



Revised History

Communism in America? Go Back to 1850

By Al Benson June 7, 2021

I recently came across an article on <https://www.historynet.com> that was not new, but was interesting. It was originally published back in 2012, in June of that year, in *Civil War Times*. I used to read this magazine, but it had been my experience that it did not deal overly much with issues like this, as that was not politically correct at the time (and still isn't).

Sarah Richardson wrote the article and it dealt with an interview it seems she had with Robin Blackburn, the author of the book *An Unfinished Revolution: Karl Marx and Abraham Lincoln*. Blackburn is a British historian and former editor of the *New Left Review* so no one can accuse him of being a paranoid right winger. He brought out some interesting points about Lincoln and Marx. Richardson noted of Lincoln that "Up until the age of 21 he was working without payment for his father. On some occasions his father would hire out his son's services and even then, didn't hand over the wages." Blackburn seemed to think this may have affected Lincoln's views on slavery. It's possible but it's hard to say for sure. Although we know from some of Lincoln's later comments on slavery it was not a major issue in his invasion of the South. He claimed to be preserving the Union (though it was going to be a preservation by force). But he said at one point that if he could preserve the Union by freeing some slaves and not others, he would do it and if he could preserve the Union by freeing none of the slaves he would do that. And his "Emancipation Proclamation in 1862 freed *only* slaves in Confederate territory. It freed *no slaves* in Union-held territory.

But the American connection to Marx goes further than Lincoln. Richardson's article stated: "Marx himself was only 30 when he was caught up in the 1848 revolution, and he edited one of Germany's main revolutionary newspapers. At that time, he was visited by Charles Dana, an American journalist and managing editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*. Dana later hired him as the Tribune's European correspondent, A lot of his research for the Tribune ended up in his famous book *Das Capital*, published in 1867."

Donnie Kennedy and I, in our book *Lincoln's Marxists*, the first edition of which is still available under the title *Red Republicans and Lincoln's Marxists* dealt with Mr. Dana and his communist proclivities at some length. Mr. Dana was a prime mover and shaker in the movement to promote communism in this country in the 1850s. Arthur Thompson, author of the very informative book *To The Victors Go The Myths And Monuments* also deals with Charles Dana on page 198, giving more info on Dana's leftist background. The Tribune published, over the years, something like 450 of Marx's articles, with at least 300 published under his name, though some researchers claim his helper, Engels, wrote quite a few of these because Marx was just too lazy to write when he often needed to, so Engels stood in the breath often while Marx was daydreaming about ways to save the world (for communism).

After the revolts of 1848 ended, thousands of the leftist revolutionaries involved fled to this country. Many of those kept in contact with Marx and continued their leftist activities by writing for German-language papers in this country, which, over time, eventually influenced many Germans here toward a Marxist point of view.

Richardson noted that "There were about 200,000 German-Americans who fought for the Union, and about 40,000 were in units that had the German language as the medium of command." So, these people

were over here, supposedly to help the North “free the slaves, and they couldn’t even speak the language. Bet your “history” books never mention any of this! And besides, the idea of leftists fighting to “free” anyone from anything is just ludicrous All you have to do in our day is look at the countries that were enslaved under communism and you begin to understand the communist concept of “freedom.” You are “free” to do what the communists tell you to do or they shoot you or put you in a “re-education” camp” until you see things their way. And if you don’t, then they shoot you!

Richardson then notes that Dana, who had been responsible for getting Marx to write for Horace Greeley’s paper became the assistant secretary of war in 1862. He remained in close contact with good buddies of Marx like Joseph Weydemeyer who later became a general in the Union Army. And also mentioned “Another member of the Communist League in Germany in the 1840 was August Willich, who became a Union general.”

And she made another interesting point from her interview with Blackburn She said “Worth noting, too, that Marx and Lincoln were both influenced by German philosophy—in Lincoln’s case, as transmitted by such writers as **Theodore Parker.**” Parker was a noted Unitarian. And all the stuff I have read about him never mentioned anything about any German connections—but it now seems there were some. We have got to begin to realize that communism in America was alive and well in the early 1850s here and that we have been lied to by those faux-historians that tell us you never had a problem with communism in America until the Roosevelt years. Let’s wake up and begin to do the homework, lest we be victimized even further in our own day.