

## William Frederick Drischler

### **Bismarck - Russian Agent in the Tartar Troika. Marx on the Rise of the Iron Chancellor, 1859-1863**

Politically, the view I have reached is this: that Vincke and Bismarck do, in fact, *accurately* represent the principle of the Prussian State; that the 'State' of Prussia [...] cannot exist either *without* Russia as she is, or *with* an independent Poland. The whole history of Prussia leads one to this conclusion which was drawn long since by Messrs Hohenzollern (Frederick II included).

*Marx to Engels, 24 March 1863, Collected Works (MEC), vol. 41, Moscow, 1985, pp. 461/462.*

The enthusiastic advocates of „Bismarck's great foreign policy“ will [...] discover how this „great“ and also „national“ policy was dictated by Russian diplomats and directed by them on puppet-strings.

*Wilhelm Liebknecht: Karl Marx. Biographical Memoirs, London 1975 (1901), pp. 103/104.*

[...] standing closer to the Tsarist regime than his own, a natural activist like Bismarck [...] was time and again disposed to conspire with the rulers on the Neva.

*Ernst Engelberg: Bismarck. Urprenuß und Reichsgründer, Berlin, 1985, p. 401.*

Bismarck's posture toward Russia was [...] not an expression of simple-minded Russophilia - as was alleged of him early on - but was rather the product of coolly objective considerations of Realpolitik and political power.

*Sigrid Wegner-Korfes: Otto von Bismarck und Rußland, des Reichskanzlers Rußlandpolitik und sein realpolitisches Erbe in der Interpretation bürgerlicher Politiker (1918-1943), Berlin, 1990, p. 13.*

#### **SUMMARY**

Marx's political conclusion after reviewing Bismarck's ascendancy from Prussian Ambassador at St. Petersburg in April, 1859 to Prussian Ministerial President in September 1862 (and Bismarck's formal ceding of Prussian sovereignty to the Eastern Slavs in the Alvensleben Convention of 8 February 1863 - the first major treaty of Bismarck's administration) was that the Iron Chancellor assumed the highest office in the land in his specific capacity as a Russian agent. If Bismarck had assumed the chief political post in Prussia under any circumstances other than being a more or less unmediated appointee of Russian diplomacy, Marx would have had to undertake a thor-

oughgoing revision of his interpretation of the history of the Prussian state structure. As events turned out, no revision was necessary - Bismarck's appointment was quite consistent with the perspective that the Prussian state enjoyed fractured sovereignty, sovereignty fractured by persistent structural servility to the rulers on the Neva (St. Petersburg). With the delineation of Bismarck as a Russian operative, Marx had put the finishing touch on an outline for a comprehensive theory of the state, since the other two major leaders in Europe, the British Prime Minister Lord Palmerston (1784-1865) and the French Emperor Louis Bonaparte (1808-1873) had previously been exposed by Marx as Russian agents in 1856 and 1859, respectively. The spectacle of a troika of Marx-exposed Russian lackeys occupying the pinnacle of state power in the three leading European nations in 1863 renders the contention that Marx's state theory is Russocentric virtually indubitable.

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In the discussion to follow, emphasis will be on the Prussian aspect of remote control of Western politics from St. Petersburg. Before embarking on such a discussion however, a brief review of two other cornerstones of Marx's state theory, namely alleged Russian hegemony in Lord Palmerston's Mid-Victorian Britain and alleged Russian hegemony in Louis Bonaparte's Third Empire in France, is in order. For all his peculiarities (and abilities), Bismarck is ultimately conceived of by Marx as a typical representative of the Prussian state. Likewise, the Prussian state is conceived of as being part of a structural whole encompassing the states of Britain and France. In short, a unified state theory is present.

## **PART ONE - The State of Marx's State Theory in 1863**

### *Introduction*

C. B. Macpherson spoke for many when in 1977 he wrote that Marx: '[...] did not provide more than fragments of a theory of the state.'<sup>1</sup>, this notwithstanding the fact Marx had fleshed out a quite operational state theory as early as 1853, this in response to the writings and movement of David Urquhart (1805-1877). Marx's state theory looked like 'fragments' to posterity due to the phenomenon of Russo-evasion<sup>2</sup> in Marx's studies, i.e., evasion of Marx's analytic focus upon and unmistakable antipathy toward Russian influence in the world, i.e., evasion of Russenhass. If one disregards the heart of any theory, the residue will resemble fragments. Marx for his part took

<sup>1</sup> Crawford B. Macpherson, „Do We Need a Theory of the State?“, in: The Rise and Fall of Economic Justice and other Papers, Oxford, 1985 (1977), p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Drischler, „Marxist State Theory Without Russenhass?“, in: Beiträge zur Marx-Engels-Forschung. Neue Folge 1996, p. 193.

great pains to emphasize the analytically exhaustive nature of his research concerning Palmerston's Tataro-capitalist state, writing to Lassalle in 1854: 'For me there's no conclusion more certain than the conclusion Palmerston [...] is a Russian agent. I have come to this conclusion through a most conscientious (höchst gewissenhafte) and thorough (sorgsame) examination of his entire career (seine ganze Carrière) including the „Blue Books”, the "Parliamentary Debates" and the statements of his own diplomatic agents. The work was in no way amusing and took up a great deal of time (sehr viel Zeit raubend) but was worthwhile in that it provided the key to the last thirty years of diplomatic history.'<sup>3</sup>

Marx's insistence his diplomacy-driven state model was grounded in exhaustive research was by no means merely a signal to posterity a finished state theory was at hand; Marx had to convince Lassalle he was more than an epigone of Urquhart since Marx's view of the political directorate of the Mid-Victorian capitalist state was largely identical to that of the right-wing Tory. The upshot of Marx's Urquhart-induced immersion in diplomatic history in 1853 was Marx's 'Urquhart Apotheosis' - a practically uncritical endorsement of the Scot's analysis of Palmerston. Compared to the influence of Urquhart, the effect classical political economy was low, so far as Marx's state theory was concerned. Methodologically, Marx's extreme emphasis on diplomacy, his trumpeting of the 'primacy of foreign policy' (Primat der Aussenpolitik) stamps him a follower of Leopold Ranke (1795-1886)<sup>4</sup> even if the historian-laureate of the Prussian state never shared the Red Prussian's Russenhass, millenarian expectations from anti-Russian struggle or fondness for espionage history.

<sup>3</sup> Marx to Lassalle, 6 April 1854, MEGA<sup>2</sup> III/7, p. 85. (All German translations are the reviewer's.) See also MEC 39, p. 431/432.

<sup>4</sup> That Marx, Urquhart and Ranke are, from the standpoint of the methodology of diplomacy and state theory, remarkably similar is suggested by Ranke's favorable review of Urquhart's Portfolio, part of a series of exposes of the Palmerston clique published by the Tory M. P. Ranke wrote that Urquhart's was the first publication 'which abstracted from conflicts in the domestic realm and has re-directed policy discussion to foreign relations and power politics where it belongs.' (In: Friedrich Meinecke, Zur Theorie und Philosophie der Geschichte, Werke Band IV, Stuttgart, 1965, p. 259).