THE MAGYAR STRUGGLE[221]

Cologne, January. While in Italy the first counterblow is already being struck against the counter-revolution of last summer and autumn, in the plains of Hungary the last stage of the struggle to suppress the movement which arose directly out of the February revolution is being completed. The new Italian movement is the prologue of the movement of 1849, the war against the Magyars is the epilogue to the movement of 1848. Probably this epilogue will yet pass into the new drama that is being prepared in secret.

Like the first scenes of the revolutionary tragedy of 1848, which rapidly succeeded one another, and like the fall of Paris and Vienna, this epilogue too is heroic, and pleasantly heroic after the partly colourless and partly petty episodes of the period between June and October. The last act of 1848 passes through *terrorism* into the first act of 1849.

For the first time in the revolutionary movement of 1848, for the first time since 1793, a nation surrounded by superior counter-revolutionary forces dares to counter the cowardly counter-revolutionary fury by revolutionary passion, the *terreur blanche* by the *terreur rouge*.[a] For the first time after a long period we meet with a truly revolutionary figure, a man who in the name of his people dares to accept the challenge of a desperate struggle, who for his nation is Danton and Carnot in one person—*Lajos Kossuth*.

The superiority of forces is frightful. The whole of Austria, 16 million fanaticised Slavs in the forefront, against 4 million Magyars.

Mass uprising, national manufacture of arms, issue of banknotes, short shrift for anyone hindering the revolutionary movement, revolution in permanence—in short, all the main features of the

[a] The white terror by the red terror.—*Ed.*

glorious year 1793 are found again in the Hungary which Kossuth has armed, organised and inspired with enthusiasm. This revolutionary organisation, which on pain of utter ruin had to be completed, so to speak, in 24 hours, was lacking in Vienna, otherwise Windischgrätz would never have been able to enter it. We shall see whether he will succeed in entering Hungary in spite of this revolutionary organisation.

Let us take a closer look at the struggle and the combatant parties.

The Austrian monarchy arose out of the attempt to unite Germany in a single monarchy just as the French kings up to Louis XI did in France. The attempt failed because of the pitiful provincial narrow-mindedness of both the Germans and the Austrians, and because of the corresponding petty commercial spirit of the Habsburg dynasty. Instead of the whole of Germany, the Habsburgs obtained only those South-German lands which were in direct conflict with the isolated Slav tribes, or in which a German feudal nobility and German burghers ruled jointly over enslaved Slav tribes. In both cases the Germans of each province required support from outside. This support they received through the association against the Slavs, and this association came into being through the union of the provinces in question under the sceptre of the Habsburgs.

That is how German Austria originated. It suffices to read in any textbook how the Austrian monarchy came into being, how it split up and arose again, all in the course of struggle against the Slavs, to see how correct this description is.

Adjacent to German Austria is Hungary. In Hungary the Magyars waged the same struggle as the Germans in German Austria. A German wedge driven between the Slav barbarians in the Archduchy of Austria and Styria went hand in hand with the Magyar wedge driven in the same way between the Slav barbarians on the Leitha. Just as in the south and north, in Bohemia, Moravia, Carinthia and Kraina the German nobility ruled over Slav tribes, Germanised them and so drew them into the European movement, the Magyar nobility likewise ruled over Slav tribes in the south and north, in Croatia, Slavonia and the Carpathian territories. The interests of both were the same; opponents of both were natural allies. The alliance of the Magyars and the Austrian Germans was a necessity. All that was still lacking was some great event, a heavy attack on both of them, in order to make this alliance indissoluble. Such an event came with the Turks' conquest of the Byzantine Empire. The Turks threatened Hungary and, secondly, Vienna, and for centuries Hungary came indissolubly under the Habsburg dynasty.

But the common opponents of both became gradually weak. The Turkish Empire became powerless, and the Slavs lost the strength to revolt against the Magyars and Germans. Indeed, a part of the German and Magyar nobility ruling in Slav lands adopted Slav nationality and thereby the Slav nationalities themselves became interested in preserving the monarchy, which had more and more to defend the nobility against the developing German and Magyar bourgeoisie. The national contradictions were disappearing and the Habsburg dynasty adopted a different policy. The same Habsburg dynasty which had climbed to the German imperial throne on the shoulders of the German burghers became more decisively than any other dynasty the champion of the feudal nobility against the burghers.

In the same spirit Austria participated in the partition of Poland.[222] The important Galician elders and army commanders, the Potockis, Lubomirskis and Czartoryskis, betrayed Poland to Austria and became the most loyal supports of the Habsburg dynasty, which in return guaranteed them their possessions against attacks from the lower nobility and burghers.

But the burghers in the towns continually grew in wealth and influence and the progress of agriculture alongside that of industry changed the position of the peasants in relation to the landowners. The movement of the burghers and peasants against the nobility became more and more menacing. And since the movement of the peasants, who everywhere are the embodiment of national and local narrow-mindedness, necessarily assumes a local and national character, it was accompanied by a resurgence of the old national struggles.

In this state of affairs, Metternich achieved his master stroke. With the exception of the most powerful feudal barons, he deprived the nobility of all influence on state administration. He sapped the strength of the bourgeoisie by winning to his side the most powerful financial barons—he had to do this, the state of the finances made it compulsory for him. Supported in this way by the top feudal and financial aristocracy, as well as by the bureaucracy and the army, he far more than all his rivals attained the ideal of an absolute monarchy. He kept the burghers and the peasantry of each nation under control by means of the aristocracy of that nation and the peasantry of every other nation, and he kept the aristocracy of each nation under control by its fear of that nation's burghers and peasantry. The different class interests, the national features of narrow-mindedness, and local prejudices, despite their complexity, were completely held in check by their mutual counteraction and

allowed the old scoundrel Metternich the utmost freedom to manoeuvre. How far he succeeded in this setting of one nation against another is proved by the Galician scenes of slaughter when the democratic Polish movement which began in the interests of the peasantry was crushed by Metternich by means of the Ruthenian peasants themselves who were animated by religious and national fanaticism.[223]

The year 1848 first of all brought with it the most terrible chaos for Austria by setting free for a short time all these different nationalities which, owing to Metternich, had hitherto been enslaving one another. The Germans, Magyars, Czechs, Poles, Moravians, Slovaks, Croats, Ruthenians, Rumanians, Illyrians and Serbs came into conflict with one another, while within each of these nationalities a struggle went on also between the different classes. But soon order came out of this chaos. The combatants divided into two large camps: the Germans, Poles and Magyars took the side of revolution; the remainder, all the Slavs, except for the Poles, the Rumanians and Transylvanian Saxons, took the side of counter-revolution.

How did this division of the nations come about, what was its basis?

The division is in accordance with all the previous history of the nationalities in question. It is the beginning of the decision on the life or death of all these nations, large and small.

All the earlier history of Austria up to the present day is proof of this and 1848 confirmed it. Among all the large and small nations of Austria, only three standard-bearers of progress took an active part in history, and still retain their vitality—the *Germans*, the *Poles* and the *Magyars*. Hence they are now revolutionary.

All the other large and small nationalities and peoples are destined to perish before long in the revolutionary world storm. For that reason they are now counter-revolutionary.

As for the *Poles*, we refer the reader to our article about the debates on the Polish question in Frankfurt.[a] In order to curb their revolutionary spirit, Metternich had appealed to the Ruthenians, a nationality differing from the Poles by its somewhat different dialect and especially by its Greek orthodox religion. The Ruthenians had belonged to Poland for a long time and learned only from Metternich that the Poles were their oppressors. As though in the old Poland the Poles themselves were not oppressed just as much as the Ruthenians, as though under Austrian domination Metternich was not their common oppressor!

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[a] See present edition, Vol. 7, pp. 337-81.— *Ed.*

So much for the Poles and Ruthenians who, moreover, because of their history and geographical position, are so sharply separated from Austria proper that we have had to get them out of the way first of all in order to reach clarity in regard to the chaos of the other peoples.

Let us, however, also remark at the outset that the Poles have revealed great political understanding and a true revolutionary spirit by now entering into an alliance with their old enemies, the Germans and Magyars, against the pan-Slav counter-revolution. A Slav people for whom freedom is dearer than Slavism proves its vitality by this fact alone, and thereby already assures a future for itself.

We pass now to Austria proper.

Situated to the south of the Sudetic and Carpathian mountains, in the upper valley of the Elbe and in the region of the Middle Danube, Austria in the early Middle Ages was a country populated exclusively by Slavs. By language and customs these Slavs belong to the same stock as the Slavs of Turkey, the Serbs, Bosnians, Bulgarians, and the Slavs of Thrace and Macedonia; these, in contrast to the Poles and Russians, are called Southern Slavs. Apart from these related Slav nationalities, the vast region from the Black Sea to the Bohemian forests and Tyrolean Alps was inhabited only by a few Greeks in the south of the Balkans, and in the Lower Danube region by scattered Rumanian-speaking Wallachians.

Into this compact Slav mass a wedge was driven by Germans from the west and the Magyars from the east. The German element conquered the western part of Bohemia and pushed forward on both sides of the Danube as far as the other side of the Leitha. The Archduchy of Austria, part of Moravia, and the greater part of Styria were Germanised and thus separated the Czechs and Moravians from the inhabitants of Carinthia and Kraina. In the same way Transylvania and Central Hungary up to the German frontier was completely cleared of Slavs and occupied by Magyars, who here separated the Slovaks and a few Ruthenian localities (in the north) from the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and subjected all these peoples to their rule. Finally, the Turks, following the example of the Byzantines, subjugated the Slavs south of the Danube and the Sava, and the historical role of the Southern Slavs was ended for ever.[224]

The last attempt of the Southern Slavs to play an independent part in history was the Hussite war,[225] a national peasant war of the Czechs under the flag of religion against the German nobility and the supremacy of the German Emperor. The attempt failed, and

ever since then the Czechs have remained fettered under the yoke of the German Empire.

On the other hand, their conquerors—the Germans and Magyars—took over the historical initiative in the Danube regions. Without the aid of the Germans and particularly of the Magyars, the Southern Slavs would have become Turkish, as actually happened to part of them, indeed Mohammedan, as the Slavs of Bosnia still are today. And for the Southern Slavs of Austria this is a service which is not too dear even at the price of exchanging their nationality for German or Magyar.

The Turkish invasion of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a second edition of the Arab invasion of the eighth century. Charles Martel's victory was repeatedly rewon at the walls of Vienna and on the Hungarian plain. As then at Poitiers, and later at Wahlstatt, during the invasion of the Mongols,[226] there was here once more a threat to the whole of European development. And where it was a matter of saving this, how could it be achieved by a few nationalities, like the Austrian Slavs, which had long ago disintegrated and become impotent and which, moreover, themselves needed to be saved?

The situation internally was like that externally. The class that was the driving force and standard-bearer of the movement, the bourgeoisie, was everywhere German or Magyar. The Slavs could only with difficulty give rise to a national bourgeoisie, and the Southern Slavs only in quite isolated cases. And with the bourgeoisie, industrial power and capital were in the hands of Germans or Magyars, German culture developed, and intellectually too the Slavs became subordinate to the Germans, even as far as Croatia. The same thing happened—only later and therefore to a lesser extent—in Hungary, where the Magyars together with the Germans took the lead in intellectual and commercial affairs. But the Hungarian Germans, although they retained the German language, became genuine Hungarians in disposition, character and customs. Only the newly introduced peasant colonists, the Jews and the Saxons in Transylvania, are an exception and stubbornly retain an absurd nationality in the midst of a foreign land.

And if the Magyars were a little behind the German Austrians in civilisation, they have recently brilliantly overtaken them by their political activity. Between 1830 and 1848 there was more political life in Hungary alone than in the whole of Germany, and the feudal forms of the old Hungarian Constitution were better exploited in the interests of democracy than the modern forms of South-German constitutions. And who was at the head of the movement here? The

Magyars. Who supported Austrian reaction? The Croats and Slovenes.

Against the Magyar movement, as also against the reawakening political movement in Germany, the Austrian Slavs founded a Sonderbund[227]—*pan-Slavism.*

Pan-Slavism did not originate in Russia or Poland, but in Prague and in Agram.[228] Pan-Slavism means the union of all the small Slav nations and nationalities of Austria, and secondarily of Turkey, for struggle against the Austrian Germans, the Magyars and, eventually, against the Turks. The Turks are only incidentally included here and, as a nation which is also in a state of complete decline, can be entirely disregarded. In its basic tendency, pan-Slavism is aimed against the revolutionary elements of Austria and is therefore reactionary from the outset.

Pan-Slavism immediately gave proof of this reactionary tendency by a double betrayal: it sacrificed to its petty national narrow-mindedness the only Slav nation which up to then had acted in a revolutionary manner, the *Poles;* it *sold* both itself and Poland to the *Russian Tsar.*

The direct aim of pan-Slavism is the creation of a Slav state under Russian domination, extending from the Erzgebirge and the Carpathians to the Black, Aegean and Adriatic seas—a state which would include, besides the German, Italian, Magyar, Wallachian, Turkish, Greek and Albanian languages, also approximately a dozen Slav languages and basic dialects. All this would be held together not by the elements which have hitherto held Austria together and ensured its development, but by the abstract quality of Slavism and the so-called Slav language, which is at any rate common to the majority of the inhabitants. But where does this Slavism exist except in the minds of a few ideologists, where is the "Slav language" except in the imagination of Herren Palacký, Gaj and Co., and, to some extent, in the old Slav litany of the Russian church, which no Slav any longer understands? In reality, all these peoples are at the most diverse stages of civilisation, ranging from the fairly highly developed (thanks to the *Germans*) modern industry and culture of Bohemia down to the almost nomadic barbarism of the Croats and Bulgarians; in reality, therefore, all these nations have most antagonistic interests. In reality, the Slav language of these ten or twelve nations consists of an equal number of dialects, mostly incomprehensible to one another, which can be reduced to different main stems (Czech, Illyrian, Serbian, Bulgarian) and which, owing to the total neglect of all literature and the lack of culture of the majority of these peoples, have become a sheer patois, and with few

exceptions have always had above them an *alien*, non-Slav language as the written language. Thus, pan-Slav unity is either pure fantasy or—*the Russian knout.*

And what nations are supposed to head this great Slav state? Precisely those nations which for a thousand years have been scattered and split up, those nations whose elements capable of life and development were *forcibly* imposed on them by other, non-Slav peoples, those nations which were saved from downfall in Turkish barbarism by the victorious arms of non-Slav peoples, small, powerless nationalities, everywhere separated from one another and deprived of their national strength, numbering from a few thousand up to less than two million people! They have become so weak that, for example, the race which in the Middle Ages was the strongest and most terrible, the Bulgarians, are now in Turkey known only for their mildness and soft-heartedness and set great store on being called *dobre chrisztian*, good Christians! Is there a single one of these races, not excluding the Czechs and Serbs, that possesses a national historical tradition which is kept alive among the people and stands above the pettiest local struggles?

Pan-Slavism was at its height in the eighth and ninth centuries, when the Southern Slavs still held the whole of Hungary and Austria and were threatening Byzantium. If at that time they were unable to resist the German and Magyar invasion, if they were unable to achieve independence and form a stable state even when both their enemies, the Magyars and Germans, were tearing each other to pieces, how will they be able to achieve it today, after a thousand years of subjection and loss of their national character?

There is no country in Europe which does not have in some corner or other one or several ruined fragments of peoples, the remnant of a former population that was suppressed and held in bondage by the nation which later became the main vehicle of historical development. These relics of a nation mercilessly trampled under foot in the course of history, as Hegel says,[a] these *residual fragments of peoples* always become fanatical standard-bearers of counter-revolution and remain so until their complete extirpation or loss of their national character, just as their whole existence in general is itself a protest against a great historical revolution.

Such, in Scotland, are the Gaels, the supporters of the Stuarts from 1640 to 1745.

Such, in France, are the Bretons, the supporters of the Bourbons from 1792 to 1800.

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[a] See G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte. Einleitung.—Ed.*

Such, in Spain, are the Basques, the supporters of Don Carlos.

Such, in Austria, are the pan-Slavist *Southern Slavs,* who are nothing but the *residual fragment of peoples,* resulting from an extremely confused *thousand years of development.* That this residual fragment, which is likewise extremely confused, sees its salvation only in a reversal of the whole European movement, which in its view ought to go not from west to east, but from east to west, and that for it the instrument of liberation and the bond of unity is the *Russian knout*—that is the most natural thing in the world.

Already before 1848, therefore, the Southern Slavs had clearly shown their reactionary character. The year 1848 brought it fully into the light of day.

When the February storm broke, who made the Austrian revolution? Vienna or Prague? Budapest or Agram? The Germans and Magyars, or the Slavs?

It is true that among the more educated Southern Slavs there was a small democratic party which, although not wanting to renounce its nationality, nevertheless desired to put it at the disposal of the struggle for freedom. This illusion, which succeeded in arousing sympathy also among West-European democrats, sympathy that was fully justified as long as the Slav democrats took part in the struggle against the common enemy—this illusion was shattered by the bombardment of Prague. After that event all the South-Slav races, following the example of the Croats, put themselves at the disposal of Austrian reaction. Those leaders of the South-Slav movement who continue to talk drivel about the equality of nations, about democratic Austria, and so on, are either stupid dreamers, such as, for example, many journalists, or they are scoundrels like Jellachich. Their democratic assurances have no more significance than the democratic assurances of official Austrian counter-revolution. It suffices to say that in practice the restoration of the South-Slav nationality begins with the most savage outbursts of fury against the Austrian and Magyar revolution, with a first great good turn rendered to the Russian Tsar.

Apart from the higher nobility, the bureaucracy and the military, the Austrian camarilla found support only among the Slavs. The Slavs played the decisive part in the fall of Italy, the Slavs stormed Vienna, and it is the Slavs who are now attacking the Magyars from all sides. At their head as spokesmen are the Czechs under Palacký, as leaders of armed forces the Croats under Jellachich.

That is the gratitude shown for the fact that the German democratic press in June everywhere sympathised with the Czech

democrats when they were shot down by Windischgrätz, the same Windischgrätz who is now their hero.

To sum up:

In Austria, apart from Poland and Italy, it is the Germans and Magyars in 1848, as during the past thousand years already, who have assumed the historical initiative. They represent the *revolution.*

The Southern Slavs, who for a thousand years have been taken in tow by the Germans and the Magyars, only rose up in 1848 to achieve their national independence in order thereby at the same time to suppress the German-Magyar revolution. They represent the *counter-revolution.* They were joined by two nations, which had likewise long ago degenerated and were devoid of all historical power of action: the Saxons and the Rumanians of Transylvania.

The Habsburg dynasty, whose power was based on the union of Germans and Magyars in the struggle against the Southern Slavs, is now prolonging the last moments of its existence through the union of the Southern Slavs in the struggle against the Germans and Magyars.

That is the political aspect of the question. Now for the military aspect.

The region inhabited exclusively by Magyars does not form even one-third of the whole of Hungary and Transylvania. In the area from Pressburg, northwards from the Danube and Theiss up to the rear of the Carpathians there live several million Slovaks and a few Ruthenians. In the south, between the Sava, Danube and Drava, there live Croats and Slovenes; farther to the east, along the Danube is a Serb colony of more than half a million people. These two Slav stretches are linked by the Wallachians and the Saxons of Transylvania.

On three sides, therefore, the Magyars are surrounded by natural enemies. If the Slovaks, occupying the mountain passes, were of a less lukewarm disposition, they would be dangerous opponents, in view of their region being excellently adapted for guerilla warfare.

As things are, however, the Magyars have only to withstand from the north attacks of invading armies from Galicia and Moravia. In the east, on the other hand, the Rumanians and Saxons rose up in a mass and joined the Austrian army corps there. Their situation is an excellent one, partly because of the mountainous nature of the country and partly because they occupy most of the towns and fortresses.

Finally, in the south are the Banat Serbs, supported by the German colonists, the Wallachians and also an Austrian corps, protected by the vast Alibunar morass and almost impregnable.

The Croats are protected by the Drava and the Danube, and since they have at their disposal a strong Austrian army with all its auxiliary resources, they advanced into the Magyar region already before October and now have little difficulty in holding their line of defence on the Lower Drava.

Finally, from the fourth side, from Austria, the serried columns of Windischgrätz and Jellachich are now advancing. The Magyars are encircled on all sides, and encircled by an enemy of vastly superior power.

The fighting is reminiscent of that against France in 1793, but with the difference that the sparsely populated and only half-civilised country of the Magyars is far from having at its disposal the resources which the French Republic then had.

The weapons and munitions manufactured in Hungary are bound to be of very poor quality; in particular, it is impossible for the manufacture of artillery to go ahead rapidly. The country is far smaller than France and every inch of territory lost is therefore a much greater loss. All that is left to the Magyars is their revolutionary enthusiasm, their courage and the energetic, speedy organisation that Kossuth was able to give them.

But for all that, Austria has not yet won.

"If we fail to beat the imperial troops on the Leitha, we shall beat them on the Rabnitz; if not on the Rabnitz, we shall beat them at Pest; if not at Pest, then on the Theiss, but in any case we shall beat them."[a]

So said Kossuth, and he is doing his utmost to keep his word.

Even with the fall of Budapest, the Magyars still have the great Lower Hungarian steppe, a terrain as it were specially created for cavalry guerilla warfare and offering numerous almost unassailable points between the swamps where the Magyars can dig themselves in. And the Magyars, who are almost all horsemen, possess all the qualities needed to wage such a war. If the imperial army dares to enter this desert region, where it will have to obtain all its provisions from Galicia or Austria, for it will find nothing, absolutely nothing on the spot, it is impossible to see how it will be able to hold out. It will achieve nothing in a closed formation; and if it splits up into flying detachments it is lost. Its clumsiness would deliver it irretrievably into the hands of the swift Magyar cavalry detachments, without any possibility of pursuit even if it should be victorious, and every isolated soldier of the imperial army would find a mortal

[a] From Kossuth's speech in the Hungarian parliament on November 9, 1848 (*Közlöny*, November 11, 1848).—*Ed.*

enemy in every peasant, in every herdsman. War in these steppes is like war in Algeria, and the clumsy Austrian army would require years to end it. And the Magyars will be saved if they hold out for only a few months.

The Magyar cause is not in such a bad way as mercenary black-and-yellow[a] enthusiasm would have us believe. The Magyars are not yet defeated. But if they fall, they will fall gloriously, as the last heroes of the 1848 revolution, and only for a short time. Then for a time the Slav counter-revolution will sweep down on the Austrian monarchy with all its barbarity, and the camarilla will see what sort of allies it has. But at the first victorious uprising of the French proletariat, which Louis Napoleon is striving with all his might to conjure up, the Austrian Germans and Magyars will be set free and wreak a bloody revenge on the Slav barbarians. The general war which will then break out will smash this Slav Sonderbund and wipe out all these petty hidebound nations, down to their very names.

The next world war will result in the disappearance from the face of the earth not only of reactionary classes and dynasties, but also of entire reactionary peoples. And that, too, is a step forward.

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[a] The colours of the Austrian flag.—*Ed.*