



Marx in Soho: A Play on History

By Howard Zinn

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Marx in Soho: A Play on History By Howard Zinn

Don't you ever wonder: why is it necessary to declare me dead again and again?

The premise of this witty and insightful "play on history" is that Karl Marx has agitated with the authorities of the afterlife for a chance to clear his name. Through a bureaucratic error, though, Marx is sent to Soho in New York, rather than his old stomping ground in London, to make his case.

Zinn introduces us to Marx's wife, Jenny, his children, the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, and a host of other characters.

Marx in Soho is a brilliant introduction to Marx's life, his analysis of society, and his passion for radical change. Zinn also shows how relevant Marx's ideas are for today's world.

Historian and activist Howard Zinn is the author of the bestselling *A People's History of the United States* and numerous other writings. He recently received the Eugene V. Debs and Lannan Foundation awards for his writing and political activism. He is also the author of *Emma*, a play about Emma Goldman, in the anthology *Playbook* (South End Press).

Praise for *Marx in Soho*:

"An imaginative critique of our society's hypocrisies and injustices, and an entertaining, vivid portrait of Karl Marx as a voice of humanitarian justice - which is perhaps the best way to remember him."-*Kirkus Reviews*

"A cleverly imagined call to reconsider socialist theory... Zinn's point is well made; his passion for history melds with his political vigor to make this a memorable effort and a lucid primer for readers desiring a succinct, dramatized review of Marxism."-*Publishers Weekly*

"Even in heaven it seems, Karl Marx is a troublemaker. But in the deft and loving hands of activist/author/historian Howard Zinn, the historical figure... is also a father, a husband and a futurist possessing a grand sense of humor."-*ForeWord*

"A witty delight that will engage both new and old acquaintances of the Marxian

corpus... Even conservatives will find Zinn's [book]... an intelligent and diverting read. Recommended for academic and public libraries alike."-*Library Journal*

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The conceit of this one-man play by historian Howard Zinn is that Karl Marx has been brought back to life--but, through a bureaucratic mix-up, winds up not in the Soho district of London where he lived and worked in the 19th century, but the modern-day SoHo district of New York City. Mostly, Marx takes the opportunity to point out to the audience how the predictions of his economic theory have come to pass: "Did I not say, a hundred and fifty years ago, that capitalism would enormously increase the wealth of society, but that this wealth would be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands?" But Zinn also sheds some light on the relationships between Marx and his wife, Jenny, and daughter, Eleanor. Slim and curious, but with an entertaining touch.

From Publishers Weekly

Taking his inspiration from Karl Marx's stay in London's Soho district after his exile from the Continent, Zinn's (*A People's History of the United States*) one-man play reads like a first-person memoir narrated by a distinctive voice. Laid out on the page as seamless monologue, it envisions Marx in the Soho district of New York in the present, where his mind reels at the same capitalist injustices that boggled him 150 years ago. The wizened and ailing Marx discourses on the economic state of the modern-day U.S., heatedly decrying the vast disparity between rich and poor and the corrupt, systematic funneling of the wealth that workers earn into the hands of capitalists. Through cascading recollections, we learn of Marx's devoted marriage, his love for his children and his stormy debates with Mikhail Bakunin, a fellow radical whose concept of a revolution of the spleen rather than the intellect makes Marx seem cold by comparison. These nuggets of personal information yield warmth and mettle where the dialectical prose gets heavy-handed. Often, the doctrines espoused threaten to overwhelm Zinn's expressed mission to expose Marx's human side. Zinn is, after all, reissuing Marx's socialist critique to apply to modern America and, along the way, revising Marxist doctrine by imagining the theorist himself rethinking some of his more off-the-mark notions. Most often it is Marx's critical wife, Jenny, and brilliant daughter Eleanor who take him to task when he fumbles. With Zinn's hefty prologue and scholarly but pointed reading list, the text is a cleverly imagined call to reconsider socialist theory as a valid philosophy in these times. Zinn's point is well made; his passion for history melds with his political vigor to make this a memorable effort and a lucid primer for readers desiring a succinct, dramatized review of Marxism. (Mar.) FYI: Actor Matt Damon is coproducing a TV adaptation of *A People's History*. Zinn recently won a Lannan Foundation Literary Award for Nonfiction. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Marx's reputation may be in far more robust health academically than practically, but even among campus intellectuals his image has gotten a whipping. With Freud, Marx is one of the two 19th-century men who dominated the social sciences and critical thinking of this century. With psychoanalysis, Marxism has fallen hard; socialism, history as class struggle, and the idea that pervasive commodification is a bad thing are conceptual victims, both of apparent market prosperity in the West and the moral and fiscal bankruptcy of the governments established under the Communist rubric. Zinn, the eminent Left historian (*A People's History of the United States*, Borgo, 1994), suddenly "hot" thanks to buzz spread by his young family friend, actor Matt Damon, believes that Marx will have deep relevance in the next century, too. This one-man play, an imagined monolog that Marx delivers after being wrongly returned from death but with a glitch, is a witty delight that will engage both new and old acquaintances of the Marxian corpus. Though its brevity and entertainment-first intent depart radically from the density of Marx's actual written polemics, even conservatives will find Zinn's Marx-for-bright-funseekers an intelligent and diverting read.

Recommended for academic and public libraries alike. AS Scott H. Silverman, Bryn Mawr Coll. Lib.,
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sybil Davis:

Here thing why this Marx in Soho: A Play on History are different and trustworthy to be yours. First of all reading a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content than it which is the content is as delicious as food or not. Marx in Soho: A Play on History giving you information deeper as different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no guide that similar with Marx in Soho: A Play on History. It gives you thrill looking at journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing in which happened in the world which is maybe can be happened around you. You can easily bring everywhere like in playground, café, or even in your approach home by train. In case you are having difficulties in bringing the printed book maybe the form of Marx in Soho: A Play on History in e-book can be your alternative.

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Cheryl Steele:

The guide with title Marx in Soho: A Play on History contains a lot of information that you can understand it. You can get a lot of benefit after read this book. This particular book exist new know-how the information that exist in this book represented the condition of the world today. That is important to yo7u to know how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you throughout new era of the internationalization. You can read the e-book with your smart phone, so you can read the item anywhere you want.

Jan Dixon:

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