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Marx and Engels’s “German ideology” Manuscripts: Presentation and Analysis of the “Feuerbach chapter”

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INTRODUCTION

This volume is based on a successful Bristol PhD dissertation presented by Daniel Blank in 2008, “‘The German ideology’ by Marx and Engels: The Political History of the Manuscript and Its Published Editions,” supervised by Terrell Carver. These chapters explain how untitled manuscript materials, cast aside by the authors after 1847, unexpectedly emerged in the 1920s as a one-volume work of the first rank in the Marx-Engels-Marxist canon.

All major editions and translations of *The German Ideology* up to the present are then shown to have a political history relating to some of the most important events of the twentieth century, including the Russian Revolution, the rise of Stalinism, fascist rule in Germany, World War II, the subsequent Cold War involving the Soviet Union and rival regimes in “East” and “West,” the fall of communist states in Eastern Europe, and the influence of successor capitalist regimes. These histories unfold, sometimes quite dramatically, in relation to a critical analysis of editorial practice, resulting in a genealogy of editions up to the present day.

The volume concludes with a statement of what would be required, *contra* current practice even within the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA) project, in order to present a fully contextual rendition of the various polemics on which Marx and Engels (and others) were engaged in 1845–46.

Note that in the text Russian names are translated to usual English forms, whereas the bibliography follows German transliterations that are appropriate to the work cited, for example, Ryazanov and Trotsky in the text, and Rjazanov and Trotszki in the bibliography. In addition, there are three scholarly appendices presenting the results of detailed research on various questions concerning the “German ideology” manuscripts and the genealogical relationships among major editions, notes on method and methodology, and an index. The volume represents a fully coauthored and integrated work throughout.

The companion volume by the present authors, *Marx and Engels’s “German ideology” Manuscripts: Presentation and Analysis of the “Feuerbach chapter,”* also published by Palgrave Macmillan, undertakes a textual exercise unique in English. It presents a “variant-rich” transcription of the most famous and widely read of the surviving manuscript pages, along with an analytical investigation of the content from a historically refreshed perspective.