

Germany and China celebrate Marx's 200th birthday

Germany accepted the gift of a large statue to Marx from China to commemorate 200 years since Marx's birth. Their were very mixed views in Germany we read about accepting this gift, and even more mixed views of the legacy of the political philosopher.

There is no doubt of his influence. Some of the teachers and lecturers I heard were heavily influenced by what they thought Marx had said, though most of them also thought you could adapt Marxism to a social democrat framework. They were not normally willing to defend Marxism as practised in the USSR at the time. I read some of Marx's works to find out how a long dead intellectual could cast such a shadow over societies that we ended up with the tyrannies of Marxist states. They were all much poorer than the west, and so obviously lacked the personal freedoms we took for granted.

One of my earlier political publications was a rebuttal of the Communist party Manifesto. That slim document was far more influential than Das Capital, as it was so much more accessible, with a strong ten point political programme which informed the ultra socialist agendas of Marxist revolutionaries and tyrants around the world. The irony of the document was that its central attack on inequality and privilege led directly to a worse kind of privilege, the privilege that accrued to the political leaders of communist states and to communist party members which was then enforced with violence against anyone who questioned their rule.

So I wrote the Popular Capitalist Manifesto. It proposed doing the opposite in nine of the ten policies recommended by Marx. The one I agreed with was universal free education with no child factory labour..

To remind you what Marx proposed:

The abolition of all private property

A heavy progressive income tax

The abolition of all inheritance rights

Confiscation of all property of rebels and emigrants

A monopoly state bank

Centralisation of all transport and communications in state hands

Wholesale nationalisation of means of production and state planned farming

Establishment of industrial armies with equal requirement of all to labour

Shift of people into towns with erosion of distinction between town and

country

Free education for all with abolition of child factory labour

In a future post I will set out my alternative to this Manifesto.