

Gentrain Unit 12 Karl Marx (1818-1883), February 25, 2014, Dr. Cindy Ausec

### Works

- *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction* (1843)
- *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844)
- *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) with Frederick Engels

### Philosophy

- Trained as a philosopher and early work was overtly philosophical – better known as a revolutionary communist
- Combines *Materialism* and *Idealism*
  - All sensation or perception is an interaction between subject and object
  - The bare object is a mere raw material, which is transformed in the process of becoming known: the world is created through the categories humans place upon it

### Philosophy of History

- Claimed to have made Socialism scientific
- The idea that forms of society rise and fall as they further and then impede the development of human productive power
- Marx sees the historical process as proceeding through a necessary series of modes of production characterized by class struggle and culminating in socialism
  - Feudalism - represented by the landowner
  - Capitalism - represented by the industrial employer
  - Socialism - represented by the wage-earner
- The politics, religion, philosophy, and art of any epoch in human history are an outcome of its methods of production and to a lesser extent, of distribution

### Economics

- Capitalists = bourgeoisie                      Workers = proletariat
- Commodity production – a commodity is defined as a useful external object, produced for exchange on a market
- Mode of Production – the specific organization of economic production in a given society
- Means of production: factories/facilities, machines, raw materials, and labor force
- Labor theory of value
  - As commodities can be exchanged against each other there must be a third thing that they have in common = Labor
  - Capitalism - the advancement of capital, in the form of money with the purpose of generating profit through the purchase of commodities and their transformation into other commodities which can command a higher price, and thus yield a profit
  - Exploitation of the worker - the capitalist purchases the worker's labor power
    - The bourgeoisie's economic interest is to pay the worker as little as possible

- The proletariat's economic interest lies in preventing the capitalist from exploiting them
- The social relations of production are inherently antagonistic giving rise to a class struggle that will lead to the overthrow of capitalism by the proletariat
- The proletariat will replace the capitalist mode of production based on the collective ownership of the means of production

#### Alienation of Labor

- Argues that labor is central to a human being's self-conception and sense of well being
- The worker under capitalism is suffering from four types of alienated labor
  - From the product – he does not own the products he produces
  - From productive activity – to survive the worker is forced to perform for someone else – his labor is not his own
  - From species-being – For humans works gives purpose to life. Now humans produce blindly and not in accordance with their truly human powers
  - From other human beings – relation of exchange replaces the satisfaction of mutual need
- Non-alienated labor is described as
  - Immediate producer's enjoyment of production as confirmation of his/her powers
  - That production is to meet the needs of others - confirming for both parties our human essence as mutual dependence

#### Religion

- *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction*
  - Religion is a response to alienation in material life
  - It cannot be removed until human material life is emancipated, at which point religion will wither away
  - At least two aspects of alienation are responsible
    - Alienated labor
    - The need for human beings to assert their communal essence
  - First religion created a false idea of community in that we are all equal in the eyes of God, which because of the fragmentation of religion under the Reformation it could no longer fulfill that role
  - State fills this need by offering the illusion of a community of citizens all equal in the eyes of the law
  - Both the state and religion will be transcended when a genuine community of social and economic equals is created