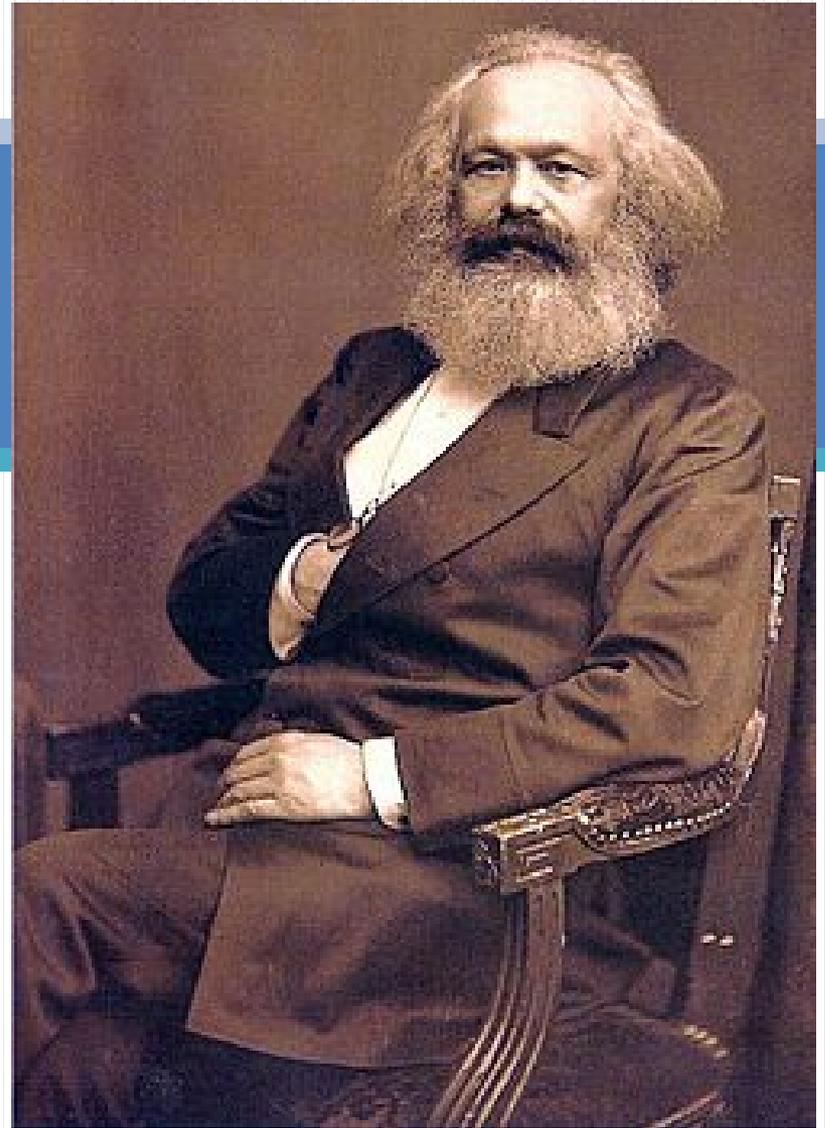


Karl Marx

February 23, 2014

Dr. Cindy Ausec



Learning Objectives

- **Comprehend the basic tenets of his Philosophy**
- **Comprehend the importance of matter (modes of production) in his Philosophy of History**
- **Summarize his theories on Economics**
 - **Describe the Modes of Production**
 - **Discuss his theory on “labor value” and the exploitation of the worker**
- **Explain how workers become alienated from his labor**
- **Discuss Marx’s views on religion**

Karl Marx (1818-1883)

- **Born in Trier, in the German Rhineland**
- **His Jewish parents became Christian when he was a child**
- **Marx studied law in Bonn and Berlin – PhD thesis in Philosophy**
- **Influenced by Hegelianism and by Feuerbach**
- **1843 he went to France to study Socialism and met Frederick Engels**

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, turned to economics and politics in his mid 20's**
- **Early work overtly philosophical**
- **Combines insights of 'Materialism' and 'Idealism'**
- **All sensation or perception is an interaction between the subject and the object**
- **The object is a raw material, which is transformed in the process of becoming known**

“The question whether objective truth belongs to human thinking is not a question of theory, but a practical question. The truth, i.e. the reality and power, of thought must be demonstrated in practice. The contest as to the reality or non-reality of a thought which is isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question... Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, but the real task is to alter it.”

Eleven Theses on Feuerbach, 1845

Philosophy of History

- Blend of Hegel and British economics
- Centered, in around 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, culminating in communism
- Like Hegel he thinks that the world develops according to a dialectical formula

Philosophy of History

- Hegel - a mystical entity called ‘Spirit’ which causes human history to develop according to the stages of the dialectic as set forth in Hegel’s *Logic*
- Marx “matter” is the driving force – Particularly the mode of production
 - 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

Philosophy of History

- See the historical process as proceeding and culminating in communism
 - Feudalism, represented by the landowner
 - Capitalism, represented by the industrial employer
 - Socialism represented by the wage-earner
- Disclaimed all ethical or humanitarian reasons for preferring Socialism

Economics

- **Capitalists = bourgeoisie Workers = proletariat**
- **A commodity is a useful external object, produced for exchange on a market**
- **Commodities have**
 - **Use Value**
 - **Exchange value – their price**
- **Mode of Production – the specific organization of economic production in a given society**
- **Means of production: factories/facilities, machines, raw materials, and the labor force**

Labor Theory of Value

- **As two different commodities can be exchanged against each other, there must be a third thing that they have in common = Labor**
- **Determined by the quantity of labor time required to produce a commodity**
- **Capitalism – the advancement of capital (money) to purchase commodities which will be turned into other commodities which can command a higher price = profit**

Labor Value and Exploitation of the Worker

- **The capitalist purchases the worker's labor power**
- **The value of a day's labor power is the value of the commodities necessary to keep the worker alive for a day**
 - **Necessary labor is the commodities necessary to keep the worker alive for the day**
 - **Surplus labor any work above necessary labor – producing this for the capitalist**
 - **Labor = variable capital the only commodity capable of creating extra value**

Bourgeoisie vs. Proletariats

- 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 and would give rise to a class struggle
- The proletariat would replace the capitalist mode of production based on the collective ownership of the means of production

Labor

- *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*
- Labor is as much an act of personal creation and a projection of one's identity as it is a means of survival
- Non-alienated labor
 - 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

Alienation of Labor

- **The worker under capitalism is suffering from four types of alienated labor**
 - **From the product – it is taken from him as soon as it is created**
 - **From productive activity (work) experienced as torment**
 - **From species-being – 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**

Alienation – Product of Human Action

- **Viewed the institutions of capitalism as consequences of human behavior**
- **As long as a capitalist intends to stay in business he must exploit his workers to the legal limit**
- **Workers must take the best job offer**
- **By doing this we reinforce the very structures that oppress us**

Religion

- *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction*
 - Home to his notorious remark that religion is the 'opiate of the people'
 - Set out his account of religion in most detail
 - Sets out the role of the proletariat in bringing about the emancipation of society

Religion According to Marx

- **Religion is a response to alienation in material life (need for sense of community)**
- **Religion created a false idea of community - are all equal in the eyes of God – Reformation ended that idea**
- **State offers the illusion of a community of citizens all equal in the eyes of the law**
- **The state and religion will be transcended when a genuine community of social and economic equals is created**