John [Johann] Most

Jay Fox

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John Most is dead, and with his death the movement has lost a most ardent worker. Most was a born rebel, and early in life harnessed himself to the revolutionary movement. He died in his sixtieth year in Cincinnati while on his way to Chicago to speak at the commune celebration.

Most was one of the great individualities the German revolutionary movement has produced. For forty years, with pen and tongue, he has fought the powers of privilege, and so powerful was the force of his words that, for more than twenty-five years he had the honorable distinction of being the most feared and hated individual in the revolutionary movement. A powerful orator, with strong convictions and an undaunted courage he soon brot down upon his head the wrath of the capitalists and their watchdogs — the governments. Jailed and jailed again in every country he has honored by his presence this mouthpiece of the social revolution could not be subdued. The unconquerable could not be conquered, the untameable could not be tamed. Each term of imprisonment, instead of cowing and subduing him, only added fuel to the fire of his revolutionary genius. the terms of imprisonment were mere recreation for him, wherein he recuperated his forces and stored
up fresh supplies of energy to renew his masterly attacks upon the
system immediately upon his release.

Most always hewed to the line, attacked the enemies of society
openly, and chose his words for their force and directness. Like all
men of force and genius, he was no respecter of forms of literary
expression and where language did not afford him proper vehicles
for the expression of his thots he promptly invented words that
suited them. He had no liking for the English language, and, al-

though more than twenty years in this country, his propaganda was
confined to his native tongue. With the exception of his autobiog-
raphy, and a few pamphlets, Most’s literary work was confined to
the publication of his paper *Freiheit*. Like all men of worth he was
little understood, even by the wage-slaves, for whose emancipation
he was among the foremost champions of the age. It is a sad com-
mentary upon men of genius that to be understood they must be
dead a long time.

Comrade Most cared nothing for reputation; he hated it. To him
the truth was of more value than all the wealth of popularity and
gold the world could heap upon him; and truth in John Most had
one of the ablest and most devoted champions ever born of woman.

Truth has always been unpopular. Few there can be, even in this
age of advancement, who care to hear it spoken. The great mass
of humanity moves carelessly along ion the beaten paths of its an-
cestors, and it looks with suspicion on the man who ventures to
suggest the building of a new road. And if he persists it treats him
with scorn and derision, if not with the hangman’s noose. In spite
of the scoffs and sneers of the mob, in spite of the threats of the
privileged tyrants, in spite of jails and gallows, men and women
are constantly coming to the front with the red flag of truth in their
hands and the burning words of liberty on their tongues. It is such
men and women that have made the world advance in spite of itself.
They prod it in the ribs, and urge it forward, and it hates them for
disturbing its sleep. The world has always hated its benefactors. It
hated Most; that is his reward. A striking example of the esteem in

which he was held by the capitalistic hangdogs was given by the
*New York Times*. That slimy sheet, in an editorial comment upon
his death, declared him a mad dog in human form, and rejoiced at
his death.

Well may *The Times* rejoice. It knows its enemies well, and the
bigger the game the slimier its epithets. No better appreciation of
Most and his work could have been written than that vile screed.
*The Times* can croak in perfect safety at a dead man. It may be
forced to recant sooner than it thinks.

Most has left his mark on the history of his time, and the influ-
ences of his work will be felt for ages. He died in the harness. I
honor his memory.

Jay Fox
Johann Most died March 17, 1906.