

## AN ESTIMATE OF MARX BY INTERNATIONAL LIBERALISM

One of Turgenev's characters thus adapted a verse of the great German poet:

*Wer den Feind will versteh'n  
Muss im Feindes Lande geh'n*

that is, "To know your enemy you must go into the enemy's country" to get first-hand knowledge of his customs, manners, ways of thinking and acting.

Marxists would do well to cast a glance at the comments made on the commemoration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Marx by influential political organs in various countries, especially the liberal and "democratic" bourgeois newspapers, which combine the possibility of influencing the masses of readers with the right to speak on behalf of official, titular professorial scholarship.

We shall begin our review with *Rusскиye Vedomosti*. This is the most sedate (and dullest), the most scientific (and farthest removed from real life) of professorial newspapers. Its short article on the twenty-fifth anniversary of Karl Marx's death (No. 51, March 1) is written in a predominantly dry wooden tone – "objectivity", as it is called in the language of professors "ordinary" and "extraordinary". The writer of the article tries to confine himself to facts and trifling facts. As an impartial historian, he is prepared to give Marx his due – at least as far as the past is concerned, a past which is already dead and can be spoken of in a lifeless way. *Rusскиye Vedomosti* admits Marx to be a "remarkable figure", a "great man of science", an "outstanding leader of the proletariat", an organizer of the masses. But this recognition applies to the past: today, says the newspaper, "new paths are really necessary", i. e., new paths for the labour movement and socialism unlike the "old Marxism". What these new paths are, the paper does not say in so many words – that is too live a subject for professors and too "injudicious" a theme for virtuosi in the art of "tactful silence". But broad hints are dropped: "Many of his [Marx's] constructions have been destroyed by scientific analysis and the merciless critique of events. Among scientists there are practically no adherents faithful to his system as a whole; Marx's spiritual child – German Social-Democracy – has deviated a good deal from the revolutionary path which the founders of German socialism had mapped out". As you see, the writer leaves very little unsaid in his desire to rectify Marx in the revisionist way.

Another influential paper, *Rech*, the organ of a political party, which plays first fiddle in the concert of Russian liberalism, gives a much more lively appraisal of Marx. The tendency is, of course, the same as in *Rusскиye Vedomosti*, but whereas there we saw a preface to a fat volume, here we have political slogans that are the immediate guide for many a speech from the parliamentary rostrum, in dealing with all current events and topics of the day. The article "Karl Marx and Russia" (No. 53, March 2) is written by the notorious renegade Mr. Izgoev, a specimen of those Russian intellectuals, who between the ages of twenty-five and thirty "try to pose as Marxists", between thirty-five and forty play at being liberals, and after that end up as Black Hundreds.

Mr. Izgoev deserted the Social-Democrats for the liberals (as he himself has declared and as that arch-renegade Mr. Struve said of him) just when the revolution, after its first staggering successes, entered a difficult period of a long and hard struggle against the growing counter-revolution. Indeed, Mr. Izgoev is highly typical in this respect. He is splendid at making it clear who stands to gain by professorial affectation in appraising Marx, and whose work this official "scholarship" is doing. "Marx the tactician of political intrigue," Izgoev thunders, "was a considerable hindrance to Marx the great scientist, and caused him to commit many mistakes." The chief mistake, of course, was that in addition to the correct, reasonable "evolutionary Marxism" accepted by the "majority" (the majority of philistines?) there was born a mischievous, unscientific, fantastic revolutionary Marxism, "adulterated by home-brewed Narodism". What our liberal especially resents is the role of this Marxism in the Russian revolution. Would you believe it—they go to the length of talking of a dictatorship of the proletariat to carry out this very same "bourgeois revolution", or even of a "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry—which is absolutely fantastic in the mouth of Marxists". "No wonder that revolutionary Marxism in the form in which it was adopted in Russia by the Bolsheviks of all shades has completely failed."... "They are having to think of establishing an ordinary 'bourgeois' [the ironical quotation marks are Mr. Izgoev's] constitution."

There you have an ideolo-gically ready-made and politically mature Octobrist, who is quite convinced that it is Marxism and revolutionary tactics that have failed, and not the Cadet tactics of compromise, betrayal, and treachery!

To proceed. From the Russian we shall pass to the German press, which operates in a free atmosphere, face to face with a legal socialist party, and which expresses its views in dozens of daily newspapers. The Frankfurter Zeitung, one of the wealthiest, most widely read and most “democratic” bourgeois newspapers in Germany, devotes a big leading article to the twenty-fifth anniversary of Marx’s death (No. 76, March 16, New Style, evening edition). The German “democrats at once take the bull by the horns. “One can understand the Social-Democratic press having honored its teacher on this day in numerous articles,” we are told. “But Marx has been recognized as a great man even in an influential national liberal paper, although with the usual reservation. Yes, of course, he was great, but he was a great corrupter.”

This newspaper, representing the pick of that brand of Black-Hundred ideology known as European liberalism, explains that it does not in the least question Marx’s personal honesty, but that his theories have caused incalculable harm. By introducing the conception of determinism and objective law in the sphere of social phenomena, by denying the significance of morality and the relative conditional nature of our knowledge, Marx founded an anti-scientific utopia and a real “Church” of his sectarian disciples. But his most harmful idea is—*the class struggle*. Herein lies all the evil! Marx treated seriously the old aphorism about *two nations*, [these two words are given by Lenin in English-Ed.] about the existence of two nations within every civilized nation- a nation of “exploiters” and a nation of “exploited” (the newspaper puts these unscientific terms in deadly ironical quotation marks). Marx forgot the clear, obvious truth that is plain to all healthy people, namely, that in social life “the aim is not struggle but agreement”. Marx “tore the nation asunder, for he hammered it into the heads of his people that there was nothing in common between them and the rest of the people, that they were deadly enemies”.

“What could be more natural,” the newspaper asks, “than that Social-Democracy, agreeing as it does with many of the bourgeoisie on a number of practical issues, should seek closer alignment with them? But that does not happen precisely because of Marxist theory. Social-Democracy has condemned itself to isolation. For a time it seemed as though a fundamental change was going to take place in this respect. It was when the revisionists began their campaign. But it turned out to be a mistake, and the difference between the revisionists and ourselves consisted, among other things, in that we understood this mistake while they did not. The revisionists believed, and still believe, that it is possible somehow to keep to Marx and yet become a different party. Vain hopes. Marx has either to be swallowed whole or completely rejected. A half-hearted course is of no use here.”....

Quite right, gentlemen of the liberal fold! You do sometimes come out with the truth by accident.

“..... So long as Social-Democracy honours Marx it will not be able to rid itself of the idea of the class struggle and of all those other things that make living with it so difficult... The scientific world is agreed that not one of the politico-economic theories of Marxism has been proved true.”..

Well, well, gentlemen. You have admirably expressed the essence of bourgeois science, of bourgeois liberalism, and its entire policy. You have grasped the fact that Marx cannot be swallowed piecemeal. This is something that the Izgoevs and the Russian liberals have not yet understood. But even they will, before long.

And here, in conclusion, is Journal des Debates, the conser-vative organ of the bourgeois republic. In its issue of March 15, it writes, on the occasion of the anniversary, that the socialists, those “wild equalitarians”, preach the cult of their great men, that the chief evil of the teachings of Marx, who “hated the bourgeoisie”, is the theory of the struggle of classes. “He preached to the working classes not temporary conflicts alternating with periods of truce, but a holy war, a war of extermination, of expropriation, a war for the promised land of collectivism... a monstrous utopia.”....

The bourgeois papers write well when stung to the quick. Life becomes a more cheerful thing when you see this growing ideological unity among the liberal enemies of the proletariat all over the world, for this unity is one of the guarantees of the unification of the millions of the international proletariat, which will win for itself its promised land, come what may.

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**Long Live Ideology of Marxism!  
Be Guided by Marxism in Thought and Practice!!**

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