KARL MARX A Nineteenth-Century Life

Still, it comes as a shock to realize that the ultimate leftist, the father of Communism itself, fits a recognizable pattern. It's like discovering that Jesus Christ regularly organized bake sales at his local church. So inflated and elevated is the global image of Marx, whether revered as a revolutionary icon or reviled as the wellspring of Soviet totalitarianism, that it's unsettling to encounter a genuine human being, a character one might come across today. If the Marx described by Sperber, a professor at the University of Missouri specializing in European history, were around in 2013, he would be a compulsive blogger, and picking Twitter fights with Andrew Sullivan and Naomi Klein.

But that's cheating. The express purpose of "Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life" is to dispel the dominant notion of a timeless Marx — less man, more ideological canon — and relocate him where he lived and belonged, in his own time, not ours. Standing firm against the avalanche of studies claiming Marx as forever "our contemporary," Sperber sets out to depict instead "a figure of the past," not "a prophet of the present."

And he succeeds in the primary task of all biography, recreating a man who leaps off the page. We travel with Marx from his hometown, Trier, via student carousing in Bonn and Berlin, to his debut in political journalism in Cologne and on to exile and revolutionary activity in Paris, Brussels and London. We see his thought develop, but glimpse also the begging letters to his mother, requesting an advance on his inheritance, along with the enduring anxiety over whether he can provide for the wife he has loved since he was a teenager. We hear of the sleepless nights that follow the start of the American Civil War: Marx is troubled not by the fate of the Union, but by the loss of freelance income from The New York Tribune, which, consumed by matters closer to home, no longer requires his services as a European correspondent. We see the trips to the pawnbrokers, the pressure to maintain bourgeois living standards, "the show of respectability," as Marx put it to his closest friend and co-conspirator, Friedrich Engels.

The picture that emerges is a rounded, humane one. Marx is committed to revolution, without being a monomaniac. He is an intensely loving father, playing energetically with his children and later grandchildren, but also suffering what would now be diagnosed as a two-year depression following the death of his 8-year-old son Edgar. He is clearly also an infuriating colleague, capable of spending 12-hour days in the reading room of the British Museum but stewing on book projects for years, only to fail to deliver. Engels, Sperber writes, spent decades repeating the same message: Get the work done!

Besides the long, devoted marriage to Jenny, there is another love story here: the partnership with Engels, who it seems was prepared to do anything for his comrade. Engels famously subsidized Marx; perhaps less well known is that he spared his friend a scandal by claiming paternity of the child born to the Marx family servant, Lenchen Demuth: the boy was in fact Karl's son. After the great man's death, it was Engels who waded through Marx's scrawled notes to assemble, and publish posthumously, the final two volumes of "Das Kapital." Even Marx's signature text, "The Communist Manifesto," included a 10-point program lifted almost verbatim from an earlier Engels program. Engels was Aaron to Marx's Moses, able to speak in public and so make up for the deficiencies of his partner, who was burdened by both a strong
Rhineland accent and a lisp. Such was his devotion that Engels even planted anonymous reviews of “Das Kapital” in the German press. Imagine what the pair would have got up to in the age of Amazon.

All this is fascinating enough as human drama (complemented by Sperber’s provision of a comprehensive reading of every Marx-related text — whether speeches, letters, articles, grocery bills or invoices — in a winningly informal, readable style). But it has extra value. For the act of reclaiming Marx as a man, and a man of his time, alters the way we understand his ideas.

Plenty of scholars sweated through the 20th century trying to reconcile inconsistencies across the great sweep of Marx’s writing, seeking to shape a coherent Marxism out of Marx. Sperber’s approach is more pragmatic. He accepts that Marx was not a body of ideas, but a human being responding to events. In this context, it’s telling that Marx’s prime vocation was not as an academic but as a campaigning journalist: Sperber suggests Marx’s two stints at the helm of a radical paper in Cologne represented his greatest periods of professional fulfillment. Accordingly, much of what the scholars have tried to brand as Marxist philosophy was instead contemporary commentary, reactive and therefore full of contradiction.

Thus in 1848 Marx could make a speech denouncing as “nonsense” the very idea of a revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, even though that notion formed a core plank of Marxist doctrine. The old Communist academicians used to insist the text of that speech must have been a forgery, but Sperber believes in its authenticity. Marx delivered it to a Rhineland audience then demanding the broadest possible front against authoritarian Prussian rule. Pitting one Rhenish class against another made no sense in that place at that time, so “Marx repudiated his own writing.” The book makes clear that, determined though Marx was to devise an overarching theory of political economy, he was, even in exile, forever preoccupied with German politics and fueled by a lifelong loathing of Prussian despotism. Whatever he wrote in the abstract was informed by the current and concrete.

Only in one area do Sperber’s efforts at contextualization fall short. He argues that Marx’s writings on the Jewish question, including his hostile comments about Jews, should be understood as “embedded” in the attitudes of the age and therefore not deemed straightforwardly anti-Semitic. But such a view is not easy to hold given the evidence Sperber himself marshals, including an 1875 letter to Engels in which Marx — born a Jew, apparently just before his father’s conversion to Protestantism — casually describes a fellow train passenger as a “little Yid,” before offering a description that Sperber, to his credit, concedes “is a stereotypical denunciation of an uncultured and greedy Jew.”

Not that this relatively soft treatment of Marx’s anti-Semitism detracts from the overall achievement of the book. Sperber forces us to look anew at a man whose influence lives on. And he also offers a useful template for how we might approach other great figures, especially the great thinkers, of history — demystifying the words and deeds of those who too often are lazily deemed sacred. For all the books that have been written about America’s founding fathers, for example, we still await the historian who will do for them what Jonathan Sperber has done for Karl Marx.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

MU professor to appear on 'The Daily Show with Jon Stewart'

By Melissa Fogarty
April 2, 2013 | 4:50 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — **MU Curators’ Professor of History Jonathan Sperber will appear on Comedy Central’s "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" on Tuesday. The show will air at 10 p.m.**

Sperber, author of "Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life," will discuss his new book with Stewart. In his book, Sperber offers his own interpretation of Marx’s writings, including the belief that what Marx described as capitalism is different from the modern concept of the system.

Sperber portrays Marx in a humanizing way, and demonstrates his complex personality and life during the nineteenth century.

The book has received many positive reviews since its March 11 release.

"A major work, this is likely to be the standard biography of Marx for many years," Publisher’s Weekly said.

“Sperber forces us to look anew at a man whose influence lives on,” Jonathan Freedland wrote in a New York Times review. “And he also offers a useful template for how we might approach other great figures, especially the great thinkers, of history — demystifying the words and deeds of those who too often are lazily deemed sacred.”

Sperber attended Cornell University and then earned a master’s degree and a doctorate degree in history at the University of Chicago. He has researched and written books about the social and political history of nineteenth century Europe.
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Three more MU professors awarded Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence

By Maddie Aberman
April 2, 2013 | 6:37 p.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Eighty-five students snapped to attention Tuesday afternoon as a group of people stormed into their American Presidency class mid-lecture.

The group, including MU Deputy Chancellor Mike Middleton and Chairman of Commerce Bank Jim Schatz, were there to honor their professor, William Horner.

A look of shock overcame Horner's face as Middleton announced he was one of the recipients of the 2013 Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence. Schatz then presented Horner with a check for $10,000.

The William T. Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence was established in 1991 and is awarded to five outstanding faculty members each year and includes a $10,000 check. Horner was the second recipient of the fellowship this year. The first, Tim Evans, was awarded Monday.

Horner has been an associate professor in the Department of Political Science in the MU College of Arts and Science since 2000. He's also served there as the director of undergraduate studies. He is involved in Pi Sigma Alpha, the honors fraternity for political science at MU, MU's Model United Nations and Relay For Life, according to a news release from the MU News Bureau.

"I almost wore my Chicago Cubs jersey today," Horner joked. "I'm glad now I didn't."

The excitement continued as the group headed to the Fine Arts Annex to award another teacher.
Cheryl Black, a professor in the Department of Theatre in the MU College of Arts and Science, was all smiles when her seminar in Theatre History was interrupted.

Black, who has been an associate professor in the Department of Theatre in the MU College of Arts and Science since 2005, was recently promoted to professor. She has played a key role in obtaining fellowships and grants, increased participation in regional and national conferences and has helped students complete their dissertations and graduate, according to the news release.

"The past recipients have set the bar," Black said. "I will just keep trying to keep trying."

The class of eight cheered and applauded loudly as their professor was honored.

The fourth teacher to be awarded the fellowship was Elizabeth Baker, a professor in the Department of Learning, Teaching and Curriculum in the College of Education. Baker was awarded during her Qualitative Research Analysis graduate course. Her students were almost as speechless as she was.

Baker has been an MU faculty member since 2002. She is at the forefront of the shift in literacy instruction from traditional reading and writing skills to those required in a more technologically savvy culture, according to the news release.

"I am overwhelmed and honored," Baker said as she was handed the check.

The fifth and final recipient of the 2013 Kemper Fellowship for Teaching Excellence will be announced later in the week.
Attorneys representing Missouri basketball Coach Frank Haith's last week filed a motion with the NCAA Committee on Infractions asking that it dismiss charges of rules violations leveled against him from his time at the University of Miami.

"The Committee on Infractions entered an order to us to raise any procedural issues we have with the manner in which the investigation has been conducted by the NCAA," attorney Wally Bley said.

His motion mirrored ones filed by Miami as well as former basketball assistants Jake Morton and Jorge Fernandez and former football assistant Aubrey Hill. All stem from the NCAA's admission of misconduct in gathering evidence in the case.

"Everybody files their own motion," Bley said. "A lot of the allegations and concerns will be the same or similar. Some will be unique to each party, be it the University of Miami, be it Coach Haith, be it Coach Whoever."

Bley said he expected the Committee on Infractions would rule on Haith's motion in the next 30 to 45 days. He was unaware of specific instances when the committee had dismissed charges made against individuals named in notices of allegations.

"This is an unusual circumstance," Bley said. "I'm not sure they've ever done anything precisely like this before."

The same could be said about the NCAA's handling of the Miami case. The governing body in January acknowledged that former investigators worked with and paid the criminal defense attorney for disgraced Hurricanes booster Nevin Shapiro to improperly obtain information for the
purposes of the NCAA investigation. Because the NCAA does not have subpoena power, it cannot compel testimony through procedures outside of its enforcement program.

NCAA President Mark Emmert commissioned an independent review of the enforcement program, and in the wake of that review, Emmert on Feb. 18 said the NCAA was proceeding with its case after all information gathered through improper means had been removed.

The NCAA still faced plenty of skepticism from the media and the public after it sent notices of allegations.

Haith is facing charges of failure to promote an atmosphere of NCAA compliance and failure to monitor the activities of his staff. Baylor's Scott Drew and former Connecticut Coach Jim Calhoun were found guilty of similar charges and were subjected to recruiting restrictions and multi-game suspensions.

The NCAA alleged that Haith learned Shapiro had threatened to go public with a claim that provided money to aid in the recruitment of a player unless Haith or Morton paid off Shapiro. The NCAA also alleged that when Haith learned of Shapiro's threat, he didn't notify anyone in Miami's athletic administration or question Morton to make sure Shapiro's claim lacked merit, nor did he disclose Morton's financial dealings with the disgraced booster. Instead, the NCAA alleged that Haith gave Morton hush money to give to Shapiro.

Bley didn't provide a copy of Haith's motion and said the coach would not make public his formal response to the NCAA's charges, which must be submitted within 90 days of the receipt of the notice of allegations.

"At this point, the Committee on Infractions has taken the position that the ongoing process is still confidential," Bley said, "so we're treating it that way."

This article was published in the Tuesday, April 2, 2013 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Haith files to dismiss NCAA charges."

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Posted in Mu Basketball on Tuesday, April 2, 2013 2:00 pm.
Higher education officials tout Common Core State Standards

College readiness may be improved.

MU mention pg. 2

By Karyn Spory

Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at 2:00 pm

State higher education officials hope the implementation of Common Core State Standards will better prepare students for college and reduce the need for remedial courses.

The Common Core State Standards Initiative aims to provide consistent expectations for learning and to prepare students for college and careers. Missouri is among 46 states that have adopted the standards, although bills in the General Assembly seek to block their implementation.

Rusty Monhollan, assistant commissioner for academic affairs for the Missouri Department of Higher Education, said several national studies have found evidence that "if a student takes one remedial course, their chances of completing a degree diminishes." Also, Monhollan said the more remedial courses a student takes, the less likely he or she will graduate college.

Right now, about one-third of recent high school graduates have to take remedial classes to prepare for college-level coursework, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

"To me, that's a real important statistic," Monhollan said.

An article, "New Evidence on College Remediation," which was published in the Journal of Higher Education, found 58 percent of community college students took at least one remedial class. Another article, "Referral, Enrollment, and Completion in Developmental Education Sequences in Community Colleges," found only "between 33 and 46 percent of students … referred to developmental education actually complete their developmental sequence."
David Russell, higher education commissioner, said Common Core standards align with college coursework and will better prepare graduating seniors, thus lessening the need for remedial classes.

The standards will address English, language arts and mathematics in a more rigorous fashion. "The standards address both the knowledge and the skill we believe all students should master by the end of each grade level to be on track for college and career ready," said Chris Nicastro, education commissioner.

Russell said the cost of remediation in Missouri is about $91 million. "We're concerned we're losing too many of our students in the education pipeline," he said.

Monhollan said it could take five or six years before the effects of the standards are seen within colleges and universities.

"We need to get students better prepared before they come to college, but we also need to find ways to get them through the remedial process," Monhollan said.

MU teaches one remedial course — pre-college algebra. As of this spring, 246 students were enrolled in the class.

This article was published in the Tuesday, March 2, 2013 edition of the Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Officials tout core standards: College readiness may be improved."

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Posted in Education on Tuesday, April 2, 2013 2:00 pm.
Bruce Joshua Miller, who help rally support last year to save the University of Missouri Press, has been honored by Publishers Weekly magazine as sales representative of the year.

Of Miller, author Jon David Cash, wrote: “I believe Miller is probably the only successful sales representative to spearhead a mass movement to save a major prize-winning university press on the side.”

This is no doubt the truth. Miller, who is based in Chicago, along with Ned Stuckey-French of Florida, cultivated a Facebook page that helped keep pressure on the University of Missouri system, which announced last May it would stop funding the academic press. Critics of the decision were wide and varied (and included the editorial page of the Post-Dispatch), but Miller and Stuckey-French managed to gain national attention and outrage on behalf of the press. By the end of the summer, the university system was announcing that the press’ editor in chief and other employees would be rehired.

Publishers Weekly also reports that the press’ consulting director, Jane Lago, said “there is no doubt that Bruce has gone behind the call of duty on behalf of the Press. He has put in more hours than can ever be justified by the commissions he earns. He has done so because of his belief in the value of university press publishing.”
MU wrestling's Brian Smith is coach of year

April 2
By TEREZ A. PAYLOR

The Kansas City Star

Missouri wrestling coach Brian Smith has been named the coach of the year in the Mid-American Conference for 2013, the school announced Tuesday.

Smith led the Tigers to the conference title in their first year in the MAC, as Missouri scored 136 points – the most in MAC Championship history – and had four individuals win their brackets. Missouri sent all 10 of its starters to the NCAA Championships and finished the year ranked No. 4 in the NWCA/USA Today poll.

This marks the second consecutive season Smith has won coach of the year honors in his respective conference. Last year, Smith was named the Big 12's coach of the year after leading the Tigers to their first Big 12 wrestling title in school history.
An estimated 1 in 88 children is diagnosed with some form of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at age 8. As Autism Awareness Month gets underway, it is a time to spread more awareness about the complexity of this disorder that affects so many children and their families. ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder, characterized by social impairments, communication difficulties, and restricted, repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior. Three main issues most families struggle with when it comes to ASD are: receiving the diagnosis, handling the perceptions of others, and deciding on a course of treatment.

Coming to terms with and wrapping your mind around what is happening to someone you love can be difficult to deal with. Many parents struggle for years to find an accurate diagnosis, and once they finally do get one, they wonder what they should have done differently or what having ASD will mean for their child growing up. Guilt is a common feeling among parents whose children have been diagnosed. However, with the feeling of guilt also comes a feeling of relief because they now have an explanation for their child’s behavior and a direction to move forward.

The perception of others is another issue with which parents sometimes struggle. When a child acts out or behaves atypically in public, the behavior can attract unwanted attention from others who often don’t understand that the child has autism and question the parent’s parenting techniques or skills. Some parents wonder if they should walk around with a T-shirt that says "my child has autism," as it seems to be the only way others can understand that there are medical factors behind the behaviors they are witnessing. Learning how to deal with
the public and even with other family members is a challenge for many parents, but understanding just how many families are dealing with ASD might provide some comfort.

Finding the right course of treatment can be another area of concern, because there is not one specific treatment for every person that has autism. ASD varies significantly in character and severity from one individual to the next, which underscores the importance of individualized treatment plans for each child diagnosed.

The good news is that a range of treatment options are available, and they are constantly improving and providing families with hope for the future and the help to keep working with their child.

In the short term, behavioral treatments are proven treatments that have helped those affected by autism, and they are being further researched and refined. Research also is currently underway to look for a bio-marker for autism and to try to determine sub-types of autism. The more we can learn the better treatments we can come up with.

For parents who suspect that there is something going on with their child, it is advised to take the steps necessary to have a thorough evaluation. Early diagnosis can go a long way toward getting on the right treatment plan at an early age and can lead to an enhanced quality of life for their child and greater peace of mind for impacted parents.

**Stephen M. Kanne, Ph.D., certified by the American Board of Professional Psychology, is the executive director of the Thompson Center for Autism, whose mission is to improve the lives of individuals and families affected by autism and neurodevelopmental disorders through world-class programs that integrate research, clinical service delivery, education and public policy.**