

# Luther

Johann Most

1892

Last Monday, a very “dashing” Fatzkiade was performed in Wittenberg, a kind of Columberei in green. It was about the opening of the renovated castle church, on whose portal on October 31, 1517, Luther nailed his famous 95 theses, which are now engraved on bronze tablets and attached in the same place.

It is understandable that on the occasion of this warming up of old coal, those elements whose essential spiritual food is this material, old men, squires and old women of both sexes, swam in bliss, because for such mammals there can be nothing more wonderful than when the concept of old-baked and the concept of new-baked, like God the Father and the Son, become entangled in a “higher” unity. But the fact that people who supposedly enjoy a real level of intelligence, as many newspaper writers claim, used this Lutheranism to attach remarks to it that fit it like a garland of roses to a dirty pig; and that countless victims of these public opinion makers swallowed such commentary, reflection and lecturing without batting an eyelid, just as if the literary hash offered were compatible with the facts at hand and common sense — one would almost like to melt into world-weariness.

Dr. Martin Luther, great reformer, bold intellectual champion, highly learned Bible fixer, gigantic German improver and cultural engine by the grace of God, if you had not raged and if Columbus had not “discovered” America — who knows, the earth would end up turning backwards now.

But joking aside — the matter is unfortunately too serious — not only the stupid and the fundamentally bad, but also the “educated” and the conservative swear that Luther was a “great man”, a freedom fighter, a cultural titan who made an epoch, to whom all of humanity owes an immense amount of progress. This is how most people have parodied the Reformation legend, as it was smuggled into world history and presented in a hundred variations.

Reformation — bloody mockery of a fool’s farce!

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Catholic priests had just got to the point where Christianity, with which they themselves were ultimately only doing nonsense, was declared to be a thing of the past. Drunken, lecherous and ignorant monks behaved so rudely that they often provoked children’s mockery. Respect for the priesthood had sunk to freezing point and people went to church more for fun than for any other reason. People went to sermons and mass like people today go to the theater to enjoy a farce with singing. Another century of development of these things and the whole Christian mess would have completely dissolved into a stench.

Then came these Luthers, Calvins, Zwinglis and other religious zealots and knew of nothing better to do than to interrupt this truly civilizing process of decay with their “improvement” babble. The “Lord God”, who the Catholic priests had long since turned into a pure scarecrow, was, so to speak, put back on the throne of heaven by these simpletons and newly consecrated. The fun part — the theatrical — was frowned upon in the churches and the goat-leather solemnity that can still be seen today in the Protestant sheepfolds of God was organized. The Bible, with all its contradictions and mind-numbing nonsense, was recommended to the people as the best reading material, and everything imaginable was used to transform what had once been a mere religious pleasure into a dark torture of penance and prayer.

One would think that the people would not have found any taste for such a change, and one would not be mistaken in this respect. But Luther and company knew how to help themselves. They harnessed secular authority to their God-wish cart wherever possible, and only to the extent that they succeeded in doing so did they succeed in darkening the world.

Since this change in the religious sphere was directed against the monasteries and other church property — the material means of power of the Catholic Church — the princes who agreed to the matter (and to the extent that this was the case, they agreed to it for this very reason) had a splendid opportunity to enrich themselves immensely by abolishing these institutions. This was a powerful spur to such action. But the dear subjects were simply ordered into Protestantism by order of the Moufti.

The bourgeoisie, which was already developing at that time, also provided a powerful aid. Since Protestantism did away with most non-Sunday church holidays, so that the days in question were turned into working days, this meant for them at least 40 — 50 days a year on which they could slave away their workers, who were left alone on such days under Catholicism.

The “reformers” understood all this very well and it is notorious that they stood firmly on the side of the ruling class and had nothing left for the people except a divine thunderbolt and the threat of the secular rod of discipline. Luther, the chief “reformer,” behaved most despicably in this respect.

The German Peasants’ War, which was not, as some believe, an indirect result of the “Reformation”, but was able to develop so strongly because the reputation of secular and spiritual authority was extremely shaken at that time — and not a little because of the degenerate state of the priesthood — so that the subjugated masses dared to break the hated yoke with their combined forces, may have been a failure precisely because the pompous “reformers” — above all Luther — incited and stirred up trouble against the real reformers of the time, the rebellious peasants, more than any order-hungry newspaper priest of our day has ever dared to do against the anarchists and other socialists.

If one considers the series of wars to which the “Reformation” hype, this higher madness, has led — just remember the Thirty Years’ War, which brought half of Europe to the brink of the abyss — and the furious Catholic reaction with its notorious persecutions of heretics that it provoked, one must admit that perhaps nothing in the entire course of the so-called historical epoch of humanity has brought so much misfortune into the world as the much-praised “Reformation”.

Genghis Khan is condemned for his mass murders in Asia, Attila for his devastating campaigns in Europe, the Roman Caesars for the bloodbaths they caused, but it is still very much a question whether Luther and his fellow zealots are not to be credited with the intellectual authorship of more bloodshed than was perpetrated by all those hideous tyrants put together.

One could overlook all this if at least on the whole a reasonable goal, some progress had been achieved, if it had really been a matter of a reformation and not merely an — let's just say it bluntly — intellectual reaction.

Yes, Luther and his associates brought about a reaction — nothing more. For the real progress that has come into the world over the last four centuries has absolutely nothing to do with the Protestant religious misery; it has largely taken place amid the fiercest opposition of the scoundrels of all countries.

Above all, the “Reformation” inspired Catholicism to new energy and a certain inner purification. Despite its loss of “souls” after the “Reformation”, the Catholic Church has taken a firmer position than ever before; without the “Reformation”, as I said, it would soon have rotted in its own filth and today there would perhaps at least be no more plague of God in the world — and consequently probably no more political and social tyranny, because only people infected with religion — church sheep whose ability to think logically has been robbed by the beliefs imprinted on their brains and who hope for a “better afterlife” after the burden and effort of earthly existence — can be prepared to submit to the kind of treatment that the masses of the people have had to endure up to now.

If you look at the matter from this point of view, you can certainly understand that guys like Fatzke have no little respect for Luther and the “Reformation”. Without this witches’ sabbath of brain-dead villains, there would ultimately be no field left for Kaiserlings and other fossils to romp around.

But when you hear workers, often more or less liberal workers, talking about the “Reformation” as a matter of progress and about Luther as a pioneer of liberal development, you simply wish there was a “Nuremberg funnel” to be able to supply the brains in question with the necessary spirit. Unfortunately, there is no such thing, but you can say what was going on in the world and how you feel about it. That is why such articles have to be written from time to time.

We do not respect idols, we tear every god down into the dust where he belongs; why should we then spare devils like Luther?

Of course, the guy is dead and buried, but the memory of him is still there; we must try to eradicate that. His disastrous work still makes itself felt every day, and we must work against it.

Down with Protestantism, as with Catholicism! Down with all god-mongering and all smuggling! These mottos must not be forgotten in the proletariat’s fight against everything that stands in the way of achieving complete freedom and complete equality.

Those who understand this must move forward all the more energetically in this respect, as it has become fashionable in certain circles of socialist reformers to regard religion and everything connected with it as inviolable.

Anyone who wants to can believe in the theory that this element of idiocy will disappear of its own accord, but we do not believe in it at all. Just as the religious rubbish has been systematically stuffed into people’s heads, it must be removed again.

Nothing is more absurd than to assume that the greatest stupidity, religious stupidity, can be spared, and that enlightenment can only be pursued politically and socially. As if a person for whom three times one is one (the doctrine of the Trinity), a person who imagines that his soul will one day leave his body somewhere and enjoy himself forever, etc., would be capable of understanding things that can only be understood if one has all five wits about him!

Priests of all kinds are now making efforts to combine a kind of socialism with religious smearing; that should give us food for thought. These night owls realize that the proletariat will

slip out of their hands if it gets the cataract from another side, hence this hypocrisy. This must be countered with skill and caution. There is no way around it, no dancing around eggshells. The robes and gowns of the priestly scum must be ruthlessly torn from their bodies so that their nakedness becomes visible. If kings and emperors turn to Lutheranism, it is up to us to declare war to the knife on the priestly scoundrels.

We cannot hurl our missiles at the castle and the stock exchange and treat the churches with respect. Every church tower that comes into view should remind us that there are still institutions everywhere whose purpose is to murder the mind.

“Without religion, the people cannot endure the misery in which they live; they rebel.” That is what Windthorst, the clever Mephisto, once said in the German Reichstag. That is undoubtedly true. That is why we call out to the world: Down with the priests! Get religion out of people’s heads!

The Anarchist Library  
Anti-Copyright



Johann Most  
Luther  
1892

Retrieved on March 2, 2025 from  
<https://www.anarchismus.at/anarchistische-klassiker/johann-most/8043-johann-most-lutherei>

**[theanarchistlibrary.org](https://theanarchistlibrary.org)**