

THE RED '48ERS: KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS. By *Oscar J. Hammen*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969. xv, 428 pp. \$8.95.

The lives of intellectuals rarely make stimulating reading when the biographer leaves the realm of purely intellectual history, but no writer need file any disclaimers or caveats in the case of Marx and Engels. The familiar story fails to spur the imagination only when told by insipid hagiographers or neurotic anti-Communists; and Professor Hammen, happily, belongs to neither of those camps. His book, which concentrates upon the great revolutionary years but devotes nearly two hundred pages to the background, constitutes a reasonably sound and generally objective treatment that students and researchers in peripheral fields will find of considerable interest.

Hammen notes with some truth that "the prime need in the study of Marx is a return to the original Marx, the complete Marx, as well as to the times in which he acted and to which he reacted." That is precisely what Hammen has tried to do (insofar as it is possible to speak of "the complete Marx" through 1849). The author has examined a variety of archival and published sources dealing with the family background, youth, and early manhood of his famous subjects. Marx in Trier, Engels in the Wuppertal—those fascinating early years are related accurately and sometimes eloquently in this book. A little less satisfactory are the sections dealing with the intellectual apprenticeship of the two men; indeed, Hammen is throughout the book most vulnerable when he deals with theory. It could be pointed out, for example, that Marx and Engels never assumed that a "Communist consciousness" would "soon spring forth from the masses without much theoretical pump-priming." On the contrary, Marx always held that a mere trade-union consciousness would "spring forth," and he insisted that a *great deal* of "theoretical pump-priming" (as well as the organizing of a proletarian party) would be necessary. Likewise, Marx held that the democratic republic was to be the scene of an Armageddon between bourgeoisie and proletariat; in no sense was the democratic republic "later called [by Marx] the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat."

These and other theoretical shortcomings notwithstanding, Hammen achieves a smooth and reasonably steady stride with the *Deutsch-französische Jahrbücher* of February 1844. The quarrel with Arnold Ruge, the formation of the intellectual partnership with Engels, and the marvelously productive sojourn in Brussels are all treated with skill and sensitivity. His discussion of the Communist League has been rendered obsolete by the publication by Bert Andréas of the *Gründungsdokumente* last year, but Hammen could not possibly have foreseen that.

The bulk of the book is devoted to the awesome events of 1848–49 in Germany. The great days of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, the liberal agony in Frankfurt, Marx's trips to Berlin and Vienna, the attempts to form a proletarian party—all this is rather more familiar than a twice-told tale, but Hammen retells it with an unusual flair and sympathy. One final note: it seems to have been a publishing decision to strip the book of a scholarly apparatus. The lack of footnotes and bibliography is lamentable, but the book is useful for all that and should soon find its way onto reading lists for undergraduate courses and into the libraries of informed laymen.

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