

## 05a. Marx, pre-Capital

October 2007

### Topics:

- Problems with liberalism
- On the Jewish Question
- Background: immiseration of working class
- Marx & Engels bio
- Intro to "Contribution to the Critique" of Hegel
- "Theses on Feuerbach"
- Communist Manifesto
- Historical materialist method

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### Four things to address in teaching Marx

- Marx's critique of liberal democracy (OJQ)
- His critique of capitalism (CM, Capital)
- Historical materialist method (18th B, GI, Preface to *Contribution*)
- Communism (CM, CWF, Gotha, Bakunin)

## Problems with liberalism

### **I. Problems with liberalism**

A. **Liberalism:** An ideology that promotes the freedom of the individual in religious, political, and economic matters.

B. **Basic tenets of liberalism** [on padcam]

1. Basic unit: the self-interested individual
2. All humans are free and equal and protected by political/civil rights
3. All humans have a right to private property
4. Religious toleration
5. Government's role: protect life, rights, property
6. Government: limited, representative
7. Economic system: capitalism

C. But there's a **contradiction** between the government's obligation to protect both liberty and private property. What happens when the life or liberty of one person comes into conflict with the property of another?

1. For example, what happens when a poor person cannot make ends meet, in part because it is her boss's "right" to pay her as little as he can? [e.g. can a Wal-Mart worker sue the company for not paying her enough to afford health care?]

Whose side will a liberal government take?

2. This is **the contradiction of liberal democracy**: We live in a society in which we all possess equal political rights, but in which wealth is held unevenly. How democratic is a society where people possess equal political rights but unequal social power?

3. Rousseau's answer is we are not free at all because the rich have hoodwinked the poor. The **poor and the rich are dependent** on each other.

4. However, the problem for Rousseau is the **gap between rich and poor**, not the existence of classes themselves. Rousseau's solution is to get both classes to work for a common good and for citizens to **place the common good before their class interests**. This is the classical republican solution to the contradiction of liberal democracy.

D. **Marx, Locke, Rousseau**

1. Marx **appreciates Rousseau's fierce commitment** to liberty and the common good.

2. Marx **appreciates Locke's critique** of the monarchy. He hate feudalism as much as Locke.

3. However, he argues that neither perspective can bring about human freedom.

4. Ultimately, Marx argues that **liberalism is primarily an ideology suited to defend capitalism** and only secondarily about protecting individual freedom. Further, the kind of human freedom liberalism promotes is not the only or ultimate type of human freedom. Humans can be much freer than liberalism and capitalism provide for.

5. Rousseau's republicanism is not a solution because even though it reduces the gap between rich and poor, it still **rests on classes**. Classes and class power, not the wealth gap, is Marx's concern.

6. Further, both depend on a **distinction between the public and private spheres** that hides where real power lies. Locke and Rousseau assume that power lies in the public sphere of politics and citizenship, but Marx argues that it really lies in the private sphere of economics.

E. Marx begins to set out this critique of liberalism in "On the Jewish Question."

1. **The central goal of Marx is freedom.** If Locke and Rousseau's goal is to discover the form of government needed to preserve individual freedom, Marx's goal is to discover the economic conditions necessary for the full and free development of the individual.

2. These economic conditions will, in turn, create new forms of governing, the final form of which will do away with government altogether.

## The method of critique

**Marx to Arnold Ruge, September 1843**, from *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher* (same issue as OJQ was published; Ruge was Marx's co-editor)

### **I. Critique vs. dogma, or abstract philosophy**

- x. **Read** Tucker 13, CW vol. 3 p. 142.
- x. **Q:** What does Marx mean?
- x. Part I of the quote: "We do not attempt dogmatically to prefigure the future, but want to find the new world only through criticism of the old..." (Tucker 13, CW vol. 3 p. 142)
  - x. Philosophy so far has constructed grand philosophies and systems (from the kallipolis to early communism) that it seeks to impose on the real world. These philosophies are **abstractions** because they do not come from an understanding of present social conditions.
  - x. But you can only develop **universal** ideas or truths out of **particular** situations. Philosophy only has value when it analyzes specific political and social conditions.
  - x. **Read** 14-15/143-145 if you want.
  - x. **Abstract philosophy** must therefore be replaced by the **method of critique**.
  - x. Part II of the p. 13/142 quote: "**A ruthless criticism of everything existing.**"  
The task of political theory, of philosophy, is not to develop abstract systems to impose on the world, but to critique the world as it really is, as it really works.
  - x. By "ruthless criticisms" Marx means two things:
    - x. First, **criticism must be radical**. It must get to the root of the problem, and it must not be afraid of the conclusions it comes to, even if they go against common wisdom.
    - x. Second, it must not be afraid of **coming into conflict** with the powers that be. It must not defer to power and hierarchical social relations if they can't stand up to critique.
  - x. Thus, Marx's very method, the method of critique, is radical to the core. It is a revolutionary approach to gaining knowledge and understanding the world.
  - x. Thus, you can see that **conflict is built into his very method**. Regardless of its Hegelian influences (perhaps because of it), the method of critique is a conflictual, agonal approach to knowledge and to politics.

## Marx, "On the Jewish Question,"

[quotes from *Collected Works Vol. 3* / Simon anthology]

### I. Bauer's argument

#### A. The formulation of a question

1. **Q:** Marx writes, "The formulation of a question is its solution. Criticism of the Jewish question provides the answer to the Jewish question" (147/3). What does he mean by that?

2. Sometimes the solution to a problem doesn't lie in the evidence or in reason, but in the way a question is posed. If you **pose a question differently** you can make an intractable problem soluble.

3. **Example:** Kant transformed metaphysics not by answering the old question, "How do our ideas about the world correspond with reality?" but by asking a new question: "How do our ideas *constitute* reality?"

4. **Example:** Instead of asking, "*How* can African Americans be integrated into American society, Malcolm X asked, "*Why* should Black people integrate?" He asked a different question and came up with a different answer: Black nationalism instead of integration.

5. Marx is going to do the same thing. He's going to reformulate Bauer's question so it can be answered in a more satisfactory way.

#### B. Bauer on Jewish emancipation

1. **Q:** What is Bauer's question?

2. The question Bauer addresses is **should Jews in Germany be granted the same rights** as Christians?

3. Bauer argues that in order to be emancipated, **Jews have to give up their religion** in order to be emancipated *as citizens*, just like Christians will have to give up their religion to be free. Emancipation requires the abolition of religion; specifically, the **separation of religion and the state**.

4. **Q:** What is Marx's criticism of Bauer's formulation of the Jewish question?

5. Don't ask "who is to emancipate?" or "who is to be emancipated?" Ask instead, "**What kind of emancipation?**" The kind of emancipation Bauer is talking about—freedom from religion—is a limited, partial form of freedom.

#### C. Marx's critique of Bauer's argument

1. Bauer argues that when religion and the state are separated (i.e. when there is no longer an official state religion), religion will disappear. Thus, Jews shouldn't be asking for state recognition of their religion, they should be trying to abolish state religion. Thus, they have to abolish Judaism as well as Christianity.

2. Marx replies, then how do we explain the situation in **North America**, in which state and religion are distinct yet it is a very pious country? Religion has in no way disappeared in the U.S. despite it being a secular state. If anything, **religion is stronger when it is detached from the state** (E.g. x/13-14). Thus, the solution to the Jewish question can't be to simply abolish state religion. Instead, we have to look at the nature of the state itself, and **how freedom is defined in the modern state**. x/6

3. Only a **critique of political emancipation**, that is, freedom under the modern state, can answer the "Jewish Question." And in order to critique it, we have to compare it to real, full, **human emancipation**.

4. Read ~~149/6-7~~ 151/6-7 (91 in Tucker)

5. We explain the limits of religious belief and practice in terms of the limits of political freedom granted by the state. The key is to attack the secular restrictions on citizens, not the religious ones.

6. Thus, **we need to examine not religion, but the secular state**, the state that grants "political emancipation" but not human emancipation. Once we see the **limits of human freedom under liberalism** (i.e. political emancipation), the critique of religion will follow, not the other way around.

7. **Bauer does not criticize political emancipation** or the relationship between political and human emancipation. He therefore can't hope to resolve the JQ.

## II. Political emancipation

### A. Defining political emancipation

1. Q: What is political emancipation?

2. Political emancipation means **liberalism**. It's the system of **civil & political rights** elaborated by Locke: the government doesn't tell us what to do or what religion to worship but instead exists to preserve our life, liberty, and estate. It's the right to participate in government and the set of "inalienable" rights we possess.

3. For example, political emancipation or liberalism "frees the state from religion" by abolishing state religion. Religion is transformed **from a state obligation into an individual right**. Religion and the state are separated into **public and private realms**.

B. The same goes with property. **When the state abolishes the property requirement for voting, is private property abolished?** No. In fact, it thrives because private property is simply relegated to the private realm. Once it is relegated to the private realm, like religion it becomes a private matter that is not subject to public intervention. All the state can do is protect and regulate property; it can't legislate it away. If anything, **the politically emancipated state presupposes private property**. Its main function becomes to protect and regulate private property.

1. Read 153/8. 37 in Tucker

2. Consider **feudalism**: Property, church and state exist within the same sphere: only those who own property and worship the appropriate church may be a part of the state. Thus, **the feudal state is not universal**. It openly exists for the benefit of one class and religion.

3. **[KEY POINT]** But under political emancipation (i.e. liberalism), property and religion are separated from the state. **Liberalism creates two spheres**, public and private.

a. **In the public sphere of the state, we are to act "universally"**: that is, as citizens we act not in our own selfish interests but in the best interests of all citizens.

b. In the private sphere, we act "egoistically", i.e. in our own self-interests. We worship the religion we please, we exercise our rights as they please us, and most importantly, we try to acquire as much property as we can, even at the expense of others.

C. [Put on padcam]

**The Christian state (e.g. feudal Germany):**

**The Christian state**

Political power  
Property  
Civil society  
Religion  
Family

**The political state (e.g. the U.S.),  
or political emancipation**

<b>The democratic state (public sphere)</b>	<b>Civil society (private sphere)</b>
Act "universally"	Act "egoistically"
Politics	Civil society (inc. church)
Citizenship ( <i>citoyen</i> )	Private selves ( <i>bourgeois</i> )
Common good	Self-interest
Rights ("lion's skin")	Property (real power)
"Christian"	"Jewish"
"Heaven"	"Earth"

**D. Alienation and the twofold life**

1. Thus, under political emancipation **society is divided into two spheres:** public and private.

2. **We also divide ourselves into two:** citizen and bourgeois, i.e. public person vs. private individual. 157-54 - 33-34 in Text

3. **Read 154/8-9 & 154/9.** Political emancipation is *by definition* a situation of **alienation**, a **twofold life**. Part of who we are is separated from ourselves.

4. **Q:** What does Marx mean by "political lion skin"? Also, what does he mean by "man's species-life" (153/8) or "species being"?

5. **[KEY POINT]** For Marx, **humans are by nature social creatures**. What it means to be human, what it means to be a human species, is to live and work socially, in concert with others. Liberalism or **political emancipation alienates us from our species-being**, from what it means to be human, because while it talks piously about our obligations to our fellow man as citizens, it's really just a cover or a "political lion's skin" for a society that's actually based on self-interest, greed, and *separation* from our fellow humans.

to recognize, i.e. that we are a *universal species*  
Being conscious that we belong to a *species*  
6 is what distinguishes humans from other animals

a. In political emancipation, we are led to believe that our "real life" lies in the life of the citizen, of the human acting in the common good, but the side of us with *real* power is the private self.

b. Our **actual humanity** lies in the privatized, egoistic civil society, while our supposed true or universal life is really an abstraction, a "political lion's skin."

6. It's not "liberty and justice for all," it's "C.R.E.A.M."

7. This split, in society and within the human, Marx calls **alienation**. **Liberalism is premised on this alienation**. It can therefore only bring about a **partial freedom** because it is a freedom that alienates us from our species-being, from other humans, and ultimately, from ourselves.

E. "But in becoming celestial and otherworldly, ... the state also figures its future overcoming, its future irrelevance" (Brown, *States of Injury*, 112). It suggests the transformation from political to human emancipation.

### III. Human emancipation

A. Political emancipation, then, is an **advance over feudalism**, but it **does not lead to full freedom** for humanity. Even worse, it quickly becomes an **obstacle to such freedom**. It can't be improved on. **It has to be overcome**—abolished and replaced with a new form of freedom.

B. In order to achieve real, full freedom, then, we have to abandon liberalism and struggle for true or human emancipation. Human emancipation means **reuniting our public and private selves**. In human emancipation, the private and public selves are brought back into the same individual, so her communal life is her real life, not an abstraction.

1. Read 168/21. 46 in Tucker

2. Soon, Marx is going to replace the term "human emancipation" with a single word: **communism**.

3. We can **define communism** as the full development of our human capacities through the abolition of ~~private property~~. *clerk & capitalism (which he calls private property)*

a. **Developing our capacities**: Becoming fully free humans with the ability to fulfill our capacities for self-development. *no more alienation*

b. **The abolition of private property**: Replacing the alienating, exploitative, and dehumanizing system of capitalism and class society in general (which is based on owners and non-owners of property) with a cooperative, democratic society where property is owned by the community. "From each according to ability, to each according to need."

c. **Reminder**: By "property" Marx means the means of production—land, factories, technology, etc.—and not homes, cars, stereos, etc. He's not out to collectivize our underwear.

- 1) Locke's property: i.e., lib, estate
- 2) Raskin's : private wealth
- 3) Marx's : means of prod.

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3. [Put on padcam]

**Human emancipation**

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Citizen & private self are integrated  
Individual, state and civil society are integrated  
(no alienation)  
Public power is the real power  
Realization of the capabilities of the species  
(species-being)  
Abolition of private property  
Later name: communism

B. Q: Does Marx dismiss political emancipation, or liberalism?

1. No. Political emancipation is "a great step forward for humanity" compared to feudalism. It's the best form of emancipation "within the prevailing order of things," i.e. within the liberal state. (155/10)

2. **Two problems with liberalism:**

a. It doesn't go far enough. It's the "half-hearted approach" to freedom.

b. It pretends it is the ultimate, highest form of human freedom, when it's not.

Political emancipation has to be carried through into human emancipation.

3. The **complete division of humanity** into public and private spheres is the most we can hope for under liberal capitalism. Human emancipation merges our public and private selves. It **makes our communal selves real**.

C. Therefore the solution to the Jewish question is not for Jews to renounce Judaism in order to be emancipated, as Bauer claims. **Jews can and should fight for political emancipation**, i.e. for full civil and political rights, and they can do this without renouncing Judaism. However, this just proves that political emancipation is not human emancipation. **To fully emancipate the Jews will require the full emancipation of all humanity** from the twofold life we are forced to live under the liberal state.

1. In this instance the situation of Jews is no different from that of every other member of society.

2. **Read** (if time) 160/14. *40 is better*

**IV. The critique of natural rights**

A. The "natural rights" that Locke, Rousseau, and the American and French revolutionaries talk about appear "natural" because all conscious, collective human activity gets relegated to the political sphere, not the private. "Egoistic man" therefore appears as what exists "naturally" beneath an "artificial" community.

1. **Locke** argues that man is by nature absolutely free and has a right to acquire property. Civil society is an artificial invention created to protect one's life and property. Marx says **this is upside down**. Humans aren't atomized subjects. They are **social creatures**. Living with humans is our natural state, not in isolation from them. 167

2. In modern society the **"bourgeois" or private side of man** becomes man itself, i.e. it **becomes naturalized**. The solitary individual, equal to all other solitary individuals, becomes the basis of society.

3. Political emancipation and natural rights therefore **normalize social inequality**. Since all people are equal in the public realm and since the private realm is governed by personal self-interest, the ability to fight against inequalities in the private realm (such as class) is removed. "Inequality" becomes a "private" concern. Some people are rich and others are poor due to "human nature" or their "industriousness," not the workings of society. In this way the politically emancipated state sanctions inequality even as it proclaims equality of rights.

B. Marx **criticizes the definitions of liberty, equality, and security** from a natural rights perspective.

1. **Liberty** is the right to do what you want so long as you don't harm others. It is therefore "based not on the **association of man with man**, but on the **separation of man from man**" (162-3/16). It's the right of the individual to withdraw from society into oneself.

a. The practical application of this conception of liberty is, of course, the **right to own property without regard to others** on the basis of self-interest. This conception of liberty and its practical application, private property, form the basis of civil society.

b. "It makes every man see in other men not the realization but rather the limitation of his own freedom" (163/16-17). For Marx, **private property is the limit on humanity's freedom**, not its basis, as Locke argues.

2. **Equality** is nothing but the definition of liberty extended to all members of civil society. "every man is equally viewed as a self-sufficient monad." 163/17

3. **Security** is "the supreme social concept of civil society, the concept of the police, the concept that the whole society exists only in order to guarantee to each of its members the preservation of his person, his rights, and his property" (163/17). So security is nothing but the guaranteeing of the above definition of liberty, and the establishment of society for that purpose alone.

4. All three of these "inalienable rights" serve the self-interested nature of civil society, i.e. **man versus the community** rather than man as part of the community.

5. **Read x/17 if time.**

C. None of these "rights of man" go beyond **egoistic, private man separated from the community**. When the community is reduced to a means (ensuring the rights of man), the *citoyen* becomes the servant of the *bourgeois*, i.e. the public becomes the servant of the private realm, despite all talk about the state and citizen's universalism to the contrary. It is man as private individual, as bourgeois, who is the true man, while man as *citoyen* is an abstract universal.

1. **Read if time 167/20.**

2. We can read "OJQ" as one of the classic critiques of natural rights theory as well as liberalism.

## V. Is Marx's argument anti-Semitic?

[Source: Dennis Fischman, "The Jewish Question About Marx," *Polity* 21, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 755-776.]

A. Q: Is Marx's argument anti-Semitic?

1. Marx first of all distinguishes between the "sabbath Jew" and the "everyday Jew."

2. Q: What does he mean by this?

3. **"Everyday" Judaism** is the concrete, non-religious or "secular" situation of the Jew in the modern world, not the Jewish religion.

B. Q: What is the "secret" of the everyday Jew?

1. **Capitalism**, or "huckstering/bargaining." 170/22

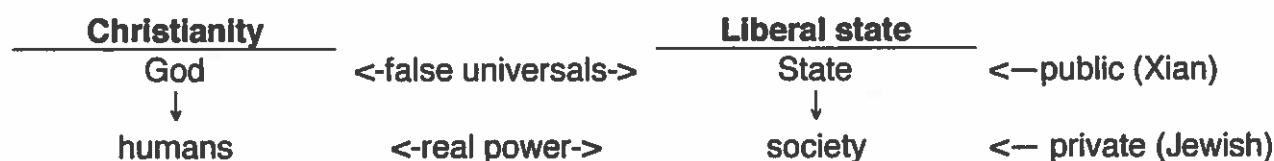
2. **Explain** the status of Jews in 19th c. Europe and the **socialism of fools**.

3. "The Jew" is thus a symbol of capitalism for Marx. **Judaism represents civil society, while Christianity represents the liberal political state.**

C. Q: Why is the political state "Christian" and civil society "Jewish" for Marx?

1. The liberal state imitates the Christian model of an all-powerful, transcendent God (i.e. the state) ruling over humanity (i.e. civil society). The state, like God, is supposedly transcendent, universal and all-powerful, but in actuality (for the materialist, anyway) it's not the real power at all.

2. **Draw diagram**



3. Thus, even though the Jewish religion is oppressed, in a certain way the "Jewish" aspects of modern society rule over the Christian ones. "The Jew has already emancipated himself in a Jewish way" (170/23). The **egoism of civil society rules over the political lion's skin** of the universal Christian state. As Fischman puts it, "In other words, Jewish civil society only dominates the Christian political state once Christianity succeeds in separating the state from civil society. By attempting to banish human need, Christianity succumbs to it." 767

D. Thus, "OJQ" is just as harsh a **critique of Christianity as it is of Judaism**. He has contempt for both religions.

1. Fischman argues that Marx kind of gives tribute to Judaism, in a backhanded way, because he recognizes it as a "skilled and potent adversary" (767). "Everyday Judaism" is the triumph of capitalism, with both its modern benefits (such as political freedom, the overcoming of feudalism) and its drawbacks (such as alienation). "Judaism" is the ever-present reality of human need driving history forward.

2. To **"abolish" Judaism is to abolish human need, to abolish alienation and capitalism** and to leave the realm of political emancipation for that of human emancipation.

3. To **abolish Christianity**, on the other hand, **means nothing** because it is nothing. The state is a false universal.

4. Although Marx calls Jews "hucksters," he vindicates them by embracing a **"Jewish" materialism**, i.e. a philosophy that begins and ends with "practical need" (see Jerrald Seigal, *Marx's Fate*).

5. Arendt argues that Marx's (who is himself a Jew) anti-Jewish remarks are equivalent to Nietzsche's anti-German remarks (who is himself a German). Marx's comments are critical of Jewishness, but not anti-Semitic. (*Origins* 34).

6. Thus, Judaism must be abolished or transcended, but as that which overcomes feudalism **it also makes human emancipation possible**.

#### E. Criticisms of Marx's metaphor

1. Marx's reformulation of Bauer's original question (from "who is to emancipate the Jew?" to "what kind of emancipation is necessary?") ironically makes the "Jewish Question" disappear in his critique. Fischman, 758

2. Marx's use of Jews as metaphors for capitalism **reflects the anti-Semitism of Germany** at the time. Jews, in their customs, their demeanor, etc. were not seen as fit for public life by German Christians. Marx essentially buys into this, even though he argues for the incompatibility of "everyday Judaism" with human emancipation, not individual Jews or the Jewish religion.

a. Q: Does Marx use anti-Semitic language against itself, sort of like how Black youth have taken back the n-word and Latinos the word "Chicano"?

#### Sources

Fischman

Brown, *States of Injury* (I followed her analysis of OJQ, pp. 100-121, as I revised these notes in Oct. 2007. Our interpretations of OJQ are quite similar.)

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## Background to Marx

### **I. The Immiseration of the working class**

[next time: Also go through *Capital* pp. 227-251, 616, 621, 652, 663]

A. The starting place to examine the changes the world went through is England. The **enclosure movement** began in the late 1600s and went through the mid-1700s. What happened was land once held in common for the poor to farm or raise cattle or sheep was enclosed or privatized, **sold to a local entrepreneur**. The enclosure of common land forced many peasants off their land and put them out of work. They migrated by the thousands **to the cities**, seeking work in textile factories or in the mines. Others emigrated **to America**. (It's not a coincidence that the enclosure movement began at about the time the Industrial revolution was under way; it helped to create a vast pool of labor for industry.)

B. This group of people, bunched together in squalor in the big cities, made up the **British working class**. Unlike the peasantry, the working class did not make their living off the land, nor did they own any tools or property. Instead, they worked for a **wage**.

1. They were "**free labor**", not tied to any noble or lord, but nevertheless forced to work for just about any wage. Lived in conditions of incredible poverty.

2. **Read** vol. 4, 331-333 (Engels' *The Condition of the English Working Class*).

3. They also lived in conditions of terrible uncertainty: of losing a job, of losing children to illness, of being one small disaster away from total ruin.

C. The **work week** was often 6 or 6.5 days a week, 12-15 hours a day. **The pay** was just barely enough for a single person to survive on, let alone support a family. This meant that the whole family often had to work.

1. **Children** under 13 made up 13% of the English labor force in the cotton industry. **Women** also formed a large proportion of the workforce.

2. **Read** *Capital* 234.

3. The result was a profound **poverty and ignorance** among the working class.

4. **Read** *Capital* 247-248.

D. This was the **ugly side to progress**: with the vast accumulation in wealth and technology came a vast increase in misery for the majority of the population. With enlightenment came alienation; with reason, ignorance; with progress, exploitation and powerlessness; with civilization, intolerance and terror.

1. There was also an **incredible arrogance** on the part of the English capitalists, who seemed concerned with nothing else but making money.

2. **Read** vol. 4, 562-3 (Engels' *The Condition of the English Working Class*).

E. But along with exploitation, misery, and absolute poverty arose **organization against these conditions** and the power of the capitalists.

1. **Worker's associations**, secret societies, gatherings in taverns, reading groups, newspapers, and cooperatives were formed, often secretly. Some workers attempted to form **unions** and the **Chartist Movement** (which began in 1839) sought the vote for working class men.

2. And of course there were **riots**, sabotage of machinery, and other spontaneous uprisings.

## **II. Karl Marx (1818-1883) & Frederick Engels (1820-1895)**

### **A. Marx**

1. Was born in 1818 in Germany. His grandparents were Jewish (both his grandfathers were rabbis) but his dad converted to Christianity because he was a lawyer and the government had decreed that Jews could no longer practice law.

2. Grew up middle class and went to the University of Bonn. He spent too much time in the beer halls there—he was president of the “Trier Tavern Club”— and he even fought a duel with another student, so his parents transferred him to the University of Berlin, where he immediately fell in love with philosophy (especially Hegel) and gave up law. Got his Ph.D. in 1841. His dissertation was on Greek philosophy.

3. Couldn't find a teaching job because he was too radical, so he got work as a journalist and an editor. Never could keep a solid job in his entire life, and as a result he and his family often lived in poverty (three of his six kids died of curable diseases). Engels often supported him. His wife and his daughters were staunch supporters.

4. Eventually his radical ideas forced him to flee Germany. He moved to Paris in 1843 but got kicked out of there, too. Same with Brussels. Finally settled in London, where he lived for the rest of his life. Marx was a ferocious reader and writer, and he spent much of his life engaged in these activities. (Often spent 10 hours a day studying in the British Museum, and then worked more at home.)

5. He and Engels were also very active politically. They joined the Communist League in 1847. The *Communist Manifesto* was the manifesto for that organization. In 1864 he helped found the International Working Men's Association. Served on its General Council for 7 years. The International sought to link up revolutionary working class organizations throughout the world and offered strike support and help for political refugees. Especially notorious during the Paris Commune of 1871.

### **B. Engels**

1. Was born in Germany in 1820. Was the son of a wealthy capitalist family, and was himself a capitalist. He moved to Manchester, England in the early 1840s to run the family's thread-making factory. Already politically radical, he was horrified by the poverty and misery brought on by capitalism, which inspired him to write *The Condition of the English Working Class* in 1845. He and Marx met around the same time and they immediately became close friends, a friendship which would last a lifetime (no mean feat for Marx). He was also one of Marx's main financial supporters.

2. In addition to co-writing several books and pamphlets with Marx, Engels also wrote several works of his own. He also edited and put together several of Marx's works that were unfinished after Marx's death.

3. In addition to being a member of the Communist League and the International, he also helped found the Second International in 1889 (the first one disbanded in 1872 when Marx moved the headquarters to NYC in order to keep it out of the hands of anarchists). He died in 1895.

## Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction" (1844)

[Pages refer to volume 3 of *Collected Works*/Simon reader]

[these notes could be expanded]

### I. The critique of religion — Q: read 53 Tucker. What's this mean? Begin (introduction) by materialist method

A. Man makes religion, religion does not make man.

B. Religion is the **opium of the people**.

1. It eases their pain but drives them further into their misery, like any addiction does.

2. Read 175/28. 54 Tucker

C. The critique of religion is also a **critique of idealism**. By criticizing religion Marx aims not just to criticize religion but to get at the real, material practices (i.e. "unholy forms") that cause alienation.

### II. The purpose of philosophy

A. The task of philosophy is to "unmask human self-alienation in its **unholy forms**," i.e. as it exists in actual life, not simply by religion. (secular) — 54 intro

1. Humanity's spiritual immiseration (religion) is but the reflection of humanity's actual immiseration; philosophy must expose that misery in order to abolish it. can be abolished

2. Read 176/28-29 54 Q2 Tucker

B. Theory as a **material force**. Read 182/34. 60 Tucker

Criticism seeks to destroy the enemy. (55 Tucker)

### III. Critique of German philosophy — the article then moves from a crit of (idealism) German phil. to German history.

A. German philosophy is dominated by idealist philosophy obsessed with the critique of religion, etc. It needs a good dose of history, while at the same time, German history needs to catch up with its philosophy.

B. Germany hasn't had a revolution that has achieved political emancipation like England (Glorious Revolution) and France (French Revolution) has. But it has shared the *sufferings* of these nations' economic transformations.

C. Germany has a strong proletariat but a weak and ineffectual bourgeoisie. It thus lacks a class that can achieve political emancipation. Germany's future lies in a radical social revolution for human emancipation, led by the working class and its "radical chains." 184-85/36-37

D. The proletariat as a "**universal class**."

1. Read 186/38. 64 Tucker

2. Q: What is Marx saying here?

3. Now read x/67 (from 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*).

4. When the proletariat emancipates itself, it emancipates all of humanity. "In their emancipation is contained universal human emancipation."

5. They are so low that when they rise up, they bring up all of humanity.

E. Philosophy (the head) and the proletariat (the heart) will bring about social revolution. 187/39

6. The particular (prolet) represents the universal (humanity). The German bourgeoisie is too weak to ~~stand~~ represent humanity; only the prolet can do this. Hence Germany goes from revolution → human emancipation, stripping philosophy of its

unity at diversity

14

— a diff calculation of this, Marx gives



## Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"

[Pages refer to McLellan *Selected Writings* / Simon reader]

- In 1944 manuscript, the preface is devoted to criticizing the idealism of the Young Hegelians & praising Feuerbach. Here Marx is going beyond Feuerbach as well

### I. The critique of idealism

A. Marx begins his philosophical work by criticizing idealism. His main target here is GWF Hegel, a German philosopher who was very influential on Marx, despite Marx's criticisms.

1. Hegel argues that **ideas create the world**. He says that *Gelst*, or spirit or reason, guides the world.

2. This view, that our ideas, consciousness, or a spirit such as God create the world is called **idealism**.

B. Ludwig Feuerbach said Hegel has the true relationship reversed. Actually, it is **the world that creates ideas**. Material reality (the natural, sensuous world) creates our ideas, not the other way around.

1. **Man makes God**; God does not make man. "You are what you eat."

2. This perspective argues that philosophy should focus not on abstract ideas but on actual material reality (which produces these ideas) is called **materialism**. (It's not about how many cars or toys you own—it's not that kind of materialism.)

C. **Marx agrees with Feuerbach's critique of Hegel**. Philosophy needs to stand Hegel on his head. It's not ideas → world, but world → ideas.

D. However, **Marx is critical of Feuerbach's materialism**, too. He has three main criticisms, from the *Theses*:

1. Feuerbach's materialism is **static and ahistorical**.

a. Feuerbach sees the world as static and unchanging. He has no sense of development, no sense that actually the world is a dynamic and ever-changing place. He has no sense that the human world is an **ensemble of social relations**, including *conflict* within human relations (thesis 6).

b. By creating this static or "contemplative" materialism, Feuerbach has **taken human beings out of history**. The third thesis says "The materialist doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated." (156/99) Humans act in and on material reality and thus they change the world. Materialist philosophy has to recognize that.

2. Feuerbach thinks **liberation is a mental act**. He assumes that just by changing our consciousness we can be free. (i.e. by *destroying* abolishing religion, a la Bauer. E.g. "free mind".)

a. Marx argues that this is wrong and in fact idealistic: changing our heads won't make us free, only **changing our circumstances** will.

b. It's true that we do have to change our consciousness and give up our "illusions" about the world (religion, liberalism, etc.), but this entails freeing ourselves from the material *conditions* that produce these illusions. In the eighth thesis Marx writes, "All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and the comprehension of this practice." (157/100) Note that he also throws these two criticisms at the various forms of socialism he and Engels disagree with in chapter 3 of the Manifesto.

Ex. All this is "merely combating the phantoms of this world" (ME, 149 Turkey)

15  
x. Humans are the products of their circumstances, but these circumstances are altered by the activity of human beings.

x. It's not just a static teacher-student relation, it's a reciprocal relation  
x. (Comm 10) Phil Marxian forgets



3. Feuerbach, Hegel, and all previous philosophers **misunderstand the purpose of philosophy.**

a. Q: What is the task of philosophy for Plato? (truth, justice, the good) Machiavelli? (strategies of war) Locke? (reveal the purpose of govt.) Marx?

b. The task of philosophy is not to be reflective, not to contemplate what has happened in the past. Instead, its purpose is to **change the world**. As the famous 11th thesis states, "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to *change it*." (158/101)

E. **Question:** How can philosophy change the world?

1. Answer: Through a **"ruthless criticism of everything existing."** Criticism, or theory, is the inducement that will inspire humanity to change the world. Once theory has exposed the lies of idealism and revealed that our oppression is not our "lot in life" or due to our "laziness" or due to the "will of God" but is instead a product of very real material social forces, we can then use theory to unmask these oppressive social forces. Once we've done that, we've opened the way to then change these forces.

2. Theory must become a **"material force."** ← GD in Tucker

a. Read vol. 3, 182/34 in Simon: "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force, but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But for man the root is man himself."

3. Theory must help discover what the needs of the people are if it is to be useful, and this requires going to the root of the problem, and being radical. This requires linking up **theory with action** (eg. criticism by weapons).

4. **Theory must be ruthless in two senses**, Marx says: criticism must not be afraid of its own conclusions, however radical they may be, and it must not be afraid of being in conflict with the powers that be. (Tucker 13; vol. 3 p. 142)

x. the dialectic

x. History moves in a dialectical fashion, through contradictions

x. thesis → synthetically new synthesis  
antithesis → new antithesis

x. that which was a solution to a previous conflict → now becomes an obstacle to progress.

x. Ex. bourgeoisie in Revolution vs. capitalism

x. Example: How Deal → 1977- new glob's water resistance → Obama's economic policy.  
cap resistance

→ Hegel's model.

x. 2 truths, both partially false, turn into a better truth, itself confronts  
and a new counter truth, resolves into still better truth, etc. He  
x. Marx turns this from a conflict of ideas to a conflict of classes. The

## Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

[page numbers refer to vol. 6 of *Collected Works*/Simon reader/International pamphlet]

### Key points

- Defining communism
- Bourgeois and proletarian
- Contradiction of liberal democracy
- Proletarian as universal class
- Role of the communists
- Freedom under communism
- The ten measures

x. *Revised in Jan. Feb 1848, literally a few weeks before the Feb 1848 uprising that swept through Europe*

### I. Defining communism

A. Q: What do you think of when you think of socialism and communism?

1. **Banish all your old ideas!** We need to clear up the **bad air**. We're going to start fresh in this class.

2. We need to understand communism as Marx defined it, then you can make up your own mind again, but on a more solid basis. **Comprehension before critique.**

3. Marx himself had to deal with lots of misconceptions about communism, even in 1848. [Read 481/158/8] So again, **banish the "nursery tales"** of what communism is from its detractors, and let's see what it really is.

#### B. Ghosts, exorcists, sorcerers

1. Note the **vivid imagery** Marx uses: specters or ghosts, exorcists, sorcerers, vampires, bloodsuckers.

2. Note also the **pace** of the Manifesto: it reads much faster than the other texts we've read in class. It's more breathless, it's going someplace, it's looking to the future.

#### C. Defining communism

1. Q: What is communism?

2. **General definition** of communism (from Marx): The full development of our human capacities through the abolition of social classes and capitalism.

a. **Developing our capacities:** Becoming fully free and equal humans with the ability to fulfill our capacities for self-development. No more alienation.

b. **The abolition of capitalism and social classes:** Replacing the competitive, exploitative, and dehumanizing system of capitalism and class society in general (which is based on owners and non-owners of property) with a cooperative, democratic society where property was owned by the community. "From each according to ability, to each according to need."

c. **Reminder:** by property Marx means the means of production—land, factories, technology, etc.—and not homes, cars, stereos, etc. He's not out to collectivize our underwear.

## II. Bourgeois and proletarian: history as class struggle

A. Chap 1 of Manifesto starts out by saying "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

1. Q: What do they mean by that?

2. They mean first of all that **history is dynamic**: it's about change, struggle, rupture, and disruption. There's no smooth evolution or progress. History moves through a series of clashes.

3. Furthermore, all human history has been divided into **social classes**: master/slave, lord/serf, peasant/landlord, etc. In the modern era, the two main classes are capitalists and workers, or bourgeoisie and proletarians.

4. Read 485/159/9. The "two hostile camps." 474 in Tucker

### B. The bourgeoisie (capitalists) <sup>Gruke</sup>

1. Q: Does Marx think the bourgeoisie is all bad? Why do Marx and Engels praise capitalism?

2. The bourgeoisie has been **the most revolutionary class in all of history**. They have brought about incredible changes. Many of these changes are good. They eliminated feudalism and its notion that some men are "naturally" superior to others, they tamped down religious superstitions, they created the modern nation-state and perhaps most importantly, they created vast wealth and immensely powerful productive forces. Instead of societies with very little technological change, capitalism is based on constant change in technology and in methods of production. It's always trying to improve itself, to become more efficient, faster, better, more powerful.

3. Read 487/161-62/12. 476 Tucker

4. Capitalism unleashes what Marx calls "colossal" productive forces in the world. It also **centralizes the means of production**: more people live in cities, they work in larger factories, and fewer and fewer people accumulate more and more wealth. With this economic centralization comes **political centralization**: instead of a bunch of principalities, each with its own laws, tariffs, tax codes and the like, capitalism has created nations with one set of laws, systems of taxation and one frontier. This makes life much easier for the capitalist, of course.

5. **Many of these changes are good**. In fact, they are necessary for the social advancement of humanity, especially improving our productive forces. Marx certainly appreciates these "colossal" changes wrought by capitalism.

6. Read if time 489/163/13-14. 477 Tucker

7. Q: Why do they condemn capitalism?

8. However, as useful as capitalism is, for every good it's brought, it has brought with it much more **misery**.

Read Simon 61 or: "It is true that labor produces wonderful things for the rich—but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces—but for the worker, hovels. It produces beauty—but for the worker, deformity. It replaces labor by machines, but it throws one section of the workers back to a barbarous type of labor, and it turns the other section into a machine. It produces intelligence—but for the worker, stupidity, cretinism." (1844 Manuscripts, vol.3, 273)

9. These dynamic, revolutionary forces of capitalism are progressive but they are also too powerful for even the bourgeoisie to control. Capitalist production often leads to **overproduction** (what Marx sarcastically calls "too much civilization") and to **crises** and **depressions**. These crises feed on itself and lead society spiraling out of control. Arising out of capitalism's crises are **the gravediggers of capitalism** itself: the proletariat.

#### C. Mass production exercise

1. Get 5-6 former "peasants" to become "proletarians" to make paper airplanes in an assembly line. Select young, unmarried women with nimble fingers.
2. Get 1 "craftsman" to make airplanes on his own. Select a white guy.
3. You're the boss.
4. Show students the **benefits of capitalism**: Higher productivity, cheaper production costs, more efficient.
5. Show students how the production process **undermines capitalism**: exploitation, alienation, teaches the proletarians to work together.

#### D. The proletariat (working class)

1. "But not only has the bourgeoisie forged the weapons that bring death to itself; it has also called into existence the men who are to wield those weapons—the modern working class—the proletarians." (490/164/15) *19 Tucker*

2. Under capitalism, workers are enslaved, to the factory machinery, to the boss, to his pittance of a wage that ensures his survival, to the entire capitalist system. It drags people down into poverty, alienation, boredom, and desperation. People are brought down so low that **they have nothing to lose by fighting back**: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains." (519/186/44) *500 Tucker*

3. In addition to giving them good reason to revolt (their poverty and degradation), the bourgeoisie has unwittingly given the working class **the weapon they'll need** to overthrow capitalism: **cooperation**. The same processes of industrialization that exploit the proletariat also strengthen it by teaching it **how to work collectively** and to get workers to see themselves as sharing a common exploited condition with others. This **class consciousness** leads to revolutionary consciousness and political action.

4. Eventually, the **fetters of capitalism** and the **rise of the working class** work simultaneously to **make it impossible for capitalist society to continue to exist**.

*493 Tucker* 6. **Read** 496/169/21: "...The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie, therefore, produces, above all, is its own **grave-diggers**. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable."

### III. The contradiction of liberal democratic freedom

A. **Q:** How many people believe the slogan "money is power"? How many think that rich people have more power than the rest of us? Why do they have this power?

B. Our conception of freedom and democracy is based on two things: a) a belief in the fundamental **equality of all persons** and each person's right to liberty and b) a **market economy**, or capitalism.

1. But these two things **exist in tension** with each other. Capitalism, even though it is based on equality of opportunity and free markets in theory, is still a mode of production in which one class, which owns the capital and controls the means of production, hires another class to work for them for wages. Obviously the former class, the capitalist class, possesses more wealth than the lower or working class. It therefore also commands more power in society.

2. Marx brings out this contradiction in "OJQ" in his analysis of the division of society and humans into citizen and bourgeois spheres.

C. **The contradiction** is this: we live in a society in which we all possess **equal political rights**, but in which **wealth** (and therefore actual power) **is held unevenly**: one class has a disproportionate share of the wealth and power for their size.

D. **Q:** How democratic is a society where people possess equal political rights but unequal economic power?

1. The demand for socialism is based on the desire to abolish this contradiction, which means the abolition of private property and the desire for a cooperative economy. It also means the abolitions of poverty and misery.

2. So the very **principles of liberalism** (individual freedom, private property, universalism, individual autonomy, etc.) also **threaten to undermine liberty**, because the **principles are based on a class society**. It's a source of strength *and* weakness for the ideology.

E. **Are the individual and society really in conflict?** Or are they interdependent?

#### IV. Proletarians and communists: The role of the revolutionary

##### A. The proletariat as a universal class.

1. Read ~~x~~/168/20 495-6 492 Ecker

2. Q: What is Marx saying here?

3. Marx argues that the proletariat is a "**universal class**." The proletariat is the key agent of human freedom. It is beyond just looking out for its own interests at the expense of other people. The proletariat is the universal class because it has no one beneath it to lord over. The struggle for its own self-interests, therefore, is the **struggle in the interests of all of humanity**.

4. [If you haven't already, go back to your "Contribution to the Critique" lecture notes here, for more on the universal class]

##### B. Abolishing alienation therefore requires **revolution**. Revolution has **three necessary premises** (GI 170-71, in McLellan):

1. The **immiseration** of the masses.

2. "An existing world of wealth and culture," i.e. a society with **advanced productive forces**. Without such advanced means of production "want is merely made general."

3. **Political organization** of the proletariat. The working class has to organize itself politically to take power from the capitalists. This is where **Marx's own activism** comes in: to encourage the development of a politically conscious proletariat that is capable of seizing state power and transforming the state and society from a DoB to a DoP, to communism and the withering away of the state.

##### C. The role of the communists

1. Q: What's the role of the communists in all this?

2. The communists are a political party created in the interests of the wc.

3. The **two goals of the communists**: a) overthrow of the bourgeoisie and b) the abolition of private property (and thus liberalism, alienation, exploitation).

4. They aim to achieve this goal by **helping the proletariat organize itself** to take on its historic mission of overthrowing capitalism and bringing about a free society

a. The party is **internationalist**: against all divisions within the party according to nationality, gender, race, etc.

b. The party is also **radical**: in all social struggles by the wc, even moderate ones, it **shows the wc the big picture** and points to the big picture as the real goal of any struggle. They point out the logical conclusions of any struggle.

##### D. The vanguard party

1. Q: Is the Communist party elitist according to Marx?

2. Nowadays when we think of a communist party we think of a **vanguard party**: An elite organization of self-selected individuals who know the "objective" or real interests of the working class and therefore take it upon themselves to lead the working class to socialism. It's the vanguard Communist Party who seized the state in Russia, China, and elsewhere and who took power "on behalf of" the proletariat.

3. This is *not* Marx's conception of what a communist party or organization should do. Marx did not invent or envision the concept of a vanguard communist party like we think of today. Lenin did that.

4. For Marx, capitalism was to be overthrown not by a small party but by the **entire working class** of a country. "All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority...." (495/168/20) *492 Tuck*

5. The role of the Communists, then, is not to assume leadership and rule in a dictatorship. Nor is it to create a revolutionary situation out of thin air. Communists haven't invented anything new, Marx argues, **they just explain in clear terms the historical movement that is happening right before our very eyes**. They use their knowledge of historical processes to show the rest of the working class their common source of exploitation and the need for the working class to unite, whether it's inside a factory, within a nation, or internationally.

6. Its goal is to transform the working class **from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself**, from a mass of people who are objectively workers to those who are conscious that they are workers and that they are exploited, and that they must unite to end their exploitation.

7. **Example:** Wal-Mart workers as "associates," who then trying to unionize

#### E. The abolition of private property

1. The key to M&E's conception of freedom is the abolition of private property.

2. **Read 498/170/23:** "... the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property." *494 Tuck*

3. **Q:** What does Marx mean by private property?

4. By property Marx means the **means of production**—land, factories, technology, etc.—and not homes, cars, stereos, etc. He's not out to collectivize our underwear.

5. **Q:** Why does Marx believe this?

6. Property is capital. **Capital is sucked out of the labor** of the working class through the normal processes of capitalist production.

7. **Give example** from a paycheck [or do you do that later in Capital notes?]

8. The bourgeoisie attacks communists for wanting to abolish the right to acquire property. But who are the biggest destroyers of property, especially of the small farmer, craftsperson, or businessperson? Why, the capitalist, of course. The ability to own private property is already eliminated for 90% of the population who will never be able to afford it. Further, the only reason why 10% of the population can have the "freedom" to actually own property is because the rest of us can't: that's the way private property works.

*Sphere →*



## V. Freedom under communism

[Discuss this topic in the CWF/Gotha lecture instead if you want]

A. Q: Can communism bring about freedom?

1. Q: What is Marx's conception of freedom?

B. Marx and Engels criticize the **bourgeois conception of individuality**.

1. In present bourgeois society, **individual freedom is little more than the freedom to buy and sell.**

a. Read 499/171/24-25. 496 Tucker

b. **He's mocking Locke's** notion of (negative) liberty.

2. Under communism, people will still be able to produce and consume the products of society, they just won't be able to subjugate the labor of others in order to do it. "Communism deprives no man of the power to appropriate the products of society; all that it does is to deprive him of the power to subjugate the labor of others by means of such appropriation." 500/172/25

C. Marx does not want to squash the freedom of the individual. **He wants to abolish one particular kind of individuality and replace it with another.** It's a myth to believe that individuality is based only on a person's abilities or ideas. Even in bourgeois society, individuality is still dependent on particular social relations, such as the relation between boss and worker, buyer and seller, etc. It's not a purely individualistic, "self-made man" kind of thing. Furthermore, the social relations on which bourgeois individuality depend are relations of *inequality*.

D. Marx wants to replace it with a fuller, more human conception of individuality that is based on equal social relations. **He does not want to abolish individuality itself** and make us all alike or bring us all down to the same level. He says **that's what capitalism does**: it brings most of us down to the level of struggling to survive while only a few people get to "express themselves" artistically or exercise their option to own property. [Ben Stiller, Brangelina, Justin Timberlake]

1. Marx argues that **individuality will flourish under communism** because, as they write on 499/171/24: "In bourgeois society, therefore, the past dominates the present; in Communist society, the present dominates the past. In bourgeois society capital is independent and has individuality, while the living person is dependent and has no individuality." 495 Tucker

2. Q: What does Marx mean by this?

3. In class societies, labor is alienating and exploitative. In communist society, where labor would no longer be alienated, labor would be used to as "a means to widen, to enrich, to promote the existence of the laborer." (499/171/24) It would be used to promote the full flowering of the individual, not stifle it by forcing them to work a crap job for 40-60 hours a week so some capitalist could accumulate that labor (in the form of profits and expansion).

E. So, by abolishing private property (i.e. class society, i.e. capitalism) you **abolish alienation**. In the process **one form of individuality is abolished**, but it's a stunted form of individuality that separates the self into public and private selves and that only allows the full and "free" development of the few. **In its place arises a new, much more fuller individuality.**



491 Tuck

1. **Read 506/176/31:** "In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

**F. Getting from here to there**

1. Look at the 10 measures M&E advocate in going from capitalism to communism on pp. 505/175-76. 490 Tuck

2. **Q:** Do these measures seem radical to you?

3. **Q:** Is anything missing from them?

**Politics.** This is the key problem of Marx's thought: lacks a democratic political theory of how humans are to govern themselves in a free society, and how a movement for a free society should be organized. Locke provides at least the outlines of a theory of the basis of political authority (consent) and how it will rule (majority rule, parliamentary government); Marx only provides the basis of authority (the prole) but doesn't say how it will rule.

4. Marx makes an attempt to address this (and in the course of things significantly revises his 10 points in the Manifesto) in CWF and Gotha Programme.

10/5/10  
Debate team

## Dialectics lecture

- thanks & props. Don't be polite!
- 1-sided thinking
  - facts, theory → but not history
  - ~~Marx~~ Marx Vaghen: main with law-like method.
  - Opposites: laws do jobs we are used to do.
  - G: what's missing? Immigrant Vaghen: 2-sided approach to h.
  - An Deen is great/bad. Cap is great/bad. ~~Marx~~ is great/bad.
  - An is least/best. All 2-sided. No concept of struggle

~~Marx, CH p. 1st IP.~~

4:15 — 2-sided, dialectical thinking —

~~Dagster - fight w/ Caren~~

- Marx, CH, 1st IP

- Dagster - fight w/ Caren - show thesis - antithesis - synthesis. <sup>CH</sup>
- History is class struggle, every class struggle is phy → power. <sup>Cap 16</sup>
- Need to view history in this way. 2-sided. Class struggle.
- Thesis - antithesis - synthesis.]

- Class struggle involves strategy, class, possibility of failure. Agency, det. <sup>no</sup>

- 256 nature of cap. vs. technol in CH, e.g., & how it leads to communism.

5:00 — Materialist method —

- "Econ makes relation, religion does not make econ." - Crit of Hegel (Carter 53).

G: what's missing?  $R \rightarrow I$ , not  $I \rightarrow R$

- History begins w/ labor, ~~as social labor~~ produce socially & creatively, creation of surplus, rise of classes → 5 Mo Ps.

- Dominant ideas of a society reflect the dominant class's interests. But this is also a dynamic, 2-sided process.

- Exception? white working class?

- Ideology & superstructure

## Historical materialism

[page #s refer to MacLellan/Simon anthologies unless otherwise noted]

### Key points

- Materialist conception of history
- Alienation
- Base and superstructure

### I. The materialist conception of history

A. **Private property is alienated labor.** Marx says let's forget about all this state of nature stuff. Let's start with the **facts** about humans and political economy. (Simon 59, 107)

#### B. Labor

1. For Marx, **history begins with labor**. Thus, **theory must begin with labor**.  
2. The first things humans have to do is **survive**, that is, to **satisfy their material needs**: food, shelter, clothing. The **first historical act**, therefore, is the **production of basic needs**.

3. We also, of course, need to **reproduce ourselves** in order for the species to survive. Production and reproduction involve **altering nature**.

4. However, we don't do these things alone. Like reproduction, we produce to **meet our needs in cooperation** with others. The production and reproduction of human life, therefore, involves a **"double relationship"**: natural and social (*German Ideology* 166/116). **Production, therefore, is a fundamentally social relationship**.

C. Locke's conception of labor is **idealistic** and **ahistorical**, according to Marx. In actual human history, it's not just individuals that labor, **individuals labor in cooperation with each other**. Now this cooperation can be voluntary or coerced, exploitative or free, but it is in some way cooperative, or social.

#### D. Human nature

1. These needs and our capacities to produce our needs constitute **human nature**. There is no abstract "human nature" (eg. original sin, self-interest, etc.); human nature depends on the material conditions of humans' production and the social relationships they enter into.

2. **Human nature is a social product**, a social product that is based on labor. What individuals are "coincides with their production" (what is produced and how).

3. **Read GI 107-108 (Simon)**

4. **Humans are fundamentally social beings**; we cannot be abstracted from society. Furthermore, we are social beings **because we labor**.

5. Our distaste for labor and the kind of crap jobs most of us do now is proof of how separated we've become from our human nature. Human labor is **productive, aesthetic, and creative** for Marx. It is not just toil.

6. Therefore, **creative labor is the essence of humanness**, or our **"species-being."** **People labor creatively**—that's what distinguishes us from other species.

7. The problem is, we've become **separated from our human nature**, from the essence of labor and our humanity. Marx calls this separation **alienation**.

the conception of the social  
poly structure to prod  
(154 tucker)

x. The effect of nat'l'n: economic forces &  
relationships shape the ideas & the direction  
of society. People's ideas are significantly shaped  
by their material social class & their relations.  
Marx.

157  
tucker

social  
cooperation  
of several  
individuals  
regarding  
conditions  
157 tucker



## E. The rise of class society

1. **Exercise:** [Get 5 hunter-gatherers. Two hunt, three gather. **Q:** What do they do with extra food and other materials they gather? Then, have one set up a permanent farm. The rest follow. The result is a surplus, and the means to store it.

**Q:** What happens next? ] *x. Hunter-gatherers do surplus. But this surplus is stored by the role of producer; their sex this role determines by the division of labor.*  
2. Different societies have different levels of production. In early societies, production was based on subsistence: gathering, hunting, horticulture. Seeing that little or **no surplus was produced**, the produce of these societies was distributed **roughly evenly** among its members.

3. However, as agriculture, herding, and other forms of sedentary production developed, two things happen:

a. The existence of a **surplus**: Society can produce more than it needs. The surplus produced by these societies tends to go to a relatively small elite, who thereby doesn't have to work itself. Power, along with the surplus, accrues with this elite.

b. The rise of a **division of labor**: Certain people assigned to particular tasks. Marx argues that the degree of production a society has attained is shown by the extent of its division of labor.

c. The division of labor means more than just different people doing different jobs. In hunter-gatherer societies, the division of labor was **gendered**. In sedentary societies, it is **gendered** but also based on **relations of subordination**: those who work and those who live off of the surplus of society. This division is the division between those who own property and those who don't. (And **gender relations become relations of subordination**, too.)

4. **Rise of classes**. Production since the hunter-gatherers, therefore, has been characterized by the existence of **different social classes**. One class owns the wealth and property (i.e. the **surplus**), while the other class or classes work for them.

## F. Modes of production

1. Human history, therefore, is characterized by **class societies**. Marx outlines five different kinds of class societies, i.e. **five historical modes of production**: a) hunter-gatherer (gendered or familial division of labor), b) ancient communal and state ownership (slave/citizen division of labor), c) feudal ownership (serf labor and nobles, craft industry), d) capitalist ownership (workers and capitalists), e) socialism (classless). Also sometimes talks of an "Asiatic" mode of production in India, China, etc. (xx/108-)

2. Each mode of production or stage in human history is characterized by conflict between those **who control the surplus** of a society and **who don't**, i.e. between ruling and subordinate classes. The social and political structures of humans are in each case connected with the MoP and the particular class relations of that society.

## G. The purpose of materialism

1. Materialism must "bring out empirically... the connection of the social and political structure with production."

2. **Read 164/111.** *154 tucker Q1*

*x. Marx P.P. of we would recognize it emerges in slave MoP but it's small + a pole can't fully develop as it's squeezed between slaves + the propertied class. tucker 152 (Gt±).*

*(clock) that restrict their human history is the history of class struggle.*

*It also implies subordination, i.e. it implies class*

*is characterized by a particular form of cooperation, sharing, production, (op.). It is also...*

*role of producer; their sex this role determines by the division of labor; answers of need*

*that society (Berl. 105f).*

*+ class struggle - attempts by making people realize full force by struggle against the*

3. Materialism attempts to explain social and political phenomena by seeing how it **connects to that society's mode of production**. The production of ideas, concepts, consciousness, religion, politics, law, morality "is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life." (SW 164)

4. Read xx/111-112, 211. Q2 154-55 Tucker

5. Materialism flips idealism on its head. We go **from earth to heaven**, not from heaven to earth.

#### H. Materialism vs. Idealism

1. Idealists like **Hegel** argue that **Ideas create the World**. God creates man, consciousness produces concrete, material life.

2. Early materialists like **Feuerbach** argues that **the World creates our Ideas**. Man makes God, the material world makes us who we are: "you are what you eat."

3. Marx builds on Feuerbach. Marx agrees that the world creates ideas.

4. Read 211. (note to next page?)

5. But unlike Feuerbach, he sees the relation between material life and ideas to be **dynamic**. The world creates ideas, which shape the world, which in turn shapes our ideas further, etc. in a dynamic, constant spiral. [explain the dialectic here?]

6. In order to change what people think, you first must **change their material circumstances**. "Liberation is a historical act not a mental act" GE (Tucker 169)

a. **Example**: To change the world, do you change people's minds first, or do their minds change as a result of changing circumstances? (E.g. Jack's dad Lenny on racism.)

7. The **purpose of political theory** for Marx is to explain these material circumstances to the working class so they can understand their situation in order to change it. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it."

## II. Base and superstructure (CM-503-4; GI 166; Intro to Crit of Poly Econ)

[Use Mary's diagram for base/superstructure explanation]

### A. Base

#### 1. Forces of production:

- Tools, technology, natural resources, labor skills, science, capital.
- FoP correspond to particular RoP.

#### 2. Relations of production:

- Class relations; property relations. "Two great hostile camps."
- The RoP simultaneously organize the process of production of a society and establish a class division in the society: those who have access to society's surplus and those who don't.
- These relations are relations of **exploitation**: one class extracts a surplus from the labor of the other class.

3. The FoP and RoP together form the economic structure, MoP, or economic "base" of a society. The base conditions or "determines" the superstructure.

x. Div of labor becomes reaches at not developed point only w/ a div. of mental & manual labor. 159 Tucker (GI)

## B. Superstructure

1. Politics: the state, laws, political institutions, parties
2. Culture: religion, morality, art, literature
3. Forms of social consciousness: ideology, values
4. How consciousness is formed and how it functions in a class society.

C. Our laws, morals, and the way we see the world are **fundamentally conditioned** by our mode of production. Furthermore, the **dominant ideas** of a society are inevitably the ideas of the ruling class, because they dominate the mode of production as well. "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." CM 503/174 (CW/Simon) *x. Read 4 & :- Tucker (21:5-1.1.11)*

D. **Example: The Protestant work ethic.** Hard works and frugality leads to prosperity and moral goodness. Ben Franklin, etc. This ethic emerges in the early stages of capitalism. It helps individuals accumulate capital. It makes accumulating capital, like cleanliness, akin to godliness. **Material reality produces this idea**, not the other way around.

[work through it—helps students understand base/super relation.]

E. Therefore, Marx argues **two things about bourgeois ideology**:

1. Liberal or bourgeois notions of freedom, of individuality, and of "rights" (to property, etc.) are **not natural**, inevitable, or necessarily the best possible conception. It is one understanding of freedom, individuality, and equality: there have been and there can be others.

2. These liberal notions are **products of particular social conditions**. Liberal ideology didn't spring up from nowhere, nor was it invented because it was a good idea and then implemented; liberal ideology is a product of history. It's a response to particular social conditions and, Marx and Engels argue, it's a justification of these social conditions. Bourgeois ideology exists to justify bourgeois property. Liberalism (and modern conservatism) are therefore justifications of capitalism.

3. **Read** CM 501/172 ("But don't wrangle..."). *497 Tucker*

*skip* F. **Q:** Which moves history for Marx? Humans or the relations of production, agents or structures? Compare Marx's theory of history with Machiavelli's fortuna and ability. Which side does Marx come down on?

1. This is the question of **determinism**.

2. **Read:** CM 496/169/21. *493 Tucker*

3. **Q:** When he says the victory of the prole is "inevitable," on what basis does he make that claim? Are the laws of history on his side, according to Marx? What kind of room does he leave for free will and politics here?

4. But if Marx is a hard determinist, why would he want to participate in a political party, the communists? If the fall of cap is "inevitable" why do we need a CP?

*497 Tucker* 5. **Read** 501/172 Q<sub>2</sub>/26. The "laws of nature and reason" apparently aren't universal but vary according to each historical epoch. The capitalists are guilty of determinism by assuming that the laws of capitalism are universal laws when they really only work in a capitalist MoP.

6. **Read** 503/174/28-29. "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class." **Discuss.** *499 Tucker*

*also GI (172 Tucker) + then*  
28

*This introduces the concept of hegemony  
Hegemony: to take as chief ideas of "the era of universality" Nice*

x. To analyze this society, we don't start w/ religion but w/ political economy.

### III. Alienation

A. **Exercise:** [Maybe show a video of Chaplin in "Modern Times" or something similar moving on a loop while you discuss alienation]

B. Defining alienation

1. **Q:** What is alienation? What is an alien?

2. To be an alien is to be a **stranger**. As Mary Dietz says, alienation is "being a stranger in a strange land of buying and selling."

3. Alienation exists in two senses: political and economic

a. **Political:** "a cleavage between the particular and common interest." (GI 169/xx) The distinction between citizen and bourgeois, as we found out in "OJQ."

b. **Economic:** Capitalism turns humans and their labor into commodities, into things that are to be bought and sold. When workers are turned into commodities, the more wealth they produce, the poorer they become, and the cheaper a commodity they become. As things increase in value, human life is devalued. This is alienation, when the products of labor confront humanity and humans' labor as something alien, "as a power independent of the producer."

4. **Read** 1844, 272/59. 71-72 - Tucker

C. Alienation separates humans' labor from their physical existence.

1. We are a "worker" (or teacher, bricklayer, engineer, etc.) for part of the day, and then a **physical subject** the other part of the day (eat, sleep, procreate, etc.).

2. **Read** 1844 xx/61-62. 74 - Tucker

3. What is ironic is that under capitalism what we do as workers maintains us physically, but what we do as humans or physical subjects (i.e. in our leisure time) is really our "animal functions": eating, sleeping, procreating, etc. Capitalism has **turned humans into animals**.

D. Alienation works in four ways

1. Alienation from the **products** we produce

2. Alienation from the **process of production**. The human becomes animal

3. Alienation from our **species-being**. Alienation from ourselves, from nature, and from what defines us as a species. "free conscious activity is the species-character of man" (xx/63).

a. What makes us human according to Marx is that **we labor**, not just out of instinct to survive **to creatively**, due to our **will and consciousness**.

b. That's what distinguishes us from animals. **Humans produce "universally,"** but animals in a "one-sided way."

c. Alienated labor makes us labor out of basic need and not creatively. It reduces us to animals.

d. **Read** 1844 xx/64, if time. 76 - Tucker

4. Alienation from **others**. We become atomized and isolated, and compete against each other.

5. **Example:** Todd working in the candy factory.

6. But if the products of labor are alien to the worker, to whom do they belong?

a. **Read** 1844 xx/65 & 66, if time.

b. To the capitalist.

- If history is the history of class struggle, history is the history of **humanity**

alienation of a producer

- Communion to 1) the abolition, the frankness of such alienation.  
It is the abolition of private property

in cap. labor  
= commodity

As  
commodity  
become more  
powerful,  
workers are  
sapped of  
power.

produce commodities, their  
labor & the  
they  
become  
commod.  
laborers

we produce,  
unlike  
animals, we  
can seek  
as part of  
a species  
we can be  
authors of  
"universally,  
part of the  
thing is  
then a  
+ our  
familial  
interest

x. private property  
is a product of  
alienated labor.



E. Alienation exists in all stages of history, but most acutely under capitalism, because private property turns people into commodities. It alienates humans from labor, from our human essence.

1. For this reason, raising wages can't eliminate the destructive aspects of capitalism because it doesn't eliminate alienation and exploitation from the production process. Higher wages only means nicer chains.

2. Read 67 if time.

OU Tucker

3. Wages, even high wages, reflect alienation. They cannot overcome it.

F. Private property (i.e. capitalism - alienation) is a product of alienated labor.

1. Hence to abolish P.P. (capital) is to abolish alienation, is to create communism

X. Communism & alienation - more in (4th 160 - 163) (Tucker)

→ - Hunter & Fisher on gate - 160 Tucker

- Div. of labor creates alienation, 160 Tucker.

X. the state  
- The alienation produces the state. The state reflects our alienated existence, for it's an "illusory communal life" (160).

- economic alienation (div. of labor) implies political alienation (clearly by particular & common interests). Alienation of us implies being split

- alienation is present in high dev. of productive forces & a "property veil." But they can't antagonism lead to its resolution → Communism.



p.p. - cap. - alienation // commun

#### IV. Private Property and Communism section of 1844 Manuscripts

- x. If history is the history of class struggles, then history is the history of humans alienation as producers.
- x. Private property is a product of alienated labor.
- x. Communism is the abolition, the transcendence, of such alienation. It is therefore the abolition of private property as well. When Marx defines communism as the abolition of private property in the Manifesto, he also means the abolition of alienation.

x. He begins this section by rejecting "crude communism," which is simply private property distributed to all, but without changing the relations of production that create alienation. Giving everyone equal wages will not abolish alienation. *Read 80 in Tucker*

- x. Marx's notion of communism *is a lister*
  - x. For Marx, real **communism is the abolition of private property** and therefore the **abolition of alienation.** *is explicitly here.*

x. Read 84 in Tucker *is a product of alienated labor. It*

x. Private property (i.e. capital) has made us "stupid and one-sided" (87). Our alienation makes us believe that something is ours only when we possess it, when we own it. (Hence the obsession with bling, dying with the most toys, etc. are expressions of alienation.) Abolishing or transcending private property will shed us of this and will even emancipate our senses—we won't use them to sense want and possession but to express ourselves fully and creatively. Rather than just seeing food as nourishment, e.g. we will become foodies. 87-89

x. Even our senses come alive under communism. Only with the abolition of alienation and private property can we truly flower and develop our capacities.

x. Communism is also **the integration of the individual and society.**

x. In communism, "my *own* existence is social activity" (86 Tucker). What I produce, I produce for myself and for society, with the consciousness of myself as a social being. To say that a human is a social being is to say that she is aware of herself as a member of the human species.

x. Read if time 86, Tucker

x. Is this anti-political? Are we to say that a truly agonal democracy *requires* alienation? It seems to me that democracy is a struggle *against* alienation, especially political alienation. Do we want to maintain this tension (as I suspect many agonal dems like Ranciere and Mouffe would say) or overcome it? Why is it anti-political to want to overcome this alienation? And even if this is an impossibly utopian dream, surely we learn much about the permanent struggle against alienation from Marx. Thus, even if we disagree that alienation can be abolished, there is still much to learn from Marx about how we struggle against it, and thus much to learn from him in regards to democratic theory.

## Eighteenth Brumaire

Page #s are for your 1963 International ed/Tucker

[Notes are only from sections I and VII. Take the rest next time]

### I. Background

- A. 18th Brumaire, year VIII: "**Brumaire**" is the second month in the revolutionary French Republican calendar. The 18th Brumaire refers to when Napoleon Bonaparte overthrew the French Republic on 11/9/1799. The 18th Brumaire of *Louis* Bonaparte refers to his coup overthrowing the second French Republic on 12/2/1851. The title is intended to be sarcastic—the second time history happens it's as farce.
- B. Purpose of the book is to "demonstrate how the *class struggle* in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity [Louis Bonaparte, LB] to play a hero's part" (8). In other words, it explains **how material conditions (base) conditioned political leadership** (superstructure).
- C. "The Roman proletariat lived at the expense of society, while modern society lives at the expense of the proletariat" (9). Seems like the U.S. proletariat lives at the expense of society today.

### II. Historical materialism in practice

- x. The 18th B is one of the best examples of Marx's application of his historical materialist method to explain a political event.
- x. **Read 15/594-595.** ("Men make their own history...")
- x. **Q:** What is Marx saying here?
- x. He is expressing his **materialist approach** to history. He's also arguing that sometimes people can **fall back from revolutionary change out of fear**, and so they conjure up the past or "tradition" in order to understand and even turn away from revolution. The French people withdrew from the revolutionary possibilities of 1848 to install a reactionary dictator, LB.
- x. What the French (1789-1804) and English (1642-1649) Revolutions did was sweep away feudalism and install the bourgeoisie as the dominant class. But its participants didn't always know that, and so **they explained what they were doing**—which was building something completely new—in **terms of the past**: restoring religion (Cromwell), recreating the Roman republic (France), etc. But they were not parodying the past but creating something new and explaining it in the only language they had. 16-17
- x. But **LB's coup in 1851 is a parody, a farce**. It does not represent something new but a **reaction**, a (necessarily failed) attempt to recreate the past (i.e. the Napoleonic Empire). 17-18
- x. Proletarian revolution will **create something completely new**. It can't even use the language of the past: "the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead" (18/597). Unlike bourgeois revolutions, proletarian revolutions

embody a ruthless criticism of everything existing, including the revolutions themselves. 19/597

x. But the French masses recoiled from proletarian revolution and, through universal suffrage, elected a dictator, LB. It's not that the French were fooled or suffered false consciousness, it was that they lost in a tough class struggle.

x. **Overview of 1848-1851:** The February 1848 revolution was an early indication of a proletarian revolution. What followed was a backlash, as existing classes sought to restore their power. Thus, the French bourgeoisie allied with the peasantry and the petty bourgeoisie to overthrow this "social republic" of Feb 1848. They formed a National Assembly in May 1848 in order to seize control of the revolution from the proletariat. The Paris proletariat fought back, which resulted in the "June [1848] Insurrection" (22-24)

x. **Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie;** The rise of the bourgeois republic "signifies the despotism of one class over other classes" (24). This is a DoB, when the capitalist class rules the other classes.

x. Note how he presents **French history as a series of class struggles**, but not just worker vs. capitalist, but numerous class factions: industrial capitalist, petty bourg, lumpen, peasantry, army, middle class, clergy, and intellectuals, all arrayed against the proletariat. 23

x. The June insurrection fails and the bourgeois or "parliamentary republic" rules until December 1851. But then LB refuses to step down and **seizes power**. Now the repression the bourgeoisie visited upon the proletariat is now visited upon itself. (part VII, 118/603)

x. The problem here is that Bonaparte overthrew the bourgeoisie and not the working class, and hence France gets political reaction rather than communism.

x. **Read 120-121/606.**

x. **Q:** Do you get a rigid, apolitical, mechanistic notion of materialism here? Is there agency in Marx's account?

x. Clearly, French history is not moving in the "correct" order of stages, yet that doesn't seem to threaten Marx's theory of history, in his mind. (Although he still seems confident that the prole will eventually prevail and that this "perfection of the executive power," like the bourgeoisie's "perfection" of its parliamentary power, will be brief.

x. **Q:** How did LB seize power?

x. Through the support of the **conservative peasantry**. 123/607-608

x. **Read 123-124/608.** ("sack of potatoes")

x. Contrast this with the proletariat's ability to cooperate and geometrically increase its strength.

x. But the radical peasantry can be brought over to the proletariat's side. 125/609Q, if time. And in fact, as capitalism advances in France (even as the bourgeoisie is out of power), the peasantry become more impoverished, and come closer and closer to the proletariat. 128/611Q if time (capital as vampire)

### III. The role of the state

- x. In the Manifesto Marx argues that the state is but an arm of the ruling class that obediently does its will.
- x. **Read** 475 Tucker (chap. 1)
- x. In the 18th Brumaire we get a more nuanced account of the role of the state. Here, the state is not just a committee of the ruling class but a **relatively autonomous** form of power that in general serves the interests of the bourgeoisie but can override its wishes in order to maintain political and social order.
- x. Rather than serve the bourgeoisie, the Bonapartist state is *independent* of it. His support rests on the peasantry, not the state. The peasantry is incapable of organizing itself as a class due to its mode of production, so Bonaparte represents them. ("They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented," 124/608.)
- x. You also get a sense of conflicts and factions *among* the elite in this book.
- x. **Q:** How might this analysis of France 1851 illuminate American politics today? (especially the support of the white "silent majority" for conservative social and economic policies)