



MARXIAN SYSTEM AND ITS MYTHOS

Alexey Burov, Fermi Society of Philosophy
Spring 2018





О свободе и демократии

Может быть Маркс был в чём-то прав?

Алексей Буров. Марксова Система и её Мифос

Dear friends, our *A Different View* publishes a high-quality article of Alexey Burov on Karl Marx, who remains and becomes over and over an object of sympathy for many intellectuals both in Russia and in the West. I do not understand it, but it is a fact. The article, I am warning you, is not an easy read, but it allows one to understand what kind of person the author of the “scientific socialism” is, and what is in fact this “scientific socialism”. Let me remind you that the previous year was the 150th anniversary of “The Capital”, and this one is the 200th anniversary of the birth of its author. The article is associated with the jubilee of the man, who, alas, turned the world upside down.

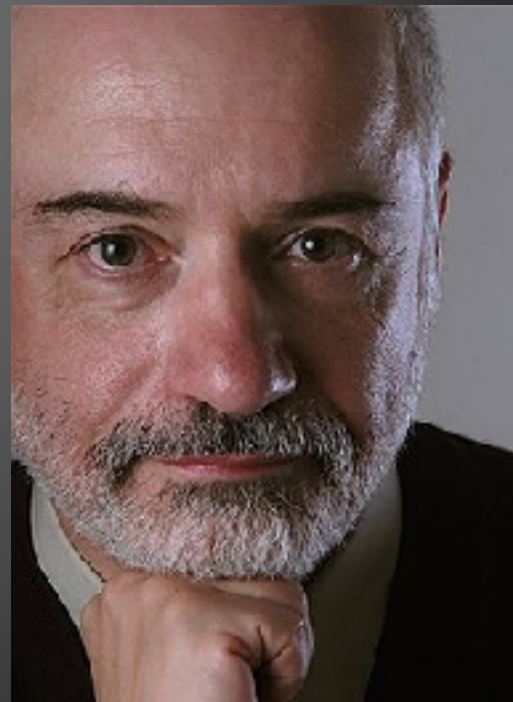
Andrei Zubov



Dear Alesha, my congratulations with this publication, so systematic, convincing, and richly illustrated.

Yours, Misha.

Mikhail Epstein

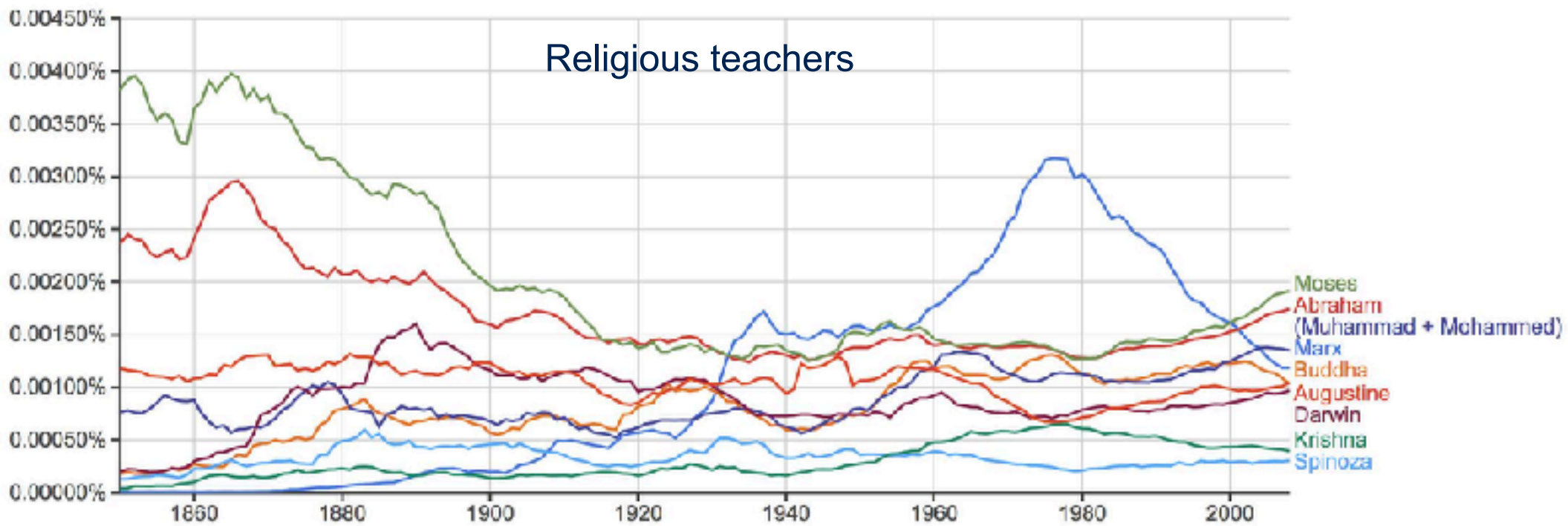


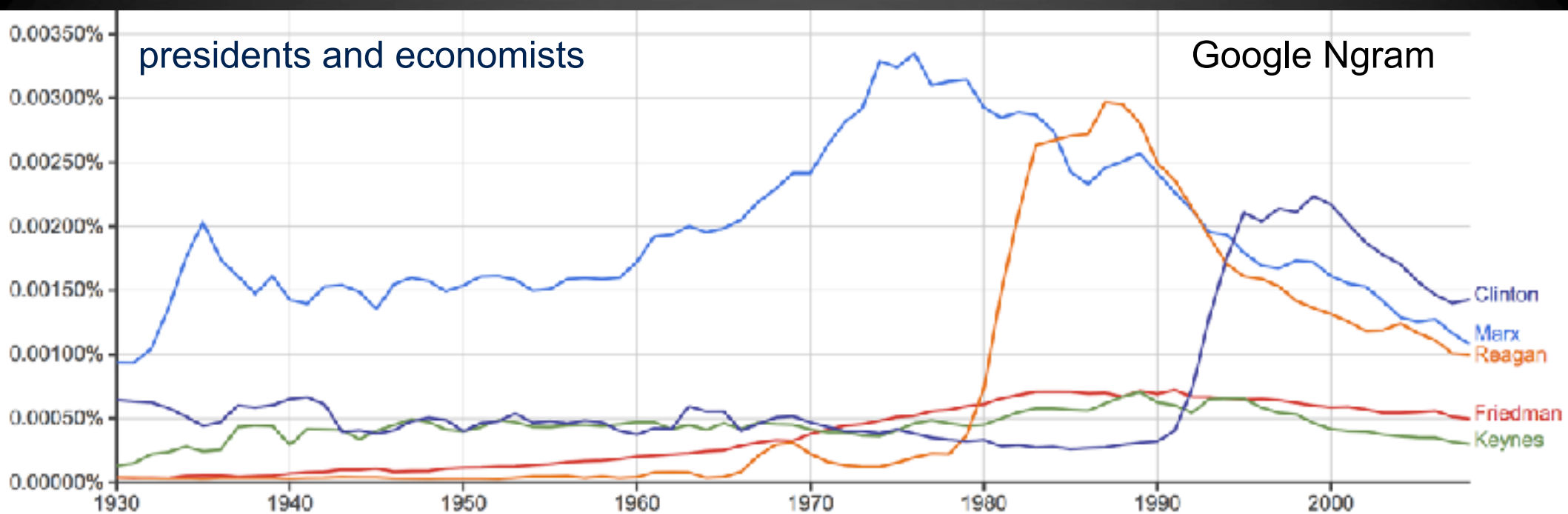
Thinkers



Google Ngram plots

Religious teachers





Nominee	% Accepted votes
1. Marx	27.93%
2. Hume	12.67%
3. Wittgenstein	6.80%
4. Nietzsche	6.49%
5. Plato	5.65%
6. Kant	5.61%
7. Aquinas	4.83%
8. Socrates	4.82%
9. Aristotle	4.52%
10. Popper	4.20%

BBC 2005 poll: "the greatest philosopher of all time", 30K responses

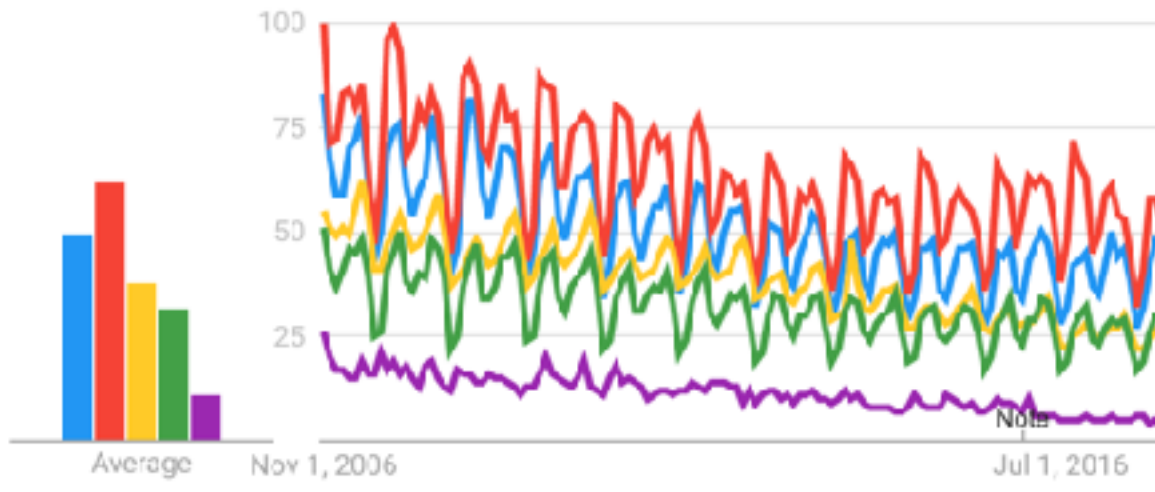
Here are the results from **a 2006 nationally representative survey of American professors**. The survey asked if the professor considered himself "radical," "political activist," or "Marxist." Survey says:

Table 12

	Radical	Activist	Marxist
Phys/bio sciences	6.3	2.6	0.0
Social sciences	24.0	20.6	17.6
Humanities	19.0	26.2	5.0
Comp sci/engineering	2.0	0.6	0.7
Health sciences	0.0	1.2	0.0
Business	5.3	3.2	1.9
Other	7.2	11.1	1.1
Total	11.2	13.5	3.0

● Karl Marx
 ● Plato
 ● Friedrich Nietzsche
 ● Immanuel Kant
 ● Richard Dawkins

Worldwide



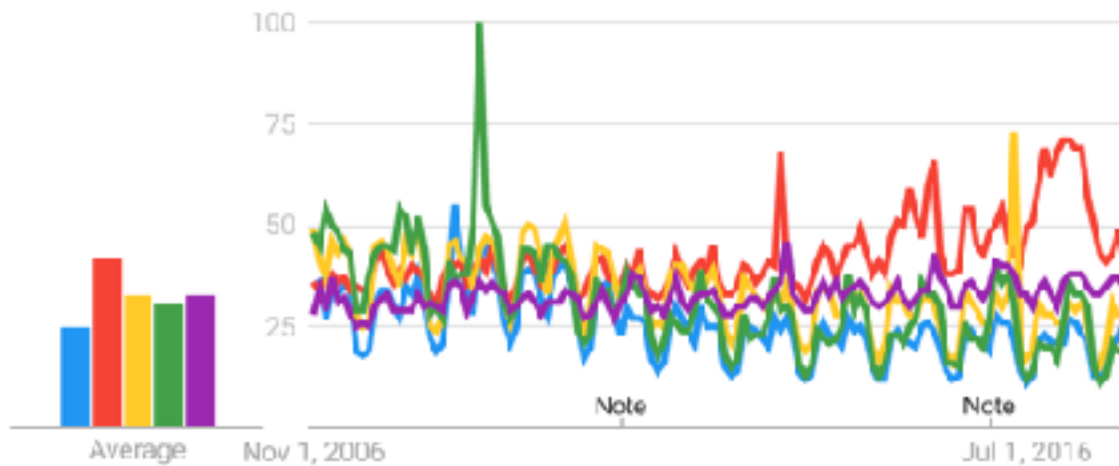
Philosophers
 Religion teachers

Interest over time

Google Trends

● Karl Marx
 ● Moses
 ● Sigmund Freud
 ● Charles Darwin
 ● Paul the Apostle

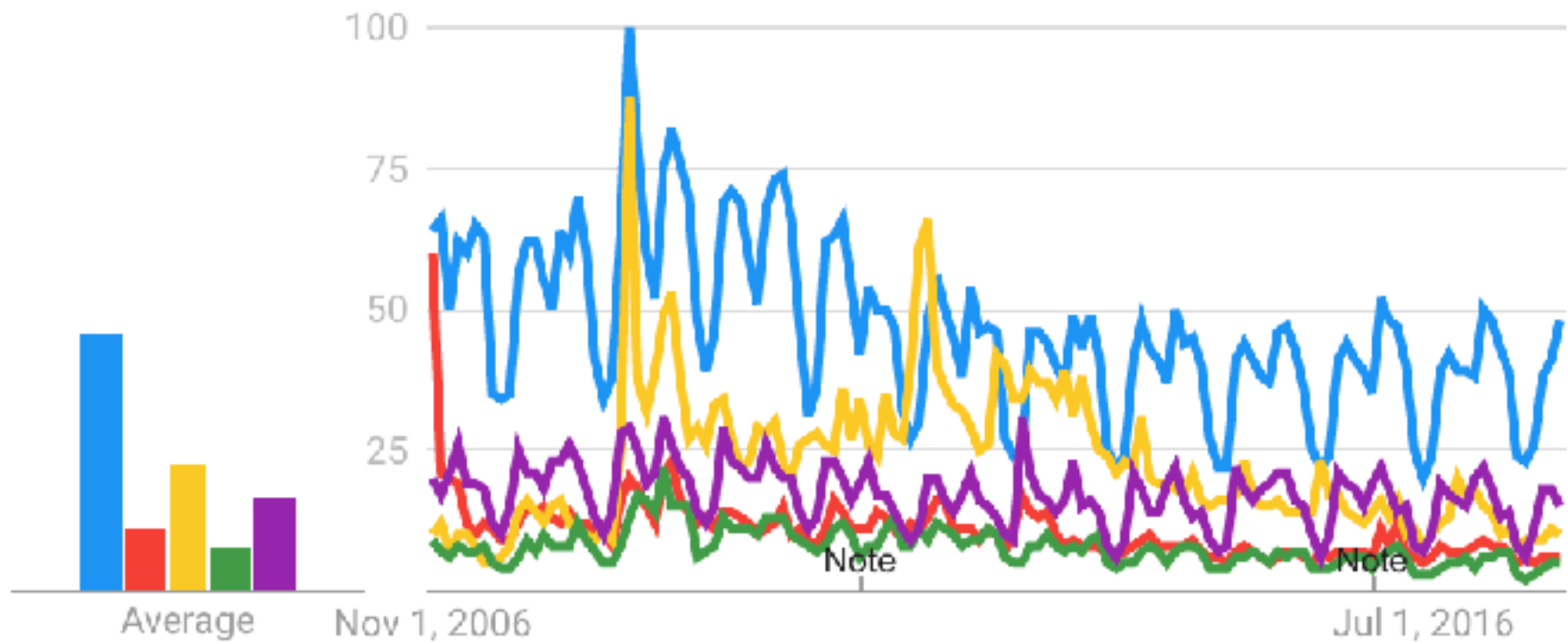
USA



Economists

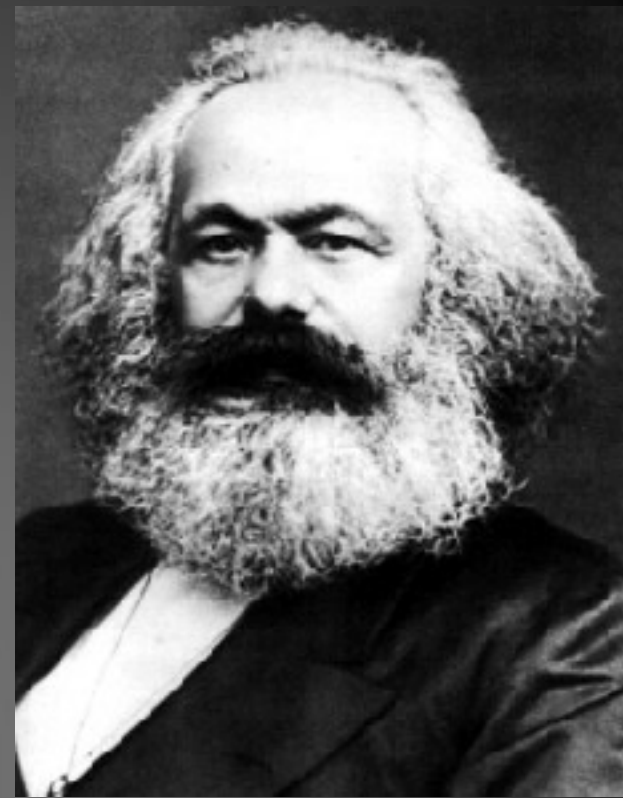
● Karl Marx ● Milton Friedman ● Paul Krugman
● John Maynard Keynes ● Adam Smith

USA



Why was his doctrine that popular among public and intellectuals and remains to be so?

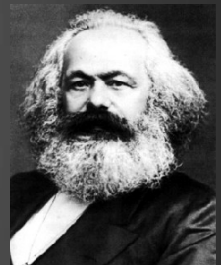
Can Marxism be eternal?

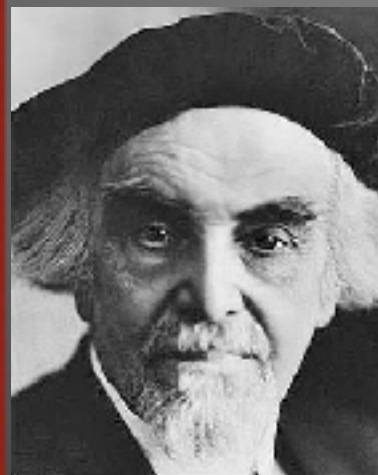
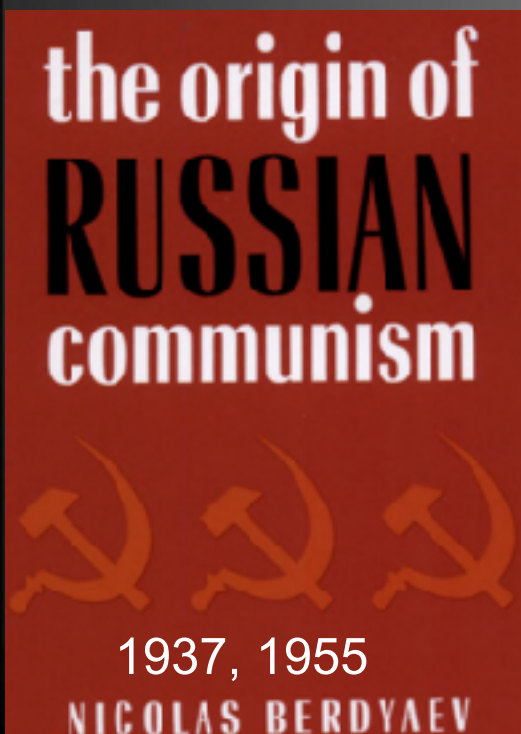
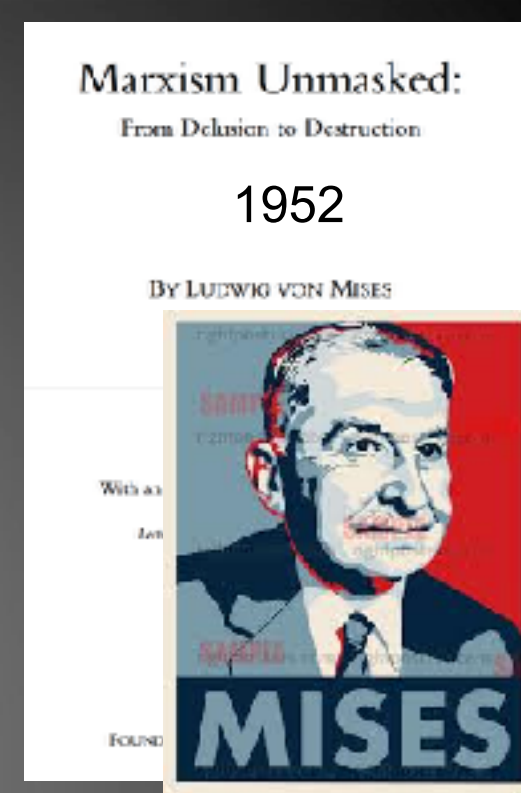
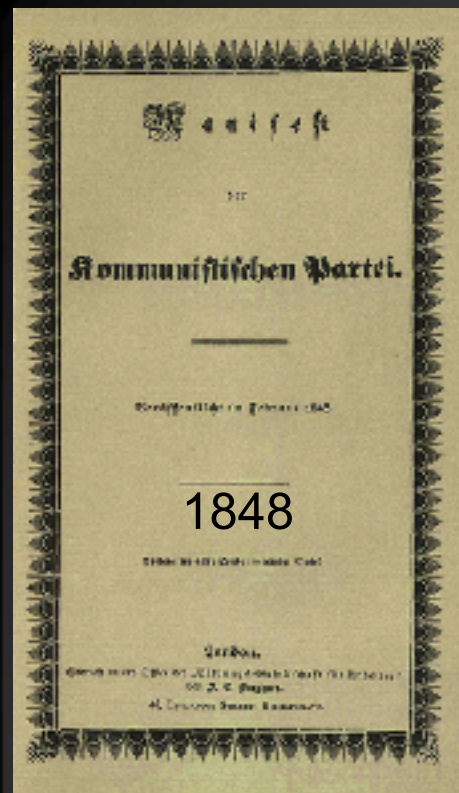


1818–1883

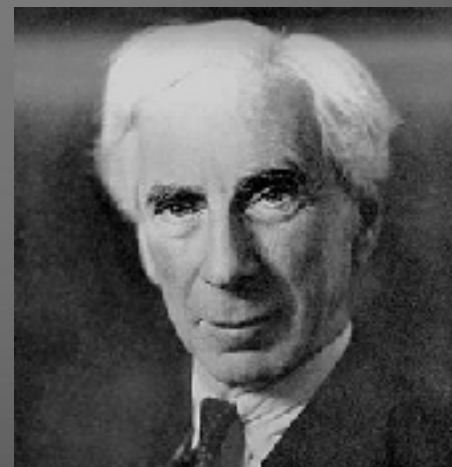


Marxian teaching and Marxist regimes:
To what degree were the latter driven by the former?

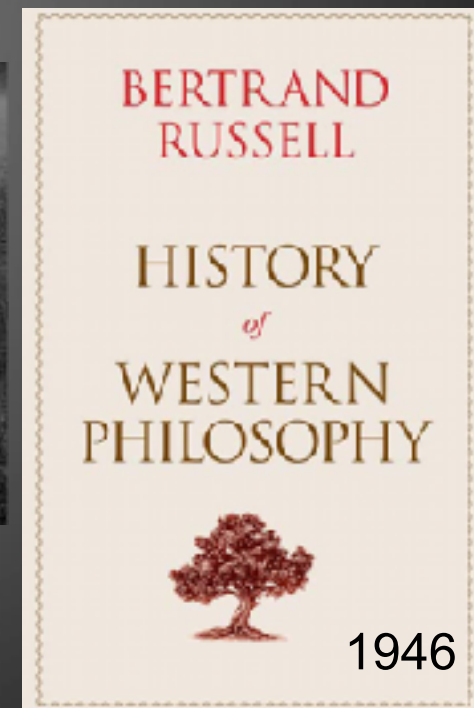




1874-1948

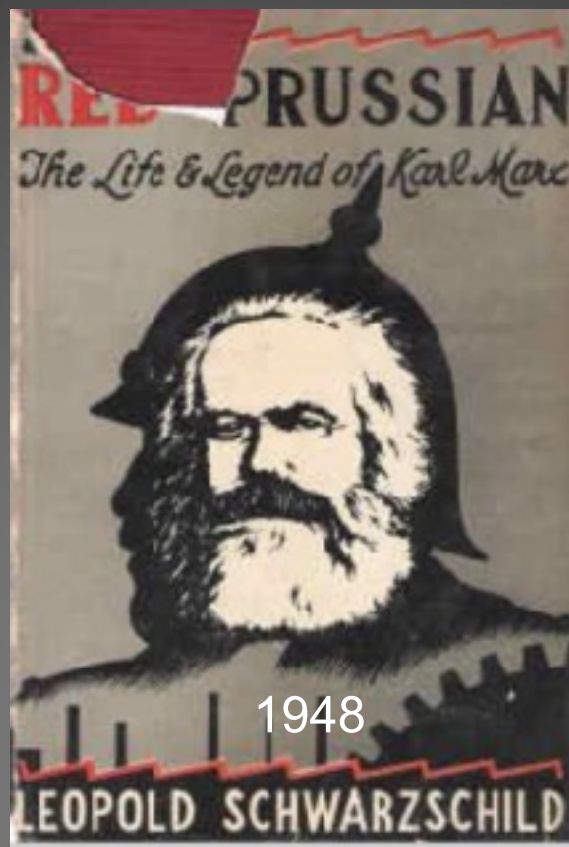


1872-1970

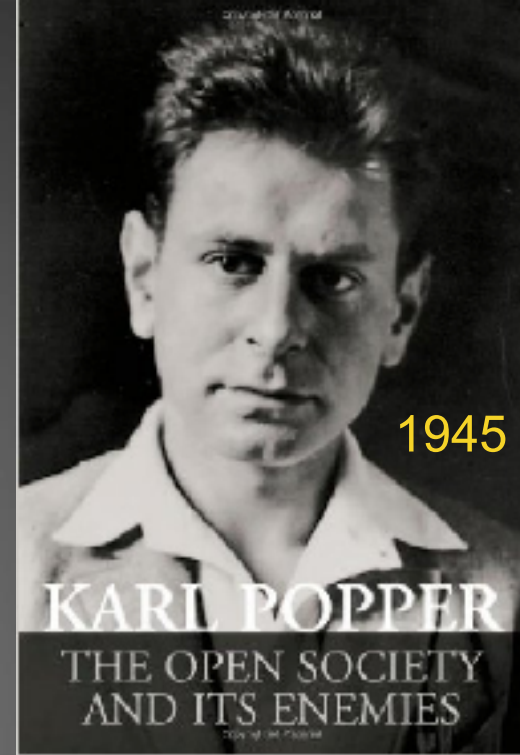




1891-1950



1948



1945

1902-1994

In the first edition of his *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945), Karl Popper distinguished between Karl Marx himself and his followers, claiming that they had transformed Marx's works into an unscientific dogma. However Popper added a note to the fifth edition: "Some years after I wrote this...Leopold Schwarzschild's...*The Red Prussian*...became known to me...it contains documentary evidence, especially from the Marx-Engels correspondence, which shows that Marx was less of a humanitarian, and less of a lover of freedom, than he is made to appear in my book. Schwarzschild describes him as a man who saw in 'the proletariat' mainly an instrument of his own personal ambition. Though this may put the matter more harshly than the evidence warrants, it must be admitted that the evidence itself is shattering"

Bakunin Statism and Anarchy

1873



1814-1876

ANTONY FLEW



1991



1923-2010

Sociological Notes No. 13

© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 255: 225–232



1927-2009

ECONOMIC CLASSIC

1942, 1946



1881-1950

MAIN CURRENTS —OF— MARXISM

THE FOUNDERS * THE GOLDEN AGE * THE BREAKDOWN

TRANSLATED FROM THE POLISH BY R. T. FAULK
WITH A NEW PREFACE AND EPILOGUE BY THE AUTHOR

1978 LESZEK
KOŁAKOWSKI

* WINDS OF THE NORTH W. BRIDGE PRIZE FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

IS
GOD
HAPPY?

Selected Essays

LESZEK KOŁAKOWSKI

2006



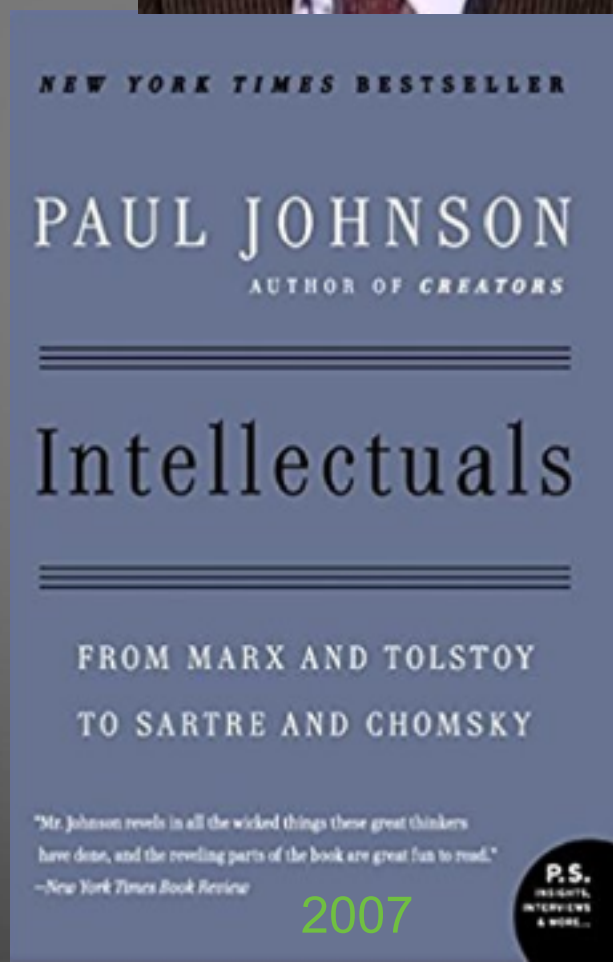
1900-1980



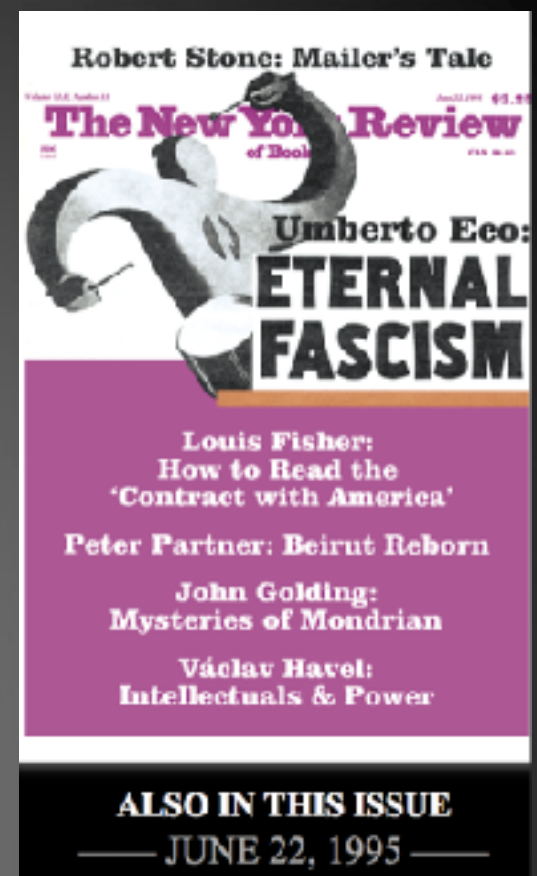
1941



b.1928



2007



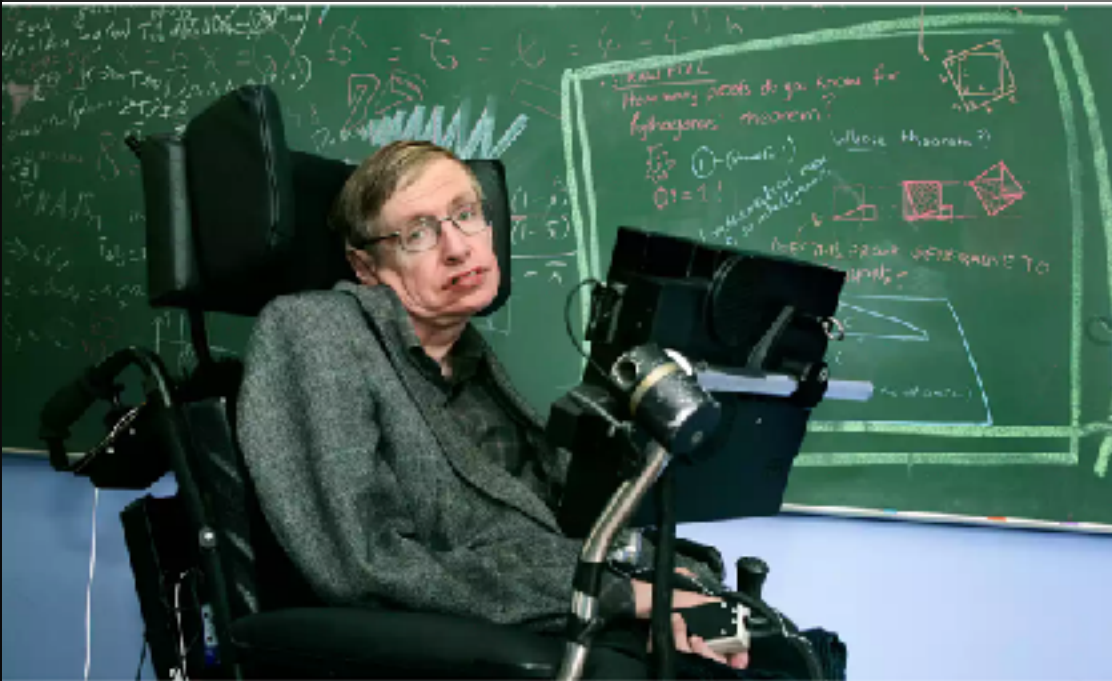
1932-2016



'Mind over matter': Stephen Hawking - obituary by Roger Penrose

Theoretical physicist who made revolutionary contributions to our understanding of the nature of the universe

● **Stephen Hawking dies aged 76**



▲ Stephen Hawking at his office at the department of applied mathematics and theoretical physics at Cambridge University in 2005. Photograph: Murdo Macleod for the Guardian

The image of **Stephen Hawking** - who has died aged 76 - in his motorised wheelchair, with head contorted slightly to one side and hands crossed over to work the controls, caught the public imagination, as a true symbol of the triumph of mind over matter. As with the Delphic oracle of ancient Greece, physical



Einstein once asked the question: "How much choice did God have in constructing the universe?" If the no boundary proposal is correct, he had no freedom at all to choose initial conditions. He would, of course, still have had the freedom to choose the laws that the universe obeyed. This, however, may not really have been all that much of a choice; there may well be only one, or a small number, of complete unified theories, such as the heterotic string theory, that are self-consistent and allow the existence of structures as complicated as human beings who can investigate the laws of the universe and ask about the nature of God.

S. Hawking, A Brief History of Time, 1988

1. Ausgabe
Kapitel 1915

Das Kapital.

Kritik der politischen Oekonomie.

Von

Karl Marx.

Erster Band.

Buch I: Der Produktionsprozess des Kapitals.

Hamburg

Verlag von Otto Meissner.

1867.

New-York: L. W. Schmidt, 24 Barclay-Street.

1867

Уч. б.

КАПИТАЛЪ.

КРИТИКА ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЭКОНОМІИ.

ОСНОВАНІЕ

КАРЛА МАРКСА.

ПЕРЕВОДЪ СЪ НѢМЕЦКАГО.

ТОМЪ ПЕРВЫЙ.

КНИГА I. ПРОЦЕССЪ ПРОИЗВОДСТВА КАПИТАЛА.

Харьковский
Университетск. Библиот.
— БУДУЩА
НАУЧНАЯ БИБЛИОТЕКА

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ИЗДАНИЕ П. П. ПОЛКОВА.

1872

КАПИТАЛЪ.

КРИТИКА ПОЛИТИЧЕСКОЙ ЭКОНОМІИ.

СОЧИНЕНІЕ

КАРЛА МАРКСА.

ПЕРЕВОДЪ СЪ НѢМЕЦКАГО.

ТОМЪ ПЕРВЫЙ.

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1872

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ИЗДАНИЕ Н. П. КОЛЛЕКОВА.

1872

БИБЛІЯ

ИЛИ

КНИГИ СВЯЩЕННАГО ПИСАНІЯ

ВЕТХАГО И НОВАГО

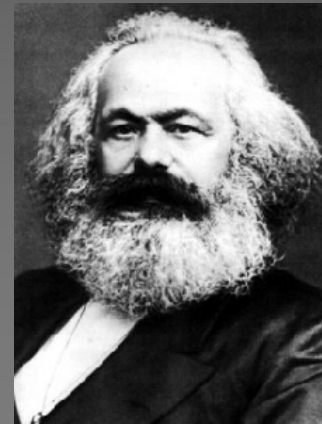
ЗАВѢТА

ВЪ РУССКОМЪ ПЕРЕВОДѢ.

1876

САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ВЪ СЕНОХАЗНОЙ ТИПОГРАФИИ.

1876.



Marxian teaching and Marxist regimes:
To what degree the latter were driven by the former?



Marxist totalitarian states

USSR
China
Vietnam
Cambodia
North Korea
Poland
Czechoslovakia
Eastern Germany
Hungary
Bulgaria
Romania
Yugoslavia
Albania
Ethiopia
Zimbabwe
Cuba

Marxist non-totalitarian states

National Day for the Victims of Communism

Today, the National Day for the Victims of Communism, marks 100 years since the Bolshevik Revolution took place in Russia. The Bolshevik Revolution gave rise to the Soviet Union and its dark decades of oppressive communism, a political philosophy incompatible with liberty, prosperity, and the dignity of human life.

Over the past century, communist totalitarian regimes around the world have killed more than 100 million people and subjected countless more to exploitation, violence, and untold devastation. These movements, under the false pretense of liberation, systematically robbed innocent people of their God-given rights of free worship, freedom of association, and countless other rights we hold sacrosanct. Citizens yearning for freedom were subjugated by the state through the use of coercion, violence, and fear.

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

November 07, 2017

National Day for the Victims of ~~Communism~~ Marxism

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Marxist States

Beginning: civil war; class, national, ideological terror; mass emigration, mass prisoner camps (Gulag), mass artificial starvation (golodomor).

Totalitarian regime.

Elimination or strong suppression and control of all religious organizations.

Elimination of all sorts of free thinking, humanities, philosophy.

Tough government censorship on all books, media, art; omnipresent propaganda, repression of thinking people. Full spiritual slavery.

Elimination of private property. Total economical slavery.

Closed borders, impossibility to go out of the country.

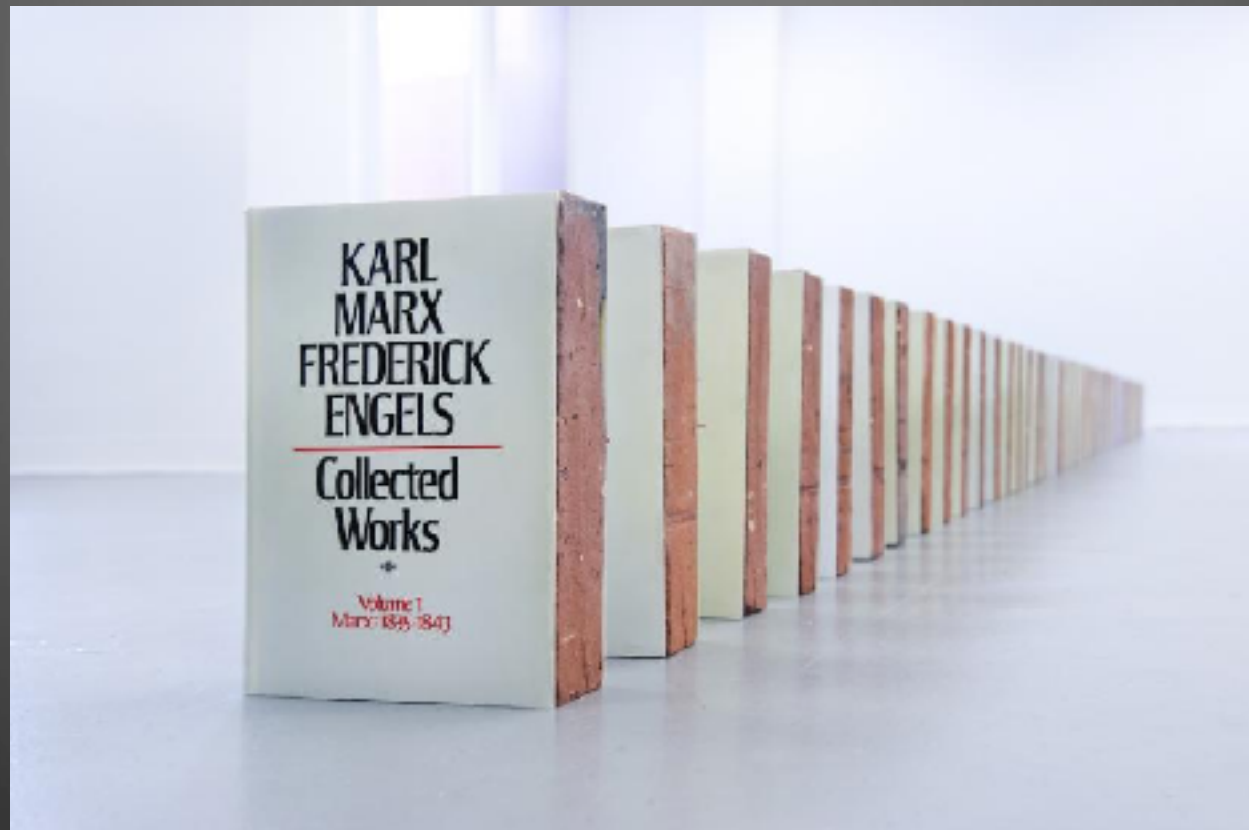
Poverty. Militarism.

Are Marxist dictatorships really Marxist?

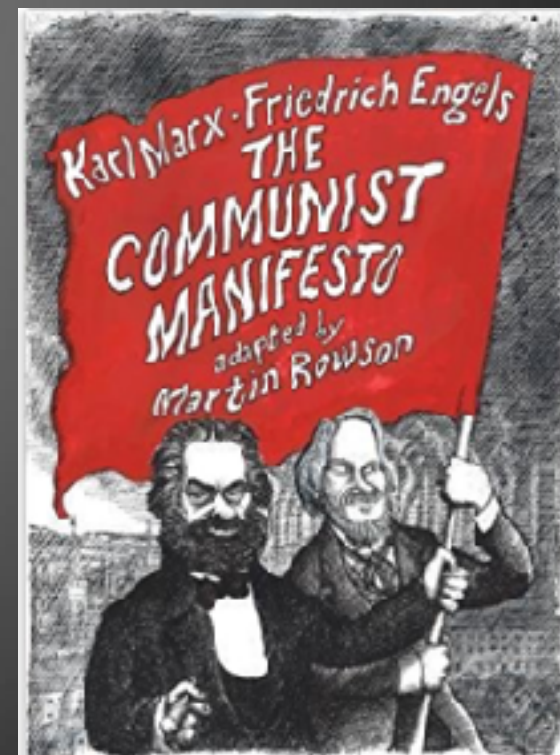
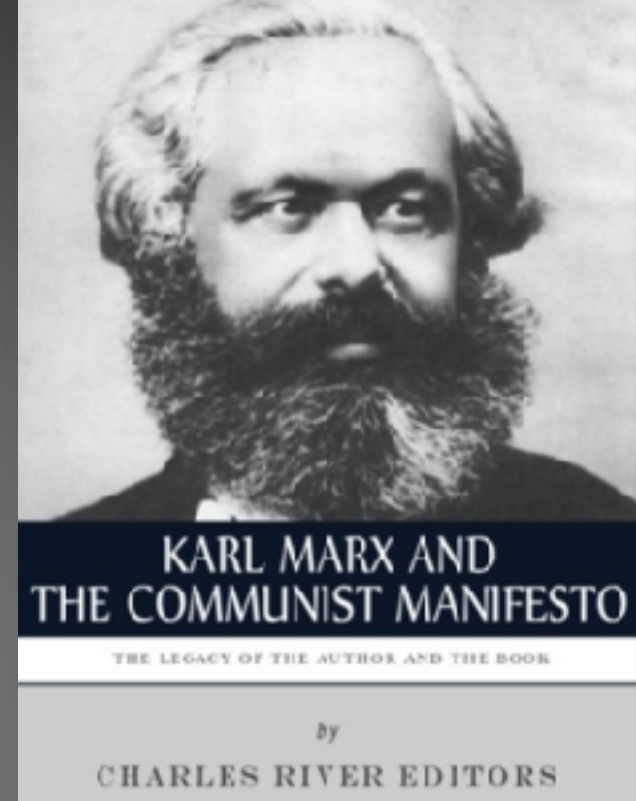
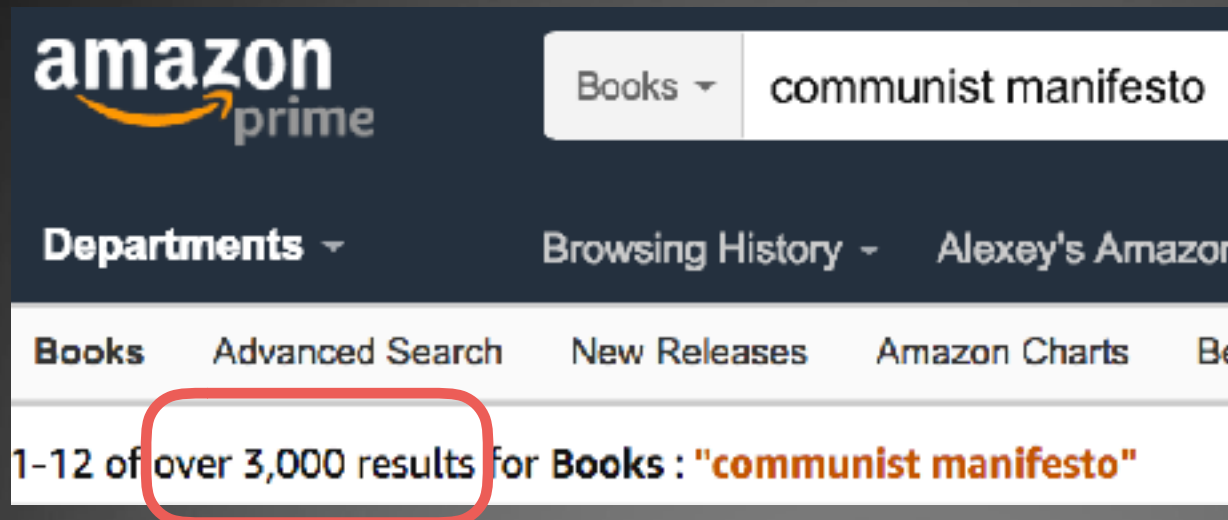
Maybe, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, Pol Pot and others simply did not understand the great teaching and perverted it to serve their vicious passions?

Could it be that Marxism is still awaiting its genuine implementation?

What if the most important wisdom of Marx & Engels is not yet discovered?



One of the world's most influential political documents



"With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines a new world-conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life; dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development; the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat—the creator of a new, communist society."

—Vladimir Lenin on the Manifesto,
1914

Rethinking the *Communist Manifesto*

JEFFREY C. ISAAC

The *Communist Manifesto* is perhaps the most extensively published and widely read text in the history of political thought. An obscure pamphlet penned by and for marginal German émigré radicals in 1847–48, in its 160-plus years it has been translated into scores of languages and published in hundreds of editions. According to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, it is the second best-selling book of all time.¹ Of course, much of its circulation is due to its long-standing

In recognition if not appreciation of this influence, in 2005 the *Manifesto* was named number one among “the most harmful books of the 19th and 20th centuries” by the American conservative journal *Human Events*, outpacing *Mein Kampf* (number two), *Quotations from Chairman Mao* (number three), and even the dreaded *Kinsey Report* (number four). That same year Karl Marx, the

Jeffrey Isaac
James H. Rudy Professor

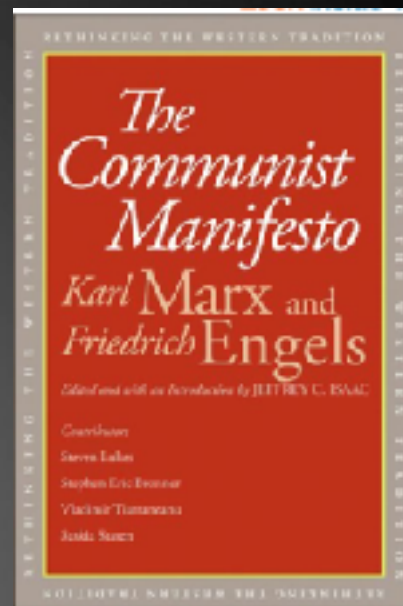
Woodburn Hall, 415 | (812) 855-8605 | [Send Email](#)

✦ [Vita](#)

Education:

Ph.D., Yale University, 1983

Professor Isaac was an undergraduate at Queens College, CUNY, and from there went to Yale University, from which he received his Ph.D. in 1983. Since 1987 he has taught at Indiana University and lived in Bloomington. He recently served two terms as department chair (2003–2009). In 2006 he became the Book Review Editor of *Perspectives on Politics*, and in 2009 he was named Editor in Chief of the entire journal. He edits *Perspectives* in Woodburn Hall with a staff of seven that is supported by the American Political Science Association and the College of Arts and Sciences.



The Communist Manifesto

KARL MARX
and

FRIEDRICH ENGELS

Edited and with an Introduction by

Jeffrey C. Isaac

with essays by

Steven Lukes

Stephen Eric Bronner

Vladimir Tismaneanu

Saskia Sassen

Yale
UNIVERSITY PRESS
New Haven & London

A specter is haunting Europe – the specter of communism...

I. Bourgeois and Proletarians

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of **class struggles**. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, **oppressor and oppressed**, stood in **constant opposition to one another**, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open **fight**, a **fight** that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the **contending classes**... Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified **class antagonisms**. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into **two great hostile camps**, into two great classes **directly facing each other** – Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.

Their focus: the social strife

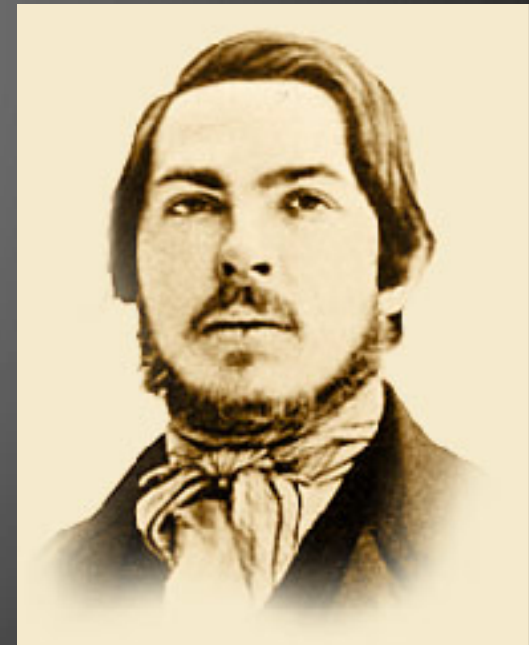
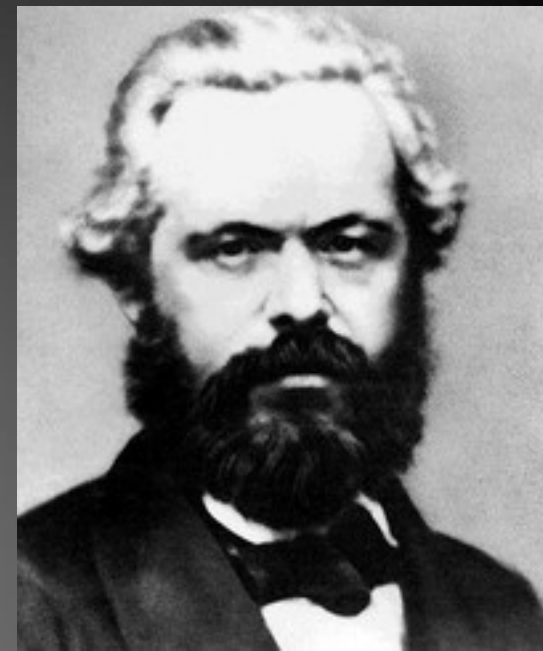


The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.

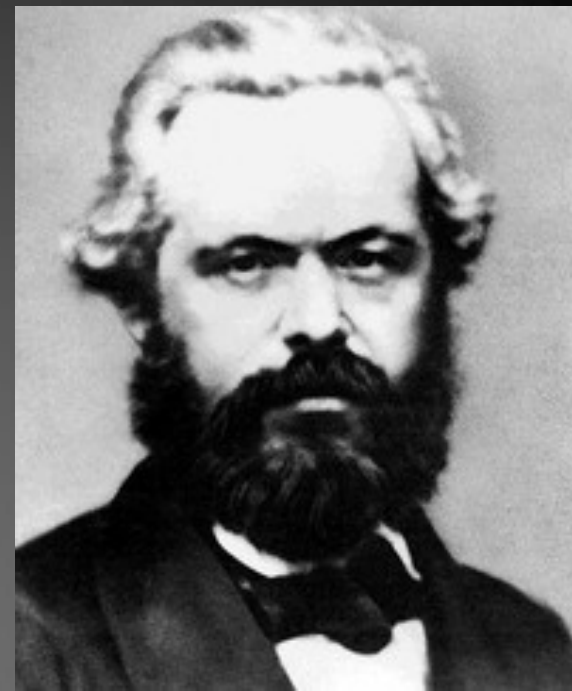
The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into *exchange* value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.

The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.

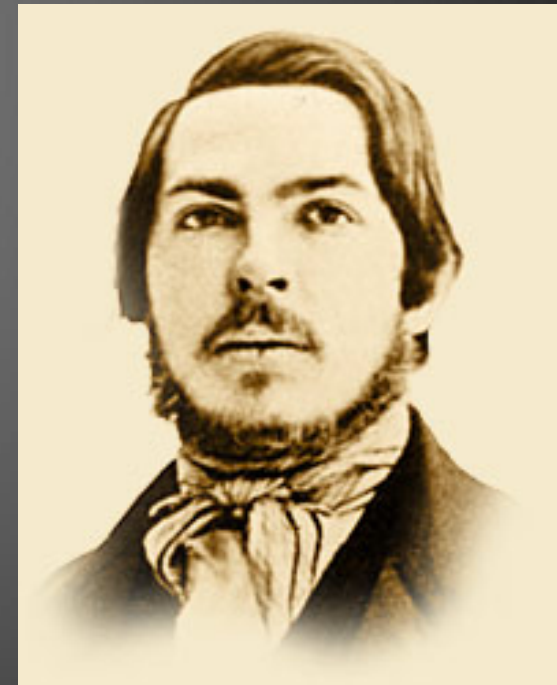
The bourgeoisie has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.



The bourgeoisie has been the first to show what man's activity can bring about. It has accomplished *wonders* far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades.



The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. Conservation of the old modes of production in unaltered form, was, on the contrary, the first condition of existence for all earlier industrial classes. Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation *distinguish* the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at *last* compelled to face with *sober* senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind. ...

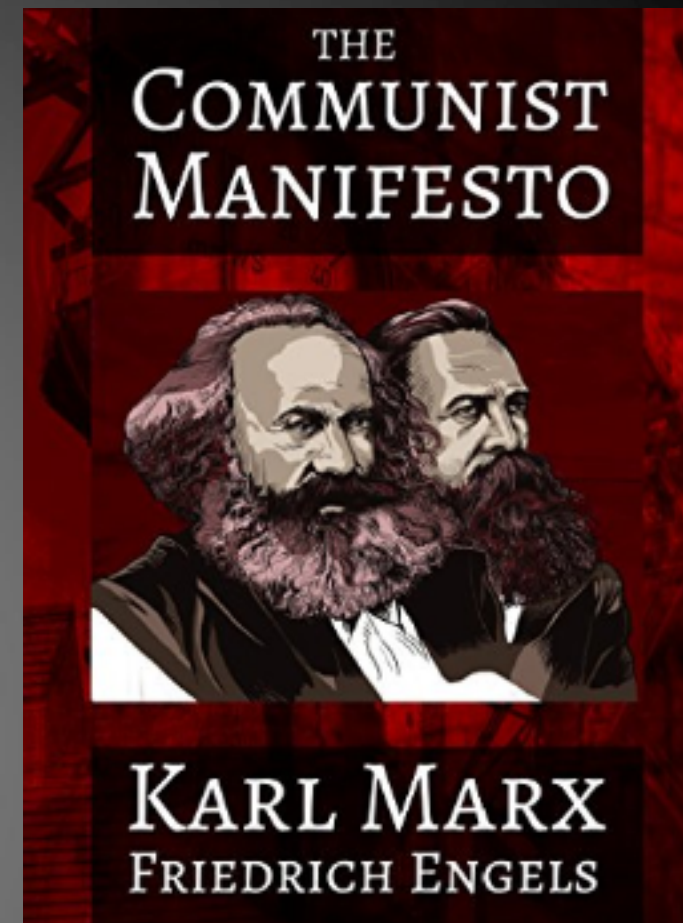


The *bourgeoisie*, during its rule of *scarce* one hundred years, has created more *massive* and more *colossal* productive forces than have *all* preceding generations together.

The conditions of bourgeois society are too narrow to comprise the wealth created by them. And how does the bourgeoisie get over these crises? On the one hand by enforced destruction of a mass of productive forces; on the other, by the conquest of new markets, and by the more thorough exploitation of the old ones. That is to say, by paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises, and by diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented.

The weapons with which the bourgeoisie felled feudalism to the ground are now turned against the bourgeoisie itself. 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...

The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalized, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and **nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level.**

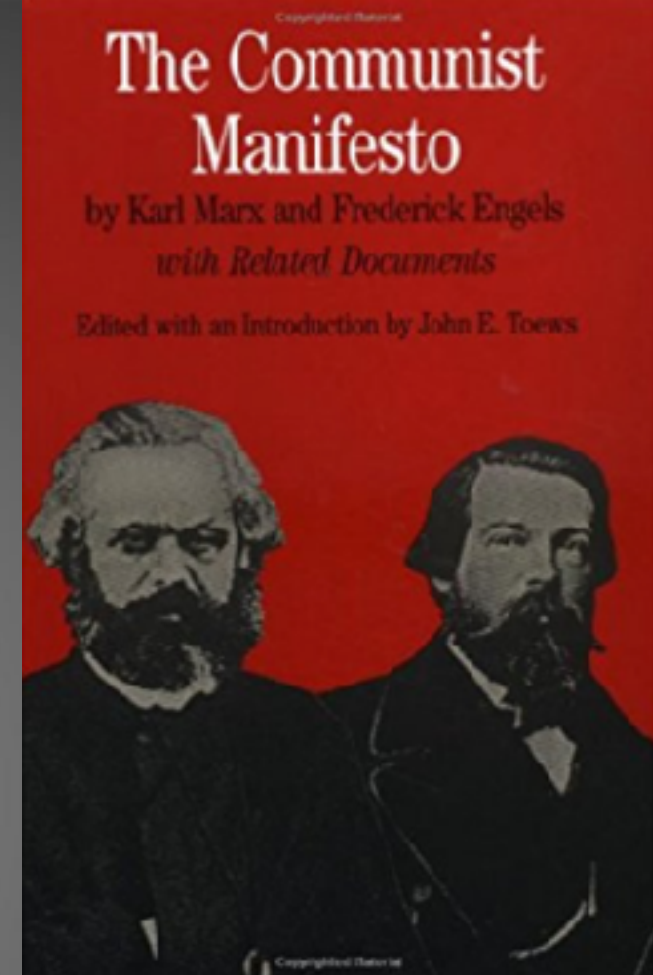


The proletarian is without property... Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

They have nothing of their *own* to secure and to fortify; their mission is to *destroy* all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.

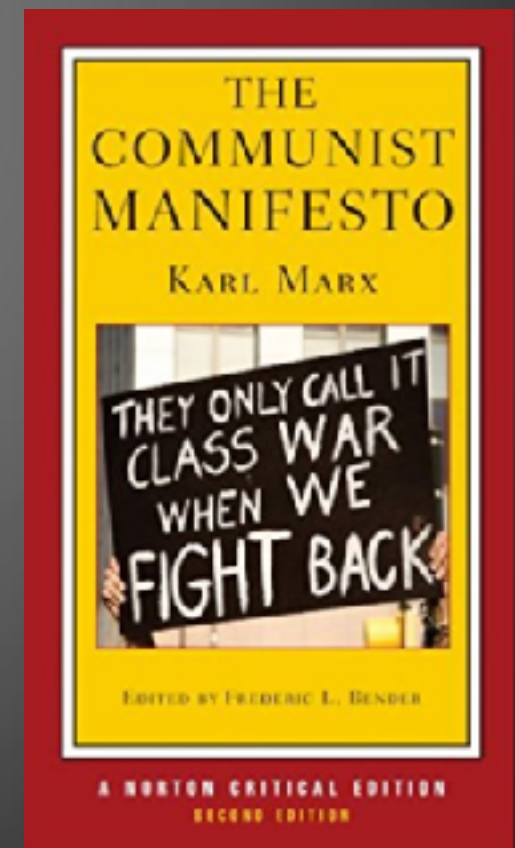
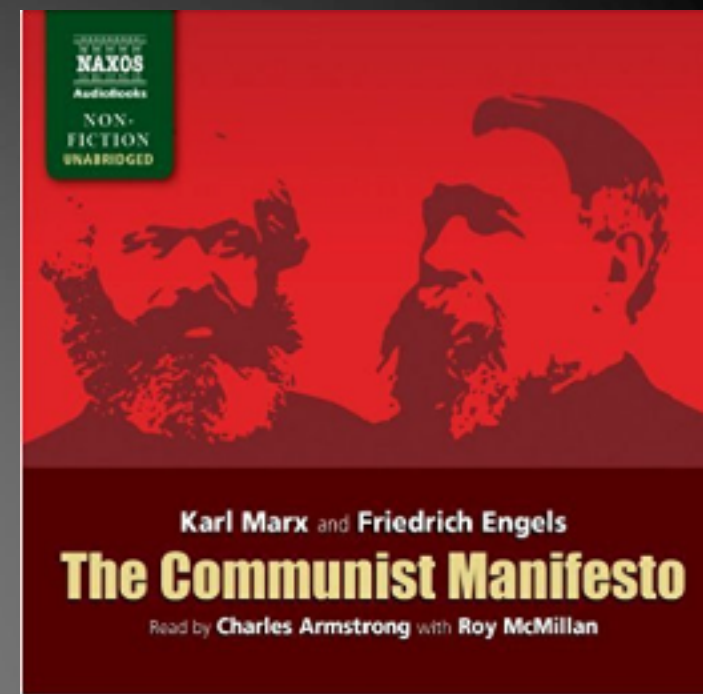
All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority. The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air.

In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat, we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat.



The modern labourer, on the contrary, instead of rising with the process of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth. And here it becomes evident, that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class in society, and to impose its conditions of existence upon society as an over-riding law. It is unfit to rule because it is incompetent to assure an existence to its slave within his slavery, because it cannot help letting him sink into such a state, that it has to feed him, instead of being fed by him. Society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.

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, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.

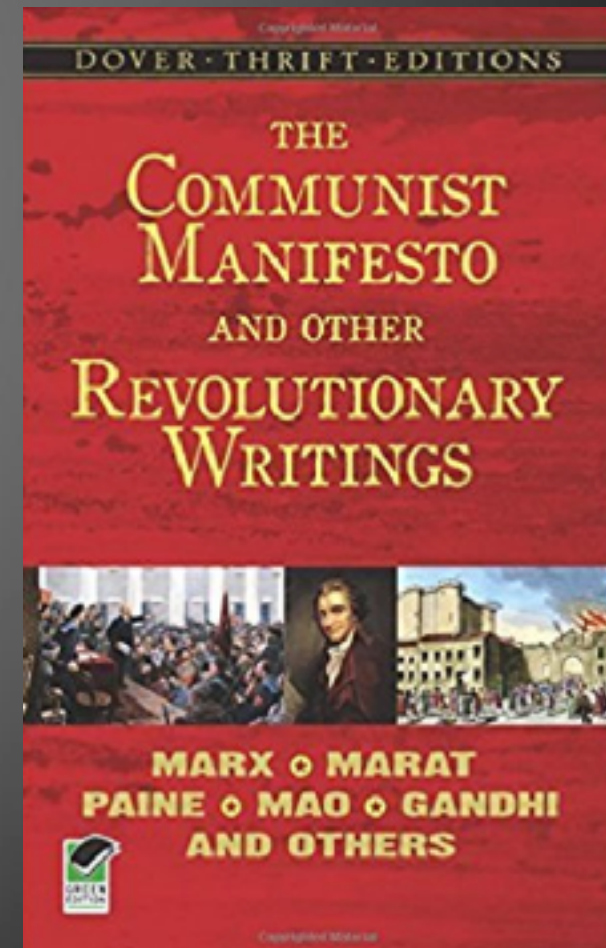
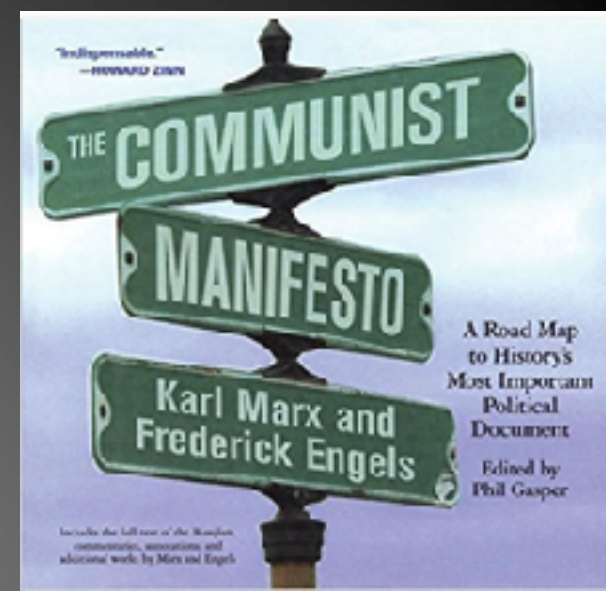


And the abolition of this state of things is called by the bourgeois, abolition of individuality and freedom! And rightly so. The abolition of bourgeois individuality, bourgeois independence, and bourgeois freedom is undoubtedly aimed at.

Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conception, in one word, man's consciousness, *changes* with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?... The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.

Question 22 [Engels' Draft]. Do Communists reject existing religions?

Answer: All religions which have existed hitherto were expressions of historical stages of development of *individual* peoples or *groups* of peoples. But communism is *that* stage of historical development which makes *all* existing religions superfluous and *supersedes* them.



The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property, and on the conditions of bourgeois production; by means of measures, therefore, which *appear* economically insufficient and untenable, but *which*, in the course of the movement, outstrip themselves, necessitate further inroads upon the old social order, and are unavoidable as a means of entirely revolutionising the mode of production...

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!



- What constitutes the core of Marxian Doctrine?
- Which principles of the Manifesto and later works played the major role for those Marxist groups that seized power to implement them?
- What are implications and consequences of these principles?
- What made the doctrine especially attractive?

- What is there? (ontology or metaphysics)
- What should I do? (ethics and politics)
- What is the truth? (epistemology)

Ontology:
God, Cosmos, Society, Person

Marxian Ontology:

~~God, Cosmos, Society, Person~~

Marxian Ethics: Necessity of Technological Progress

MARXIAN SYSTEM: FIRST PRINCIPLES

1. Culture, religion, morality, science, state and law constitute the social superstructure, which is determined by the production relations, which, in their turn, are determined by the productive forces or technology. Thus, technological progress (TP) entails transformation of culture and all social structures. What makes his first cause, TP, fast or slow, Marx did not ask.
2. Production relations determine the classes of people. Dominant ideas are rooted in class interests; this determinism is normally subconscious. Relatively to Progress, the classes are divided into the revolutionary and reactionary ones. Progress inevitably takes on cruel and violent forms of the class struggle.
3. Literature, art, philosophy and morality are of class nature, being either progressive or reactionary. Today, all religions are reactionary, opium of the people.
4. Private property, separation of powers and the rule of law today are reactionary means of the bourgeoisie dominance over the proletariat.
5. TP inevitably leads to a perfect society, bright future, paradise on Earth—to Communism—where people will be free from injustice, the burdens of labour and adversities. Powerful machines and human kindness will provide that.

MARXIAN SYSTEM: FIRST PRINCIPLES

6. The road to Communism inevitably runs through a dramatic deterioration of life for the entire society under capitalism, climaxing in the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.
7. The dictatorship of the proletariat is established by the Marxist party. Its coming to power is followed by the abolition of civil liberties and the liquidation of the democratic, judicial, religious and economical structures – the entire civil society. Having accomplished that, the party begins to build the new society.
8. Progress is fostered by means of cruelty to reactionaries, thus justifying the violence. Progress is the only measure of ethics.
9. This ‘scientific socialism’ is ‘dialectical’: any logical or historical contradiction of the doctrine is removed by pointing out that the Marxian teaching is alive, its contradictions are dialectical and are to be resolved by life itself. Objections and attacks on the scientific socialism are *explained away*, if not by stupidity of those who did not learn dialectics, then by reactionary interests, maybe subconscious. Thus, no critical analysis of the doctrine is possible from inside the groups.
10. The style of the “scientific socialism” is that of preaching and precluding any doubt. Doubts are considered as acts of hostility.

To be continued