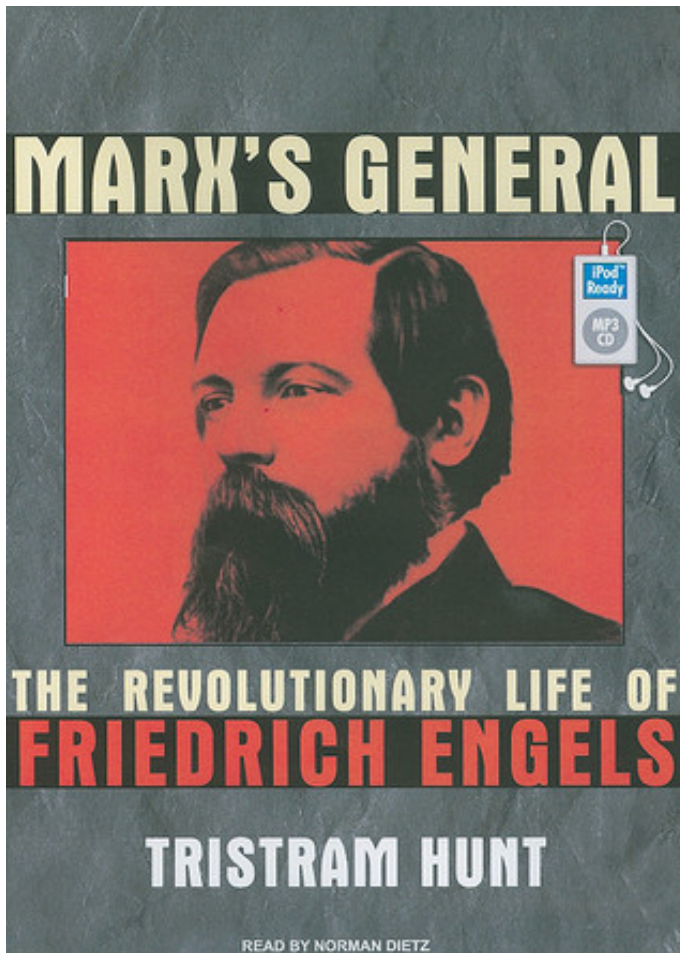


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## Tristram Hunt

### Marx's General: The Revolutionary Life of Friedrich Engels



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Author: Tristram Hunt

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## Description

Friedrich Engels is one of the most intriguing and contradictory figures of the nineteenth century. Born to a prosperous Prussian mercantile family, he spent his life working in the Manchester cotton industry, riding to the Cheshire hounds, and enjoying the comfortable upper-middle-class existence of a Victorian gentleman.

Yet Engels was also, with Karl Marx, the founder of international communism, which in the twentieth century came to govern one-third of the human race. He was coauthor of *The Communist Manifesto*, a ruthless party tactician, and the man who sacrificed his best years so that Marx could write *Das Kapital*. His searing account of the Industrial Revolution, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, remains one of the most haunting and brutal indictments of the human costs of capitalism. Far more than Marx's indispensable aide, Engels was a profound thinker in his own right—on warfare, feminism, urbanism, Darwinism, technology, and colonialism. With fierce clarity, he predicted the social effects of today's free-market fundamentalism and unstoppable globalization.

Drawing on a wealth of letters and archives, acclaimed historian Tristram Hunt plumbs Engels's intellectual legacy and shows us how one of the great *bon viveurs* of Victorian Britain reconciled his exuberant personal life with his radical political philosophy. Set against the backdrop of revolutionary Europe and industrializing England—of Manchester mills, Paris barricades, and East End strikes—*Marx's General* tells a story of devoted friendship, class compromise, ideological struggle, and family betrayal. And it tackles head-on the question of Engels's influence: was Engels, after Marx's death, responsible for some of the most devastating turns of twentieth-century history, or was the idealism of his thought distorted by those who claimed to be his followers?

An epic history and riveting biography, *Marx's General* at last brings Engels out from the shadow of his famous friend and collaborator.

## Insightful reviews

CJ Underwood: An absolutely fascinating book full of sometime unexpected and entertaining insights into the life of the most stalwart yet contradictory communist in the history of the movement.

Adam: An illuminating view of Victorian England (and late 19th century Europe) from the perspective of businessman/revolutionary Friedrich Engels. Hunt portrays Engels as neither hero nor villain, but as an energetic and intelligent ideologue and politician-- simultaneously capable of substantial self-sacrifice, viciousness, and hypocrisy.

K C: Informative.

Titus Hjelm: i am not adequate of knowledgeable to touch upon the former reviewer's dismay approximately Hunt's deficiencies in depicting nineteenth century Germany, yet suffice it to

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assert that no matter what they are, they do not have an effect on the vital narrative sufficient to brush aside the total book. In fact, lots of the context of Engels's tale is Victorian England, which essentially is the author's speciality. The narrative flows very nicely; the chronicle of Engels's existence is colored with contextual details and discussions of the 'supporting cast' including, obviously, Marx. there's the necessary womanising, ingesting and gossip, yet regularly the private aspect of Engels is mentioned relating to the foreign socialist circles and his guarding of Marx's heritage. within the latter lies the single unhappiness of the book: up to the writer makes of Engels being consciously the 'second fiddle' to Marx, he by no means bargains an explanation. Why used to be this so? this can be after all a notoriously tricky query to answer, and lots of have long gone down the easy, slim and probably mistaken path of psychonanalysing their topics (e.g. Radkau's Max Weber). However, a few type of 'theory'--no topic how tentative--would were attention-grabbing and could have supplied a lens by which to learn the differently brilliant, yet descriptive narrative.

Roger Boyle: it kind of feels a piece suggest no longer provide this five stars, yet I appear to do this quite too often. This used to be a truly instructive ebook - I discovered much approximately 19C philosophy and approximately Marx and Engels - Hunt introduced them alive as males very well, warts and all. Hunt is possibly a top quality educational political historian, yet his presentation the following was once very obtainable and instructive. really deliberately, he is a little bit an apologist and has an attractive epilogue during which he absolves FE of blame for the 20C mishandling of the Marxist ideas. Entertaining and true!

Steven Peterson: whereas i've got learn a few of Engels' works and plenty of of the Marx-Engels works and, of course, a lot of Marx' "solo" authored works, I had little information regarding Friedrich Engels the person. I did comprehend that there has been a rigidity among his position as a socialist philosopher and his enterprise role, being profitable off of the paintings of proletarians. Of course, the counterargument is that, up to he used to be uncomfortable with this, it allowed him to financially help Marx's lifestyles work. I discovered this an exceptional biography of a massive determine in politics and political thought. even if one may possibly consider Marx and Engels, they're very important figures historically. The extra that we comprehend the context during which their paintings developed, the higher off we're in figuring out the whys and wherefores of such writing. Many have seen Engels as a moment cost thinker. This e-book turns out to do a pleasant task in debunking that. The proof the following (and elsewhere) is that he made actual contributions to joint works with Marx (such as "The German Ideology"); he additionally wrote a few reliable works on his own; he ended up finishing "Das Kapital" after Marx's death, utilizing the latter's nearly undecipherable notes and fragments for those manuscripts. The publication contributes greater than summaries of Marx' and Engels' writings. We examine quite a lot approximately Marx--and absolutely very much approximately Engels. They grew to become buddies and collaborators whereas in Germany. They dabbled in innovative movements, with no reaching very much via their energetic paintings at the parapets. Their relations lives diverged greatly, with Marx having a brood of children, doting on them. Engels simply officially married once, as his moment accomplice lay close to death. His dating with the Burns sisters is very properly told--a tempestuous dating with the elder sister and a more well-off dating with the more youthful sister, who grew to become Engels' associate upon the loss of life of the elder sister. Engels' relationships with Marx's youngsters and sons-in-law upload a nice, occasionally poignant, touch. Some questions come up for me within the choice

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of matters during this book. For instance, I'd have suggestion that at the very least a number of pages must have been dedicated to "The financial and Philosophical" manuscripts, within which Marx started fidgeting with issues that have been later elaborated (e.g., alienation). The tale of Engels' existence is efficacious in its personal right. The stress among his business-oriented relations and his personal younger radical views. He frequently came upon himself at the "outs" along with his family. He used to be beautiful wild whereas young, ingesting greatly and residing a pretty dissolute life. His curiosity in problems with politics and philosophy observed him attending lectures of significant figures and interpreting the works of key philosophers. His dating with a gaggle of younger Hegelians ("die Freien") sped up his radical thinking. It used to be in the course of that point that he met Marx. Their collaboration (and friendship) begun at that point. The booklet does a pleasant task of unveiling how committed Engels used to be towards Marx, subordinating his personal philosophical goals to aid the paintings of Marx. At that, the 2 labored jointly on a few significant co-authored works, reminiscent of "The Communist Manifesto" and "The German Ideology" and "The Holy Family." Engels wrote a publication that generated a few visibility early on, "The of the operating classification in England" in addition to later in life, akin to "The beginning of the Family, deepest Property, and the State." He used to be greater than only a author and a collaborator of Marx; He was once a political activist (although he and Marx were not continuously cozy operating in firms the place humans could disagree with them). He performed a task in socialist organizations, usually in management positions. He wrote pamphlets and articles that encouraged change. If you have an interest in studying extra approximately Friedrich Engels as a thinker, a political actor, and as a person, this e-book can be worthwhile reading.

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