if need be, by war with one another."<sup>27</sup> A powerful national hatred stood athwart the path of proletarian emancipation in the most important capitalist country and of the international cooperation of the proletariat of three nations.

Marx felt to the end that nationalism did not sit naturally on the proletariat. British and French workers might show "an honorable national spirit" during such a "pro-

<sup>27</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 236-37; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 258; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 414, 478.

gressive" conflict as the Crimean War, but they seemed "more or less free from the antiquated national prejudices common, in either country, to the peasantry." While victory flattered "their national pride," they had little direct interest in the war except as it offered an opportunity for criticizing the governing classes.<sup>28</sup> More extreme nationalist feeling among proletarians seemed to Marx somehow temporary, episodic, exceptional. The French workers had to reckon with an especially strong nationalist tradition. Anglo-Irish enmity was largely rooted in peculiar economic circumstances which might be altered.

The socialist idea did not involve invidious distinctions among nations; it would not lead to national struggles between advanced or between advanced and undeveloped nations. The proletariat of an advanced nation must assist the proletariat of other advanced nations in attaining the common goal. The socialization of one country was not secure unless other countries followed suit. The bourgeoisie drew strength for oppressing its native proletariat from the subjection of foreign peoples. Under socialism, the tendency to control undeveloped nations would disappear and, with it, one of the most important sources of national antipathy. The advanced countries must take a high international ground and promote the progress of undeveloped nations; it was dangerous to themselves to leave any considerable area of the globe sunk in backwardness. The roots of national oppression, national wars, and imperialism would wither in the era of socialism. The political "delirium," as well as the economic misery of capitalism, will find no place in the new society. When every nation was ruled by labor, the ideal of international peace would become a reality.<sup>29</sup> This was the faith of Marx.

<sup>28</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 27, 1855, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 33.

## 8

## NATIONAL DIFFERENCES AND THE INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION

IT IS hardly necessary to insist that Marx was primarily an internationalist. His proposed solution of the social problem was applicable to all countries, at least eventually. The welfare of every nation depended upon the introduction of the modern industrial system and its social control and direction. Capitalism and industrialism were conquering country after country. They were bringing in their train the same evils and crises everywhere. With monotonous regularity, the bourgeoisie grew and came to power, and with it grew the proletariat, which prepared to challenge this power. The victory of capitalism and the issue of socialism were increasingly transforming the world into a single community.

In analyzing forces of universal significance, Marx frequently treated the world as an integral unit. For the sake of argument, he took "the whole trading world" to be "one nation" and assumed that capitalist production was established everywhere and had permeated all branches of industry. The complete organism was "easier to study than its cells."<sup>1</sup> He acknowledged that the pure capitalism he posited existed nowhere, not even in England.<sup>2</sup> But he was

<sup>1</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, vi, 544n. <sup>2</sup> "Carey und Bastiat," *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>2</sup>, 9.

interested in explaining the forces which held the greatest potentialities for progress rather than in photographically describing the actual variety of the world.

If, therefore, he thought of the world as increasingly capitalistic, it was not in the sense that all countries were equally capitalistic, or even that every country had been launched on the sea of capitalism. If he thought of the social revolution as international, it was hardly in the sense that all countries were ready for it and that the revolution would occur simultaneously and in the same manner everywhere. Like capitalism, socialism must come to birth in a richly diversified environment. The unity of Marx's world was far more potential than actual. He implicitly classified countries into three broad categories: advanced countries; countries which were backward but contained the possibilities of progress or had already started to develop a modern economy; and countries which were not only backward but socially and economically stagnant. The difference among these categories might be one of degree or tempo of development. Thus feudal Japan was a later edition of feudal Europe.<sup>3</sup> Within the same category the differences were relative; the industrially advanced country was the image of the future of less developed lands.<sup>4</sup> The countries in each of these categories had many common problems and shared a somewhat distinctive relation to the development of capitalism and socialism.

The advanced region of the world roughly consisted of Western Europe and the United States of America. There, the foundations for capitalism were already laid and the superstructure of modern industry was arising rapidly. A large proletariat was developing. Both the economic and socio-political conditions for socialism were increasingly present.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 683n.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. vi-vii.

To the second category belonged countries like Russia and perhaps Turkey. Their development did not differ essentially from that of the Western countries, although the pace had been much slower. They were encumbered by antiquated feudal or communal relations and institutions, and such capitalist enterprises as they had were commercial and financial, rather than industrial in character. However, they stood in close proximity to the advanced countries in more than a geographic sense, and would inevitably, in one fashion or another, follow these upon the stage of industrialism. Their special problem was how to speed up political and economic growth, while the related problem of the advanced world was how to prevent the conservatism of the backward countries from being an obstacle to its own further progress.

Quite different was the position of the countries in the last category. These were regarded by Marx as incapable of organizing modern societies through their own efforts. Such was the condition of virgin lands or regions inhabited by primitive tribes, and of some very old, large, and important civilizations. Only powerful pressure from without could stir them into change; advanced countries would help to modernize them. Marx hoped that the bourgeoisie would accomplish that task, but he also contemplated the possibility that a socialist West might undertake the administration and transformation of backward countries. The reader may recall his remark that "the great social revolution" would place the world economy and market under "the common control of the most advanced peoples."<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie was forcibly "civilizing" all nations, "even the most barbarous," by improving production and communication. The Chinese walls of economic and cultural isolation were everywhere crumbling

<sup>5</sup> New York *Tribune*, August 8, 1853, p. 5.

before the attack of the cheap goods of capitalism. One country after another was compelled to become bourgeois or be ruined. Capitalism was creating a world "in its own image."

This world, however, still consisted of distinctive regions. The economic and political changes which accompanied the introduction of modern industry occurred within the framework of large geographic units. The bourgeoisie was gradually putting an end to the dispersion or fragmentation of the means of production, property, and population. The small areas were being assembled into much larger, but not world-wide, polities. The "necessary effect" of agglomeration of population, industrialization, and the concentration of property was political centralization on a national scale: "Independent, or loosely connected provinces with disparate interests, laws, government, and custom tariffs, have been pressed together into one nation, one government, one system of laws, one national class interest, one tariff boundary."<sup>6</sup>

Marx appears to have expected that the more developed societies would become socialist in the near future. With a sense of immediacy, he would speak of "the revolution of the nineteenth century."<sup>7</sup> For his own age, the "world revolution" meant a revolution in the advanced world, or in "all important countries of the world."<sup>8</sup> The *Manifesto* outlined a political program with specific reference to England, the United States, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Poland; neither Russia nor Turkey was mentioned. The Inaugural Address of the First International declared, in 1864, that the emancipation of labor was a problem "embracing all countries in which modern society ex-

<sup>6</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 201, 528-30, 536.

<sup>7</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 24; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 47, 62.

<sup>8</sup> Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 139.



ists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, political and theoretical, of the most advanced countries." <sup>9</sup>

The revolution presented both a national and an international problem: how to attain the socialist objective in individual, advanced countries, and how to integrate national efforts into a campaign to socialize the whole Western world. Socialism must, after all, come to life in a particular country and spread to other particular countries; it must find a "local habitation and a name." "The struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie is in form, though not in substance, primarily a national struggle. The proletariat of every country must naturally first of all settle accounts with its own bourgeoisie." <sup>10</sup> This position of the *Manifest* was reasserted in 1875: the workers must organize themselves as a class at home. Their own country was the "immediate arena" of their struggle. The class conflict could not be waged effectively on less than a national scale or with disregard of existing state lines, although, given the interconnections of the world market and capitalists, the workers must organize internationally as well. The nation was the irreducible unit for the establishment of socialism. <sup>11</sup>

National coverage was the practical climax of the proletarian movement and of the class struggle. The *Manifest* described how, in the early stages of industrialism, the workingmen fought against capitalism individually and locally. They combined by factories and trades. They showed their immaturity by destroying machines, setting fire to factories, and sighing nostalgically for the "lost position of the medieval workers." Their orientation was backward rather than forward. They were "scattered

<sup>9</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

<sup>10</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 536.

<sup>11</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, pp. 14, 20.

throughout the country and splintered by competition," while the bourgeoisie was already organized on a national scale. The latter was continually at odds with the aristocracy or with the bourgeoisie of other nations; its factions were also engaged in conflicts among themselves. The embattled bourgeoisie, in its search for allies, appealed to the proletarians and drew them into the political arena, thus educating them for public combat and supplying them with "weapons which will be turned against" capitalism. The proletarians were being consolidated, but they were as yet fighting the enemies of their enemies, and their victories were therefore bourgeois victories.

Proletarian maturity and nationwide integration must come, in the final analysis, through economic development and the growth of the self-consciousness of the workers as a class apart. The advance of industry increased not merely the numbers of proletarians but their concentration. Strength induced consciousness of strength. The introduction of machinery wiped out distinctions of labor and depressed and leveled off wages and living conditions. Competition among the bourgeois and commercial crises caused fluctuations in wages and intensified the insecurity of the workers. Caught increasingly in a common economic whirl, they were driven closer together; disputes between individual employees and employers took the form of collisions between two classes. The workers then organized coalitions against the bourgeois, to maintain rates of wages. Modern means of communication brought the workers of different localities in contact with each other; at last the proletariat would be consolidated on a national scale. Conflicts of the same character in different localities would now be "centralized into a national struggle, a class struggle." <sup>12</sup> This was the culmination of the development

<sup>12</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 533-34.

of each considerable unit of the international proletariat and the starting point of the creation of the socialist society.<sup>13</sup>

The first task of each national proletariat was to socialize its own economy. Strategy and political programs must vary from country to country. Marx was not only aware, but insistent, that the same movement or institution might have a different significance in different countries, depending on special economic conditions, class structure, peculiarities of historical experience, and cultural characteristics. His sharp contrast between European and American republicanism was a case in point. The older culture of the countries of Europe, their sharp class distinctions, their developed means of production, and "an intellectual consciousness in which all traditional ideas have been dissolved through the work of centuries," combined to invest the proposal to change the form of government with explosive force and a more than political implication. The continental monarchy was not merely one of several alternative regimes but "the normal ballast and indispensable cloak of class rule." The European republican was not infrequently a social revolutionary. In the United States the republic was a fact, not an issue, even from the narrowly political point of view. Here, republicanism was but the "conservative form of existence" of bourgeois society—in other words, the sign of the status quo. This was natural for countries where social classes, although they existed, were still in a state of flux, where groups shifted from one class to another, where modern means of production did not correspond to a "stagnant population" but supplied the deficiency in the supply of labor, and where the absorption with material development was favorable

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 444; Nikolaievsky and Mänchen-Helfen, *op. cit.*, p. 229.

to the survival of antiquated and conservative ideas.<sup>14</sup>

While this contrast did not represent Marx's final judgment of American political institutions, it illustrated his sense of the relativity of historical and cultural factors. The meaning of democratic forms, like the significance of republicanism, varied over a wide range. The existence of an energetic labor movement in England in the middle of the century seemed to guarantee that the proposed Chartist reforms would be used to accomplish radical social ends. The democratization of English suffrage would be "a far more socialistic measure than anything which has been honored with that name on the Continent."<sup>15</sup> In the absence of strong labor movements, democracy lost much of its importance.<sup>16</sup> Marx combated what he regarded as a one-sided emphasis on demands for political democracy by the followers of Lassalle in Germany.<sup>17</sup> It was essential, in that country, to supplement democratic reforms by proletarian organization and activity in the economic field. Again, democratic forms were subject to abuse and corruption, and to exploitation by military and Bonapartist dictatorships. Bonapartism was careful to cloak itself with the toga of democracy. Napoleon III had "lived in vain" for those who looked upon universal suffrage as a panacea.<sup>18</sup> Under proper management, popular suffrage had proved to be—in France at any rate—"the best machinery in the world by which to establish a despotism upon a firm and comely basis."<sup>19</sup> Instances were not lacking in France

<sup>14</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 30; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 408; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 246.

<sup>15</sup> *New York Tribune*, August 25, 1852, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> "Vierter jährlicher Bericht des Generalrathes der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association," *Der Vorbote*, September 1868, p. 139.

<sup>17</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 205; *Briefwechsel*, III, 233-34, 240; *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*, pp. 28, 31.

<sup>18</sup> *Briefwechsel*, I, 322; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 205.

<sup>19</sup> *New York Tribune*, August 29, 1859, p. 4.

and the United States, where democratic formalities acquired conservative or "counterrevolutionary" significance.<sup>20</sup>

The widespread notion that Marx expected that the victory of socialism would require a violent revolution in all countries is false. There can be no question that he hoped to witness a social upheaval which would sweep over the whole Western world, that he knew a revolutionary wave would involve gigantic, open conflicts, and that he was eager to jump into such a general fray. His objective judgment of the course of social transformation was another matter. As early as 1847 Marx had recognized the possibility that political developments which were accompanied by violent action in some countries might occur peacefully in others. The socialists "knew only too well," the *Communist Journal* stated, "that with the possible exceptions of Britain and the United States, we shall not be able to enter our better world unless we have previously and by the exercise of force won our political rights."<sup>21</sup> The possible exceptions were made hesitantly, it is true, and they applied only to two states, but these states were among the most important in the West. Twenty-five years later, he drew a similar distinction:

Some day the workers must conquer political supremacy, in order to establish the new organization of labor; they must overthrow the old political system whereby the old institutions were sustained. If they fail to do this, they will suffer the fate of the early Christians, who neglected to overthrow the old system, and who, for that reason, never had a kingdom in this world. Of course, I must not be supposed to imply that the means to this end will be everywhere the same. We know that special regard must be paid to the institutions, customs and traditions of various lands; and we do not deny that there are certain countries, such as the United States and England,

<sup>20</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 110.

<sup>21</sup> Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 291.

in which the workers may hope to secure their ends by peaceful means. If I mistake not, Holland belongs to the same category. Even so, we have to recognize that in most continental countries, force will have to be the lever of revolution. It is to force that in due time the workers will have to appeal if the dominion of labor is at long last to be established.<sup>22</sup>

This simple statement has been subjected to the strain of violent controversy between "revolutionary" and "evolutionary" interpreters. The fact is that Marx was neither a "revolutionist" nor an "evolutionist" in the sense that he insisted on any particular method in all countries. He never abandoned the belief that the old states on the continent, encumbered by monarchical, military, aristocratic, and clerical institutions or remnants, must be essentially altered or destroyed. He thought evolutionary change, whether political or social, possible only in countries where liberal and constitutional regimes were deeply rooted.

Marx did not advocate a uniform program for all nations, even for nations passing through the same economic stage. He undoubtedly would have subscribed to Engels' conclusion from the experience of the radical movement in England, that it was impossible "to cram" a social theory into a large nation, even if it was "the best theory" and one which had been developed out of that nation's own history.<sup>23</sup> The *Manifest* assumed the socialization of the means of production as the eventual common goal, but emphasized that the immediate measures for advancing toward that goal would "naturally be different in different countries." Its ten-point program was restricted in applicability to the more advanced countries. The socialists were to cooperate with various parties and on occasion even with bourgeois groups. In England, the socialists were

<sup>22</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-41; see Engels' statement in his preface to the first English translation of *Das Kapital* (Chicago, 1906), I, 32.

<sup>23</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

to support the Chartists; in the United States, the Free-Soil reformers. They were to work with the radical republicans of the day in France. Among the parties striving for the emancipation of Poland, the socialists were to help that party which favored an agrarian revolution. They were to join forces with the bourgeoisie in Germany, provided that class was prepared to engage in a serious campaign against the old order.<sup>24</sup>

Tactics, even more than strategy, must vary from country to country. To give but one example—although concededly an extreme one—Marx accepted terrorism as inevitable under Czarist conditions although he always opposed it in the West. When Alexander II was assassinated in 1881, Marx described the terrorists as “thoroughly sound men, without melodramatic pose, simple, objective, heroic.” They did not preach tyrannicide as a “theory” or “panacea,” in the “schoolboy” fashion of certain Western anarchists and liberals. Terrorism “was a specifically Russian, historically inevitable method of action, about which there is as little reason to moralize—for or against—as there is about the earthquake in Chios.”<sup>25</sup>

Marx’s view of the role of the advance party of the socialist movement harmonized with his conception of the relation between the national and the international purposes of that movement. According to the *Manifest*, the socialists in each country were to coöperate with existing democratic and radical forces in order to influence them in a socialist direction; at the same time, through mutual understanding with socialists of other countries, they were to promote international interests. The socialists did “not form a separate party opposed to other parties of workers.” The immediate socialist aim was “the same as that of

<sup>24</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 545, 556–57.

<sup>25</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 321; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

all other proletarian parties: organization of the proletariat as a class; overthrow of the supremacy of the bourgeoisie; conquest of political power by the proletariat.” Some of the interests of a national proletariat concerned it alone, others were part and parcel of the common struggle of the international proletariat against the international bourgeoisie. Working class parties must further both the special interests of the workers in each country and the general interests of workers everywhere. Some proletarian parties, the *Manifest* implied, might be especially dedicated to the promotion of gains at home. The socialists distinguish themselves by the promotion of the international goal of the proletariat: “. . . on the one hand, in the various national struggles of the proletarians, they emphasize and champion the common interests of the proletariat as a whole, those interests that are independent of nationality; and, on the other hand, in the various phases of development through which the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie passes, they always represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”<sup>26</sup>

The emphasis on international or national action varied with circumstances. In the period to which the *Manifest* belongs, it seemed possible to conceive of national and international action being undertaken simultaneously and in an integrated fashion. The activities of the First International, in the sixties, when no great national radical parties existed, naturally placed international activity in the foreground. Later, the attacks on the International, the rifts within it, and its consequent decline and death in the early seventies, had the effect of shelving, for the time being at any rate, any effort to conduct an effective international movement. Moreover, the unification of Germany and Italy and the extension of constitutionalism and popular

<sup>26</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 537–38.

suffrage opened new avenues of political progress within national boundaries. As a result, Marx became more active in promoting the organization of socialist parties in advanced countries. The testament of the International declared: "Let us give our fellow workers in Europe a little time to strengthen their national affairs and they will surely soon be in a position to remove the barriers between themselves and the working men of other parts of the world."<sup>27</sup>

The objective of the revolution was not national in character. Socialism, like capitalism, must transcend national boundaries. The success of the revolution rested on the mutual support of the various labor movements. "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" was the slogan of the *Manifest* of 1848, of the constitution of the Communist League of 1850, and of the Inaugural Address of 1864.<sup>28</sup> The coöperation of the workers of different lands was essential to the protection of their economic interests. Such coöperation could prevent, for example, the lowering of wages by the importation of cheap foreign labor. (This was, in fact, one of the reasons for the establishment of the First International.<sup>29</sup>) Then, no nation could become socialist definitively without regard to the question of whether, and when, the other nations would also become socialist. The issue of "socialism in one country" was met in the *Grundsätze des Kommunismus*, which Engels wrote shortly before he collaborated with Marx on the *Manifest*: the socialist revolution would not be

merely a national revolution; it will take place in all civilized countries, that is, at least in England, the United States, France, and

<sup>27</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 285.

<sup>28</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 557; Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 340; Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

<sup>29</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 445.

Germany, at one and the same time. It will develop more rapidly or slowly in each of these countries, according to whether this or that country has a more developed industry, greater wealth, or a more considerable quantity of productive forces. The revolution will therefore be achieved most slowly and with the greatest difficulty in Germany, and most quickly and easily in England. It will also cause a considerable reaction in other countries of the world, altering completely and hastening considerably their previous course of development.

The revolution was a "universal" one and would therefore have "a universal terrain."<sup>30</sup> The language of the *Manifest* was less sweeping than that of the *Grundsätze*. The prediction of simultaneous revolution was not repeated. It was simply stated that "united action, at least among civilized countries, is one of the first conditions for the emancipation" of the proletariat.<sup>31</sup> The *Grundsätze* and the *Manifest* agreed in regarding concerted efforts by several countries as requisite for revolution in the Western world.

Marx chided the French workers for having imagined, in 1848, that they would be able to carry through a proletarian revolution in France while the other nations remained capitalist. That was impossible because French economy was conditioned by foreign trade and the position of France in the world market. The "laws" of that market could not be violated "without a European revolutionary war, which would strike back" at England. The problem of the proletariat would nowhere be "solved within the national walls." A combination of several nations led by a revolutionary England was needed.<sup>32</sup> In the sixties and seventies, Marx became persuaded that a revolution could occur only as a result of a great war in Europe.<sup>33</sup> The implication was that if revolutions occurred in several coun-

<sup>30</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 516.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 543.

<sup>32</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 46, 113.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 137, 156; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 459; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800.

tries at once, they would reinforce each other and sever the international conservative bonds that checked the radical forces. It was inconceivable that if a single country in the West were to establish socialism, the others would stand by with folded arms.

Before 1848, Marx had developed a pattern of the probable course of the European revolution. This might break out in France, but its real seat of action would be England, which, being the most advanced industrial country and having the most politically conscious proletariat, would be the first to set up a socialist system. Other countries would then follow suit. The failure of the Revolution of 1848, the absence of England from the revolutionary ranks, and subsequent developments, however, destroyed this pattern. Marx now pinned his hopes for revolutionary initiative and leadership on other countries, depending on the general conditions existing at any given moment. Russia and France figured prominently, but not exclusively or consistently, as likely stimuli of a European transformation. Marx no longer assumed that political tensions would rise with economic development or that the most advanced countries would give the first examples of revolutionary change.

The revolution of non-European areas belonged to the more distant future. But what if Europe, and perhaps the whole Western world established socialism, while Asia—to mention but one other principal area of the globe—was still capitalist or was introducing capitalism? The two systems must surely face each other as irreconcilable enemies. Would a socialist Europe be likely to prevail in a frontal conflict with a capitalist Asia? Marx pondered the issue in a letter to Engels in 1857. After remarking on the revival of international trade following the crisis of that year, he went on to say:

We cannot deny that bourgeois society has lived to see its sixteenth century a second time—a sixteenth century which I hope will sound its death knell just as the first one thrust it into existence. The real task of bourgeois society is the establishment of the world market, at least in its outlines, and of production based upon the world market. Since the world is round, this seems to have been brought to a close by the colonization of California and Australia and the opening up of China and Japan. The knotty question for us is this: on the Continent the revolution is imminent and will also immediately assume a socialist character. Will it not necessarily be crushed in this little corner because the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendancy in a much greater territory?<sup>34</sup>

One wonders whether Marx was disturbed again by this eventuality. Looking back, it is clear that his fears, no less than his hopes, were premature. The bourgeoisie of Europe so strengthened itself in the subsequent decades (at least partly through the increased exploitation of Asia and Africa) that it was able to adjourn the expected socialist revolution. The sanguine revolutionist quite characteristically overestimated the pace of capitalist advance in Asia. Yet, his faith was grounded in more than a judgment of the tempo of change. The tendency to socialism, he believed, would be as inherent in Asiatic as in European capitalism. Any bourgeoisie could be trusted, in the lively phrase of the *Manifest*, to produce its own grave diggers.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 342.

<sup>35</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 537.

## 9

ENGLAND: THE HEART OF  
CAPITALISM

AS THE starting point and principal locale of industrial capitalism, England held a unique position in the world of Marx. It was the home of the most powerful bourgeoisie and the largest proletariat. Its dominion over the commercial and industrial scene of the middle of the nineteenth century was unchallenged. As the sensitive and powerful nerve center of the business cycle, it was the first to show the effects of prosperity and crisis. "The initial [economic] process always takes place in England; she is the demiurge of the bourgeois cosmos."<sup>1</sup>

The eminence of England was based on a long historical development. In the seventeenth century, Holland had been the "model country" of commercial capitalism. Her place was soon taken by her rival across the Channel, who transformed commercial into industrial capitalism earlier and more thoroughly than any other nation.<sup>2</sup> In the terminology of Marx, the modern economic history of England had been "classical," which meant that it had proceeded in a manner expressing and illustrating most clearly and directly the chief elements and the inner meaning of the course of capitalism: the primary accumulation of capital

<sup>1</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 716-17, 719; III<sup>2</sup>, 141-42; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 586-87, 591. On the capitalist priority of Italy, see *Das Kapital*, I, 682n.; III<sup>2</sup>, 141.

in various ways at home and abroad; the creation of a large class of wage earners without land or other property; and, finally, the introduction of the industrialized means of production on a large scale and under capitalist control.

England seemed a veritable laboratory where the moving forces of capitalism had been isolated and laid bare for all to see. That was why Marx drew so largely from English history for the material and illustrations in *Das Kapital*. "The physicist," he explained in the preface to the first edition, "either observes natural phenomena where they occur in the most pregnant forms and are least obscured by disturbing influences; or, wherever possible, he performs experiments under conditions which assure the occurrence of the phenomenon in its pure form." The last expedient was obviously not open to the social scientist. In order to investigate the nature of capitalist methods of production and exchange, he had to turn to the country which had been their "classical ground." The history of the expropriation of the agricultural producers from the soil, for example, assumed different aspects in different countries and the steps in that process followed one another in varying sequences. It was only in England that expropriation showed the "classical" succession of stages.<sup>3</sup> Only there did capitalistic landed property develop "adequately."<sup>4</sup> Agrarian life and work were mercilessly subordinated to the conditions of capitalist exploitation. The profundity and effect of that transformation made England "the most revolutionary country in the world." The rural masses were uprooted from the soil, villages were razed, farm buildings destroyed, and the land put to new uses—in short, the traditional society was completely subverted and the "conditions of production" were "so shaped historically as to

<sup>3</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, vi, 682; note also *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 7.

permit the most favorable investment of capital.”<sup>5</sup> The result was that “great masses of people were suddenly and forcibly torn away from their means of subsistence, and hurled on the labor market as ‘free’ proletarians.”<sup>6</sup> Finally, it was England that combined systematically the various “factors of primary accumulation” in “the colonial system, the national debt system, the modern system of taxation, and the modern system of production.”<sup>7</sup> By transforming the method of production, the English had taken the step which Marx regarded as the greatest contribution and function of capitalism. France, through her great Revolution, had given important ideas to mankind, but, as Engels remarked, the steam engine and the railroad were “worth a good many ideas.”<sup>8</sup>

The development of capitalism was etched into the thought and speech of England and the character of her business men. English economic theory contributed the most disciplined analysis of capitalism. The sound appraisal of the importance of modern finance by the early English economists reflected the development of money economy in their country.<sup>9</sup> Robinson Crusoe, with his predilection for the commercial virtues of order and calculation seemed to Marx the typical bourgeois. Daniel Defoe’s hero saved “watch, ledger, pen, and ink from the wreck” and, like “a good Englishman,” proceeded to keep a set of books. He took inventory of his useful possessions, noted the various operations required for their production, and entered the average labor time which given quantities of these goods consumed. Crusoe liked to pray as a sort of

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7; see also *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 217.

<sup>6</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 682.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 716.

<sup>8</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 366; see also *Correspondence*, p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 39 ff.; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, I, 41-42; “Carey und Bastiat,” *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>2</sup>, 7-8.

“recreation.”<sup>10</sup> But the mercantile qualities which made men competent bookkeepers might mislead them into taking the measure of all things by their measurement. It was in this spirit that Marx criticized the “archphilistine” utilitarian Bentham as “a purely English phenomenon.” No other country could have produced that “genius in the way of bourgeois stupidity,” or a moralizing poetaster like Martin Tupper—a highly doubtful generalization.<sup>11</sup>

The special experiences of enclosures and industrialization had given rise to a stark idiom. Marx was fond of pointing out that certain expressions could have been coined only in England. Englishmen could not fail to observe that the uprooting of the small farmers from the soil had been nothing but a “clearing of estates.” This phrase was not in use on the Continent because the process had nowhere been carried through so directly and brutally. Nor could the English avoid remarking that homework for low wages was, quite visibly, a “sweating system.” Low-paid labor was called “cheap labor,” an arresting combination of adjective and noun. As soon as the class of wage earners grew to noticeable proportions, the expression “laboring poor” made its appearance in parliamentary law. Marx observed that the “technical term” for the agricultural laborer in English political economy was “wretch”! Engels, through whom Marx received most of his early impressions of England, was struck by the fact that business men called the workers “hands” to their faces, and were wont to say that a man was “worth” as much as he owned and to refer to the wealthy as “respectable,” assigning them to a new species: “the better sort of people.” The supremacy of the bourgeois and “the spirit of huckstering”

<sup>10</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 573-74n. On the “periodical fits of morality” of the British public, see *New York Tribune*, August 12, 1853, p. 5.



penetrated the language.<sup>12</sup> Commercial calculation, after much adding and subtracting, ended by extracting the roots of many human values.

England conformed more closely to the economic than to the political patterns of Marx, especially his earlier political patterns. Her political institutions had followed a path distinctly less "classical" than did her economic movements. We have seen that he held parliamentary republicanism the most suitable form of government for the rule of the bourgeoisie. Yet the most advanced bourgeois nation in the world, while it had a distinguished history of liberalism, retained not only the monarchy but also some of the old aristocratic and clerical institutions. Marx's early conception of centralization was more applicable to continental states, notably France, than to this island kingdom. England was more capitalistic than France but a good deal less centralized politically and administratively. This means, as we have observed, that the conventional view of the Marxist correlation between economic and political forms is not tenable.

In substance, however, the English constitution gave expression to capitalist interests. With "shameless egoism," Parliament had played the role of a "permanent trades-union of the capitalists directed against the workers."<sup>13</sup> Marx did not share the contemporary admiration of English institutions, although he sometimes acknowledged their value. As a body, Parliament could hardly be said to have been endowed with "genius," and the House of Commons occasionally exhibited "profound ignorance."<sup>14</sup> The cabinet system offered opportunities for

<sup>12</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 6-7; *Das Kapital*, I, 358, 427, 516, 725n.; *Sämtliche Werke*, IV, 262.

<sup>13</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 707.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 442; *New York Tribune*, August 14, 1857, p. 5; February 14, 1860, p. 6; August 11, 1860, p. 5.

irresponsible action by incompetent or unscrupulous politicians.<sup>15</sup> Despite constitutional guarantees, dictatorial and illiberal measures were hardly unknown.<sup>16</sup> Parliamentary corruption was still rife as late as the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>17</sup> Marx did not attach much significance to the "feudal" forms of the "aristocratico-constitutional" system of England, although he once predicted greater progress for her when she had "cast off that medieval crust which now clogs and impedes her action." He wondered whether the people were ready for a fundamental change and whether it would not require "some great disaster" to bring it about.<sup>18</sup>

England had purchased commercial and industrial success at enormous social cost. The birth of large-scale industry was celebrated by the impressment and kidnapping of young people, a Herodian massacre of innocent creatures. Her investments abroad represented "the capitalized blood of children."<sup>19</sup> The laws against strikes and trade-unions were repealed reluctantly and "only under the pressure of the masses."<sup>20</sup> Legislative improvement was apt to be narrow, partial, mincing. A legal step forward was frequently balanced by a practical step backward.<sup>21</sup> Marx appeared to think that one of the reasons for the stinting character of English reform was the failure of the Revolution of 1789 to spread to the north. He was impressed by the superiority of the more direct "revolution-

<sup>15</sup> *New York Tribune*, February 14, 1860, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, March 31, 1857, p. 6; April 6, 1857, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, November 4, 1859, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, October 25, 1851, p. 6; June 22, 1853, p. 5. See also *Briefwechsel*, I, 312; *New York Tribune*, June 27, 1855, p. 4. On the relation between the middle classes and the "oligarchs," see *ibid.*, March 9, 1857, p. 6; April 17, 1857, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 721, 722-23.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 707; see also pp. 374-75.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 374-75, 459-60; *New York Tribune*, April 22, 1857, p. 6; March 15, 1859, p. 6; March 24, 1859, p. 6.

ary method" of legislation. The French Legislature had established the same working day for all shops and factories, whereas Parliament "yields reluctantly to the pressure of circumstances, now on this point, and now on that, and loses its way in a bewildering maze of contradictory enactments." What French law proclaimed as a general principle was won in England piecemeal in the name of children, minors, and women, and only later claimed as "a general right."<sup>22</sup> "A true reform in the old English sense of the word" was one which "neither creates anything new, nor abolishes anything old." Rather, "it aims at conserving the old system by giving it a more reasonable form and teaching it, so to say, new manners. This is the mystery of the 'hereditary wisdom' of the English oligarchical legislation. It simply consists in making abuses hereditary, by refreshing them, as it were, from time to time, by an infusion of new blood."<sup>23</sup>

The struggle between the two old political parties was largely shadow-boxing.<sup>24</sup> Each party consisted of a combination of several interests and was essentially capitalistic. The Whigs, who originally stood for "the oldest, richest, most arrogant portion" of the landed aristocracy, had formed a strong alliance with the "bankocracy" and later with the "millocracy" of the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> The Tories represented the landed classes and certain commercial groups.<sup>26</sup> Marx did not take seriously the reformism of the Whigs or the nationalism of the Tories. He regarded Whig opposition to political corruption as being due to the sense of power of the industrial middle class and to its desire to avoid the expensive maneuvers of bought elections. It was cheaper "to compete with the landed aris-

<sup>22</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 264; see also *Briefwechsel*, III, 319.

<sup>23</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 27, 1853, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, February 21, 1854, p. 6; April 22, 1857, p. 6; March 15, 1858, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, August 21, 1852, p. 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Loc. cit.*

tocracy by general moral, than by personal pecuniary means."<sup>27</sup> Although the Tories made much of their attachment to the monarchy, the state church, and "the beauties of the old English constitution," they were in fact as much devoted to profit as their antagonists.<sup>28</sup> It is hardly necessary to add that Marx regarded "Tory radicalism" with the gravest suspicion.<sup>29</sup>

Marx felt that the issue between bourgeoisie and proletariat must, in the final analysis, be settled in England. This country was so powerful economically that, if it became socialist, the other countries would take the same step; at least they would be too weak to oppose the change. If England did not become socialist first and did not follow an example of socialization elsewhere, it would be in a position to thwart the success of the new order. English economic supremacy, which was the basis for this view, had not yet been challenged by Germany and the United States, not to mention more recent rivals. While industrial capitalism would not fulfill itself completely until it had spread from England to the other large nations, it would not be definitively undermined anywhere unless it were also undermined in its original and strongest center.

The course of English labor was therefore of enormous concern to Marx. In the forties, when his principal economic and political ideas became crystallized, Chartism stood out as the most promising popular movement in the world. Marx then looked upon the English workers as a revolutionary class whose victory would propel forward the movements of exploited groups everywhere. In 1847, in a speech in London on the Polish question, he urged that

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, September 4, 1852, p. 6. On the famous Reform Bill of 1832, see *ibid.*, August 28, 1855, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 49; see also *New York Tribune*, August 21, 1852, p. 6.

<sup>29</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 547; *Das Kapital*, I, 217n.

the emancipation of smaller nations depended on the emancipation of England:

No small country so backward economically as Poland can free itself by its own efforts. Its freedom depends on the emancipation of the civilized countries. The most civilized land, the land whose industry is the most developed, whose bourgeoisie is the most powerful, where the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are divided in the sharpest fashion and stand most decisively opposed to one another, will be the first to witness the emancipation of the workers of all the lands. That land is England, and therefore the emancipation of the Poles will be achieved not in their own country, but in England.

Another report of the speech quoted Marx as having said:

The victory of the English proletarians over the English bourgeoisie is . . . decisive for the victory of all oppressed people over their oppressors . . . You Chartists need not express pious hopes for the emancipation of nationalities. Defeat your own internal enemies and you may then have the proud consciousness of having defeated the whole old society.<sup>30</sup>

Among the disappointments which the Revolution of 1848 brought to Marx, the failure of England to share in the general overturn of governments was conspicuous. France revolted, and so did many German and Italian states. In England, instead of a revolution, there was a huge march on Parliament with a petition for the six points of the Chartist program of democratic political reform. The country was "shaken," but no more.<sup>31</sup> Bourgeois England became the rock on which the counterrevolution built its "church."<sup>32</sup> In the period of business recovery which began in 1849-50, the prospects of radicalism became still less bright. Only an economic depression would create another critical situation in Europe but Marx was confident

<sup>30</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 359-60.

<sup>31</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 49; *Nachlass*, III, 177-78.

<sup>32</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 105; *New York Tribune*, July 27, 1857, p. 5; June 24, 1858, p. 4.

that the revolution was "just as certain" as another decline in the business curve.

However, his picture of the role of England in a future revolutionary period underwent a decided change. He began to realize that it would prove more difficult to assault capitalism in its center than in the periphery. He still insisted that the economic "foundation" of continental revolutions was "always" laid in England, but now argued that "violent outbreaks" should be expected to occur earlier in continental countries, which formed "the extremities of the bourgeois body," than in its English "heart," where the possibility of capitalistic readjustment was greater. The social seriousness of continental revolutions, as distinguished from the political, could be judged by the measure of the reaction upon England.<sup>33</sup> The most advanced country would be the terminal rather than the starting point of the socialist transformation.

Marx's faith in the Chartist movement died very hard. It was only gradually that the events of the later fifties and the sixties caused him to moderate his sanguine opinion of its revolutionary value. In 1852, he spoke of "the knowledge acquired by some popular leaders that the people are too indolent to create, for the moment, a movement of their own. . . . The mass of the Chartists, too, are at the present moment absorbed by material production." The decline appeared to be temporary. "On all points, the nucleus of the party is reorganized, and the communications reestablished, in England as well as in Scotland, and in the event of a commercial and political crisis, the importance of the present noiseless activity at the headquarters of Chartism will be felt all over Great Britain."<sup>34</sup> He

<sup>33</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 134; *New York Tribune*, September 6, 1860, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> *New York Tribune*, November 25, 1852, p. 6; but see *Briefwechsel*, III, 316-17.

could still believe that a world war would bring the English proletariat to power.<sup>35</sup> A popular demonstration in Hyde Park in 1855 impressed him as "quite revolutionary."<sup>36</sup> It seemed natural to assume that the "first-born sons of modern industry" would not be "the last to aid the social revolution produced by that industry."<sup>37</sup>

The expected commercial crisis occurred in 1857 but its revolutionary effect was nil.<sup>38</sup> Marx and Engels were surprised by the brevity of the crisis and the speedy recovery which followed it. Bourgeois society, Marx was moved to write, was experiencing a high tide comparable to that of the sixteenth century. There was no sign of revolutionary activity in England, or indeed anywhere else in the Western world. The only consolation was the stirring of reform in Russia.<sup>39</sup> The two socialists exchanged increasingly gloomy opinions of the prospects of the English labor movement and especially of the quality of its leaders, some of whom had begun to advocate collaboration with bourgeois radicals. Marx broke relations with Ernest Jones, the Chartist leader, on that score.<sup>40</sup> He agreed with Engels that both the workers and their chiefs had become infected with bourgeois tendencies. Engels remarked that the proletarian movement "in its old traditional Chartist form must perish completely before it can develop into a new vital form." It was difficult to foretell the new form. The attempts at alliance with bourgeois radicals showed that "the English proletariat is actually becoming more and more bourgeois, so that this most bourgeois of all nations is apparently aiming ultimately at the possession of a bour-

<sup>35</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 113.

<sup>36</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 91; "Eine Massenaktion im Jahre 1855," *Neue Zeit*, XXXI, 10.

<sup>37</sup> *Correspondence*, p. 91.

<sup>38</sup> On expectations of revolution, see *Briefwechsel*, II, 201, 207, 237, 242, 341-42; *New York Tribune*, July 27, 1857, p. 4.

<sup>39</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 275, 317.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 247.

geois aristocracy and a bourgeois proletariat *as well* as a bourgeoisie." "For a nation which exploits the whole world," he concluded, "this is, of course, to a certain extent justified." The revival of the proletarian movement would depend on the collapse of the economic supremacy of the country. "The only thing that would help here would be a few thoroughly bad years and these seem no longer so easy to come by since the gold discoveries [1849]."<sup>41</sup>

During the American Civil War, Marx strove to rally the English workers to the support of the North. He felt that they had not been reacting sufficiently to the economic crisis of 1862-63.<sup>42</sup> The more enthusiastic support of the Northern cause which became evident in 1863 cheered him considerably. It was in that year that Engels observed that "all revolutionary energy has evaporated pretty completely from the English proletariat and the English proletarian is declaring his complete agreement to the rule of the bourgeoisie."<sup>43</sup> The following year, in the Inaugural Address of the First International, Marx pointed to the factors which, since 1848, had conspired to reduce English labor to "a state of political nullity": the emigration of "the most advanced" workers to America and Australia, the destruction of the confidence of the ruling classes after the defeat of the Revolution, and the "temporary bribe of greater work and wages."<sup>44</sup>

The course of the English movement had become uncertain and unclear to him.<sup>45</sup> During the great demonstrations for popular suffrage in 1866, the workers nearly came to blows with authority. Englishmen seemed to be definitely in need of a "revolutionary education": ". . . these thickheaded John Bulls, whose skulls seem to have been manufactured especially for the constables' bludgeons, will

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 340.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 111.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 135.

<sup>44</sup> *Steklov, op. cit.*, pp. 442-43.

<sup>45</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 138.

never get anywhere without a really bloody encounter with the rulers.”<sup>46</sup> Marx later proposed the injection of a dose of radicalism from without. The First International, whose principal leader he was, seemed to be the logical body to administer the injection. The International must intensify its efforts to direct and influence the workers toward a more aggressive policy. Special attention must be paid to England as “the metropolis of capitalism.” It was “the only country where there are no more *peasants* and where landed property is concentrated in a few hands”; “where the *capitalist form*—that is, combined labor on a large scale under capitalist entrepreneurs—has conquered nearly the whole of production”; “*where the great majority of the population consists of wage workers*”; and finally, where “the class struggle and the organization of the working class through the trade-unions has acquired a certain degree of maturity and universality.” Domination of the world market had made England “the only country where revolution in its economic conditions must react immediately on the entire world.” In short, only England could serve as “the *lever* of a serious economic revolution.” With native labor and radicalism grown so “bourgeois,” it would be “foolish,” even “criminal,” to allow that lever to fall exclusively into English hands. Although they had “all the necessary material prerequisites for the social revolution,” the English lacked “the spirit of generalization and the revolutionary passion.” By supplying that deficiency, the International would accelerate “a truly revolutionary movement in this country and consequently everywhere.”<sup>47</sup>

If England was still the lever of the revolution, the only fulcrum visible at the moment was Ireland. The antago-

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 351-52.

<sup>47</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 476-77.

nism toward the Irish neutralized the class struggle in England; “every industrial and commercial center . . . now possesses a working class population split into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians.” Landlordism and capitalism were stronger in England because of the wealth and power they drew from Ireland, where, however, they were more vulnerable to attack. Ireland provided the English government with the “only pretext for maintaining a large permanent army which can be launched, if necessary, against the English workers. . . .” The English workers must therefore be made aware that the emancipation of the smaller island was “not a question of abstract justice or humanitarian sympathy, but *the first condition of their own emancipation.*”<sup>48</sup>

If Marx’s diagnosis was correct, the immediate future of English radicalism was indeed unpredictable. Following the Franco-Prussian War and the controversy over the Paris Commune, the influence of the International declined sharply everywhere, and especially in England. In 1872 the organization was split over the issue of Marxism *versus* Bakuninism and its seat was transferred to the United States. There it expired almost at once, and with it expired the plan of energizing English labor from without. The case of radicalism was even more critical if it hinged on Irish freedom—which did not become a fact until after the World War. Plainly the social movement of England presented very difficult problems to Marx. He grew more pessimistic with the passing years. The prospects of labor appeared to be dark unless it rid itself of its leaders. He was somewhat encouraged by the renewed movement of agricultural laborers.<sup>49</sup> With that possible exception, the

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 477-78; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 236-37.

<sup>49</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800; Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

“deeply demoralized” labor movement, headed by “corrupt trade-union leaders and professional agitators,” had become the tail of the Liberal party.<sup>50</sup>

The country which had justified, indeed had largely inspired the economic theories of Marx, was proving a severe testing ground of his political ideas and hopes.

<sup>50</sup> *Correspondence*, pp. 355-56; Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-37.

## IO

### FRANCE: THE SPIRIT OF REVOLUTION

ALTHOUGH she was considerably less developed economically than England, France seemed to Marx politically far more sensitive and ebullient. Since the eighteenth century she had provided revolutionary leadership at crucial moments in Europe with astonishing regularity. If Marx appealed to the experience of England in order to justify his theory of the development of capitalism, he was wont to turn to the history of France to illustrate his views on the growth of the modern state machinery, the political forms of the class struggle, and the tactics of revolution. Engels remarked that in the *Manifest* England had been taken as “the model country” of the economic development of the bourgeoisie and France as the clearest prototype of its political development,<sup>1</sup> and this was true of other works as well. He once referred to France as the “center of feudalism in the middle ages,” and the “model country” of the unitary monarchy of early modern times.<sup>2</sup> Both men regarded the Revolution of 1789 as the “classical” political event par excellence, the pattern of a bourgeois revolution and in some respects the pattern of any great political upheaval. The economic decline of the Old Regime had found a suitable climax in the abolition of the

<sup>1</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 527n.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . pp. 15-16.

privileges and power of the aristocracy, the monarchy, and the church. While the bourgeoisie rose to the position of a national class, France fulfilled the role of a leading nation by carrying the revolutionary reforms beyond her own borders. Having disposed of the past, she proceeded to announce the future. The bourgeois revolution had not yet run its course when the proletarian successor made its first formal appearance in the conspiracy of Babeuf.<sup>3</sup>

The bourgeoisie and the masses in France seemed to Marx to have acted in the revolutionary age with a sense of political fitness and responsibility. The leaders of the earlier phases of the Revolution destroyed the institutions of feudalism. Then Napoleon I fashioned "the conditions under which, alone, free competition could be developed, the divided property exploited, and the unchained industrial productive force of the nation utilized." In order to provide the bourgeois order with a proper environment on the Continent, the Emperor swept away the feudal institutions of other countries as well. The "heroes," political parties, and the masses had accomplished "the task of their time—the emancipation and establishment of a modern bourgeois society."<sup>4</sup>

Since 1789, revolution had become an almost normal method of political change in France. Her frequent transformations induced sympathetic repercussions in other countries. To the generation of Marx, France represented the most forceful propeller of European reform. Francophilia became synonymous with progressivism and liberalism, and Francophobia with conservatism. In 1830, when Marx was twelve years old, France overthrew the recently restored Bourbon dynasty and struck the first considerable blow at the reactionary regimes of the Metternich Era.

<sup>3</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 308.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . pp. 15-16, 21-22, 119.

The July Revolution had an immediate effect only on the political system of the Netherlands, but it put a new heart into liberal and radical movements everywhere. It was not too much to expect that France would soon again assume command of the hosts of freedom. Marx was confident in 1846 that the signal for the impending revolution in Germany would be given by the Gallican cock. Within two years, indeed, the cock crowed, and with more than customary effect. The overthrow of King Louis Philippe set off the most extensive series of upheavals that Europe had ever seen. Marx congratulated the February revolutionists on "the immense service" which the French nation had "rendered to the cause of humanity."<sup>5</sup>

At first, the events of 1848 confirmed France in her political and revolutionary leadership. A liberal republic, the "classical" form of bourgeois rule, was set up in Paris. In the preceding century France had been the first large continental state which established liberal, republican institutions. Then, having exhausted the alternatives of Bonapartism, Bourbonism, and Orleanism, she returned to republicanism. There seemed to be a possibility that a further step would be taken and that the capitalists would yield to the workers the national leadership which Marx had claimed for them in the *Manifest* on the eve of the Revolution. But the socialist tendencies of the February Republic were checked before long. In June 1848, an uprising of the proletariat of Paris was suppressed in bloody fashion by the troops of the National Assembly. Although Marx naturally deplored it, the result of the insurrection strengthened his opinion that French politics provided a convenient outlet for social conflict. The proletariat was neither large enough nor well enough organized to take over power; it therefore lost. Its economic and social strug-

<sup>5</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 653.

gle with the bourgeoisie, however, was already very real and the street war gave it visible expression. "The collisions which are created by the very conditions of bourgeois society," he asserted in an editorial in memory of the victims of the June Days, "must be fought out; they cannot be imagined away. The best state form is one in which the social contradictions are neither ignored nor violently kept in rein, but only apparently and artfully fettered. The best state form is one in which such contradictions are allowed to develop to a free struggle and thus attain a solution."<sup>6</sup>

France then wavered in her "classical" course. The Second Republic proved to be more short-lived than the First Republic of 1792 and gave way to another Bonaparte. The country seemed to turn deliberately backward in order to imitate her own past. Marx had the utmost contempt for the statesman under whose regime *La République française* became "*La République cosaque.*"<sup>7</sup> He probed for the causes of the collapse of liberalism and republicanism in *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich* and in *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, his most brilliant and finished pamphlet. Granted that Napoleon III was an "adventurer," yet his adventure could not have been the result of mere accident. Class forces and relationships had made it possible for "a mediocre and grotesque personage to play the role of a hero."<sup>8</sup> The progress of the country was being hampered by the survival of an unusually strong petty proprietorship on the land, by an agrarian overemphasis and a failure to develop fully large-scale industry, by the division of the bourgeoisie into factions, which a relatively weak industrial middle class was unable to dominate and fuse, by an excessively developed state structure

<sup>6</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 118; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 56; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* pp. 15-16.

<sup>7</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* p. 111.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 26.

and bureaucracy, and, finally, by the weakness of the industrial proletariat.

A discussion of Marx's attitude toward small-scale agriculture would be out of place here. It must suffice for the present purpose to remark that while he preferred the small farm to the large estate under certain backward conditions and for special reasons, he regarded the small holding as a hindrance to production under modern conditions. He might temporarily support the establishment of small holdings in order to destroy an old-fashioned, aristocratic landlordism, or to prevent the growth of a new landlordism. However, the small farm could not hope to be more than a passing phase in history; it had no economic future.<sup>9</sup> Culturally and socially, country life seemed backward, stagnant, even brutalizing, to Marx.<sup>10</sup> The proposal to abolish all distinctions between the country and the city was a recurrent refrain in his writings. Along with other sections of the lower middle classes, the peasants were set down in the *Manifest* as "reactionary." Only the unpleasant prospect of sinking down to the level of proletarians ever drove these groups to take a revolutionary position against the powers that be.<sup>11</sup>

The *Manifest* had predicted that the small peasants, as well as petty manufacturers and traders, recipients of small incomes, and handicraftsmen, would increasingly be forced down into the ranks of wage earners by the development of industrial capitalism.<sup>12</sup> The fact was that in the middle of the nineteenth century the French nation still consisted

<sup>9</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 201; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 232; Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 133, 144; Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-30; *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 341 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 73; *Das Kapital*, III<sup>2</sup>, 347-48; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 30; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 240-41.

<sup>11</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 535; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 533.



largely of peasants.<sup>13</sup> This class had played a progressive role in 1789. The small farm had deprived feudalism of its roots in the land and so formed a valuable ally of the bourgeoisie against the Old Regime. The Revolution and Napoleon I had combined to assure the survival of the small farm, which became the basis of the Grand Empire. However, within two generations capitalism had transformed the agrarian blessing into a curse. The feudal dues and services were gone but the peasant bore a huge burden of indebtedness. The social conditions in rural France were appalling. The new serfdom to capital had converted sixteen million people into "troglodytes" living in "hovels a large number of which have but one opening, others two, and the most favored ones three." The peasants hardly constituted a class, in the full sense of that term as Marx employed it. His picture of them is worth citing textually because it is one of the few instances when he adumbrated his conception of the class:

The small peasants constitute a huge mass whose members live in similar conditions, without, however, entering into manifold relations with one another. Their method of production isolates them from one another instead of drawing them into mutual intercourse. This isolation is promoted by the poor means of communication in France and by the poverty of the peasants. The cultivation of the small holding—their field of production—admits of no division of labor and no application of science; therefore there is no multiplicity of development, no diversity of talents, no wealth of social relationships. Every individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; by itself it produces the greater part of what it consumes and so earns its livelihood more by means of exchange with nature than by intercourse with society. There is the small holding, the peasant, and his family; alongside, another small holding, another peasant, and another family. A number of these make up a village, a number of villages a department. The great mass of the

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 548; *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 117, 133.

French nation is thus constituted by the simple addition of equal magnitudes, much as a bag with potatoes makes up a potato bag. In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes and place them in a position hostile toward the latter, the peasants constitute a class. In so far as a merely local interconnection prevails among these small peasants and the uniformity of their interests creates no unity of interest, no national union, and no political organization, they do not constitute a class.

In their distress the peasants looked for a savior. Tradition had bred the superstition that "a man named Napoleon would restore to them all manner of glory." Their isolation and the simplicity of their demands made them especially susceptible to an authoritarian, one-man government. A truly modern class, functioning actively in the midst of a changing world and partaking of its spirit, must evolve complex and flexible policies through pliant representative institutions. Given the static quality of their interests, the peasants were incapable of promoting them through such institutions. The representative of the peasants must appear "as their master, as an authority over them, as an unlimited governmental power that protects them against the other classes and bestows rain and sunshine upon them from above." The political influence found "its ultimate expression in an executive power that dominates society." Thus it came about that the small farm became a conservative force and again crossed paths with a "Grand Empire."

But the peasants were doomed to disillusionment. The state was opposed to them in their capacity as debtors. Their interests had come into sharp conflict with the interests of the bourgeoisie. The capitalist system, which had once protected the small holding, was now exploiting

it financially. Under the circumstances, the "natural allies and leaders" of the peasants, could they but come to see it, were the urban proletarians.<sup>14</sup>

The existence of a huge peasantry testified to a strong agrarian tendency in the development of the French economy. This tendency was reflected in French economic thought. It was fitting that the doctrine of physiocracy, with its exaltation of landed wealth, should have originated in "predominantly agricultural" France and not in a predominantly industrial, commercial, and maritime country like England.<sup>15</sup> From the economist Pierre de Boisguilbert of the seventeenth century to the utopian socialists of the nineteenth, French theorists emphasized use values and disparaged the money economy. English economists since William Petty, the contemporary of Boisguilbert, had shown a greater appreciation of the importance of money operations. Petty extolled "in the greed for gold, the energetic drive which spurred a nation to industrial development and to the conquest of the world market." Boisguilbert, on the other hand, was "fanatically" critical of money and looked upon gold as a foreign element which intervened to upset "the natural equilibrium or harmony of commodity exchange." The Moloch of gold exacted "all natural wealth as a sacrifice." The French thinker was not consistent, however. While he opposed "the capitalist system of labor in one form," he praised it extravagantly in another. This ambivalent attitude toward capitalism seemed to Marx to be the "national hereditary disease" which infected subsequent writers like Proudhon or Sismondi. The "national contrast between English and French political economy" was a contrast between scientific clarity with an occasional trace of cynicism and scien-

<sup>14</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . pp. 116-17, 119-21.

<sup>15</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, I, 41.

tific confusion touched somewhat with sentimentality.<sup>16</sup>

Marx held that French capitalism was excessively weighted on its financial side. State bonds constituted too important a medium of speculation. The volume of national production was "disproportionately" lower than the volume of the national debt,<sup>17</sup> and an uncommonly close relationship existed between the state and the financial community. Industrially, France had fallen far behind England. The largest manufacturers seemed mere petty bourgeois compared with their English rivals. French industry could not make a bold bid for the world market; it needed the protective arm of the state to maintain itself even at home.<sup>18</sup> Since industry did not dominate the national economy, the industrial capitalists were not in a position to impose their policy and leadership upon the other bourgeois, and the various factions acted independently of each other in politics. The weakness of the landed and financial capitalists made them reluctant to govern directly through the instrumentality of liberal republicanism. They were driven to retreat, as Marx put it, to "the subordinate, incomplete, weaker form of the monarchy."<sup>19</sup> The Bourbon dynasty was favored by the landed capitalists; the Orleans by the financiers.<sup>20</sup> Monarchism thus came to stand for the promotion of this or that special interest of a segment of the capitalist class. Republicanism appeared to offer the only hope for prosecuting the welfare of the bourgeoisie as a whole.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 40-42; see also *ibid.*, pp. 39n., 141n.; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, I, 41-42; "Carey und Bastiat," *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>2</sup>, 7-8. For a view of the relation between economic theory and economic history in the United States, see *ibid.*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>17</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 111.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47, 111-13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . pp. 50, 91-92.

<sup>20</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, p. 89.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

If only French republicanism had had no social connotations, no implications of popular influence! The industrialists must perforce turn to the lower classes for help in the campaign against the domination of the financiers during the July Monarchy. Under such paradoxical conditions, authentic leadership by industrialists was impossible. They were too weak to lead a great national movement, as the English industrialists were doing, and so, in order to obtain any influence at all, they must second the efforts of revolutionary groups which were only too likely to have anticapitalistic aims.<sup>22</sup> Such was Marx's explanation of how industry found itself allied with radical elements in the February Revolution. The misalliance could hardly last long. Frightened by the democratic tendencies of the early period of the Second Republic and unable to patch up a peace with the other bourgeois factions still wedded to particular royal houses, the industrialists delivered themselves to a political "adventurer." With the peasants, though along a different path, the industrialists had converged toward Bonapartism.

The "adventurer" found the state structure a convenient tool in his hands. Marx became increasingly convinced after 1848 that the administrative apparatus had become a burden and danger to the nation. He felt that the French bourgeoisie "from the beginning, or at least since the rise of towns," had obtained "too much of its influence by constituting itself the Parliament, the bureaucracy, and so forth, and not, as in England, merely through commerce and industry." This political overemphasis was "certainly still characteristic" of nineteenth-century France.<sup>23</sup> Yet on the whole, it seemed to him that the French state had developed along a satisfactory course until the fall of Na-

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>23</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 47; Engels, *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 145n.

oleon I. The Revolution had continued and Napoleon I had completed the development of a centralized administration. After 1815 the state became more domineering. Its activities were constantly proliferated until the officials numbered more than half a million. On this army of dependents the state could confidently rely for support. The bureaucracy was parasitic, yet it presumed to regulate society with stifling minuteness and centripetence. The magnitude of the apparatus complicated the struggle between the legislative and executive branches of the government. The bourgeoisie extended the bureaucracy in order to get jobs for its "surplus" members, but the process strengthened a "hostile" executive power and undermined parliamentary life.<sup>24</sup>

While the interests of the proletariat were irreconcilable with those of its masters, the very growth of a considerable class of wage earners was conditioned by the development of modern industry, which, in turn, was best promoted by the rule of industrial capitalists. Only under such rule could the proletariat gain that "extended national existence which can raise its revolution to the level of a national revolution. . . ." The fact that the industrialists had never attained political supremacy was thus the indirect cause of the failure of the proletarian movement. The revolutionary energy of the lower classes in the capital was deceptive. The strategic position of the Paris workers was powerful but it was out of all proportion to the strength, compactness, and maturity of the proletariat of the country as a whole. In short, there was no national proletariat in France, either in the sense of size and permeation of the population or potential leadership of other lower classes.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire . . .* pp. 61-62, 115-16; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 61.

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 63.

Marx pointed out, perhaps with a touch of irony, that it was only after the defeat of June 1848—in other words, after it was too late—that the petty bourgeois and some peasants came to realize that their own fate had made them the allies of the proletariat.<sup>26</sup> As matters stood shortly after 1848, the country was not yet ready to resolve its conflicts in a socialist direction. One might look to France for the “proclamation” of the social problem, but must turn to England for its solution. There must be “a world war in which the nations confront one another” on this issue and the English proletariat must come to power.<sup>27</sup> The pattern of the great wars of the era of the French Revolution is clear here; this time England would play the part of leader of European progress.

Although Marx did not lose confidence that the proletariat would eventually lead the masses toward socialism, he became pessimistic over its immediate course. He was severely critical of the utopian socialist movements prevalent in France in the fifties and sixties. He especially opposed the popular doctrine of Proudhonism because of its reliance on credit schemes, its leaning to anarchism and federalism, and its lack of appreciation of large-scale industry. Frenchmen had become accustomed to think of themselves as the leaders and teachers of Europe. So long as they actually exercised leadership, Marx did not object to that aspect of their national tradition. But in a period when their labor movement was weak, their radicalism confused, and their government reactionary, the self-esteem of the French seemed completely unjustified. He began to question the value of their revolutionary initiative and to wish that the next social advance might be led by another nation. In 1858, commenting on the possibility

<sup>26</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 46–47, 91–92, 95.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

of a revolution in Russia, he remarked that it would “do the French no harm to find out that the world can move even without them.” He referred to the chances of political repercussions in Prussia and added that the Germans were “such complete satellites of France” only because of the conservative regime in Russia and that an internal movement there would put an end to “this bad joke.”<sup>28</sup> The revolution did not materialize, however. In 1863, impressed by the rising in Poland, Marx was certain that “the era of revolution” had “now again fairly opened in Europe.” The “general position of things” seemed good. He hoped that “this time the lava will flow from east to west and not the other way around, so that we may be spared the ‘honor’ of French initiative.”<sup>29</sup>

The events of the late sixties somewhat revived his confidence in that initiative. The liberal and radical movement showed renewed energy. The political atmosphere of the Second Empire was tense. It was doubtful, however, that “a revolution in Paris could be successful, except through treason and rebellion or a split in the army.” A rebellion was “hardly likely without a previous row.”<sup>30</sup> Yet there was revolutionary significance in the increasing discussion and study of the origin of the Empire, the coup d’état, the events of 1848, and the Napoleonic legend.<sup>31</sup> Just before the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War, he reasserted his former view that “the revolutionary initiative will probably come from France,”<sup>32</sup> but he still doubted that the proletariat was ready to assume national leadership with good prospects of success.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 341–42.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 126–27, 132.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 114, 125.

<sup>31</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 412–13; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> “Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 476–77.

<sup>33</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 114, 125, 127; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

In 1870 the Second Empire collapsed at Sedan. From the outset Marx had regarded the "Bas-Empire" of "Napoleon le Petit" as a brittle imitation of the "Grand Empire" of "Napoleon le Grand." No one attracted Marx's rich gift for invective more than Louis Napoleon. The emperor had posed as the conciliator of all classes but had ended by alienating them all. He had done much damage by inflating the power of the executive and retarding liberalism and radicalism. When the Republic was proclaimed for a third time, Marx felt that the workers should support it. Although the bourgeois republic had been established "not as a social achievement but as a measure of national defense,"<sup>34</sup> it was to be preferred to Bonapartist imperialism. The labor movement stood in need of a period of maturation which only a liberal regime could supply. The war was not over and it was questionable whether the workers of Paris could offer serious resistance to Prussia. He could not blink the fact, he confided to Engels, that "twenty years of the Bonapartist farce have caused enormous demoralization. One is hardly justified in reckoning on revolutionary heroism." The First International advised against an uprising under such "exceptionally difficult circumstances":

Any attempt at upsetting the new government in the present crisis, when the enemy is almost knocking at the gates of Paris, would be desperate folly. The French workers must perform their duty as citizens, but at the same time, they must not allow themselves to succumb to the national memories of 1792, as the French peasants had allowed themselves to be deluded by the national memories of the First Empire. They have not to repeat the past, but to build the future. Let them calmly and resolutely exploit the opportunities of republican freedom in order to organize themselves thoroughly. This will give them fresh Herculean powers for the regeneration of France and for our common task—the emancipa-

<sup>34</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 40, 42.

tion of the proletariat. The fate of the Republic hangs on their energy and wisdom.<sup>35</sup>

However, when the people of Paris rose against the Versailles Republic six months later, they found a passionate defender in Marx. No event of his time stirred a greater enthusiasm and admiration in him than the audacious uprising of the Commune. The "vanguard of the entire modern proletariat"<sup>36</sup> had again lunged forward! "What elasticity, what historical initiative, what a capacity for self-sacrifice in these Parisians!" he exclaimed in a letter to a German friend:

After six months of starvation and ruin caused more by internal treachery than by the external foe, they rise under the shadow of Prussian bayonets, as if there had never been a war between France and Germany and the enemy were not yet at the gates of Paris! History has no like example of a like greatness! . . . Compare these heaven-storming Parisians with the heavenly slaves of the German-Prussian Holy Roman Empire, with its posthumous masquerades reeking of the barracks, Church, cabbage-Junkerdom and, above all, of the philistine.<sup>37</sup>

The Commune was suppressed in blood two months after it was born and Marx carved its obituary in his bitterest philippic, *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*. He exulted in the promise the rebellion had embodied and covered its enemies with invective. In the heat of the moment, it seemed that the Commune held the answer to all the great questions of the country—the plight of the farmers, the burden of the state, the industrial problem. In describing the greatness of the France that might have been, Marx passed in review the inadequacies of the France that was.

<sup>35</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 358–59, 378; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 40; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 17; *New York Tribune*, April 27, 1855, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 90.

<sup>37</sup> "Über die Pariser Kommune," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>1</sup>, 709.

The Commune, he argued, would have freed the peasants of heavy taxes and expensive government and would have put elective officials and schoolmasters in the place of gendarmes, prefects, and priests. It would have solved the problems of the agrarian debt and of the country proletariat. It would have improved agricultural production and done away with the competition of capitalistic farming. The clash between city and country would have been resolved. The Commune would have "brought the rural producers under the intellectual leadership of the central towns of their districts, and there assured them, in the working man, the natural representative of their interests."

A new form of state would have been constructed. Marx's sharpest attack on the too-pervasive state was contained in *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*. He described how the state apparatus had grown unbearably arrogant under Napoleon III. The Commune confirmed him in the opinion that this state must not be merely transferred from old hands to new, but "smashed." By way of defending the Commune, Marx outlined his conception of the purposes, policies, and mechanism of the proletarian state in the period of transition to socialism, with rather special application, of course, to conditions in France. Political unity would have been retained. The communards did not propose to pulverize France into a federation of small states, as some critics contended. The unity of great nations, although brought about originally by political force, had become "a powerful factor of modern production." But there was no justification for a state power which claimed to be the embodiment of national unity and yet sought to be "independent of, and superior to, the nation." The Commune would have suppressed the standing army and the old police force; it would have set up a popular militia with

an extremely short period of service, disestablished and disendowed the church, and made education free. All public offices, including the judiciary, would have become "elective, responsible, and revocable."

Instead of deciding every three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent—and repress—the people in Parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer to pick the workmen, managers, and bookkeepers for his business. And it is well known that in matters of real business, companies, like individuals, generally know how to find the right man for the right place and, if they once make a mistake, to correct it promptly.

In short, the state would have been restored to its proper position as obedient and responsible servant of the citizenry. With the abolition of the standing army and the reduction of government salaries to the level of the income of workers, the desire for cheap government would have been realized. The communal form was "thoroughly expansive" and under it the country could have marched toward socialism. The Commune, while abolishing "class property," would have made "individual property a fact by transforming the means of production, land, and capital, which are now used primarily to enslave and exploit labor, into the mere instruments of free and associated labor." Of course, the process of establishing socialism would be long and arduous. The workers were aware that they would have to pass "through lengthy struggles, a whole series of historical processes which will transform men as well as circumstances." Meanwhile, the striking fact was that the proletariat of an important country had claimed and won national leadership and held political power for the first time.<sup>38</sup>

At least so Marx thought in 1871. In retrospect the

<sup>38</sup> *Loc. cit.*; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 63-73.

significance of the Commune was considerably less impressive. Ten years after the rebellion, in discussing the measures of a socialist government on attaining power, he rejected the Commune as a historical example of such a government: ". . . apart from the fact that this was merely the uprising of a town under exceptional conditions, the majority of the Commune was not at all socialist, nor could it be that." Moderate popular gains were, after all, the most that could have been expected: "With a small amount of sound common sense," the communards "could have reached a compromise with the Versailles Government useful to the whole mass of the people, which was all that could be achieved at the time."<sup>39</sup>

The period of the Commune had been the last historical moment when Marx's faith in French revolutionary leadership had glowed brightly, if only briefly. Several years later he complained of "the lack of a theoretical foundation and practical common sense" in France. In 1877 Russia struck him once more as better soil for revolutionary change and initiative. French affairs seemed unimportant by comparison. The struggle to assure the existence of the Republic was still being waged. Marx hoped that the bourgeois regime would carry the day, otherwise the old game of seesaw between republicanism and monarchy would begin all over again and "no nation can afford to repeat the same stupidities too often." The movement of the proletarians betrayed as much hesitation as that of the liberal bourgeois. It was as late as 1880 before Marx thought he saw the beginnings of "*the first real workers' movement*" in France. Until then, there had been only "sects" and founders of "sects." The mass of workers had followed radical bourgeois or bourgeois who played at radicalism

<sup>39</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 317-18; cf. "Über die Pariser Kommune," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>1</sup>, 709.

and had fought for them, only to be slaughtered and deported by the men they had raised to power.<sup>40</sup>

A host of circumstances and events had conspired to wrest from France the revolutionary initiative which had been formerly hers. In the seventies and eighties, liberal republicanism seemed to Marx to offer the best immediate prospect for speeding the economic progress of the country and for advancing its social movement.

<sup>40</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800; Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 157, 170-71.

## I I

GERMANY: THE PROBLEM  
OF UNIFICATION

AS HE surveyed the condition of Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century, it seemed to Marx that his native country was suffering from general arrested development. Several important characteristics set her apart from other Western countries: monarchical, aristocratic, and feudal institutions and privileges had survived in powerful measure; capitalism was weak and consequently also the *grande bourgeoisie* and the industrial proletariat, but the petty bourgeoisie, on the other hand, was uncommonly strong; and finally, the country was politically disunited beyond comparison with other large nations of Europe. No less than thirty-nine practically independent states of all sizes were formally grouped in a loose Confederation. Economically, politically, and socially Germany was backward, and one may measure Marx's conception of the distance separating her from England and France by his hope that the Revolution of 1848 might prove to be a German edition of the Revolution of 1689 and of 1789.

The roots of this condition reached deep into the past. The alliance between the monarchy and the bourgeoisie, which had done so much to consolidate other nations and to corrode feudal institutions, had not been struck in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The epochal shifting of the world trade routes

<sup>1</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 47-48.

from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean had dealt a heavy blow to Germany; her position in the center of the Continent had been formerly a great economic asset. The Germans were driven out of naval shipping by the Dutch and the English. No city acquired importance as an economic center of gravity for the whole country. The Thirty Years' War, which was fought by the great powers of the seventeenth century on German territory, destroyed means of production as well as people and left the country prostrate for generations. The war confirmed the impotence of the Holy Roman Empire and Germany failed to develop the centralized state which Marx regarded as the concomitant of modern production. The same disunity stood in the way of effective revolutionary action on a national scale. Germany was, in short, an "imaginary country."<sup>2</sup>

"Feudal" tenure, Engels asserted in a series of articles published over the signature of Marx, was prevalent "almost everywhere" before 1848, having been entirely destroyed only in the Rhineland during its union with France in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic age. In England and France, the power of the landed aristocracy had been abolished formally or virtually by a wealthy middle class. The German nobles, although they had lost their political privileges and "the right to control the princes," still preserved a "great portion of their ancient privileges" and "almost all their medieval supremacy over the peasantry of their demesnes, as well as their exemption from taxes." The aristocracy supplied the higher government officialdom and almost completely officered the army.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Nachlass*, II, 463-64; III, 92; *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 144; *New York Tribune*, October 25, 1851, p. 6; February 27, 1852, p. 6; *Das Kapital*, I, 670; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *New York Tribune*, October 25, 1851, p. 6; *Nachlass*, III, 107, 128; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 216.



The bourgeoisie was weak and divided. The backwardness of industry deprived it of influence on the government, despite such practical concessions as the Tariff Union. Want of numbers and concentration prevented the bourgeoisie from attaining the political power of the English and French bourgeoisie. Industry, it was true, grew rapidly in the fifties and sixties, but Germany, along with other countries on the Continent, had to cope with problems arising from the "incompleteness" of its capitalist development, as well as with problems incidental to that development. "A whole series of inherited evils" flowed from the survival of antiquated methods of production and social and political anachronisms. The country suffered "not only from the living, but also from the dead. *Le mort saisit le vif!*"<sup>4</sup>

In the middle of the century, the industrial proletariat was as retarded as the bourgeoisie. A minority of the workers was engaged in modern manufacturing and only it and the migratory workers had any clear conception of the interests of their class. Most workers were employed by small masters and practised old-fashioned crafts. The "enormous difference between the great cotton lord and the petty cobbler and master tailor" was matched by the difference between the "wide-awake factory-operative of modern manufacturing Babylons" and "the bashful journeyman tailor or cabinetmaker of a small country town," who lived and worked in a semi-medieval fashion. No wonder that in 1848 "a large part of the working classes should cry out for the immediate reestablishment of guilds and medieval privileged trades' corporations."<sup>5</sup>

The petty bourgeois held an uncommonly important position in the country. Exceedingly increased in number

<sup>4</sup> New York *Tribune*, October 25, 1851, p. 6; *Sämtliche Werke*, V, 175; *Das Kapital*, I, vii, x, xiii.

<sup>5</sup> New York *Tribune*, October 25, 1851, p. 6; Mehring, *Karl Marx*, p. 239.

because of the stunted development of large capitalists and manufacturers, the lesser bourgeois formed a majority in the larger cities and dominated the smaller towns. The prosperity of the petty bourgeoisie depended on the custom of the court and aristocracy. "In the smaller towns, a military garrison, a county government, a court of law with its followers, form very often the base of its prosperity; withdraw these and down go the shopkeepers, the tailors, the shoemakers, the joiners." Hence the febrile hesitations of the petty bourgeois, who envied the richer bourgeois, depended on the aristocracy and monarchy, and feared the proletariat. "Humble and crouchingly submissive under a powerful feudal or monarchical government, [the petty bourgeoisie] turns to the side of liberalism when the middle class is in the ascendant; it becomes seized with violent democratic fits as soon as the middle class has secured its own supremacy, but falls back into the abject despondency of fear as soon as the class below itself, the proletarians, attempt an independent movement."<sup>6</sup> The oscillations of this considerable segment of the population had national significance.

The economic backwardness and social composition of the country were reflected in its cultural life. Marx had no patience with the overfine theorizing and sentimental idealism which flourished in Germany. The *Manifest* satirized the adulteration of French economic and socialist thought by German men of letters, who wrote their own "philosophical nonsense beneath the French original":

For example, underneath the French critique of the functions of money they wrote "alienation of humanity" and underneath the French critique of the bourgeois state they wrote "overthrow of

<sup>6</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 551; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 340; *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 140 ff.; New York *Tribune*, October 25, 1851, p. 6.

the dominion of the abstract universal." They christened this interpolation of philosophical phraseology into the French arguments "philosophy of the deed," or "true socialism," or "German science of socialism," or "philosophical foundation of socialism," and so on. French socialist and communist literature was thoroughly emasculated. And since in the German's hand this literature ceased to express the struggle of one class against another, he felt that he had overcome the "narrowness" of the French and that he represented not true needs, but rather the "need for truth"; not the interests of the proletariat, but the interests of humanity itself, of that abstract man who belongs to no class and exists not in the domain of reality but in the realm of philosophical fantasy.

The weakness of the bourgeoisie and of the proletariat was the social background of this attitude, which expressed the fears and hopes of the petty bourgeois.<sup>7</sup>

A related tendency was the rationalization of the backwardness of the country into a species of superiority. If material development lagged, it was because the Germans, more than other nations, were absorbed by spiritual and intellectual concerns. If they surpassed in speculation, perhaps it was because they were the philosophical nation par excellence and had a special aptitude for the life of reason. If they failed to construct a strong national state, it was perhaps because they were the most cosmopolitan of nations and would not confine their existence within narrow national boundaries. Other nations "represented" only themselves but Germany "represented" all humanity. The Germans were too moral and peace-loving to join in the vulgar scramble for political dominion and the profits of the market place. Their nationalism had a peculiar character. The French regarded themselves as the natural leaders of progress and civilization because they had led the world during the great Revolution. French nationalism was the fond memory of past achievements. The national pride of Germany, however, must thrive in the soil of

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 550-52.

frustration by turning every defect into a source of vanity. If their neighbors across the Rhine were foolishly vain over what they had done once but were no longer able to do, the Germans were proud they had never done it. In the *Deutsche Ideologie* Marx quoted the lines of Heine's *Deutschland—Ein Wintermärchen*:

Franzosen und Russen gehört das Land,  
Das Meer gehört den Britten,  
Wir aber besitzen im Luftreich des Traums  
Die Herrschaft unbestritten.

Hier üben wir die Hegemonie,  
Hier sind wir unzerstückelt;  
Die andern Völker haben sich  
Auf platter Erde entwickelt.

The Germans, Marx commented, regard this ethereal realm as the highest goal of man, and as the peculiar possession which distinguishes them from other nations.

In every field they consider their daydreams as final judgments on the deeds of others nations, and because they always play the part of disappointed onlookers, they feel called upon to sit in judgment on the whole world and see in Germany the fulfillment of all of history. We have frequently noted that this inflated and extravagant national arrogance corresponds to an utterly petty, philistine, and backward existence. If national narrow-mindedness is everywhere repulsive, it becomes actually loathsome in Germany, for there it is coupled with the illusion that the Germans are above nationalism and practical interests, in contrast to those nations that have the frankness to admit their national narrow-mindedness and their dependence on practical interests.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 445-46, 453-54. A translation of Heine's lines follows:

The Russians and French possess the land,  
The British have the sea;  
But we in airy realm of dreams  
Have unchallenged mastery.

Here we hold hegemony,  
Undismembered here.  
Less favored nations have evolved  
On the flat earth drear.

Germany had played a reactionary and abject role in international affairs. At home, backwardness bred hollow idealism and false pride; abroad, it bred servility and indignity. Weakness and disunion made the German a mercenary soldier of European conservatism. Marx's newspaper published in 1848 a fierce indictment of the foreign policy of the German princes. German armies had fought against American and French revolutionists and Swiss liberals. The Congresses of the powers after 1815 and the interventions against revolutionary forces in Italy and Spain were laid at the door of the German Confederation. The newspaper detected German intrigues in all the centers of conservatism: "reaction in England armed with Hanoverian troops, Belgium divided and thermidorized by German influence, the Czar and the smaller autocrats supported mainly by Germans in the deepest recesses of Russia—all of Europe overrun with Coburgs!" It was with the help of German "soldateska" that Poland had been torn to pieces, the Republic of Cracow "assassinated," and Lombardy and Venetia "enslaved and sucked dry." While the German governments were primarily to blame, the nation bore "a great part" of the responsibility. "But for its delusions and slavishness, its adroitness as mercenaries and as complaisant jailers and tools of lords by divine right, the German name would be less hated, cursed, and despised abroad, and the peoples suppressed by German forces would long since have reached a normal condition of free development."<sup>9</sup>

Exaggeration elbowed truth in this sweeping indictment. The Germans were not, of course, the only mercenaries in Europe. There was no "Germany" in quite the concrete and self-conscious sense implied in the editorial of the *Neue rheinische Zeitung*. The intent, however, was

<sup>9</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 108-9, 112-13; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 37-38.

plain. International honor, as well as national progress, required a sharp turn in German affairs. Monarchical and aristocratic institutions and power must be abolished. Large-scale industry must be established. Germany must develop from a petty bourgeois, semifeudal nation into a fully grown, bourgeois nation so that she might in time become a proletarian and then a socialist nation. Her role abroad must become a progressive one. Germany could not be free if it continued to interfere with the freedom of other nations. The great prerequisite for all these changes was unification and centralization. Federalism would not do. Marx was convinced that only a thorough political integration could release the energies of the German people. The federal example of the United States seemed to him to be more relevant to the organization of the Continent as a whole than to its component states. The union must be comprehensive and must include the German territories ruled by the Hapsburgs. The most desirable form of government would be the liberal and democratic "republic, one and indivisible," as proclaimed by the French Revolution.<sup>10</sup>

Marx had hopes that the bourgeoisie would rise to the occasion, as the French bourgeoisie had risen in 1789, and lead the movement for unification. Hence his strategy of 1848, which called for the temporary subordination by the proletariat of its own special aims in order to assist the bourgeoisie in establishing a modern constitution.<sup>11</sup> He advocated a war against Russia so that the foreign as well as the internal enemies of a reformed Germany might be weakened and the nation united behind the revolution.<sup>12</sup> The bourgeoisie, however, failed to play the role assigned

<sup>10</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 93-94; *Germany: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 137, 144-45.

<sup>11</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 556.

<sup>12</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 93-94, 114, 150-51.

to it. Marx was struck by the contrast between the wordiness and vacillation of the Frankfort Assembly and the energy and determination of the famous National Convention of 1792. Instead of following the French example of granting the demands of the peasants and thus securing their support, the bourgeoisie compromised with the aristocracy and monarchy and thus muffed its opportunity for leadership.<sup>13</sup> The revolution was condemned to remain "half a revolution." Henceforth Marx showed profound contempt for the German bourgeoisie. His newspaper concluded bitterly that its "disgraceful wretchedness" found no match in history. "We [Germans] have always been and will always remain narrow-minded bourgeois. We made two dozen small and big revolutions, of which we ourselves became frightened even before they were completed. . . . The revolution restricted our horizon, instead of widening it."<sup>14</sup>

One thing was clear: Germany was not to imitate the political pattern of France. There were no signs in the fifties that the bourgeoisie would make another attempt to secure national leadership; the proletariat, on the other hand, was hardly sufficiently developed to perform the task of unification. There was left only the alternative of Hapsburg or Hohenzollern leadership. The former, however, was associated with the weak and conservative German Confederation; and Marx looked forward to a division of Hapsburg dominions into the national states of a Great Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Italy. He felt increasingly impelled to accept unification at the hands of Prussia. As a Rhinelander, he had from his youth been sharply opposed to Hohenzollern rule. The traditional friendship of the Prussian dynasty for the hated Ro-

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 227.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99, 150-51, 198; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 35.

manovs, its membership in the Holy Alliance, its support of and by the landed aristocracy, its participation in the partitions of Poland, its oppression of the Poles in the East and the Rhinelanders in the West—all these combined to make Prussia odious in his eyes. He had little enough love for the Austrian dynasty, but he admitted that the rise of the Hapsburgs had a certain historical grandeur, even as a "diabolical epic." In contrast, the history of the Hohenzollerns read "like an immoral family romance." They had swelled their territories "by the divine right of bribery, open purchase, petty larceny, legacy hunting, and treacherous partition treaties." He was contemptuous even of Prussia's military reputation. Of all the acquisitions of the Hohenzollerns, only Silesia had been obtained by direct conquest—"a feat so unparalleled in the annals of their house, that it earned the title 'Unique' for Frederick II." "Indeed and indeed," Marx once exclaimed, "the history of the world has never produced anything more despicable" than the rise of the Hohenzollerns.<sup>15</sup>

Marx proceeded from the assumption that Germany stood in urgent need of unity and that this unity, however or by whomever attained, would benefit the progressive forces of the nation far more than its reactionary elements. Unity would inevitably promote economic advance and further the growth of the bourgeoisie, and therefore also the growth and organization of the proletariat. The development of these two classes would weaken the monarchy and aristocracy. In foreign affairs a stronger Germany would necessarily assume an attitude of greater independence toward the conservative powers, particularly toward Russia. Marx therefore did not favor an intransi-

<sup>15</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 158; *New York Tribune*, January 9, 1857, p. 3. See also *Briefwechsel*, III, 132-33, 143-44; *Nachlass*, III, 106, 139, 203; *Das Kapital*, I, 698n.; "Das göttliche Recht der Hohenzollern," *Neue Zeit*, XXVIII<sup>1</sup>, 9-13.

gent opposition to the policy of Bismarck and was critical of those democrats and federalists, mostly South Germans, who seemed to him to be willing to throw out the baby of union with the bath of Prussianism.

No matter how unavoidable the program of union under Prussia might appear, it remained very unpalatable to Marx. He could console himself but slightly with the reflection of Carlyle that, "When God wants to do something especially great, He always chooses the stupidest people for it."<sup>16</sup> He despaired that "our philistines" would ever realize that, unless the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, not to speak of the lesser dynasties, were overthrown, the country would again have to undergo the miseries of "a Thirty Years' War" and another "partition." The lightning victory of Prussia over Austria in 1866 took him by surprise, as it did his contemporaries. He concluded bitterly that "the whole past" of petty bourgeois Germany had proved that union would be granted it only by "the grace of God and the sword." Radicals were powerless to affect the immediate course of events. There was nothing to be done, as Engels said, but to accept union without justifying it, and to exploit "the greater facilities for national organization and unification of the German proletariat which must now at any rate be proffered." Marx accepted "the mess" in the same spirit. "Everything which centralizes the bourgeoisie is naturally advantageous for the workers." "Still it is pleasant," he must add, "to be at a distance [in England] during this period of love's young dawn."<sup>17</sup>

The Franco-Prussian War which broke out in 1870 was

<sup>16</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 358-59, 365, 369; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 38. For Engels' view, see *The Peasant War in Germany* (New York, 1926), pp. 22-23.

<sup>17</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 323, 344, 350, 351-52; IV, 339-40; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 61. On the attitude of the First International, see Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

far more disturbing. The prospect of such a conflict had seemed "disastrous," "suicidal," "fratricidal."<sup>18</sup> Armed slaughter was to Marx, as Franz Mehring put it, a dispensation of "the devil, a phenomenon inevitable in class society in general and bourgeois society in particular."<sup>19</sup> The question was whether some practical benefits might not be derived from a diabolical situation. A Prussian victory was certain to result in the completion of the process of unification, and was also likely to wreck the Bonapartist state; but what good could a French victory do? Like all his countrymen who were concerned over the political progress of Germany, Marx resented what he regarded as the traditional policy of France of keeping her neighbor divided, "the inherited right of France in German disunion."<sup>20</sup> Since Richelieu, various regimes had indeed pursued that policy with energy. On the other hand, the Revolution, while it annexed the Rhineland, had the effect of forwarding the sentiment of German unity. Napoleon I abolished more Lilliputian states, and did more to round out the territories of the larger states than any native ruler had done. Bismarck strengthened the suspicion of Gallic knavery by exploiting the secret demand of Napoleon III for territorial compensation in Germany. To make matters worse, France had declared war and so was formally the aggressor. It was years before the world knew how much more Bismarck deserved that title.

Marx struck the balance and definitely took sides with Germany. On her part, it was "a war of defense" and independence.<sup>21</sup> Engels agreed with him that Germany was fighting for "her national existence" against imperialist

<sup>18</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 224; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Mehring, *Karl Marx*, p. 479.

<sup>20</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 48; *New York Tribune*, November 8, 1859, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 31.

attack and expressed the hope that, if she won, "French Bonapartism will at any rate be done for, the eternal wrangle over the establishment of German unity will at last be ended, the German workers will be able to organize themselves on a national scale quite different from that heretofore, and the French workers, whatever sort of government may follow, will certainly have a freer field than under Bonapartism." Despite the pro-Russian tendencies of the Hohenzollerns, an enlarged Prussia was likely to fall out with Russia over demands for compensation in the East. The newly strengthened "national sentiment" would stiffen the German people against a pusillanimous attitude toward Czarism.<sup>22</sup>

There was another consideration which moved Marx to favor a Prussian victory. The German proletariat had developed strikingly since 1848. Marx had many followers among the workers and their leaders. On the other hand, Bonapartism seemed to have dampened the ardor of French labor and weakened it both economically and politically. Non-Marxist doctrines, especially Proudhonism, were influential in France. "Between ourselves, taking all in all," he confided to a friend just before the war, "I expect more for the social movement from Germany than from France."<sup>23</sup> Marx had also come to resent the chauvinism of Frenchmen who, despite the conservative turn of affairs at home, continued to regard themselves as the vanguard of European progress. All this helps to explain his remark to Engels, upon the outbreak of the war, that "the French need a thrashing." "German predominance," Marx went on, "would . . . transfer the center of gravity of the workers' movement in Western Europe from France to Germany, and one has only to com-

<sup>22</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 358, 365.

<sup>23</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 416; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 279.

pare the movement in the two countries since 1866 to see that the German working class is superior to the French both in theory and in organization. Its predominance over the French on the world stage would also mean the predominance of *our* theory over Proudhon's, etc."<sup>24</sup>

Yet serious misgivings were in order. It was naturally difficult to reconcile oneself to the thought that unification was being attained by conservative forces. "Who would have thought it possible," Marx wrote to Engels, "that twenty-two years after 1848, a national war in Germany would receive theoretical expression such as *this!*" His friend blamed "the miserable state of the German bourgeoisie" for a situation which offered Prussia an opportunity to increase her prestige.<sup>25</sup> The outbreak of the war brought a wave of chauvinism. Marx was persuaded that the workers showed less nationalistic sentiment than the upper classes of the two countries; he cited the fact that labor organizations on both sides of the border issued fraternal statements and protests. There was reason to fear, nonetheless, that the war against Napoleon might "degenerate" into an attack upon the French people.<sup>26</sup>

The conflict reached a sudden climax. France was "thrashed" thoroughly and almost immediately. Marx's position on the war no more survived the fall of Sedan than did the Second Empire. The dangers of a Prussian victory, merely suspected before, now became blindingly clear. The "war of defense" had somehow come to an end midway. Engels observed that the struggle "in which Germany at the beginning merely defended her own territory against French chauvinism appears to be changing gradually but surely into a war in the interests of a new German chauvinism." Marx agreed that defense had become unneces-

<sup>24</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 339-40, 365.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 346, 348, 358, 366.

<sup>26</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 30-33, 39; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 346.

sary after the surrender of Louis Bonaparte, the capitulation of Sedan, and the proclamation of the Republic. He was aware, of course, that the Prussian "military camarilla" had resolved upon conquest long before these events.<sup>27</sup>

Marx now entered the lists for France. He criticized the proposal to annex Alsace and Lorraine (whose people did not "pant for the German embrace"), denied that these provinces were essential to the military protection of Germany, dismissed the argument that they belonged to Germany by historical right, and denounced the growth of German nationalism. He warned that the unfair treatment of France would deliver her into the arms of Russia and eventually lead to a "race war against the combined Slavonian and Romance races"—a prediction partly fulfilled in 1914. History would measure its "retribution" upon Germany "not by the extent of the square miles torn from France, but by the enormity of the crime of reviving in the second half of the nineteenth century the policy of conquest." His wrath rose to white heat because Prussia was at war not with the Empire, but with a republic and then with the Paris Commune. "The German workers," he recalled, "have energetically supported the war, which it was not in their power to prevent, as a war for the independence of Germany and for the liberation of Germany and Europe from the depressing nightmare of the Second Empire." They must have two guarantees, an "honorable peace for France" and recognition of its republican government. He called for war *à outrance* against Prussia and did not find terms harsh enough in which to condemn the failure of the Thiers government to conduct an energetic campaign in coöperation with the communards. He accused Bismarck and Thiers of conspiring to join forces

<sup>27</sup> *Correspondence*, p. 303; *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, p. 34.

against the French nation as represented by the Commune because they feared that a victory of revolutionary Paris over the Prussians would also mean a victory over French capitalism.<sup>28</sup> Marx had crossed the firing line: he now sided with a revolutionary France against an imperial Germany, as he had sided earlier with a national Germany against an imperial France.

The proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles brought him face to face with the nationalistic state which was to set a pattern for Europe. Did he appraise the phenomenon at its true value? He realized how difficult it would be to upset the new state by internal class revolution and turned for a solution to external conflicts which might generate the needed social tensions. As early as 1870 he had remarked that the "*best result*" of the Franco-Prussian War for Germany would be the logically "inevitable" second war, to be waged between a united Germany and Russia. "Typical 'Prussianism' has never had and never can have any existence except in alliance with and subjection to Russia. And a second war of this kind will act as the midwife of the inevitable social revolution in Russia."<sup>29</sup> This was more prophetic for Russia than for Prussia. Political unification, for which he had been willing to pay a high price, had exacted a price quite unexpectedly high. Prussia ruled in Germany, Bismarck ruled in Prussia. Neither seemed seriously challenged by capitalists or workers. As Franz Mehring correctly observed, Marx had overestimated the revolutionary mood of the masses and had underestimated the reach of Bismarck's policy.<sup>30</sup>

Disappointed by the failure of the bourgeoisie to play an energetic political role, Marx rested his faith for Ger-

<sup>28</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 35-39, 42 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Mehring, "Engels und Marx," *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, V, 25.

man progress exclusively on the growing proletarian movement. He appears to have expected far more of the German than of French or English socialists.<sup>31</sup> Yet he also had occasion to speak very critically of the course of German socialism. He disapproved of the principles of the Gotha Program which united the two socialist parties in 1875.<sup>32</sup> Two years later he criticized the compromising "rotten spirit" which had made itself evident both among the masses and their leaders. He recalled, perhaps with a touch of disillusionment, how hard he had worked to instill sound socialist principles into the German movement.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800.

<sup>32</sup> In his *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*. <sup>33</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-60.

## I 2

RUSSIA: THE THEORY OF  
STAGES

CZARISM and Russia loomed large in the revolutionary reckoning of Marx. He saw in Czarism the chief pillar of reaction in Europe, the greatest single obstacle to the progress of the Continent. The country, as distinguished from the government, had revolutionary import for two reasons. The signs of political and economic change, which Marx began to notice in the late fifties and sixties, gave rise to the hope, as we have seen, that the initiative of revolutionary action might perchance come from the East instead of from the West. The development of Russian economy and of the revolutionary movement raised the exceedingly important question whether capitalism was a social stage which every modern country must experience.

Today, when Russia is governed by the most radical regime in the world, it requires an effort of the historical imagination to picture her as she appeared to the generation which grew to maturity with Marx a century ago. The Russia of the Romanovs was the archetype of political, social, and religious reaction. The Holy Alliance summed up the spirit, if not the content, of the Metternich system and the formal author of that mystical brotherhood of Protestant, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox sovereigns was Czar Alexander I. The Age of Metternich coincided



roughly with the period of the "Nicholas system" of police persecution, spy rule, and suppression of liberalism even in its mildest forms. Just as France was regarded as the home of liberal enlightenment, Russia was regarded as the citadel of conservatism. The character of the government and the mystery and inaccessibility of an empire that stretched clear across Asia to the Pacific Ocean, and even beyond, helped to make the realm of the Czars appear as a colossus of evil portent to the Western world.

Hatred of Czarism pervaded the political judgments of Marx. In his liberal youth, he considered Czarist Russia as the greatest hindrance to the realization of the French ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity; after he had become a socialist, he saw in it the greatest hindrance to the social revolution. Once, writing in the *New York Tribune*, he reduced the conflicts of Europe to a struggle between Russia and the "sixth and greatest European power," which had risen since 1789—the power of the Revolution, "the explosive force of democratic ideas and man's native thirst for freedom."<sup>1</sup> (Marx indulged in liberal phraseology when addressing bourgeois readers.) The fortunes of these two "powers" stood in inverse ratio to one another;<sup>2</sup> their relationship governed the conduct of the other states, which did not relish to see either radicalism or Russia too strong. But while eventually the Western states might deem it necessary, in sheer self-defense, to check Russian expansion, they generally found it advantageous to support Czarism as an ally against radical forces.

In his concern over the international influence of Czarism, Marx magnified the ramification of its interests, the extent of its ambitions, and the cunning and patience of its

<sup>1</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 12, 1853, p. 4; February 2, 1854, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, April 7, 1853, p. 5; June 9, 1853, p. 5.

diplomacy.<sup>3</sup> He saw in nearly every ruling house an open or concealed accomplice of the Romanovs. The Hohenzollerns were their servile tools.<sup>4</sup> Napoleon III was drawn like a magnet to the despots whose "system of governing he has introduced into France."<sup>5</sup> The Danish monarchs were the protégés of the Czars.<sup>6</sup> There were Russophiles even at the court of the Sultan, the traditional enemy of the Romanovs.<sup>7</sup> The English aristocracy was ready to "permit the consolidation of a juvenile despotism in the East in the hope of finding a support for their valetudinarian oligarchy in the West."<sup>8</sup> Marx detected Russophilia in the *London Times*, in the Whigs, and in William Gladstone.<sup>9</sup> The principal English culprit was Lord Palmerston, whom he described as "the unflinching and persevering advocate of Russian interests in the Cabinet and in the House of Commons."<sup>10</sup> When it was not sheer romanticism, Pan-Slavism was but another form of czarophilia.<sup>11</sup> Even some of his opponents in the radical world (Proudhon and Lassalle, for example, not to mention Michael Bakunin) were accused by Marx of pro-Russian leanings.<sup>12</sup> His detestation of Czarism was so ample that it embraced nearly all his other antagonisms.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 126; *Briefwechsel*, III, 331, 440, 441; IV, 375, 454; *New York Tribune*, September 5, 1853, p. 6; July 25, 1854, p. 4; August 27, 1857, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 358; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>5</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 11, 1853, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, June 9, 1853, p. 5; August 21, 1854, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 471.

<sup>8</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 11, 1853, p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, April 11, 1853, p. 7; April 19, 1853, p. 4; June 22, 1853, p. 5; August 24, 1853, pp. 5-6; September 2, 1853, pp. 5-6; April 17, 1854, p. 6; April 11, 1854, p. 3; January 12, 1856, p. 4; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 346, 348; Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 443.

<sup>10</sup> *The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston*, p. 16 and *passim*; *New York Tribune*, January 11, 1854, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 240; *New York Tribune*, May 5, 1855, p. 4; May 7, 1855, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> For example, *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 144; *Briefwechsel*, III, 146.

It was natural, under the circumstances, that the destruction of Czarism should be the principal plank of the "foreign policy" of Marx. In 1848 he urged a war against Nicholas I as the only means of preserving the Revolution in Germany. When the Eastern Question became acute in the early fifties, he tried to argue, cajole, and threaten the West into concerted action to stop Russian aggression in Turkey. Europe was warned that unless Russia was checked promptly she would engulf and barbarize the whole Continent. He drew an alarming picture of her territorial gains since Peter the Great. When Nicholas I demanded a "protectorate" over Turkey, Marx observed that "mankind will not forget that Russia was the *protector* of Poland, the *protector* of the Crimea, the *protector* of Courland, the *protector* of Georgia, Mingrelia, the Circassian and Caucasian tribes." The Scandinavians and the Germans were admonished to cease quarreling lest they pave the way for the Slavic "hereditary enemy." Playing on another sentiment, Marx denied that Russia was as rich and strong as some Westerners feared. He reassured the English business community that war against Russia would not prove a commercial disaster because trade with Turkey was on the upgrade while that with Russia was more or less stationary and advised that Russian aggression was imperiling England's commercial and imperial position.<sup>13</sup> Whatever might be thought of such language and arguments, Marx's underlying motive was, as always, revolutionary. He felt that the interest of the proletariat coincided momentarily with the interest of capitalistic England and the West generally: both pointed against the Czars. Neither England nor the "sixth power" could afford to let the Czar seize Constantinople. The conquest of Turkey

<sup>13</sup> New York *Tribune*, April 11, 1853, p. 7; April 12, 1853, p. 4; June 14, 1853, p. 6; August 19, 1853, pp. 5-6; February 2, 1854, p. 4; February 20, 1854, p. 4.

would make Russian might "superior to all the rest of Europe taken together," and that would be "an unspeakable calamity to the revolutionary cause." Again, a war of the West against Russia might precipitate a general revolution in Europe. "Only a signal is wanted," Marx wrote with *élan*, "and this sixth and greatest European power will come forward, in shining armor and sword in hand, like Minerva from the head of Olympian."<sup>14</sup>

The ardently preached crusade—the Crimean War—was launched in 1854. It proved a great disappointment from the point of view of both the European revolution, which did not materialize, and the stability of Czarism, which was shaken but not destroyed. The sluggish campaign of France and England aroused the wrath of Marx as much as the lack of sanitary provisions distressed Florence Nightingale. Marx complained that the war was being conducted with inefficiency and indecision; it seemed almost as if the powers preferred defeat to victory. "The fact is," we read in an interesting newspaper article signed by Marx, but since it was on a military subject, most likely written by Engels, "that conservative Europe—the Europe of 'order, property, family, religion,'—the Europe of monarchs, feudal lords, moneyed men, however they may be differently assorted in different countries—is once more exhibiting its extreme impotency. Europe may be rotten, but a war should have roused the sound elements; a war should have brought forth some latent energies, and assuredly there should be that much pluck among two hundred and fifty millions of men that at least one decent struggle might be got up, wherein both parties could reap some honor, such as force and spirit can carry off even from the field of battle. But no. Not only is the England of the middle classes, the France of the Bonapartes, incapable of a

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, April 12, 1853, p. 4; February 2, 1854, p. 4.

decent, hearty, hard-fought war, but even Russia, the country of Europe least infected by infidel and unnerving civilization, cannot bring about anything of the kind." When "that bore of a war" was finally brought to an end in 1856, Marx observed, in an excess of exaggeration, that the agreements which sealed the defeat of Russia were Russophile!<sup>15</sup>

A striking overestimate of Russian power continued to color his views of international affairs. During the Franco-Sardinian war against Austria in 1859, he opposed Napoleon III because he suspected the backing of the Czar and feared that a weakened Austria would be rendered less capable of checking the growth of Russia.<sup>16</sup> In 1863 Russian Poland rose in rebellion and the Czar seized some territory in the Caucasus. Marx characterized these events as the most important that had occurred since 1815.<sup>17</sup> The following year he condemned "the shameless approval, mock sympathy, or idiotic indifference" with which the upper classes of Europe witnessed the expansion of Russia and her "assassination" of "heroic Poland."<sup>18</sup> Later he urged "the need of armies" because of "the Russian menace."<sup>19</sup> While the states of the West were indulging in petty squabbles, the Czar, "to pass the time," had seized an island near Korea. If such adventures were allowed to continue, he would soon be in possession of Japan!<sup>20</sup> Marx's position on the Franco-German War in 1870-71 was tinged by the fear that Russia might derive some advantage from it. He was not far wrong, for the clauses of the Treaty of 1856 providing for the neutralization of the Black Sea were denounced by Alexander II. It was a tragic spectacle of the French and German workers slaughtering

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, August 17, 1854, p. 4; April 27, 1855, p. 6; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 544.

<sup>16</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 383-84; cf. III, 146, 213.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 178.

<sup>18</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 445. <sup>19</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 417. <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, 237.

one another instead of combining to lay siege to the fortress of international reaction. Marx insisted that Bismarck must not be allowed to call for or accept the help of Russia and criticized Prussian nationalists for being more concerned with annexing French provinces than with checking the greater menace in the East.<sup>21</sup> In the war of 1877-78, Marx hoped for the victory of Turkey, an empire for which he had otherwise little sympathy.<sup>22</sup>

This Carthaginian campaign did not go unchallenged by those radicals who felt that hatred of Czarism was obscuring Marx's vision.<sup>23</sup> It is well to recall, however, that such hatred pervaded liberal and radical circles and that Marx never involved the Russian people in his attacks on Czarism. In fact, he once expressed the opinion that the development of the Romanov empire had run counter to the tendencies of the Russian nation. In the posthumous pamphlet, *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*, Czarism was depicted as an artificial and monstrous creation which owed its prosperity to international intrigue and a veritable conspiracy against the people. Muscovy was cradled in "the bloody mire of Mongolian slavery, not [in] the rude glory of the Norman epoch." The yoke of the Mongols was evaded by stealth rather than broken forthrightly by the "confessed coward" Ivan Kalita. "The character of every people enlarges with its enfranchisement from a foreign yoke; that of Muscovy in the hands of Ivan seems to diminish." Ivan set the pattern for modern Czarist diplomacy. He assumed "abroad the theatrical attitude of the conqueror, and, indeed, succeeded in hiding under a mask of proud susceptibility and irritable haughti-

<sup>21</sup> *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, pp. 33, 38.

<sup>22</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-57; Marx and Engels, *Briefe an A. Bebel, W. Liebknecht, K. Kautsky, und Andere*, I, 494-95.

<sup>23</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 67, 85-86, 384, 391-92; "Der Kongress der Internationalen Arbeiterassociation in Genf," *Der Vorbote*, November, 1866, pp. 165-67; *Briefwechsel*, III, 303-4.

ness, the obtrusiveness of the Mongol serf who still remembered kissing the stirrup of the Khan's meanest envoy."

The gulf between the autocracy and the people widened steadily, especially under Peter the Great, who, as one of the chief architects of the power of the Romanovs, fared badly at the hands of Marx. Peter had dragged a reluctant nation to the sea. It was a "feature characteristic of the Slavonic race" that it confined itself "almost everywhere . . . to an inland country, leaving the sea borders to non-Slavonic tribes." Hence it was that "no portion of the Baltic coast has really adopted Russian nationality." The maritime policy of Peter broke "all the traditions" of the Slavs. His new capital embodied the triumph of a brutal state machine over the natural tendencies of the nation. "Petersburg was not like Muscovy the center of a race, but the seat of a government; not the slow work of a people, but the instantaneous creation of a man; not the medium from which the peculiarities of an inland people radiate, but the maritime extremities where they are lost; not the traditional nucleus of a national development, but the deliberately chosen abode of a cosmopolitan intrigue. By the transfer of the capital, Peter cut off the natural ligaments which bound up the encroaching system of the old Muscovite Czars with the natural abilities and aspirations of the great Russian Race. By planting his capital on the margin of the sea, he put to open defiance the antimaritime instincts of that race and degraded it to a mere weight in his political mechanism." He transformed an inland state into a sea-bordering empire so that "the traditional limits of the Muscovite policy could be superseded and merged into that bold synthesis which, blending the encroaching method of the Mongol slave with the world-conquering tendencies of the Mongol master, forms the life-spring of

modern Russian diplomacy."<sup>24</sup> It was clear that when Marx wrote, as he did more than once, that Russia represented "Mongolism" he had in mind a regime and policy essentially alien to the people.<sup>25</sup>

This historical picture was a strange one, nonetheless, to come from his pen. When such an estimate of the development of a great state came in through the door, historical materialism flew out of the window. If an empire of world importance could be forged by intrigue, cunning, dynastic ambition, and international diplomacy, what became of the economic forces in history? From the point of view of Marx's philosophy, the conception as a whole was more significant than its constituent inadequacies and exaggerations, some of which have been criticized by Ryazanov: the state of Peter had as sound economic justification as did the absolute monarchies of the West; Russian policy had not followed an unswerving course; Marx missed much of the internal history of the country; and so forth.<sup>26</sup>

It was only gradually that Marx became interested in the domestic development of Russia; not until the seventies did he engage in any special studies in that field. In the forties and most of the fifties he regarded Russia as economically and politically stagnant and relied for the overthrow of Czarism on assault from without.<sup>27</sup> The Crimean War made it clear, however, that Czarism could not be thus dispatched, although extensive economic and administrative innovations were introduced by Alexander II shortly thereafter. Marx hopefully interpreted the summoning of Russian nobles to a conference in St. Petersburg

<sup>24</sup> *Secret Diplomatic History of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 77 ff. Note also *Briefwechsel*, II, 106-8.

<sup>25</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelman," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 415-16; *Briefwechsel*, III, 275-76.

<sup>26</sup> Ryazanov, *Karl Marx über den Ursprung der Vorherrschaft Russlands in Europa*, pp. 34, 52, 54-55, 57, 60.

<sup>27</sup> *New York Tribune*, April 19, 1853, p. 4; June 22, 1853, p. 4.

in 1858 as a sign that "the revolution has begun."<sup>28</sup> The movement for the emancipation of the serfs revealed "the beginning of an internal history," which might work a change in the traditional foreign policy of Russia.<sup>29</sup> The social movement seemed to be "advancing faster than in the whole of the rest of Europe." The struggle between the peasants and nobles outweighed the "extraordinary successes of Russian diplomacy during the last fifteen years, and especially since 1849." Remembering the political quiescence of Russia in 1848, Marx predicted that in the next revolutionary wave "Russia will be so kind as to revolutionize as well." He referred to the movements to free the Russian serfs and the American slaves as "the biggest events that are happening in the world today." Profound changes had set in simultaneously in the East and the West; and "this, added to the imminent downbreak [sic] in Central Europe, will be grandiose."<sup>30</sup> In 1863 he expressed the hope that the revolution might begin in the East and spread westward.<sup>31</sup>

During the war with Turkey in 1877-78, Marx was persuaded that all strata of Russian society were in a state of "complete decomposition" economically, morally, and intellectually. The revolution would break out in "the inviolate bulwark and reserve army of counterrevolution." He would fain live to see the "fun." However, the Czar won the war, although he lost the peace at the Congress of Berlin. "A Russian defeat," Marx reflected, "would have greatly hastened the social revolution in Russia, for which the elements exist on an enormous scale, and with it the revolution throughout Europe."<sup>32</sup> The country which the

<sup>28</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 341.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 448, 453; *New York Tribune*, August 11, 1860, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 127.

<sup>32</sup> *Sorge, op. cit.*, pp. 156-57; *Briefe an A. Bebel, W. Liebknecht, K. Kautsky und Andere*, I, 494-95.

authors of the *Manifest* had found it unnecessary to mention in their discussion of political tactics had become a generation later one of the principal foci of European change.

The closer Russia moved to revolution, the more pressing became the question of what sort of revolution this would be. Would it introduce a capitalist regime under the liberal auspices familiar in the West or would it proceed at once to establish socialism? If capitalism was regarded as a necessary development, then radical efforts would be directed toward accelerating the dissolution of the rural communes, expropriating the peasants, and introducing individual enterprise on the land. Tactically, the activities of socialists would have to be concentrated in the growing urban centers which such a process would produce. But if the communes were to be maintained and developed as a basis for a more imminent socialist system, radicals must try to strengthen them and work among peasants as well as among proletarians.

Did Marx believe that capitalism was inevitable as a stage in the evolution of all societies? Was there a series of stages through which every society must pass? The *Manifest* listed three "epochs of history": ancient slavery, feudalism, and capitalism; the last was to be followed by socialism. Engels later explained that "history" had itself been preceded by the communal society which he and Marx, along with other thinkers of the nineteenth century, assumed as having existed in primitive times.<sup>33</sup> In 1859 Marx observed that the Asiatic, the ancient, the feudal, and the bourgeois methods of production might be designated "in broad outline" as "progressive epochs in the formation of economic society." By "Asiatic," he apparently meant a fairly primitive communalism. The relation-

<sup>33</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 525-26 and n.; V, 11 ff.

ship of these stages was sketched briefly: "A social order never disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the old society."<sup>34</sup> In the preface to the first edition of *Das Kapital* (1867), he referred to the development of the economic structure of society as a "natural historical process." A nation could not at will skip over "the natural phases of evolution," although it might "lessen and mitigate the birth pangs" of a new stage. In the book itself Marx argued that capitalism, after it was established, begot "its own negation with the necessity of a natural force." The "negation" was, of course, the socialization of the means of production.<sup>35</sup>

If what we have here is a doctrine of a fixed series of stages valid for every society—and that is how these statements have been very generally understood—then the doctrine was ignored, contradicted, and finally repudiated by its author. Long before he wrote *Das Kapital*, Marx had pointed out that in India capitalism was not succeeding feudalism, but a backward communal system.<sup>36</sup> His denial of the inevitability of social stages became explicit in his discussions of the Russian problem. In a letter to a Russian periodical *Notes on the Fatherland*, in 1877, Marx wrote that he had come to the conclusion, after much study, that Russia had had, until 1861 and perhaps even later, "the best opportunity that history has ever offered to a people" of escaping "all the catastrophies of capitalism." He contended that, in sketching the process of primary accumula-

<sup>34</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 5-6, 221.

<sup>35</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, viii, 727, 728-29.

<sup>36</sup> *New York Tribune*, June 25, 1853, p. 5; August 8, 1853, p. 5. For the "stage" history of Japan, see *Das Kapital*, I, 683n.; for that of the United States, "Carey und Bastiat," *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>2</sup>, 8.

tion and proletarianization of the peasants in his principal work, his intent was nothing more than "to trace the path by which the capitalist economic order in Western Europe emerged from the womb of the feudal economic order." While it is true that his instances were drawn from Western history, especially the history of England, there was no indication in *Das Kapital* that his conclusions were meant to be limited to that area. It is not clear whether he had expressed himself in stronger terms than was justifiable—and overemphasis was characteristic of his writing—or had changed his views in the decade after the publication of *Das Kapital* and would not admit it. But it is clear he was now arguing that so far as Russia was concerned, the implication of his discussion of the origin of capitalism was "simply this: If Russia is tending to become a capitalist nation after the fashion of Western European nations—and in recent years she has been taking great pains in that direction—she will not succeed without having first transformed a good part of her peasants into proletarians; and after she has once been taken into the pale of capitalism, she will have to experience its pitiless laws like other profane nations. That is all." Capitalism was not inescapable, but if established, it would surely be preceded by expropriation and the abolition of small-scale or communal ownership.

In order to determine whether capitalism would be established, a study of actual conditions was more important than theoretical disquisitions. Marx entered a vigorous protest against interpretations which would "transform" his outline of the origin of capitalism in Western Europe into "a historico-philosophical theory of the general path fatally imposed upon all peoples, whatever their historical circumstances, if they are to arrive ultimately at that economic organization which insures the most integral devel-

opment of man as well as the greatest amount of the productive power of social labor." He cited the failure of ancient Rome to introduce capitalism despite the presence of some favorable factors. The process of land expropriation, a prerequisite condition for capitalist production, had taken place. The free peasants had lost their holdings, and the same movement which divorced them from the means of production and subsistence led to the formation of big landed property as well as big money capital. "And so, one fine morning there were to be found on the one hand free men, stripped of everything but their labor power, and on the other, for the exploitation of that labor, the holders of all the acquired riches."

The situation was similar to that which existed at the birth of industrial capitalism in Europe; yet what happened? "The Roman proletarians became not wage laborers, but an idle mob more abject than the former 'poor whites' in the southern regions of the United States; and there developed, alongside, a system of production based not on capitalism, but on slavery." Marx did not discuss the reason for this dénouement, but from a remark which he made in another connection, we may perhaps infer that the crucial factor was the failure of the industrial crafts to keep pace with the growth of commercial capitalism. In general, he associated slavery with backward methods and tools of production. At any rate, "strikingly analogous" phenomena occurring in different historical milieus had "entirely disparate" results. One could explain these differences by studying the two evolutions and comparing them, never by the open sesame of a "historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists in being supra-historical."<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "Lettre sur le développement économique de la Russie," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, VII, 969-72. See also *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 311, 316-17; *Der*

Marx went further in the restatement of his position shortly before his death. The Russian revolutionist Vera Zazulich asked him in 1881 to clarify the question of the inevitability of capitalism. The reply was cryptic. He again contended that his description of the genesis of capitalism in *Das Kapital* was restricted to Western Europe. Then he drew a distinction between the problem of Russia, which was that of transforming communal into private property, and the experience of the West, where one form of private property—small-scale ownership—had been changed into another form—large-scale property—and concluded abruptly: "The analysis given in *Das Kapital*, therefore, offers no arguments for or against the vitality of the rural commune, but the special study I have made of it, the materials for which I sought in original sources, has convinced me that this commune is the *point d'appui* for the social regeneration of Russia. But in order that it may function as such, it would be necessary first to remove the deleterious influences which are attacking it from all sides and then to assure it the normal conditions of a spontaneous development."<sup>38</sup>

Zazulich might be forgiven for inferring that Marx offered a reasonable hope that Russia would be spared the trials of capitalism. In fact he was decidedly less convinced that there was still a chance for the survival of the *mir* than his letter implied. This somewhat misleading, or at any rate vague, reply has puzzled students of Marx. It has been suggested, probably correctly, that he did not wish to discourage the Russian revolutionists by pronouncing the death of an institution to which many of them were attached and by condemning their country to a system

*Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . pp. 18-19; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 275; Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 289.

<sup>38</sup> "Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx," *Marx-Engels Archiv*, I, 341-42.

whose indictment had attracted them to the banner of socialism.<sup>39</sup> He had planned a more elaborate and less optimistic statement, four drafts of which have survived. This material was published for the first time in 1927 in the *Marx-Engels Archiv* by Ryazanov, and is of the utmost importance for an understanding of the conception of history held by Marx toward the end of his life.

Even in Western Europe—so the argument ran—capitalism had not arisen with the inevitability of a law of nature. There was no inherent reason why the communal forms which had prevailed before feudalism could not have evolved into a higher form of communism, thus eliminating *two* stages, the feudal and the capitalistic. Capitalism had struck root as a result of a long series of catastrophes, crises, and conflicts of which the capitalist revolution proper was only the last. Marx thought it significant that the countries which had established the system of private property earliest had been the first to witness movements to abandon it for socialism. The implication was that capitalism had not been inevitable anywhere!

Historical circumstances, then, had played the determining part in bringing capitalism to Western Europe. But different, even "unique," circumstances affected Russia. It was not that the *mir* was peculiar to that country, as some of her scholars and radicals thought. Communal institutions had existed elsewhere in Europe and Asia. The Russians had merely clung to "old forms that their neighbors abolished long ago." Yet, that fact was of great consequence. Russia was the only large European country where the commune continued to function on a national scale far into the nineteenth century, at a time when Western Europe had become intensively industrialized, when it had

<sup>39</sup> Ryazanov in introduction to "Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx," *ibid.*, pp. 311-12; see also p. 341. B. Nikolaievsky, "Marx und das russische Problem," *Gesellschaft*, 1924, I, 362 ff.

become apparent there that capitalism was to be a transitory system and that the proletarian society was on the horizon, and when—this was most important—a backward country might obtain ready made the inventions, techniques, and methods developed so painfully in the West. Marx asked those who denied that a socialist society could possibly grow out of the "archaic" *mir* to explain how Russia had been able to introduce modern machinery without being forced to pass through a long stage of industrial incubation and to adopt quickly the mechanisms of exchange which the West had been centuries developing.

Clearly, a nation did not have to repeat all the experiences of other nations with which it came in contact in order to benefit from their progress. The commune possessed certain advantages over capitalistic enterprise for transformation into socialism. The historic isolation of the village economy had made possible a simple type of centralized despotism which would not be difficult to dismantle. The commune possessed a vitality greater than that of the ancient Semitic, Greek, and Roman societies and, "a fortiori, greater than that of modern capitalist societies." Certain characteristics of the commune prevented it from passing beyond a limited degree of development, but it was not facing fatal obstacles. No foreign enemy insisted on destroying it, as had been the case in India. Its economic isolation was steadily diminishing. The peasants were prepared by their communal experiences for modern collective methods of agriculture.

In short, economically, technologically, and politically, there was no necessity for introducing capitalism in Russia as a preliminary to socialism. As in the West, so in the East, the course of development would be determined, not by historical "laws" which laid down an unalterable sequence of stages, but by complex and largely unpredictable



circumstances and events. One could state a few possible alternatives but not decide between them in advance. The destiny of the *mir* was reduced to a race with time. The central question was whether the *mir* would succumb to capitalism *before* Czarism succumbed to revolution. If it did, then Russia would enter upon a long and costly capitalistic process. If the revolution occurred before the *mir* had disintegrated and if—the second “if” was crucial—the West should pass from capitalism to socialism, at the same time, then the *mir* would become the basis for socialization. It was a matter of determining the degree of deterioration of the commune, the chances for the overthrow of Czarism, and the possibility of a simultaneous revolution in the West.<sup>40</sup>

Now Marx had long held the opinion that the *mir* was being subjected to irresistible attacks. Capitalism was visibly entrenching itself.<sup>41</sup> Communal ownership was “already on the downgrade” in 1882. “To save the Russian commune, a Russian revolution is needed”—promptly. Only an equally prompt and successful revolution in the West could assure communal Russia of the political support and material implements which would enable it to develop a socialist society.<sup>42</sup>

Neither revolution occurred in the nineteenth century. The fact was that the Russian government, far from undermining the *mir*, as Marx thought it was doing, actually supported and used it as a basis for the land settlement which accompanied the emancipation of the serfs. It was not until after the defeat of the Revolution of 1905 that

<sup>40</sup> “Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx,” *Marx-Engels Archiv*, I, 318–40; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 27. See also “Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann,” *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 415–16; *Das Kapital*, I, 198.

<sup>41</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 524.

<sup>42</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 121; “Vera Zazulich und Karl Marx,” *Marx-Engels Archiv*, I, 328–39; Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 264–65.

the government began to favor the breakup of the communes and the establishment of a system of individual proprietorship. The process of dissolution was slow and the *mir* was still a very important and vital institution when Czarism finally collapsed. The Russian Revolution occurred under circumstances which made possible the transition from communalism to modern collectivism, despite the failure of the West to produce a simultaneous socialist revolution.

Marx’s sense of timing and his view of the interconnection between advanced and backward countries in the establishment of socialism were obviously at fault. His insistence, however, that a complete capitalist stage was not inevitable in Russia and that the commune might form, to some extent, a bridge between the old rural order and the new was substantially confirmed by history.

## 13

THE UNITED STATES: A  
NATION IN THE MAKING

MARX regarded the United States as the great prototype of the modern colonial nations founded by European emigrants in the new lands of the other continents. Although the young nations were in many respects integral parts of the general historical movement of the Western world, they had special characteristics and faced problems somewhat different from those of the older nations of Europe.

In all colonial countries, the paramount task of occupying and conquering vast territories absorbed for a long time the energies of the people and completely overshadowed other pursuits and interests. If a colony was, as Marx defined it, a country with "virgin soil, colonized by free immigrants," the United States remained colonial approximately through the nineteenth century. In the sense of economic and especially financial dependence on the Old World, it ceased to be a colonial nation only gradually after the Civil War, or a century after it had reached political sovereignty. As late as 1867 Marx asserted that the United States was, "economically speaking, still only a colony of Europe."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 417n., 721, 729n., 733. On the nature of colonies, see, *ibid.*, III<sup>2</sup>, 190, 210-11, 289, 303; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 70-72, 83-84; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 250.

The most important peculiarity of the colonial nation was the slowness of its stratification into the social classes associated with a full-grown capitalist system. Marx observed in 1848 that class struggles had not yet begun in the Western states, while in the East they "stirred in the old, silent English way."<sup>2</sup> Four years later he wrote that classes already existed in the United States, but was careful to add that they had "not yet become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in a constant state of flux. . . ." <sup>3</sup> Bourgeois society had not yet developed "far enough to make the class struggle evident and comprehensible."<sup>4</sup> Signs of proletarianization were apparent after the Civil War. The "great Republic" ceased to be "the promised land of emigrant workers." True, wages were still higher and the workers less dependent than in Europe. However, a sediment of surplus labor had already begun to form in the East, for migration to the West did not keep pace with immigration from Europe. At the same time, capitalism was advancing with "giant strides"; the Civil War had brought in its train "a colossal national debt, and with it, pressure of taxation, the creation of a financial aristocracy of the vilest sort, the squandering of a huge part of the public lands on speculative companies for the exploitation of railways, mines, etc.—in short, the rapid centralization of capital."<sup>5</sup> In 1882 Marx recorded the definitive victory of capitalism in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

A young nation may be very old in certain respects. The United States was a pioneer in religious freedom, but it was also "preëminently the country of religiosity."<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VII, 407; V, 52; *Nachlass*, III, 438.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 738.

<sup>6</sup> Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 263-64.

<sup>7</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, I<sup>1</sup>, 581, 590-91.

New World seemed to be more bound by custom than the Old, where centuries of critical thought had destroyed worn-out ideas. Americans had been too busy with the problem of subduing a continent to share in the critical process, and they remained culturally backward.<sup>8</sup> In less esoteric realms, however, they showed refreshing shrewdness and spontaneity of thought. While traditions common to Europe and the United States survived longer in the latter, this country possessed the advantage of not having developed an inflexible body of tradition of its own.<sup>9</sup> Marx was impressed by the practical sense of Franklin and Lincoln, who was one of the few privileged contemporaries for whom Marx had a respect approaching admiration. Franklin had given the first "clear analysis of exchange value as labor time."<sup>10</sup> His penetrating definition of man as a tool-making animal was characteristically "Yankee."<sup>11</sup> Marx pictured the American soldier in action in a discussion of the Mexican War of 1846-48. Every division and even "every individual, small body of troops, despite mistaken or deficient orders of the chief, always stubbornly heads for the goal and spontaneously exploits every accident, so that finally something worth while comes of it." This was "Yankee spirit of independence and individual efficiency, perhaps even in excess of the Anglo-Saxons."<sup>12</sup>

Politically, the United States was in advance of the older Continent. The American revolutionists had led in organizing the first modern bourgeois state. The establishment of the principles of political and religious freedom was a historic step forward.<sup>13</sup> The War of Independence had

<sup>8</sup> *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 30.

<sup>9</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 43; "Carey und Bastiat," *Neue Zeit*, XXII<sup>2</sup>, 8-12.

<sup>10</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 43.

<sup>11</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 142, 290-91n.

<sup>12</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 69.

<sup>13</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, I<sup>1</sup>, 585.

"sounded the tocsin for the European middle classes," and Marx hoped the Civil War might have the same effect upon the European proletariat.<sup>14</sup> Although in 1846 he spoke of the United States as "the most progressive country,"<sup>15</sup> he frequently criticized its political parties and political corruption. The American polity proved the inadequacy of liberalism and democracy in the absence of economic and social reforms. He once referred to the United States as "the model country of the democratic swindle."<sup>16</sup> Yet he acknowledged the value of the social and educational gains of American workers. He recognized the importance of individual liberty and would not let others disparage it.<sup>17</sup> His appreciation of the strength of American political institutions was implicit in the admission that they might possibly pave the way for an evolutionary transition to socialism.<sup>18</sup> He insisted, of course, that liberal and democratic institutions must be supplemented by labor organization and political action directed toward the realization of socialism.<sup>19</sup>

But first the United States would pass through the stage of capitalism. There were two special obstacles in its path: the frontier of free land with its system of small-scale property, and slavery. Marx did not share the hope of reformers who saw in free land a short cut to Utopia.<sup>20</sup> While he conceded, as we have seen, that the communal

<sup>14</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, vii-viii; H. Schlüter, *Lincoln, Labor and Slavery* (New York, 1913), p. 189; "An die Arbeiter von Europa und den Vereinigten Staaten!" *Der Vorbote*, June 1869, p. 87.

<sup>15</sup> *Correspondence*, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 102, 105-6, 191; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>17</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 83; "Der politische Indifferentismus," *Neue Zeit*, XXXII<sup>1</sup>, 40 ff.; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 246.

<sup>18</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-41.

<sup>19</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 240; "Vierter jährlicher Bericht des Generalrathes der Internationalen Arbeiter-Association," *Der Vorbote*, September 1868, p. 139.

<sup>20</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 11-13.

village system of Russia might, given favorable circumstances, form the basis for a socialist society, he would not admit that the distribution of land in individual farms and the establishment of a small-scale and largely self-sufficient agrarian economy could serve the same end. Small-scale farming would merely make the path of capitalism slower and more circuitous. Nevertheless, Marx strongly supported the demands of American and Australian reformers for the free distribution of the public lands in small plots. As a radical, he felt he must side with the democratic forces behind this program, with the underdog. He was also concerned in preventing the entrenchment of landlordism which had proved a reactionary influence in Europe.<sup>21</sup>

In the forties he had entertained the hope that the movement of the small free settlers would promote bourgeois industrialism. He abandoned that hope before long. Frontier and capitalism came to represent antagonistic, indeed irreconcilable and mutually exclusive, systems of private property.<sup>22</sup> The capitalist system of property could exist only if "the vast majority of society" owned no property.<sup>23</sup> The exploitation of indigent workers was essential to capitalism.<sup>24</sup> The unpropertied many must come to depend on wages and compete with each other for the privilege of using the means of production assembled in the hands of the heavily-propertied few. The frontier, however, gave private property to the many, who proceeded to work for themselves.<sup>25</sup> The system of small, independent property must be destroyed if capitalism was to succeed.<sup>26</sup> It was a mistake to argue with colonial economists like E. C. Wakefield, that "the splitting up of the means of production into

<sup>21</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 191.

<sup>22</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 730.

<sup>23</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 540.

<sup>24</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 719.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 730; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 70-72.

<sup>26</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 728, 730, 731; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 539.

the individual properties of many workers, independent of one another and each for himself," was but another form of capitalism.<sup>27</sup> The means of production and subsistence were not "capital" if they were owned by workers. They became "capital" in the hands of a person who was not an immediate producer himself, but used them to exploit others. Capitalist accumulation and the reproduction of wealth on a large scale were impossible in new countries so long as free land was available.<sup>28</sup> Money, goods, and machinery could not make their owner a capitalist in the absence of the wage worker, that "other man" who felt "compelled to sell himself of his own free will."<sup>29</sup> In new countries, the labor market was unreliable at best, especially for long-range enterprises, because the wage worker of today was the independent farmer or handicraftsman of tomorrow.<sup>30</sup> It would not even do to import one's own labor supply so long as the workers had access to vacant soil. The scarcity of labor made wages high and high wages, Marx observed slyly, made the colonial rate of exploitation "indecently low."<sup>31</sup> The psychological situation was no better, for the worker lost his "sense of dependence on the abstemious capitalist."<sup>32</sup> Finally, the self-sufficient Jack-of-all-trades of the frontier was a poor customer of industrial goods.<sup>33</sup> Capitalism could not thrive until wealth was more concentrated and poverty more widely distributed.

The history of the modern colonial nation seemed to Marx to confirm his theory that capitalism originated in expropriation and compulsion. If it were true, as some economists argued, that capitalism was based on a voluntary agreement among men to divide themselves into work-

<sup>27</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 730, 731; *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 482 ff.

<sup>28</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 731-32.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 731, 733-34.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 732, 734, 735, 736.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 734.

<sup>32</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 733-34.

ers and capitalists, where was there ever a better opportunity to make such a contract than in the free colonies? If the mass of mankind had willingly "expropriated itself in honor of the 'accumulation of capital' " in older countries, one would think that "the instinct for this self-denying fanaticism would especially have free rein in the colonies, since there, alone, men and conditions existed which could translate a social contract from a dream into reality."<sup>34</sup> The American and Australian colonists shattered that dream simply by refusing to work for wages.<sup>35</sup> The rule that capitalism is born of expropriation would hold in the United States, as elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> The hope of America must rest, not on any special feature of its development, but on the establishment of a socialist society by means of a great proletarian movement.

While capitalism would have to overcome small property insidiously and by degrees, it required a violent revolution to dispose of the other enemy—slavery. Following the tradition of classical economics since the physiocrats, Marx opposed slavery as an obstruction to the growth of the free market.<sup>37</sup> Through the plantation economy, slavery strengthened the landed interest which ran counter to the industrial interest at many points. Slavery did not adequately promote the productive reinvestment of profits.<sup>38</sup> It compelled the use of backward techniques.<sup>39</sup> The competition of slave labor hampered the emergent industrial proletariat and no independent labor movement was possible so long as slavery "disfigured a part of the Republic."<sup>40</sup> "Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded."<sup>41</sup> Marx was revolted by the particularly brutal exploitation of the

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 732.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 734.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 733, 738–39.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 299; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 72.

<sup>38</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 561.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159n.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 264; Schlüter, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–91. <sup>41</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 264.

plantation system, in which "the civilized horror" of overwork was grafted on such "barbaric horrors" as slavery.<sup>42</sup>

For all these reasons he fought for the abolition of slavery. He was a fierce partisan of the North in the Civil War, which he regarded as a conflict between "the system of slavery and the system of free labor."<sup>43</sup> The war broke out because the two systems could no longer "live peacefully side by side"; it could only end with the victory of one or the other.<sup>44</sup> By its very nature, slavery could not survive unless it could expand; it would surely die if restricted to the old slave states.<sup>45</sup> The South started the war in order to acquire territories in the West and also in Central and South America. The War of the Confederacy was therefore "not a war of defense but a war of conquest for the extension and perpetuation of slavery."<sup>46</sup> If the South won, the "slave system would infect the whole Union. In the Northern States, where Negro slavery is in practice unworkable, the white working class would gradually be forced down to the level of helotry. This would accord with the loudly proclaimed principle that only certain races are capable of freedom, and as the actual labor is the lot of the Negro in the South, so in the North it is the lot of the German and the Irishman, or their direct descendants."<sup>47</sup> The war was one of those moments of history when the coöperation of the lower classes with the ruling middle classes was thoroughly justified, in order to assure the progress of the nation (here, by abolishing slavery).<sup>48</sup> Marx and Engels called on the North to conduct a revolutionary war on the model of the French campaigns of 1792–93, when democratic reforms and united action

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197, 228, 229, 725.

<sup>43</sup> *The Civil War in the United States*, pp. 81, 157.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60–61, 81. <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66, 69, 80. <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 79.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>48</sup> See Engels' view, *Briefwechsel*, III, 107, 108–9.

against the aristocracy forged a mighty national alliance.<sup>49</sup> They urged recruiting by conscription and the immediate emancipation of the slaves.<sup>50</sup>

Despite the defeats and disappointments of the first phase of the war, Marx never doubted that the North would prevail in the end.<sup>51</sup> There were two reasons for his confidence. The greater resources and population of the North (with the assistance of the important Northwest areas<sup>52</sup>) must ultimately outweigh the initial advantage of the South, which, as an "oligarchy," was better adapted to military exertions.<sup>53</sup> However, Lincoln would eventually conduct the war with the necessary energy.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, the success of the South, to be worth anything at all, must be complete to a remarkable degree. The struggle hinged on the border states which were vital to the South as slave-breeders. Whoever controlled these states dominated the Union.<sup>55</sup> If the South were powerful enough to enforce possession of the border states, it would be in a position to secure California as well; the Northwest would follow and the whole Union, with the possible exception of New England, would be reorganized under the "acknowledged supremacy of the slaveholders."<sup>56</sup> Given the superiority of the potential might of the North and the Northwest, such a triumph was inconceivable to Marx. Unlike the South, the North could afford to make peace on the basis of a compromise. In short, the South must lose because a thoroughgoing victory was impossible, given the ratio of strength between free capitalism and slavery, and a partial victory was worthless. Whether or not

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81; *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 82.

<sup>51</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 110-11; see also 68, 81-82, 92, 101-2, 107, 108-9.

<sup>52</sup> *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 70; *Briefwechsel*, III, 29-30.

<sup>53</sup> *Briefwechsel*, III, 102. <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 101-2, 104-5, 108-11.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 59, 104.

<sup>56</sup> *The Civil War in the United States*, p. 80; *Briefwechsel*, III, 101-2.

Marx's reasoning was sound, his conclusion was confirmed by the event.

The victory of the North unleashed capitalism. The population grew and new means of communication and transportation increased the "density" of its interrelationships.<sup>57</sup> The relative scarcity of labor compelled a greater use of machinery than in England.<sup>58</sup> It was common in the United States to introduce machines in small handicraft industries and, predicted Marx, when the inevitable transition to the factory system occurred "the ensuing concentration will march forward in seven-league boots, compared with Europe and even with England."<sup>59</sup> The spirit of capitalist enterprise had long been alive in the United States. Before the outbreak of the Civil War Marx had observed that "a nation is at its industrial height so long as its main object is not gain, but the process of gaining." From that point of view, the Americans stood above the English.<sup>60</sup>

In 1879 Marx declared that the United States had overtaken England in the rapidity of its economic progress, although it was still behind in the extent of acquired wealth.<sup>61</sup> Three years later, he and Engels summed up the economic changes since 1848:

European emigration has promoted the unprecedented growth of agriculture in North America, which in its turn, by becoming a competitor of European agriculture, has shaken the landed interests of Europe (great and small alike) to their very foundations. Again, the development of farming in the United States has made it possible to exploit the vast industrial resources of the country so effec-

<sup>57</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 317, 738.

<sup>58</sup> *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, II<sup>2</sup>, 369-70n.; *Das Kapital*, I, 358, 425n.; *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire* . . . p. 30.

<sup>59</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 425n.

<sup>60</sup> *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, pp. 219-20, 240.

<sup>61</sup> *Correspondence*, p. 360; "Die internationalen Kongresse," *Der Vorbote*, August 1867, p. 116.

tively that, before long, American competition will put an end to the monopoly hitherto exercised by Western Europe in the realm of industry. These two courses of evolution react, in their turn, upon the United States, tending to force that country likewise into revolutionary paths. More and more the small and medium-sized farms, the warp and woof of the whole political system, tend to be submerged by the competition of large-scale undertakings. Simultaneously in the field of industry, we are witnessing the emergence of a multitudinous proletariat and a fabulous concentration of capital.<sup>62</sup>

The exploitation of labor grew apace. Although land was still available to a certain extent to the great mass of people, Marx observed in 1881, capitalism and its characteristic "enslavement" of the workers "have developed *more rapidly and brazenly* than in any other country."<sup>63</sup> He came to recognize that labor faced special difficulties in the United States. Yet he always felt that American labor, once on its way, would catch up with European labor organizations and possibly surpass them.

The revolutionary optimism and activism of Marx led him to overestimate the significance of all energetic working-class movements. The first American radical organization with which he became acquainted—in the forties—was the National Reform Association. The Association advocated equal division of public lands and their free distribution to persons who owned no other property. Marx not only supported this program but seems to have regarded the agrarian movement as proletarian in origin and as the forerunner of the future socialist movement. While he was correct in thinking that the agrarians were radical and even somewhat class-conscious,<sup>64</sup> little did he

<sup>62</sup> Ryazanov, ed., *The Communist Manifesto*, pp. 263-64; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 250.

<sup>63</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>64</sup> J. R. Commons and Associates, *History of Labour in the United States* (New York, 1936), I, 522 ff.

realize then how deeply individualistic they were or how thoroughly committed to private property. The Association declared that the agrarians "desired not to interfere, *pro* or *con*, with the present arrangements of Society, further than they may be regulated by the right of every man in this Republic to become a Freeholder on the Public Lands." More specifically, they "*do not* want an equal division, or any division at all, of private property—either of land property, or property created by human hands."<sup>65</sup> This was more in harmony with Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism than with Marxism.

The failure of the Revolutions of 1848 had the effect of moderating the immediate expectations of Marx for both European and American labor. English Chartism collapsed and the National Reform Association petered out, although their programs eventually prevailed in large measure. Marx's hopes were revived by the Civil War. In a proclamation of the International, he asserted rhetorically that labor was "the true political power of the North."<sup>66</sup> The post-war period witnessed a great wave of organization. The labor movement was stimulated by the freeing of the slaves.<sup>67</sup> Marx commended the campaign for the eight-hour day and the formation of the National Labor Union, which has been described as "the first important national labor federation in the United States."<sup>68</sup> The slogan of the Union, Marx wrote, was "organization for the struggle against capital; and curiously enough most of the demands which I drew up for Geneva [second Con-

<sup>65</sup> *The Working Man's Advocate*, April 20, 1844, p. 1; March 30, 1844, p. 1; April 6, 1844, p. 1; and *Young America!*, March 6, 1847, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> Schlüter, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>67</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 264; *Briefwechsel*, III, 328; "Die internationalen Kongresse," *Der Vorbote*, August 1867, pp. 115-16.

<sup>68</sup> *Das Kapital*, I, 264-65; Nathan Fine, *Labor and Farmer Parties in the United States, 1828-1928* (New York, 1928), p. 23.

gress of the First International] were also put forward by the correct instinct of the [American] workers." <sup>69</sup> He praised the liberal position of the Union on the issue of women's rights. <sup>70</sup> Marx established contact with the leaders of the Union, which at one time considered formal affiliation with the International. <sup>71</sup>

Before long, however, the National Labor Union disintegrated; it disappeared in the early seventies. When Marx proposed the removal of the internally-wracked International to the United States, he argued that this country was "preëminently becoming the land of the workers": half a million workers immigrated there every year and the International "must perforce strike deep roots in this soil upon which the workers are supreme." <sup>72</sup> He was mistaken, for the organization hardly breathed after leaving Europe; its formal demise occurred in Philadelphia in 1873. Marx did not despair. American socialists faced "great" obstacles, some economic, some political, but they were making headway against them. <sup>73</sup> In the late seventies American labor again seemed definitely on the march. A wave of strikes spread to many parts of the country, particularly affecting the railways. Disorders broke out and Federal troops intervened in the struggle between capital and labor. In Pittsburgh the militia sensationally fraternized with the strikers. "What do you think of the workers of the United States?" Marx exclaimed. "This first outbreak against the capitalist oligarchy which has arisen since the Civil War will naturally be put down, but it may

<sup>69</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 63; M. Hillquit, *History of Socialism in the United States* (New York, 1910), pp. 165-66.

<sup>70</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 383.

<sup>71</sup> Hillquit, *op. cit.*, pp. 168, 173; Schlüter, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-34; "Jahresbericht des Generalraths an den Kongress in Basel," *Der Vorbote*, September 1869, p. 143. On W. H. Sylvius, see *Briefwechsel*, IV, 224.

<sup>72</sup> Steklov, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>73</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800.

well form the starting point of the establishment of a real workers' party in the United States." He thought that the Western farmers and the Negroes might be driven by the reconstruction policy of the newly-elected President Rutherford Hayes and by the land grants to companies in the West to ally themselves politically with the proletarians. <sup>74</sup> In 1881 he observed that the publication of *Progress and Poverty* by Henry George was "significant" as "a first, if unsuccessful, attempt at freedom from the orthodox political economy." <sup>75</sup>

Marx reached a less definite diagnosis of the problems of American than of English socialism. His emphasis on the importance of vigorous activity in the trade-union field and the enthusiasm with which he welcomed every effort to organize labor on a national scale regardless of theoretical programs, show that he was in accord with the many warnings Engels issued to German immigrant radicals against attempts to impose German or Marxist "dogmas" on American workers. <sup>76</sup> Both men felt that "every step of a real movement" was more important than a dozen programs. <sup>77</sup> It seemed suicidal to make theoretical orthodoxy, instead of effective organization and a sound general direction, the test of militancy. The labor movement, according to Engels, would mature politically and develop socialist interests and leadership in its own good time by the process of attempting to better the condition of its members, not by indoctrination from without. The evolution from organization for immediate practical aims to socialism "must happen in the English way," and the German radicals who would function effectively alongside of the workers must strip off "the special German character" of their doctrine. <sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 466.

<sup>75</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239; see also pp. 224, 242-44, 323, 328-30.

<sup>77</sup> *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 239.



To the end, however, and apart from tactical problems and issues, Marx and Engels were confident that the future of American labor and socialism was no less bright than the future of American industrialism.

## WAS MARX A NATIONALIST?

THE BIOGRAPHY of a scientist is not likely to illuminate the basis of his professional contributions. The personal factor is obviously more important in analyzing the thought or action of the social scientist, and especially that of the practical statesman. That is why memoirs and reminiscences are more essential source materials for the study of history than for physical or abstract science. There is ample justification for inquiring into the informal opinions and tendencies of Marx and their effect on his national views. Marx *en pantoufles* may help to explain Marx on the platform.

There is a more immediate reason, however, for such an inquiry. The question has been raised more than once whether the founder of "scientific socialism," for all his internationalist professions, was not actually a nationalist or even a chauvinist, consciously or unconsciously. It has seemed to some critics of Marx that he drew invidious distinctions between races and nations. Others have gone further and flatly accused him of being a German nationalist, a Pan-Germanist, a hater of Slavs, Russians and Frenchmen, and an anti-Semite.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Guillaume, *Karl Marx, Pangermaniste . . .* (Paris, 1915), pp. iii-iv and *passim*; Bertrand Russell, *Freedom versus Organization* (New York, 1934), pp. 214-15; Max Nomad, "Marx and Bakunin," *Hound and Horn*, New York, April-June 1933, p. 385. For milder criticisms, see T. G. Masaryk, *Die philosophischen und soziologischen Grundlagen des Marxismus* (Vienna, 1899), pp. 429-30, 438, 444-45; Charles A. Dana's letter, *Herr Vogt*, appendix, pp. 188-89; S. M. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (Berlin, 1925-30), IX, 83, 130 ff.

Such indictments were frequently generated in the heat of partisan warfare and polemics and are therefore not worth their face value. One cannot take seriously all the attacks against a man whose life was a long succession of highly personal controversies and whose teachings and activities have aroused bitter debates to this day. On the other hand, it will not do to dismiss these charges out of hand, for the fact is that Marx left himself quite open to some of them.

For example, he nursed a strong antipathy toward Russians for many years. He looked upon them rather indiscriminately as superficial in their cultural interests and attainments, insincere, overbearing, and even mendacious. "There is no such word in the Russian vocabulary as 'honor,'" he once remarked. "As to the thing itself, it is considered to be a French delusion. '*Schto takoi honneur, Et-Fransuski chimère,*' [What is honor? It is a French chimera.] is a Russian proverb."<sup>2</sup> The context of this observation, true enough, was a criticism of the diplomacy of Czarism, but Marx thought little better of the Russians with whom he came in contact. Under the circumstances he was naturally embarrassed that he was repaid with consideration and kindness. He received prompt recognition in Russia.<sup>3</sup> It seemed to him an "irony of fate" that the "good friends" whom he had "fought for twenty-five years" should have always been his "patrons." Russian aristocrats had treated him with extreme courtesy in his early sojourn in Paris in 1843-44. *Misère de la philosophie* and *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* sold better in Russia than anywhere else. Admitting all this, Marx refused to be impressed. He complained that the noblemen who studied abroad swallowed the most extreme theories

<sup>2</sup> *The Story of the Life of Lord Palmerston*, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

that the West had to offer. It was "pure *gourmandise*," in the manner of the French aristocracy of the eighteenth century, whose Enlightenment was not meant for the common people. As soon as they entered the state service, the liberal noblemen became "scoundrels."<sup>4</sup>

The Russian colony at Geneva asked him in 1870 whether he would become its representative in the General Council of the First International. Marx was amused by this "droll" situation. He submitted to the "strange fellowship" but took subtle revenge. In his letter accepting the offer, he emphasized that the main task of the group was "to work for the independence of Poland," which meant, as he remarked in an aside to Engels, that the Russians were to "free Europe from themselves as neighbors!"<sup>5</sup> In the seventies, this stiffness began to give. He was struck by the vigor of the Russian revolutionary movement. A biting reference to Alexander Herzen, the famous Russian liberal editor, in the first edition of *Das Kapital* was deleted in later editions.<sup>6</sup> Marx praised the terrorists and showed a more sober appreciation of individual Russians.<sup>7</sup> The socialist thinker was not given to acknowledging mistakes or failings, but one gets the impression that toward the end of his life, he may have felt shamefaced at having allowed himself to make sweeping judgments of a large group of people on the basis of limited experiences.<sup>8</sup>

That Marx exhibited antagonism toward various Slavic

<sup>4</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 224.

<sup>5</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 296, 387.

<sup>6</sup> *Das Kapital* (Hamburg, 1867), p. 763; "Lettre sur le développement économique de la Russie," *Le Mouvement socialiste*, VII, 969; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 356.

<sup>7</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 321; Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 172; P. L. Lavrov, "Herzmann Alexandrowitsch Lopatin," *Neue Zeit*, VII, 302.

<sup>8</sup> See Ryazanov's opinion in "Marx und seine russischen Bekannten in den vierziger Jahren," *Neue Zeit*, XXXI<sup>1</sup>, 715 ff., 757 ff.; and E. Bernstein's in "Karl Marx und Michael Bakunin," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, XXX, 3-5.

groups there can be no question; but it was not a consistent, conscious, or ideological antagonism. Both he and Engels delivered themselves of arbitrary and unfair opinions on the smaller Slavic nations. We have seen how they were set down as "ruins of peoples" without a historical future. The Western Slavs were consigned summarily to national extinction in the next wave of revolution.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Marx was a consistent supporter of the independence of another Slavic nation, the Poles. We are evidently dealing with a complex of attitudes affected by revolutionary calculations. But it cannot be denied that he absorbed much anti-Slav prejudice in his early German environment.<sup>10</sup>

Marx's attitude toward France was somewhat ambivalent. Its political energy and leadership aroused his enthusiasm; the defense of the Paris Commune in *Der Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich* might have been written by a native proud of the revolutionary tradition of his country. Yet he was intensely annoyed by Gallic nationalism. When he spoke of *chauvinisme*, it was as if the passion were as French as the word. While he freely acknowledged his indebtedness to the great social thinkers of France, he betrayed increasing irritability with the affectations of national superiority of contemporary radical leaders.<sup>11</sup>

His reaction to the Jewish people was rather more complex. The world has regarded Marx as a Jew; he was not infrequently reminded of his origin. That was not his own point of view: for him, the Jews were "they," not "we."<sup>12</sup> He appears to have had little or no contact with the Jewish

<sup>9</sup> See above, pp. 40-41.

<sup>10</sup> For the view of a Slav leader, see Masaryk, *op. cit.*, pp. 440, 442, 444-45, and *Russland und Europa* (Jena, 1913), II, 25, 33, 295.

<sup>11</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 152; IV, 339-40. For the opinions of Frau Marx, see *Briefwechsel*, IV, 360, 370, 585; Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

<sup>12</sup> "Zur Judenfrage," *Sämtliche Werke*, I, 576 and *passim*; I<sup>2</sup>, 308.

community either in Germany or abroad. His father, Heinrich Marx, had been converted to Lutheran Christianity before Karl was born. Frau Marx and the children were baptized in the same faith when he was six years old.<sup>13</sup> The elder Marx was a deistic intellectual steeped in the tradition of the Enlightenment. His conversion was apparently necessitated by his professional duties as a lawyer. Some of his letters to his son, whose tempestuous character gave him deep concern, have survived; it is difficult to picture him presiding over a religious household. Karl was apparently never religious in any serious sense, quite unlike his future friend Engels, who had been stirred by profound religious emotions in his youth.<sup>14</sup>

The first half of the nineteenth century was an age of great change for Western Jews. Along with other groups, they were striving for a recognized place in the modern state, for civil and political equality as individuals. Marx was not indifferent to the movement of emancipation, which was generally supported by liberals and radicals. He helped to further it on at least one occasion, although the reason he gave showed that he was interested far more in the revolutionary effect of civil reform than in Jewish grievances as such.<sup>15</sup> Another feature of the time was the pervasive movement for Jewish religious reform and assimilation. It became the fashion to abandon or disparage traditional rituals and customs. Finally, there was much talk in liberal and radical circles of the supposed financial power of the Jews. The relation of the banking house of the Rothschilds with conservative regimes, notably the Hapsburg Empire, gave rise to much anti-Semitic feeling.

These tendencies were reflected in an essay which Marx wrote at the age of twenty-five. *Zur Judenfrage* was a

<sup>13</sup> *Karl Marx: Chronik seines Lebens*, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, II, 485 ff.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, I<sup>2</sup>, 308.

discussion of a book on the same subject by Bruno Bauer, a former friend of his. Bauer had argued that if the Jews wished to earn the right to civil equality, they should renounce their exclusive orthodox faith. Marx replied that political freedom could not be made conditional on either the denial or the profession of any religion. He himself looked forward to the extinction of religion, which he characterized in another essay of the same period as "the opium of the people."<sup>16</sup> He felt, however, that this problem must be faced by Christians as well as Jews. The liberal polity, as exemplified in the eighteenth-century constitutions of the United States and France, did not end religion, but on the contrary assured its freer exercise. In fact, denominational variety flourished especially in the liberal American polities. The essay was a plea for Jewish emancipation and for political emancipation in general, as well as an assertion of the insufficiency of such emancipation unless supplemented by economic liberation.<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, Marx spoke of the Jews in highly unpleasant and invidious terms.<sup>18</sup> He took occasion to develop a complicated theory which seemed to be directed against the economic activities of the Jews, although it was intended as a criticism of capitalist and Christian civilization. He distinguished between spiritual and "everyday Judaism," equated the latter with the spirit of capitalism, and wound up with an attack on Christianity on the ground that it had become capitalistic and therefore "everyday Jewish"! In the paradoxical and epigrammatic style of his youth (Marx never completely shed his excessive love of the literary paradox), he demanded that both Christians and Jews discard capitalism, that is "everyday Judaism," and logically concluded that the social, apart from the

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 607.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 577 and *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 601, 603, 604, 605-6.

merely political, enfranchisement of the Jews and of everyone else, presupposed "the emancipation of society from Judaism," meaning capitalism.<sup>19</sup>

Marx soon outgrew this strained theory; few traces of it survived in his later writings.<sup>20</sup> His passionate hatred of bourgeois civilization remained intact, but he ascribed to capitalism a highly important and progressive role in history.<sup>21</sup> Industrial and commercial capitalism, as well as their respective functions in the transformation of society, were carefully distinguished.<sup>22</sup> No phase of capitalism was associated with a particular people or religion. The development of commercial capitalism was a result of the activities of many groups: the ancient Greeks, Phoenicians, and Carthaginians, the medieval Lombards, the Jews, and—in modern times—the Dutch and the English, the Germans and the Russians; nor was this list exhaustive.<sup>23</sup>

But while he cast aside the economic philosophy of *Zur Judenfrage*, Marx preserved a certain antagonism to Jews. He did not have sufficient interest to acquaint himself with the conditions and problems of the Western Jews. He was even more ignorant of the position of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>24</sup> His earlier writings contain ominous references to "stock exchange Jews" and to a "freemasonry" of Jewish financiers and speculators who were bringing "ruin" on "the people."<sup>25</sup> He ceased to speak in this fashion in the late fifties, and there is no reason to suppose that his mature view of anti-Semitism differed from

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 601 ff.

<sup>20</sup> See Dubnow, *op. cit.*, IX, 132-33.

<sup>21</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 527 ff.

<sup>22</sup> See above, pp. 49-50.

<sup>23</sup> *Das Kapital*, III<sup>1</sup>, 314; III<sup>2</sup>, 132-34, 141; *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, III, 542; *Zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, p. 244; *New York Tribune*, March 5, 1852, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Dubnow, *op. cit.*, IX, 132.

<sup>25</sup> *Die Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich*, pp. 41, 49, 50; *New York Tribune*, November 9, 1855, p. 4; November 22, 1855, p. 4; January 4, 1856, p. 4. For a more sympathetic attitude toward a Jewish issue, see *ibid.*, April 15, 1854, p. 5.

that of Engels, who condemned it as "the characteristic sign of a backward civilization," and as "the reaction of the medieval and decadent social strata against modern society."<sup>26</sup> However, Marx continued to indulge in a derogatory tone toward individual Jews. For example, he applied to the dark-complexioned Ferdinand Lassalle, whom he detested, the double-barreled epithet of "Jew nigger" or such terms as "Jüdel Braun."<sup>27</sup> It is plain that Marx did not escape infection by the increasing animus against the Jews, which characterized the age of reaction in Germany, and that, for one reason or another, he did not cultivate an informed and responsible attitude toward the people of his origin.

One is tempted to say that Marx was more German than Jewish, and indeed he exhibited certain traits which have been conventionally, but not always justly, regarded as German. Essentially, however, by cultural inheritance and radical convictions, Marx was a member of that community of men whose primary allegiance is to the world—more particularly to the Western world and civilization—rather than to any individual country. Engels once remarked that he and Marx no more belonged to the German socialist movement than they did to the French; rather, they held a special position as representatives of international socialism first and foremost.<sup>28</sup> They were absorbed, nonetheless, by the course of events in Germany. Marx was the presumptive head of German socialism as well as a leader of world socialism. Although he spent more than half of his sixty-five years in England, it was always as an exile; he never acquired the status of a British subject. For

<sup>26</sup> *Ausgewählte Briefe*, pp. 369–70.

<sup>27</sup> *Briefwechsel*, II, 371; III, 47, 49, 82, 84, 91, 145, 188, 213, 219, 220, 234; IV, 52.

<sup>28</sup> E. Bernstein, *Die Briefe von Friedrich Engels an Eduard Bernstein* (Berlin, 1925), pp. 114–15.

a long time he hoped to be able to return to Germany. He frequently represented the German element in international organizations and maintained close relations with the radicals of his country.

This activity hardly implied a strong sentiment of patriotism. The position he took on the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 has been cited as evidence that he was a nationalist. Unquestionably, he showed strong interest in the political unification of Germany. It is true that in 1870 he wished to see the French "thrashed," for reasons which we have discussed, but the following year he hoped that the Commune would thrash both the Frenchman Thiers and the Prussian Bismarck. Marx expressed more than once the desire that the radical movement might follow German leadership, and it was amply clear that he meant Marxian leadership. When the charge was made that the General Council of the First International was controlled by "Pan-Germanism," or "Bismarckism," he retorted that there were fewer Germans than either Frenchmen or Englishmen on the Council. "The offense therefore consists in the fact that the English and French elements are dominated by the German element in theoretical matters (!) and find this domination, that is, German science, very useful and even indispensable." That "German science," as used here, was reducible to Marx's own doctrine, was indicated by the description of his relation to the influential German element. He observed that the charge of Pan-Germanism referred to the "unpardonable fact" that he, a German by birth, exercised "a decisive intellectual influence" on the Council.<sup>29</sup> No one was more aware than Marx that his philosophy was as much the product of French and English thought as of German and certainly far more the product of French and English political and economic

<sup>29</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

experience, than of German.<sup>30</sup> His references to the theoretical ability and the "talent" for "generalization" of Germans, and the "scientific" superiority of the German workers,<sup>31</sup> need not be taken too seriously. He found it just as necessary to combat German as French or English deviations from what he considered to be sound socialist doctrine. He criticized the "true socialism" of Germany more sharply than the utopian socialisms of France.<sup>32</sup> The Gotha Program of 1875 seemed to him no less inept because it was written by German leaders. Toward the end of his life, he complained that German socialists were again succumbing to utopianism, which he had been "clearing out" of their heads for "tens of years . . . with so much toil and labor."<sup>33</sup>

The long and short of the matter is that Marx simply was not a nationalist. Most of his occasional nationalist utterances were the obiter dicta of an opinionated and choleric personality. His political relations were characterized by acerbity and sometimes by indignity. His struggle with Lassalle showed that Marx was not above personal jealousy. He was not above unjust partisan accusations and misrepresentations, as his dealings with Bakunin and other opponents proved. Like John Knox, he was an "angry man." Perhaps it is not too much to say that he was haunted by the émigré's sense of frustration. His opinions of people were mordant enough to begin with, and they lost nothing in the expression. He had a blistering tongue and a sharply satirical and pungent—too pungent—style.

It is well to keep in mind, however, that the more amiable aspects of his personality were not reflected fairly

<sup>30</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 308; *Briefwechsel*, II, 46-47; *Ausgewählte Briefe*, p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, III, 17-18; *Briefwechsel*, IV, 102; Sorge, *op. cit.*, pp. 33, 40, 170-71; "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 800.

<sup>32</sup> *Sämtliche Werke*, VI, 549 ff.

<sup>33</sup> Sorge, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

even in informal writings.<sup>34</sup> Like so many men of stern countenance, Marx was capable of deep attachments but was inordinately averse to what he called "demonstrative pathos."<sup>35</sup> One is entitled to wonder whether his passionate shrinking from sentimentality did not bespeak some inner sensitiveness as well as hardness. He wrote poetry in his youth, but when his Muse—a divinity more insistent than inspired—deserted him, the romantic and lyrical strain did not die completely. It merely retired into the private recesses of his being.

If one ranges over his entire contribution, the note of internationalism, humanitarianism, and tolerance is found to be unquestionably dominant. Although he disliked many men—perhaps most of the men he met—all his work testifies to a deep-rooted and authentic love for mankind. Racial and national oppression seemed no less repugnant to him than any other form of persecution. No nation was regarded as superior or inferior to others. However important certain racial or national tendencies might be, they could not be made the basis for grading human groups hierarchically. Material and cultural achievement was not the final test of human worth. All men were capable of progress.

In assaying Marx's contribution, it is necessary to give a certain weight to the informal expressions of his temperamental personality, but it is essential not to confuse them with the direction of his thought and the quality of his aims.

<sup>34</sup> For an interesting sidelight, see Ryazanov, "Marx' Bekenntnisse," *Neue Zeit*, XXXI<sup>1</sup>, 854-62.

<sup>35</sup> *Briefwechsel*, IV, 529.

## A VARIED WORLD

IN SOME of its aspects, the position of Marx on national questions flowed from his economic and social philosophy. In others, it derived circumstantially from his background and personal experiences, his geographic and cultural setting, and the outlook of his time. His attitude toward any particular problem was commonly the resultant of various factors. No matter how much a man might reject his age or transvaluate his culture, they will cling to him at many points. The brilliantly original quality of Marx's thought was not inconsistent with his avid tendency to assimilate many elements in his cultural environment. In some of his reactions and predispositions, he betrayed the Western European, in others the Rhinelander, in still others the Young Hegelian or the Benjamin of the Enlightenment. Much has been written to isolate these various influences. Here it is relevant merely to note that they were likely to turn up at important crossroads of his political judgments.

His opposition to national oppression was not unaffected by ethical and humane motivations. He was also moved by other considerations: the idea of the interconnection of all forms of oppression and their basis in class exploitation; the belief that human society could not permanently attain true tolerance in one realm if it denied it in another, somewhat in the spirit of the statement of Lincoln that a nation could not endure half slave and half free; and the realization that the technique of power was such that in-

strumentalities devised for one end could easily be turned to another. The result was a strong conviction that no nation could be free unless it allowed other nations to live freely as well. Marx appealed to the history of Rome and Great Britain as witness that "the people which subjugates another people forges its own chains."<sup>1</sup> It seemed to him that the English Republic of the seventeenth century had sealed its own doom when it reconquered Ireland.<sup>2</sup> He interpreted the foreign policy of the Germany of the Old Regime in the same sense. Forces employed abroad were available for action against lower classes at home. Freedom was indivisible for social, political, and philosophical reasons.

Purely economic criteria became more prominent when Marx passed judgment on movements to establish independent national states. The scales were then tipped, not by the integral nature of freedom or the moral evil of oppression, but by the ability to achieve economic progress. We have followed his chain of reasoning. The advance of society presupposed a rich material foundation, which only highly industrialized methods could create. Industrialization was most effective in large-scale production. The establishment of large, integrated societies, in the political form of the modern state, was therefore a necessity for mankind. Smaller nations must somehow adjust themselves to functioning within larger states. It was unavoidable that certain nations and cultures should lose their identity through assimilation. The process of assimilation, however, need not involve invidious discrimination and intolerance. As for large, backward nations, their right to independence could hardly be asserted unless they underwent economic transformation. Economic criteria could also help to determine vexing questions of boundary delimita-

<sup>1</sup> "Briefe an Dr. Kugelmann," *Neue Zeit*, XX<sup>2</sup>, 478.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

tion. Each nation should have the territory, resources, waterways, and population needed for the proliferation of a great economy.

In dealing with national situations, Marx's position was complicated by a pattern of thought which stemmed from the experiences of France and England with which it was especially congruous; its relevance to other areas was limited by the measure of their similarity to these countries. He assumed all too readily, for example, that the history of France and England would be duplicated in Germany and that the German bourgeoisie, as it grew stronger, would secure political power. That was why Marx could accept Bismarck's policy of unification without anticipating that the aristocratic and monarchical institutions and ruling groups would entrench themselves still further. In view of developments west of the Rhine and across the Channel, it seemed anachronistic that aristocrats and kings by divine right should preside indefinitely over an industrialized economy. Bismarck and the groups he represented appeared to have signed their own death warrant when they unified the country and thus released irresistible economic forces which would make the bourgeoisie supreme.

At this point, another of Marx's tendencies became apparent. He was persuaded that the economic consequences of unification must prove more important in the future than its political method and means and the directing personnel. In the event, of course, the method had more than temporary significance. The fact that a conservative monarchy, and not the liberal bourgeoisie or the democratic petty bourgeoisie, consolidated Germany substantially strengthened that monarchy. Marx did not sufficiently appreciate the lasting political results of the method of unification, although his hopes for an intensive industrial

development and a strong and influential socialist movement were amply confirmed by history. He perceived some of the disadvantages of the "blood and iron" policy, the danger of an alliance between France and Russia directed against Germany, and the possibility of a civil war for the destruction of the Hohenzollern dynasty. His attitude shuttled between hope of industrialization and fear of Prussian aggrandizement. If his hope finally outweighed his fear, it was chiefly because, further west, old political institutions had succumbed to the new economic order.

A similar western emphasis was discernible in his oversimplified conception of the national problems of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe, not to speak of regions more removed from Western Europe, geographically or otherwise. Western Europe had become divided into large, integrated, and homogeneous nations. The founding of modern states had followed upon the development of capitalist economies, or had at least been closely related to that development. The growth of uniform languages and cultures and the increasing assimilation of smaller nations and older cultures had occurred in due course of time. Great Britain and France were, again, the models of that process. Minority problems had become comparatively insignificant. When Marx considered issues affecting minorities, the examples that naturally sprang to his mind were the Basques of France and Spain, the Bretons of France, and the Welsh of Great Britain. It is worth noting that he thought of these as politically conservative groups.<sup>3</sup> This background goes far to explain his opinion of small nations and minorities in other countries.

In the empires of Austria, Turkey, and Russia, the small nations proved to be a more explosive political force than Marx had expected. They exhibited a surprising vitality,

<sup>3</sup> *Nachlass*, III, 241; *New York Tribune*, April 24, 1852, p. 6.



which was being renewed in his own day. The national consciousness and the national literatures of some of the Central European populations were, to a considerable degree, products of the nineteenth century. Marx was primarily interested in the activities of the more prominent and larger groups, such as the Poles and the Hungarians. He did not foresee that the pressure of nations smaller than these could play a powerful role in the disintegration of states as imposing as the Hapsburg Empire. He clearly underrated the political possibilities of the national sentiment as an expression of social tension or as a tool in the hands of contending great powers.

His inadequacy in dealing with the political problems of Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe was in part traceable to an exaggerated estimate of the tempo of the expansion of industrial civilization. His anticipation of the imminent economic and political transformation of many parts of the world was fed by many springs. It is easier to list some of these than to assay their relative weight in any given situation: the overpowering impression of speed created when the early Industrial Revolution burst upon a predominantly agrarian society; the sensational rise of the principal industrial country to world leadership; the role of the bourgeoisie in abolishing traditional institutions and in developing modern state techniques; the succession of revolutions which had shaken the Continent from 1789 to 1848; the dynamic revolutionary temperament of Marx. One might go on to mention other, perhaps less important, factors.

Now, on the assumption that the relatively backward regions would become welded economically by the advance of industry, that the old agrarian problems would be solved, that the peasantry would become converted into a mass of proletarians, and that a powerful bourgeoisie

with far-flung interests would push to the fore, it was inconceivable that such regions—let us say, the Austro-Hungarian Empire—could become pulverized into minor states. If the Hapsburgs were to give way at all, it would be in favor of two or three great states which would proceed to incorporate and assimilate the smaller national groups. The Czechs would be lost among the Germans; other groups would melt into the Polish, Hungarian, and Russian nations. Linguistic and cultural diversities would diminish, as they had in France, England, and the United States. It appeared unnecessary to frame a special policy for dealing with national issues beyond Western Europe.

Marx therefore proved a poor guide for his followers who were later harassed by the intricate problems arising from the growing strength of nationalist movements. In Austria, for example, Otto Bauer and other leaders had to reconsider the relation between Marxism and national questions. They had to devise more practical and politically palatable solutions than the distribution of many small national groups among two or three of the more "advanced" nations. They veered more and more toward semifederal proposals, which would maintain the economic and administrative unity of the great Danubian state and yet provide for national variety and autonomy. Even the small groups were to be given an opportunity for cultural survival. Marx's distrust and disparagement of the Slavic nations had to be overlooked or repudiated, if their claims were to receive recognition.<sup>4</sup> When Karl Kautsky (who was half Czech by birth and became the theoretical spokes-

<sup>4</sup> Otto Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie*, pp. 314 ff. Kautsky, *Nationalität und Internationalität*, p. 36; "Der Kampf der Nationalitäten und das Staatsrecht in Österreich," *Neue Zeit*, XVI<sup>1</sup>, 558-59, 726; "Die Krisis in Österreich," *ibid.*, XXII<sup>1</sup>, 78, and XXXIV<sup>1</sup>, 503. Hermann Wendel, "Der Prager Slawenkongress von 1848," *Gesellschaft*, 1926, II, 459; "Der Marxismus und die Südslawenfrage," *ibid.*, 1924, I, 153, 170. Mehring, *Karl Marx*, p. 195.

man of German social democracy after the death of Marx and Engels) published a new edition of the articles which had denied a national future to the smaller Slavic groups, he was careful to dissociate himself from that verdict. He argued that Marx had been driven into an indefensible position by a "just wrath" over the role of the Slavs in the Revolution of 1848. "Have not the facts given him the lie?" Kautsky asked. "Has not the vitality of the Czech nation been admitted by its bitterest enemies?"<sup>5</sup>

Western Europe was a far greater and a more significant center of the world in the nineteenth century than it is now. Marx shared with his contemporaries a strong sense of Western leadership. True, the scope of his vision was uncommonly universal. In 1852 he wrote to a friend that "one could not choose a better time to come into the world than at this moment. Both of us shall have had our heads chopped off or be shaky with age by the time it is possible to go from London to Calcutta in seven days. And Australia, and California, and the Pacific Ocean! The citizens of the new world will be unable to imagine how small our world was!"<sup>6</sup> Yet by functioning within that "small . . . world," Marx was to some degree caught in the centripetence of European civilization, especially in his earlier years.

In the forties the area of his immediate concern was limited to Western and Central Europe and to the United States. The passage in the *Manifest* which dealt with the attitude of socialists toward other parties made specific reference to England, the United States, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Poland. This was the core of the universe of revolution and within it emphasis was placed on three, or perhaps four, points: England, France,

<sup>5</sup> Kautsky, preface to *Revolution und Kontre-Revolution in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, 1896), p. xxi.

<sup>6</sup> Mehring, *op. cit.*, p. 249.

Germany, the United States. The fate of the social revolution hinged on the combined action of these countries. The progress of the European periphery and the more distant periphery of the East seemed to depend on the successful reorganization of the advanced world. Poland would be freed in London; Czarism would fall, Marx hoped, before the concerted attack of the West. The revolution would move from the center outward.

The failure of the Revolution of 1848, the collapse of Chartism, the continued resilience of English capitalism, the maintenance of Czarist rule—these and other factors played havoc with Marx's early scheme. The center of gravity remained largely in the West, but it became the uncertain center of an expanding orbit. Marx had to give up the idea that England would lead the revolution. He could merely hope that she would follow soon enough to prevent her powerful capitalists from wrecking the revolution in other countries. His faith in France as a catalytic agent of European change wavered frequently and, on the whole, waned with the passing years. There appeared to be no direct correlation between economic advance and political ripeness for socialization. The eye of Marx, searching for a lever with which to pry loose modern society from capitalism, roved more and more toward the immediate periphery, eastward to Poland and Russia, westward toward Ireland and the United States. But again, these countries described the outermost limits of his political vision. For practical purposes his "world" was the Western world. China and Japan were then just being opened to Western influence; they exerted as yet little direct weight in international affairs. There was small prospect of a revolution in the Middle or Far East or of the coöperation of native movements with the European proletariat. For this reason little Ireland seemed more important than huge India as a

point of departure for a campaign against capitalism in England. The permanent army stationed in Ireland might be dispatched to put down a proletarian rising in England; a rebellion in Ireland might spill over into the larger island, and then, into the Continent. But India seemed too far removed from Europe to play the role of a convenient military base for capitalism and too weak and disunited to set off a social revolution.

With all these limitations, Marx's contribution to the national question was more concrete than has been generally recognized. His positive attitude toward nationality was in itself sufficient to set him apart from many another radical thinker and leader. His approach was distinguished, we have seen, by an acceptance of the nation as a substantial historical entity, by an attempted reconciliation of national and class factors in politics, by a revaluation of national welfare and national devotion, and by an internationalist rather than a cosmopolitan view of the organization of the world.

X Marx conceived of the modern nation as a society resting on the integration of a considerable area and population through the instrumentalities of large-scale industry, communication, and transportation, and through participation in far-flung markets. The nation functioned and had historical continuity as such because of the prolonged interdependence of various classes concerned with the operation of a given economic system. The ideas and tendencies of the nation were significantly related to the pattern formed by its constituent classes. National traditions were quite real; they reflected the economic development of society, the arrangement of classes at different periods, and the special, perhaps unique, features of the course taken by particular countries.

The most salient product of Marx's application of his

economic theory to the politics of the individual society was the idea of the leading or national class. In that idea was reconciled the paradox of the theory that the individual modern society was irretrievably severed into contending classes and so possessed no unity, and the insistence on the reality of common objectives for that society. Reconciliation was also found for the paradox of the emphasis on the constancy of class antagonisms and the recognition of the necessity of the support of a certain class by other classes at critical times. Several strands in Marx's thought pointed to the resolution of these difficulties through the idea of the national class: the view that the leading class in a modern nation represented not alone the immediate interests of its members but the interests of a mode of production vital to the whole society as well; the realization that the modern world consisted of a plurality of societies each of which had distinctive problems and traditions; the recognition that each society contained, in addition to the principal classes, other classes or groups which must be taken into account; and finally, the need to translate the philosophy of socialism into programs suitable to particular nations.

Marx redefined national concepts in socialist terms. The enrichment of the material environment of society was in the national interest. The role of a leading class in improving the methods of production promoted the national welfare. Indeed, the activity of such a class was the most suitable vehicle for the promotion of the national interest as long as class divisions continued to exist. The socialist program deserved the sanction of enlightened patriotism in advanced countries. The classes which opposed the progressive class could be set down as enemies of the true national interest.

A narrow nationalism exploited patriotic sentiments in

order to promote special class interests. Authentic love of country must express itself in a sympathetic association with those classes and forces which can lead the nation toward greater productivity and eventually toward a condition of classlessness. The sound national tradition was the recollection and evocation of the movements of the past which have acted in the same spirit. In a highly industrialized society, the enlightened citizen would favor the leadership of the nation by the proletariat. If a country is economically backward or still has to dispose of feudal institutions, patriotism may dictate the choice of some other class as the national vanguard. Thus, while Marx called upon the peasants of France in 1871 to accept the guidance of the proletariat, he had, during the German Revolution of 1848, thrown his own support to the bourgeoisie on the ground that a liberal constitution would further the welfare of his country.

An enlightened patriotism which recognized the bearing of international progress upon national welfare seemed to Marx compatible and even fairly synonymous with sound internationalism. The true patriot must further the advance of other nations if only to assure the progress of his own; the true internationalist must strive for the advance of particular countries as the basis of world progress. Such an equation of sound nationalism with sound internationalism was, of course, easier to formulate than to apply. It was the province of the theorist to indicate the possibility of reconciling human loyalties; it must be left to the statesman to negotiate that reconciliation. We have cited instances of Marx's conception of the national and international duty of Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Americans, and others, at various moments of history.

There are several kinds of internationalism. The character of Marx's internationalism was defined by his accept-

ance of the existence of many diverse societies and by his emphasis on the intensive organization of the individual society. He was decidedly not a cosmopolite in his picture of a world order although there were many traces of cosmopolitanism in his thought. Cosmopolitanism seeks to pass from the individual to mankind without the intermediate stopping place of social units less comprehensive than the whole species. The assumption of large societies seemed to Marx a more effective starting point for the establishment of a harmonious world. He was an internationalist, not only in the sense of advocating a system of coöperative world relations, but in the more specific sense of conceiving that system as the resultant or function of the friendly interaction of large nations which were organized harmoniously within.

Along with the too-small society, Marx rejected the vague and amorphous global society. He admitted considerable local variations, even within the same system of production. The socialist world of his imagination consisted of a limited number of advanced nations. His conception of world literature and world culture was a similar one. He reveled in linguistic variety and was at home with ancient and modern literature. He spoke of a world literature as already in the process of formation in the nineteenth century. It was the product of great nations which were developing distinctive, and yet related, literatures.

The world of Marx remained richly variegated. He did not pour it all into one mold.

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## VITA

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