Marx for Beginners
WHAT? TRY TO SUMMARIZE MARX? THAT'S NOT ONLY A SACRILEGE (AS MOST "ACADEMIC" MARXISTS WILL SAY), BUT A COMPLETE WASTE OF TIME - BECAUSE COMRADE KARL IS SUPPOSED TO BE COMPLETELY BEYOND THE RANGE OF SIMPLE MINDS.

MAYBE SO, MAYBE NOT. BUT I'VE WRITTEN THIS BOOK ANYWAY, ON THE PRINCIPLE THAT THE WORST KIND OF BATTLE IS THE ONE NOT CONFRONTED.

ANOTHER REASON FOR TRYING TO TAKE ON CHARLIE WAS MY WISH TO UNDERSTAND HIM - AN AMBITION WHICH I HAVEN'T SATISFIED.
MARX - LADIES AND GENTS - WAS TRULY A "TOUGH GUY". A "TEUTONIC GENIUS" TOWERING OVER MUCH OF THE SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE OF HIS DAY. HE JUST WENT ON PRODUCING PHILOSOPHY ON PHILOSOPHY, WITHOUT WORRYING HOW MANY PEOPLE WOULD UNDERSTAND HIM. RESULT? A WHOLE SERIES OF HIGH-LEVEL WORKS. REALLY HEAVY STUFF AND MUCH TOO DENSE FOR THE ORDINARY READER. MARX IS HARD TO DIGEST!

THIS BOOK TRIES TO PROVIDE A "DIGEST" - AN EXTRACT OF MARX'S IDEAS. SOMETHING EASIER TO GET DOWN. BEING AWARE OF MY LIMITS (5TH GRADE ELEMENTARY!), I AM HAPPY IF THE THING ISN'T COMPLETELY INCOMPREHENSIBLE.

MARX HIMSELF HASN'T MADE MY JOB ANY EASIER BY FORGETTING TO PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF HIS WORKS. I GOT EVEN LESS HELP FROM ALL THOSE SCHOLARLY VOLUMES WHICH PRETEND TO CLARIFY MARX, BUT END UP BEING MORE DIFFICULT THAN CHARLIE HIMSELF.

AN ATTEMPT TO "POPULARIZE" MARX RAISES ANOTHER PROBLEM - THE DIFFICULTY OF PUTTING INTO EVERYDAY LANGUAGE THE PHILOSOPHIC AND ECONOMIC TERMS HE USES. BECAUSE THERE AREN'T ONLY 20 OR 30, BUT 200 OR 300! TO TRY TRANSLATING THIS NUMBER WITHOUT LOSING THEIR MEANING IS REALLY DOG WORK. I HOPE THE AVERAGE READER WHO GETS THROUGH THIS BOOK WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO CONFRONT THE COMPLETE WORKS OF MARX AND COME OUT OF IT BETTER THAN I DID.

I SHOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE ILLUSTRIUS MARXIST THEORETICIANS WHO, WHEN I ASKED THEM FOR A HAND, REPLIED POLITELY THAT I MUST BE OUT OF MY MIND TO START SUCH A WORK. I REALLY APPRECIATE THEIR "SPIRIT OF CO-OPERATION" AND REGRET NOT HEEDING THEIR ADVICE BEFORE SETTLING DOWN WITH HERR DOCTOR KARL MARX.

AFTER THIS INTRODUCTION, IF YOU STILL WANT TO GO ON READING - BE WARNED! YOU DO SO AT YOUR OWN RISK. I CANNOT ANSWER FOR THE DAMAGES.

ONE LAST EXCUSE FOR THIS LIGHT-WEIGHT BOOK (BESIDE MY OWN IGNORANCE): THE STUBBORN AND INSISTENT PRESSURE OF MY PUBLISHER WHO LEFT ME HARDLY ANY TIME TO WRITE IT. I'M SORRY TO SEE MY EFFORTS HAVEN'T "JELLED" AS I WOULD HAVE LIKED.

IT'S INCREDIBLE THAT MARX, WORKING UNDER FAR WORSE CONDITIONS AND PRESSURES THAN MINE, COULD WRITE ALL THOSE THOUSANDS OF PAGES WITHOUT EVER LOSING HIS WAY OR MAKING A BOTCH OF IT.

BUT THAT JUST GOES TO PROVE IN THE END THAT MARX IS MARX, AND RIES IS... WELL, JUST A POOR GUY!
LONDON IN KARL MARX'S DAY...
FIRST THINGS FIRST—THE READER WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO THIS CHARACTER WAS!!

CHARLES MARX (KARL AS HE'S CALLED IN GERMAN) WAS A JEWISH-GERMAN PHILOSOPHER WHO LIVED AND STRUGGLED FROM 1815 TO 1883. EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD HE'S BLAMED FOR HAVING INVENTED COMMUNISM...

BASED ON HIS WRITINGS AND IDEAS, ONE THIRD OF HUMANITY PRACTISES COMMUNISM, WHILE THE OTHER TWO THIRDS KEEP ARGUING ABOUT THEM...

ANYWHERE YOU GO, WORDS LIKE BOLSHEVIK, MARXIST, SOCIALISM, LENINISM, RED, FIDELISTS, MADIST, MATERIALIST, COMMUNIST AND SO ON RUB LOTS OF PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY...

Capriol, class-struggle, labour-power, proletariat...
Actually, Marxism today divides the world into two camps: those who hate him and those who pull all their hopes in him...

and I'd mention a third group: those who don't know him...

Boy! He sure had lots of influence, the hairy old guy!

Because Charlie Marx is just like the Bible or the Koran: many quote him, but very few know him, and even fewer understand him... (or better... make him out...)

And he wasn't short of hair...!

MARX HAS SOMETHING TO SAY TO EVERYBODY: THERE'S NOT A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS WHICH DOESN'T OWE SOMETHING TO COMRADE CHARLIE'S INFLUENCE...


In short: if in every sense we're better off today, we owe that to Marx especially...

That's not true... I owe it to my Boss!

All revolutions, even those which claim to be spontaneous and without "putative" fathers, have a Marxist origin...

Not to mention some continental...

Worker priests are accused of being Marxists, South American generals talk about him. He's studied in Jesuit schools. Others have fled Cuba when it declared itself the first Marxist country in Latin America... But still you hear it said there's no interest in Marx...
Briefly:
Marx went to Bonn University to study law, but he worked harder at raising hell and (so his teachers say) pursuing wine, women and song... to such a point that he ended up fighting a duel for a lady's favours, which earned him a wound on the eyebrow! You can't really say that he kept his nose to the grindstone...

From Bonn he went to Berlin where he finished his studies. Then he returned to Bonn to try teaching, but his bad name didn't open any doors: in Berlin he'd turned atheist and subversive...

His father was a well-to-do lawyer, which allowed the young Marx to study what was in fashion then:

**Law.**
It is important at this point to clear up a detail about Marx's life: although his origins were Jewish, he didn't consider himself Jewish, or ever practise that religion. His father had become a Lutheran and Marx himself was one, but only in his youth...

How true! Youngsters today don't believe a damn thing!

Blame the ideologies, your lordship, the ideologies...

The young Marx didn't ask himself "What to do?" in the sense of "How can I earn a living?" but "What is the meaning of my life and what purpose should it serve...?"

To answer this thorny question, Marx decided to study philosophy...

His father grows angry worrying about his son's future...

The University of Berun was in a terrific turmoil of new ideas. Religious explanations of man and the universe had been challenged and thinkers were looking round for other answers to the eternal questions of mankind...

The same old eternal questions

Someone called Frederick Hegel seems to have found the answers to the big questions. German philosophers gravitate round him, some to oppose and others to support his theories. Marx begins studying Hegel's ideas. Too bad the great philosopher had already died, alas...
Immanuel Kant (Hegel's great predecessor) argued that you could not prove God's existence, but no system could prove it. Hegel instead seeks to justify the idea of God... How? Hegel proposes a system of pantheism (from the Greek pan, all, and logos, reason).

(Note: a little dictionary at the back of this book explains some of these terms)

KANT

separates science from religion...

HEGEL

wants to make religion into a kind of science...

Reason is constantly evolving in history towards an absolute goal. "World history is the progress in the consciousness of liberty," God exists only as world-spirit, which is real because rational (and vice versa).

God is restless, according to Hegel!

"It is in the organisation of the state that the divine enters into the real."

Maybe this justifies Hegel's God. But it doesn't justify any particular established religion or state...

"Am I making myself clear? No?"

Marx's student friend Krippen (by Engels)

Well, Heinrich Heine, a poet and disciple of Hegel's, explains it more clearly:

""Thanks to Hegel I learned that the 'good' God doesn't dwell in Heaven, as my Grandma believed, but instead that I myself, here on earth, might be God..."

OR -
GOD DIDN'T CREATE MAN, BUT THE OTHER WAY ROUND...

Besides which, Hegel didn't believe in the immortality of the soul. But persecuted by the Church and State (in those days allied) he was forced to give in a bit and not allow his ideas to be spread among the people. His ideas were - so he said - "nothing more than philosophy" and it was necessary that people should still follow their customary religion...

Remember: He was a respected civil servant of the Prussian State...

But it was really Hegel's philosophy of history which attracted Marx. According to Hegel, humanity advances and progresses only because of conflicts, wars, revolutions; that is, through the struggle of the oppressed against oppressors. Peace and harmony - he used to say - don't make for progress..."
HEGEL WASN'T TALKING ABOUT SOCIAL STRUGGLE, BUT ONLY ABOUT RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE. HE WASN'T THINKING OF THE STRUGGLES BETWEEN WORKERS AND BOSSES, BETWEEN OPPRESSED PEOPLES AND OPPRESSIVE GOVERNMENTS... ONLY OF A PURELY "SPIRITUAL" CONFLICT, A STRUGGLE BETWEEN IDEAS...

WHEN HEGEL DIED, CONTRADICTIONS LIKE THESE DIVIDED HIS FOLLOWERS INTO "HEGELIANS OF THE RIGHT" AND "LEFT". THE LEFT DEFENDED THEIR TEACHER'S MOST PROGRESSIVE IDEAS, THE RIGHT STUCK TO HEGEL'S SPIRITUAL AND CONSERVATIVE SIDE...

LUDWIG FEUERBACH, A SUPPORTER OF THE HEGELIAN LEFT, WANTS TO PUT HEGEL'S THEORY INTO PRACTICE. HE DENIES THE "SACRED" ORIGIN OF ROYAL AUTHORITY. MARX IS TOO SO WITH HIM...

Looks like Feuerbach's a man after my own heart...

That's when (1848) the terms "left" and "right" came into use...

THE PUPIL RAPIDLY SURPASSES THE TEACHER. MARX IS MORE RADICAL, MORE CLEAR-HEADED AND MORE PRACTICAL THAN THE HEGELIAN LEFTISTS. MARX IS THE ACTIVE TYPE AND NOT ONE FOR BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH...

THE HEGELIANS GOT LOST IN ENDLESS PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL DEBATES. THEIR MEETINGS ALWAYS FINISHED WITH MORE SMORE THAN FIRE... TO AVOID ENDING UP NEWPORT, MARX ACCEPTED A JOB ON THE "RHEINISH GAZETTE"... THAT WAS IN 1842.

A Philosopher and Honest Journalist? Does he plan to die of Hunger?

POLITICAL JOURNALISM CAME TO LIFE WITH MARX: THE USE OF THE PRESS TO SPREAD IDEAS, TO CRITICISE BAD GOVERNMENT AND TO LET PUBLIC OPINION IN ON THE AWFUL MISERY OF THE PEOPLE...

MARX WAS TRYING TO PUT INTO PRACTICE (AND INTO THE HEARTS OF HUMBLE FOLK) THE IDEAS WHICH CAPE PHILOSOPHERS ONLY THOUGHT ABOUT. MARX INVENTED DOCUMENTARY REPORTING WITH HIS ARTICLES ON THE PeASANTS OF THE MOSELLE DISTRICT...

MARX MADE SUCH AN IMPACT ON THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE THAT HE WAS SOON MADE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF. UNDER HIS DIRECTION THE NEWSPAPER GAINED REAL PRESTIGE... SO MUCH SO THAT THE GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO SHUT IT DOWN...

Liberty is fine, so long as it's not used to show me up as a crook (even if I am one)...
Yes, even Charlie had feelings...
At the tender age of 13
he was courting a childhood friend, Jenny von Westphalen.
She was beautiful, rich and came from an aristocratic Prussian family. (Her elder brother was minister of the interior during the very reactionary period, 1860-68.) Her father, a state councillor, had encouraged the young Marx to read the Greek poets and Shakespeare...

Marx had no money or work. How was he going to support his charming Jenny? Her father is seriously worried about her future...

In 1843, Marx took his Jenny to Paris. He accepted a job as co-editor of a radical magazine with Arnold Ruge ("left Hegelian, imprisoned 1825-30, Bismarckian after 1846.)

...married 12 June 1843...

In Paris, Marx worked on all the issues published by the magazine "Franco-German Annals..."

Why?
Because in Paris, Marx had grown even more radical as a direct result of his contact with French ideas (Blanc, Proudhon-Leroux) and the Russian anarchists Botkin and Bakunin...

...and meanwhile, he started studying the economic theories of the Englishmen, Adam Smith and David Ricardo...
MARY'S FRIENDSHIP WITH ANOTHER FELLOW-GERMAN, FREDERICK ENGELS, HAD THE GREATEST EFFECT ON HIM.

THEY MET IN THE "ANNALS" HEYDAY, 1844...

WHO IS ENGELS?
(1820-1895)

THE SON OF A RICH TEXTILE MANUFACTURER, HE LEFT PRUSSIA IN 1842. TO WORK AS A BUSINESS AGENT FOR HIS FATHER'S BRANCH OFFICE IN MANCHESTER. ENGELS WAS A RESTLESS 'LEFT' HEGELIAN ANYWAY, BUT FIRST-HAND CONTACT WITH WORKING-CLASS MISERY AFFECTED HIM DEEPLY.

MANY ARTISTS OF THE TIME HAVE LEFT US EVIDENCE OF THE TERRIBLE EXPLOITATION SUFFERED BY ENGLISH WORKERS...

BECAUSE OF THEIR SMALL SIZE, (AND LITTENESS OF THEIR WAGES) CHILDREN WERE EXPOSED TO MINES AND OTHER KINDS OF INDUSTRY BY INHUMAN BOSSES...

THEY DIED!
Engels wrote "The Condition of the Working Classes in England", 1845. Marx had been powerfully struck by an article on economics which Engels wrote for the "Annales". They became close friends and decided to work together...

Before seeking refuge in London, Marx and Engels had taken part in a secret society called the "Communist League" which commissioned them to prepare the now famous Communist Manifesto.

"A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise the spectre: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies. Where is this party in opposition that has not been decried as communist by its opponents in power? Where the Opposition that has not hurled back the brand of reproach..."

"(So it begins: but more of that later...)"
MARX REMAINED IN LONDON FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, IN THE DireST POVERTY (THREE OF his CHILDREN DIED THROUGH THE LACK OF MEDICINES), CONTINUING TO WRITE REVOLUTIONARY BOOKS AND ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSPAPERS WHICH WOULD ACCEPT THEM...

Among Others, the New York "Daily Tribune"...

ENGELS HELPED OUT AND OFTEN HAD TO SUPPORT HIM. THE LITTLE INHERITANCE MARX RECEIVED WHEN HIS FATHER-IN-LAW DIED WENT TO PAY OFF HIS DEBTS. A JOB IN A RAILWAY OFFICE HE WAS ABOUT TO GET WAS REFUSED HIM BECAUSE OF HIS TERRIBLE HANDWRITING... (Judge for yourself...!)

MARX NEVER HAD A STEADY INCOME OR A PERMANENT JOB OR A BANK ACCOUNT... BUT WHAT HE COULDN'T EARN FOR his OWN FAMILY, HE WON FOR MILLIONS OF OTHERS THROUGH HIS WRITINGS...

DON'T IMAGINE THAT CHARLIE'S IDEAS WERE GREETED WITH WILD ENTHUSIASM BY THE PUBLIC. ON THE CONTRARY - NO ONE KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT MARX OUTSIDE A SMALL CIRCLE OF GERMAN EXILES AND A FEW INTELLECTUALS...

Marx's economic theories made no immediate impact on the debate inside the workers' movement or on other thinkers, except after his death (1883). This is true of his theories on value and surplus value, accumulation, exploitation, pauperization, crisis and appropriation, class struggle and revolution. But by the end of the century, several such theories were being hotly discussed within the workers' movement; while others were gradually accepted as absolutely valid.

THE NUMBERS OF HIS BOOKS AND REVIEW ARTICLES PRINTED WERE VERY SMALL. COME TO THINK OF IT, MARX'S STYLE WASN'T TERRIBLY CLEAR, AND SO, VERY FEW WERE ABLE TO GRASP HIS DARING AND COMPLEX IDEAS.

IN FACT, IT WAS ONLY IN 1917, WITH LENIN'S VICTORY IN RUSSIA, THAT THE WORKS OF MARX WERE HEARD OF THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, AND STUDIED AND DISCUSSED...
Working in misery was not easy, and the Marx family of six became ever more proletarian in character during those London years. Sometimes Marx could not go out because his clothes were at the pawnbroker's. Even paper to write on was lacking, as well as the necessities for his family. During this Dean Street period, 1851, a daughter, Francesca, was born only to die in a year.

Jenny Marx describes the hard times in a letter to a friend: "Our three children lay down by us and we all wept for the little angel whose lifeless body was in the next room. Our beloved child's death occurred at the time of the hardest privation, our German friends being unable to help us just then... Anguish in my heart. I hurried to a French emigrant who lived not far away and used to come to see us, and begged him to help us in our terrible necessity. He immediately gave me two pounds with the most friendly sympathy. That money was used to pay for a coffin in which my child now rests in peace. She had no cradle when she came into the world and for a long time was refused a last resting place..."

The last 25 years of Mark's life were spent working on his major work:

"CAPITAL"

Which he didn't manage to finish.

Only the first of the three volumes he had planned was entirely completed by him. The other two were put into order and finished, according to Marx's notes, by Engels.

Marx's last years were filled with illness and infirmities...

...migraine, depressions, insomnia, haemorrhoids, belly, nervous debility, pleurisy and bronchitis, pulmonary abscess -- enough to kill anyone...

... And it did... March 14th, 1883, Marx died at his desk.

He was 65 years old...
BESIDES THE HUNDREDS OF ARTICLES HE WROTE FOR THE GERMAN, ENGLISH, FRENCH AND AMERICAN PRESS, MARX PRODUCED THE FOLLOWING GEMS:

1841: ON THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHY OF DEMOCRATS AND EPICURUS
1844: ON THE JEWISH QUESTION
1844: THE CRITIQUE OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT
1848: ECONOMIC AND PHILOSOPHIC MANUSCRIPTS
1848: THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO
1850: CLASS STRUGGLES IN FRANCE
1852: THE 18TH BOURBON OF LOUIS BONAPARTE
1853: REVELATIONS ON THE COMMUNIST TRIAL AT COLOGNE
1863: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CRITIQUE OF POLITICAL ECONOMY
1866: WAGES, PRICE, PROFIT
1871: THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE
1885: CAPITAL, VOLUMES I, II & III
1894:

MARX'S WORKS ARE CONSIDERED THE WORKING CLASS BIBLE. YET IT IS ODD HOW VERY FEW WORKERS UNDERSTAND WHAT HE'S WRITTEN. MOST OF WHAT HE WROTE IS ABSTRACT, AS DIFFICULT AS MATHEMATICS, BUT IT DID CHANGE THE WORLD...

IN ALL FIELDS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE YOU CAN TRACE HIS INFLUENCE. HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE GREAT NAMES WHO WERE INSPIRED BY MARX... THOSE IN THEIR TURN WHO HAVE INFLUENCED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE...
So, after this short biography of the man, let's go on to see what Marxism is, and how CHARLES MARX actually managed to contribute so much to humanity, like it or not...

To do that, we'll have to go back in time and seek the roots of Marxism...

It's not possible to guess what men think if they don't express it... even less if they lacked the means to write down what was said...

What did the first humans think?

In the beginning, ignorance and fear predominated. Because they didn't know the meanings of things, early peoples were afraid of everything which moved, and their first thought was about the supernatural: who made the noise of thunder? Who moved the earth? Who made it rain?

The spirits!

That's why, to provide some kind of explanation for natural events, mankind created the gods: the god of rain, of fire, of earth, of sun, the goddess of fertility, the god of hunting...

My god is more powerful than the dinosaur's...
OUT OF THIS CAME THE MAGICIANS AND SORCERERS WHO EXPLOITED THE "IDEA OF DIVINITY" FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT. BY USING ALL KINDS OF CHEAP TRICKS THEY PASSED THEMSELVES OFF AS SPECIAL "DELEGATES" OF THE GODS WITH FANTASTIC POWERS...

EVEN SO, SOME BEGAN TO USE THEIR HEADS TO FIND LOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THE PHENOMENA OF NATURE. THE "THINKERS"...

"Stop thinking and find something useful to do!"
"Just a sec, I'm about to invent philosophy...."

PHILOSOPHY STARTED AS CRITICISM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS. BY SEEKING LOGICAL REASONS FOR THE THINGS IN NATURE, MANKIND CREATED THE SCIENCE OF PHILOSOPHY...*

* from the Greek words
Philos - friend, and
Sophos - science

...to profit from it, of course....!!

TWO OPPOSED CAMPS SPRANG UP WHICH STILL PERSIST TO THIS DAY: RELIGION ON ONE SIDE, SCIENCE ON THE OTHER...

ONE OF THE VERY FIRST PHILOSOPHERS WE HEARD OF, A GREEK BY THE NAME OF XENOPHANES OF COLophon, REFUSED TO ADORE IDOLS, BECAUSE, AS HE SAID:

"If oxen and horses and lions had hands or could draw with those hands, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses, and oxen like oxen, lions like lions, and the gods would resemble the beasts each species possesses..."

THE IDEAS OF XENOPHANES GOT ROUND, BUT THE RULING CLASS WASN'T GOING TO TOLERATE RIDICULE OR DOUBT ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE GODS WHICH SUPPORTED THEIR "SACRED AND LEGITIMATE" CLAIMS TO POWER... BUT STILL MANY LISTENED TO HIM...
As time went on—and profits rose—the ruling class perfected its religion and added more gods, more myths, more rites and ceremonies. Temples were built in which gods and goddesses were worshipped, which usually meant "donations" of money or other things had to be paid up "to attract divine favours"...

Even religion had to invent some kind of science for itself (Theology = The Philosophy of Divinity) to justify its existence.

The first thing religion invented was a faith in the "Beyond", the After Life...

The Egyptians

The Egyptian Argument was quite simple: men were created by Osiris and must obey his will on this earth. They must put up with slavery in the hope that, if they behave well, a better after-life awaits them in the next world—no more slavery; only eternal bliss...

The state commanded which gods could be worshipped or not...

Sounds pretty familiar, doesn't it?
However, the world wasn't totally deprived of men (no matter how few) able to resist blind faith, who prefer to come to their own conclusions, relying on science...

Who were they

Well... Thales for instance...

Pythagoras and his followers (he founded a peculiar sect which prohibited the eating of beans!) were the first to declare that the Earth isn't at the centre of the universe...

Harsh! Atheists! Reds!!

As a result, they were persecuted and the Pythagorean community was scattered by religious fanatics...

Thales

Of Miletus is considered the father of philosophy. He lived four centuries before Christ and devoted himself to astronomy and scientific enquiry into nature...

What is the force that keeps the universe in motion?

What is the force that keeps the universe in motion?

Next came Heraclitus, often named the father of dialectics, that is, the art of argument...

Heraclitus, an atheist philosopher, used to teach that everything exists and at the same time doesn't exist... that all things are in motion and fluid change, continuously appearing and disappearing...

"No one steps twice into the same river, for what occurs in the next instant is never the same as the first"

Pythagoras

Another famous pair of whiskers—father of mathematics—concluded that number stands at the origin of all things, and therefore life is...

...The result of a perfect mathematical relation between the parts of a body...

All you old fox!
More often than not, these enlightened fellows were persecuted and ended up badly. Science was far too backward and it wasn't the time to test new "atheist theories"...

The structure of things depends on opposite tensions, as between the bow and arrow...

What kind of doofus idea is that??

And now we're off to Sicily...

At Agrigentum, Empedocles, another philosopher, used to claim that humans were once upon a time descended from gods, but had been cast down to Earth because of their wickedness and impurity...

He also thought that everything was made up of fire, air, earth and water—a theory that survived right into the Middle Ages...

And much prepared the way for modern chemistry...

These four elements, said he, were influenced by two forces; attraction and repulsion, love and hate, which explains how all things in the universe change according to the rhythms of life and death...

Love unites, hate divides. That's how change and motion happen...

Here's one more who died for his opinions: Anaxagoras...

And yet he said no more than the truth: "The sun is a mass of fire and stone... (and not a god as the ignorant Athenians believed)...

But the "worst" of the lot was Socrates!

At Agrigentum, Socrates...

This granddaddy of humour used to joke about everything—about gods, philosophers, governments, religion... and also about himself, and it's true; he was no beauty... short, fat, bald, wrinkled, and really untidy...
This was one of his most original discoveries: he denied morality as a synonym for religion...
and here's how:

Human beings can be good without having to believe in the gods.

No one is bad knowingly, but only through ignorance.

Living begins when you start doubting everything that come before you.

Know thyself.

Doubt is the origin of truth.

Greek philosophy ends with these three giants:

Plato, Democritus & Aristotle

In the end, Socrates was accused of corrupting the youth, of attacking institutions, of atheism, lack of morals and so on and so on.

Of course, this meant the death penalty, which he accepted by drinking poisonous hemlock from a big cup.

But, in between sips, he went on talking calmly to his disciples...

Plato used the dialogue form to express his ideas. In this way he posed the three most basic questions of philosophy:

How can man discover the truth?

What is the origin of the universe?

What is the purpose of human life?
THE ANSWERS OLD PLATO GAVE TO THESE QUESTIONS LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF A SYSTEM OF PHILOSOPHY CALLED "OBJECTIVE IDEALISM," ACCORDING TO WHICH ALL THINGS ARE THE MERE SHADOWS OF IDEAS. IDEAS ARE ETERNAL, WHILE THINGS ARE TRANSITORY...

Horses don't exist. What alone exists is the idea we have of horses...

TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS - SAYS PLATO - COMES NEITHER THROUGH PERCEPTION NOR REASON... OR, THAT IS, MAN CANNOT KNOW TRUTH BY MEANS OF SCIENCE BUT ONLY THROUGH "INSPIRATION" ARRIVING FROM THE BEYOND. MAN CANNOT KNOW THINGS ON HIS OWN, BUT ONLY BY THE IDEAS GOD GIVES HIM OF THINGS...

LATER ON, IT'S WELL KNOWN, PLATO'S IDEAS WERE USED TO PROP UP THE DOCTRINE OF THE "IMMORTALITY" OF THE SOUL AND THE SINFUL NATURE OF THE FLESH - THAT IS, OF MATTER:

Amen!

DEMOSTHENES

INSTEAD WAS PERSECUTED FOR UPHOLDING "MATERIALIST" IDEAS...

"Cosmic substance is made up of an infinite number of elements or particles physically invisible, indestructible and infinite, which vary in size and shape, and are in eternal motion..."
DEMOCRITUS was talking about **ATOMS**
Four centuries before Christ and twenty-four before Einstein!

THE GREEK EPOCH closes with **ARISTOTLE**

A real master-mind, a Protege of Alexander, the Great, a genius in all fields of human enquiry (he wrote on physics, metaphysics, ethics, politics, philosophy, biology, zoology...)

A remarkable teacher and a tireless scientist. His influence lasted everywhere until the birth of materialism in the 18th century

ONE OF ARISTOTLE'S most interesting discoveries is that social conflicts arise from the inequality in economic and social conditions...

It all depends—'Ary's thought—on who's got the power. If it's in the hands of the rich, it's called oligarchy. When the people have it, it's called democracy. There are many kinds of democracy, which again depends on who predominates—peasants, artisans and so on...

So, 'Ary's thought—'all' was the first to realize that the economic set-up gives rise to social inequalities, though it's also true that he gave his O.K. to slavery because it was "necessary" to society...

Some are rich and some are poor. And the gods have nothing to do with that...
Aristotle found Plato's ideas ridiculous. He considered the senses as the only sources of truth.

His teachings about ethics was that the goal of life was happiness. So, he admitted that anyone lucky enough to have money or power or honour was bound to be happy.

Seeing is believing...

Philosophy doesn't quite end here... Even if it did almost vanish with the appearance of the false, backward Christianity of the Middle Ages...

(Those, first and foremost)

(Knowledge becomes the slave of religious theology...)

Not by accident, this unbelievable epoch is named:

THE AGE OF FAITH

(And by 'faith' understand the denial of all scientific reasoning)

During this period, at Rome, a ferocious dictatorship was set up which declared anyone a 'heretic' who didn't think like the church... Every trace of philosophy disappears from Europe when the 'Holy Inquisition' lights the execution fires...

...And next, we will try to define the idea of angels...

"On the Difference between the Natural Philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus..."

Pew! It's hard!!

If anyone cares to read it (it can be found in some library nearby) and can digest it in a fortnight, I'll guarantee he'll be a real master mind... (or a complete nutcase in a month...)

The first philosophical enquiry which the young Marx started on, deals precisely with these "giants" of Greek thought. It was the subject of his Ph.D. thesis at university.
During the dark times, science and thought did not develop except outside Europe, in the Muslim world, where men like Averroes and Avicenna reputed the Bible as false, or at best as "symbolic tales meant for ignorant folk..."

\[\text{△ An illustration of 'Erasmus of Rotterdam' censored by the Spanish Inquisitors because he was a 'heretic'...}\]

In the absence of proper philosophy, a few, who had nothing better to do, passed their time in theological quibbles about whether angels had navels, or the immortality of lobsters, or the mysteries of the Holy Trinity and the church. Thomas of Aquino was one such worthy fellow who wrote 21 volumes of mental gymnastics to defend the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church...

...literature with a capital L...

(These are still studied today in Catholic seminaries...)

Machiavelli (1469-1527) was the first to come along and attack the church and preach rebellion against the dictatorship of the clergy...

\[\text{The church has appropriated God for its own ends!}\]

Now begins the Renaissance

Which is to say - the all-out counter-attack of reason and science against dogma, religious tyranny and fanaticism: and it scored an important victory for humanity, that is, freedom of thought.

\[\text{I wonder why it is that the countries with the most nobles also have the most misery...?}\]

Bacon
Giordano Bruno (c. 1548-1600), a Dominican monk and Galileo's contemporary, renounced obedience to his Order to follow the Pantheistic doctrine whereby God and Nature are considered as the active and passive elements of reality. Prisoner of the Inquisition, he refused to recant and was burned alive at the stake in 1600.

Well, let's see: this philosopher first proposed the idea (pretty bold for his time) that the history of mankind passes through 3 stages which correspond to the 3 stages of human life:

1. The state of barbarism and patriarchy of man the hunter, governed by magic.
2. The state of feudalism with a minority of lords and a majority of slaves.
3. The "New" state... the adulthood of humanity.

The idea isn't especially remarkable in itself, except for two details: one, that Vico maintained it despite the feudal society around him, and two, that he spoke for the first time of an **evolution** of society towards democracy through class-struggle.

Certainly, his mistake was to end his evolution here and assume the bourgeois state wouldn't be changed for the better, but only that history would start all over again from a first phase on a new cycle of evolution...
Descartes & Spinoza

Were the next great adepts of philosophy in the XVII century, a time still dominated by the Church of Rome...

Possessed of a truly scientific spirit, René Descartes wrestled hard to explain things from a materialistic point of view, reasoning about the nature of things, and at the same time trying to prove God's existence...

"All things we can conceive of clearly and distinctly, exist..."

The Cartesian system ("I think, therefore I am") was part materialist, part idealist: he believed the human being was only a machine, but with a soul... and he even located it specifically: the soul was hidden in the pineal gland inside the brain...

Descartes introduces us to a mechanistic concept of the world, later we'll see what this is and whether it's edible...

Spinoza lived a lonely life, first because he was a Jew, and second because he stopped being one and turned atheist... Spinoza proclaimed something completely unthinkable in those days:

"Man is free to think and believe as his reason tells him..."

God doesn't exist in the way religion preaches, but Spinoza affirmed—only as an impersonal and spiritual 'principle', as a substance which constitutes the reality of the universe... (Pantheism believes everything is God). That's why Spinoza lived in poverty, polishing eye-glass lenses for a living...

But all these semi-atheist, materialist philosophers had one flaw: they placed too much confidence in science. They started from the assumption that man is part of nature (true) and that human relations are regulated by the same law which applies to all other natural events (false)

Because Descartes and Spinoza and their followers were wrong, to believe that nature doesn't change, doesn't evolve, and that it obeys only eternal and unchanging laws.

Why is that wrong?

Let's see how Diderot thought of it...
Astronomy had demonstrated that planets move in defined orbits which repeat themselves at their point of origin.

Diderot (among others) came to the conclusion that the universe and humanity had always been the same. Neither had ever undergone evolutions, but both went on repeating themselves in the same cycles of life and death...

[Image of Diderot and cat]

Oh no! Not more of that again!!

In their eyes, the people had no existence. Only "heroes" existed (kings, captains, prophets and philosophers) who acted as leaders. These were the "divine force" of history, Cleopatra's nose - or her behind - had more effect on history than all the people of Egypt put together... and so if man isn't the master of his own destiny, but the plaything of a series of haphazard causes... I'd like to...

Locke had the idea that men were free to think of God in their own way, not as any religion told them to. This was a big brick on the heads of priests, and an idealist philosopher, George Berkeley, an Anglican bishop, tried to refute Locke's theories, but didn't succeed because another philosopher came to his defence...

David Hume (1711-1776)

... agnostic philosopher (being someone who defends the idea that nothing is certain). Hume scandalized all of Britain with his anti-religious ideas, and so he had to pack up for France, which received him a lot more warmly...
France was a real hive of the most advanced ideas. A widespread rebellion had broken out against the tyranny of the clergy and the monarchy, which finally culminated in the French Revolution and the triumph of reason over religion.

Names!! C'mon! Out with 'em!!

Sigh... Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Montesquieu, Robespierre, Danton...

As the exact opposite of 17th century materialist philosophy, an idealist variety now arose, and its greatest champion was Immanuel Kant.

Kant (Germain), 1724-1804

His most talked about work is the "Critique of Pure Reason" which cost him 15 years of critical analysis of human thought. Among the many other complex points brought up in his study, Kant makes these:

"Every intent, whether scientific or religious, to define reality is nothing other than pure hypothesis..."

"Every attempt to apprehend transcendental knowledge is vain since for every thesis the mind produces, one can oppose an equally valid anti-thesis..."

"It is impossible to prove the existence of God through any normal means..."

Kant was certain that these... cannot be morality without some belief in God or immortality, and so this obliged one to presuppose the existence of God as a necessity..."
If what we've said so far isn't clear, don't worry. This happened in the days of "pure" philosophy which no one understood or took any notice of either...

The point of our journey has been to arrive here—at German idealist philosophy, since this was also Marx's starting point. Schelling, Fichte and Hegel were its chief exponents. Because of them, philosophy makes a great leap forward and recovers the best of Greek philosophy—the dialectic or the idea of human development...

Metaphysics, dialectics, mechanistics, materialism, idealism... Hey! Cut it out, will you!

Right! Marx also thought so. Philosophy had become a straitjacket of jargon and mumbo, impossible to make out heads or tails.

Marx set himself the job of unravelling this cat's cradle and begin making philosophy into an exact science, with less fuzzy suppositions, and so give it the practical means to transform the world...

"Philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it."

(Marx: "Theses on Feuerbach")
"The teaching of Marx is all-powerful because it is true."

1. The Philosophy of Marx

As we've already seen, the philosophical ideas of man are of two kinds: Idealist and Materialist.

Idealism starts by assuming the existence of super-natural and divine forces...

Materialism considers that there is nothing beyond natural things...

2. The Economic Doctrine of Marx

Idealism imagines things, presupposes the existence of spirits, "idealises" everything, but doesn't offer proofs for what it proposes...

Materialism, instead, doesn't idealise, but seeks the scientific explanations of things—including even religion...

3. The Historical Materialism of Karl Marx

Faith by itself is enough to go on.

Or to put it more simply...

(...which is like trying to know what sugar tastes like without sampling it...)

Materialists explain what's what on the basis of science...
Right at the start of his philosophical studies, Marx joined forces with materialism. But he devoted his entire life’s work to giving it more consistency and scientific character...

"By God's grace", the majority of atheists wished to prove the non-existence of God by starting the usual religious arguments, which got them into useless muddles...

Why? Because before Marx, materialists were content to deny God's existence. Period! Ah! that's that...

Basing themselves on mechanics, which in those days was the height of science, the philosophers imagined that the same mechanical laws could be applied automatically to life and to nature...

*This philosophical criterion is called metaphysical.

Why metaphysical, then physics, from the Greek, "placed beyond physics".

In metaphysics, things are unchanging (i.e. immutable), given once, and for all, without inter-relationship, and hence may be examined independently, one from the other.

Hegel’s disciple, Feuerbach reasoned like this:

...Nature's elements only in quantity while always remaining the same...

...Nature's elements... (Those who thought like this about nature, could think the same way about society too. Society changes very little for the metaphysician, except by repeating itself mechanically, e.g., wars, hunger, governments etc.)

*Originally, those works of Aristotle placed after his "physics".

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And that’s why Diderot, Descartes and others are called “mechanistic”...

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In the XVII and XVIII centuries, the greatest scientific discoveries were made in the area of the mathematics and mechanics of celestial bodies, and so, materialism became "mechanistic"...

In other words, the materialist philosophers examined both nature and social life from a mechanical point of view...

And that’s why Diderot, Descartes and others are called “mechanistic”...

And that’s why Diderot, Descartes and others are called “mechanistic”...

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69
HAVING RECOGNISED THE ERROR OF THE MATERIALISTS AND METAPHYSICIANS, MARX ASKED HIMSELF THE SAME QUESTION:

AND MAN?

Let's leave God out of it, and all those who want to drive themselves crazy asking whether he exists or not — so Charlie said — and let's look at man and his role in the world. How is it really possible that nothing changes?

LET'S LEAVE GOD OUT OF IT, AND ALL THOSE WHO WANT TO DRIVE THEMSELVES CRAZY ASKING WHETHER HE EXISTS OR NOT — SO CHARLIE SAID — AND LET'S LOOK AT MAN AND HIS ROLE IN THE WORLD. HOW IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE THAT NOTHING CHANGES?

DIALECTICS: FROM THE GREEK, "DIALECT" TO ARGUE, TO CONTEND

RELIGION (CATHOLICISM ESPECIALLY) OPPOSED DIALECTICS BECAUSE IT DIDN'T PERMIT ARGUMENT. THINGS WERE JUST AS THE BIBLE SAID — AND NO DISCUSSION...

RELIGION (CATHOLICISM ESPECIALLY) OPPOSED DIALECTICS BECAUSE IT DIDN'T PERMIT ARGUMENT. THINGS WERE JUST AS THE BIBLE SAID — AND NO DISCUSSION...

"... HIS HORIZON WAS FUNDAMENTALLY RESTRICTED BY THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONCEPTS CURRENT IN HIS DAY, ONE SHOULD ADD THAT HEGEL WAS AN IDEALIST, AND FOR HIM, THE IDEAS WERE NOT MORE OR LESS ABSTRACT IMAGES OF OBJECTS; ON THE CONTRARY, THINGS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT WERE A PROJECTION OF IDEAS WHICH HAD EXISTED, NO ONE CAN SAY HOW, EVEN BEFORE THE WORLD ITSELF EXISTED. HEGEL'S SYSTEM WAS A GIANTIC MISCARRIAGE, BUT THE LAST OF ITS KIND, WHILE ON ONE HAND IT AFFIRMS A FORMULA ESSENTIAL TO THE CONCEPT OF HISTORY, ACCORDING TO WHICH HUMAN HISTORY IS A PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT WHICH CANNOT, GIVEN ITS NATURE...

Instead of the usual mechanistic notion of nature and humanity, Marx and Engels set out a theory of development — or a return to dialectics.

"... His horizon was fundamentally restricted by the knowledge and concepts current in his day, one should add that Hegel was an idealist, and for him, the ideas were not more or less abstract images of objects; on the contrary, things and their development were a projection of ideas which had existed, no one can say how, even before the world itself existed. Hegel's system was a gigantic miscarriage, but the last of its kind, while on one hand it affirms a formula essential to the concept of history, according to which human history is a process of development which cannot, given its nature...

Supposing it edible... how do you cook it?

Kant and Hegel began to re-employ the dialectic method. But Hegel never brought it down to earth, as you can see from this:

Got it now? You're joking.
HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY CONTAINS LOTS OF VALUABLE IDEAS, SUCH AS HIS THEORY OF ETERNAL MOTION, THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNIVERSAL SPIRIT, AND ESPECIALLY HIS METHOD OF Dialectics.

HEGEL'S ADVICE TO ANY WORKER EXPLOITED BY HIS BOSS WOULD BE: DON'T WORRY YOURSELF ABOUT MATERIAL OPPRESSION, BUT ONLY ABOUT THE "SPIRITUAL" KIND. BY OBEYING THE STATE (GOD'S REPRESENTATIVE ON EARTH) YOU WILL FIND HAPPINESS AND FREEDOM (OF THE SPIRIT...)

HEGEL (AND I'LL TRY HARD TO BE CLEAR) WAS AN IDEALIST. "THE ESSENCE OF REALITY," HE SAID, "ISN'T MATERIAL, BUT SPIRITUAL (OR MENTAL), AND IS THEREFORE INDEPENDENT AND THUS FREE..."

HEGEL'S IDEAS SEEM ABSURD. BUT IN HIS DAY, THEY SOUNDED PRETTY DARING AND THEY WERE ATTACKED JUST BECAUSE THEY WERE (IN THEIR OWN WAY) DIALECTICAL...

FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE DIALECTICAL METHOD, NOTHING IS ETERNAL OR UNCHANGING... BUT IN SPITE OF THIS HEGEL DENIES THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATURE AND SOCIETY, THIS IS THE MOST SERIOUS CONTRADICTION IN HIS USE OF THE METHOD...

THE LEADER MARX TO SAY THAT HEGEL'S METHOD WAS "INVERTED", UPSIDE-DOWN, AND IT NEEDED TO BE STOOD ON ITS FEET AGAIN...

...in short, to make it MATERIALIST...

But what does Hegel's theory say about Development?

Well, let's take it step by step:
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT—SAID HEGEL—HAD GONE THROUGH CONSTANT EVOLUTION, STARTING WITH PRIMITIVE ORIENTAL DESPOTISM, IN WHICH ONLY ONE PERSON WAS FREE (THE TYRANT), AND NEXT THE GREECO-ROMAN ARISTOCRATIC SYSTEM IN WHICH MANY MORE WERE FREE...

WHAT WAS REALLY HAPPENING WAS THAT FEUDALISM HAD GRADUALLY GIVEN WAY TO CAPITALISM, A MORE MODERN AND SOFTER FORM OF EXPLOITATION.

...Doctor Hegel didn't take any notice of this...

HEGEL WENT ON TALKING ABOUT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT WHILE DENYING IT, BECAUSE HE CLAIMED THE PRUSSIAN STATE HAD BEGUN TO ACHIEVE THIS DEVELOPMENT ALREADY, SO HE TOOK BACK INTO METAPHYSICS...

HEGEL'S ARGUMENTS REMAIN VALID AND DIRECtIOnAL, EVEN THOUGH MISTAKENLY APPLIED BY HIM TO REALITY... LET'S SEE, FOR INSTANCE, WHAT HE MAKES OF THE "CONFLICT BETWEEN CONTRARIES"...

"Each thing is a combination of contraries because it is made up of elements which, although linked together, at the same time eliminate one another..."

DON'T HAVE A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN YET! THERE'S AN EXAMPLE COMING:

LATER STILL, SLAVERY AND SERFDOM DISAPPEARED, AND EVEN MORE PEOPLE WERE FREE... AFTER THE HOLY ROMAN-GERMAN EMPIRE, FEUDALISM, MONARCHY, THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, AND FINALLY WITH THE PRUSSIAN STATE HUMANITY REACHES (ACCORDING TO HEGEL, ANYWAY) ABSOLUTE LIBERTY

My, I do like this chap Hegel. Give him the National Award.

PRUSSIA HAD AN EMPEROR, AN ARMY, A VERY RICH CHURCH AND SOME BIG LANDOWNERS. THE PEOPLE WORKED FOR THEM, WITHOUT BEING SLAVES MAYBE, BUT OPPRESSED ENOUGH. HEGEL DIDN'T NOTICE THIS OPPRESSION. HE IMAGINED ABSOLUTE LIBERTY EXISTED JUST BECAUSE SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED...
Society, for example, is a combination of contraries (the rich and well-off versus the poor and miserable) hitched together, yes, but opposed...

If you wanna stick with me, TOIL, man, TOIL!!

With very good reason, Hegel said that what makes humanity evolve is the struggle between contraries. The triumph of one over the other produces change...

But this dialectical law wasn't supposed to apply to reality...

Funny, how in Hegel's Prussian state the conflict between contraries wasn't going to lead to transformation, but rather an improvement of society. This united Hegel, naturally... that's why...

At this point, Marx steps in to put Hegel (and his method) the right way up...

...Between real contraries, such as capital and labour, no reconciliation is possible.

Is that clear...?

If Hegel's dialectical method influenced Marx, Ludwig Feuerbach (pronounced "foyer-bahc") turned him into a materialist.

But Marx took over Feuerbach's theory and changed it...

What did this bloke foy-er-back say and how did Marx change it?

Feuerbach, a disciple of the idealist Hegel, gave up Hegelian idealism to switch over to materialism, but of a metaphysical brand, because he saw nature (and society too) sunk in sleep, motiveless, motionless, with no immediate chance for change.

That is:

Hegel was dialectical, but idealist... Feuerbach was materialistic, but metaphysical (sort of dialectical)

It was up to Marx to re-shuffle the deck to amalgamate the best of this one and that one and come up with his own famous, unique variety of dialectical materialism.

(Dialectics by G.W.F. Hegel and Materialism by L. Feuerbach)
As we've noted, Hegel didn't see or didn't wish to see the exploitation of the majority by a minority of the privileged rich. Here's the first question the young Marx asked himself...

(Alienation means 'to disfranchise to seize possession of something to export from others what belongs to them'.)

Unfree labour. (ie what's done for a boss may earn the worker a wage, but at the same time it 'alienates' him. It deprives him of something which goes into the boss's pocket.)

But is this "something" money or what?

In his first work, Marx begins to investigate Alienation - or better, the different kinds of Alienation: Political, Religious and Economic.

This work's called "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844."

Marx wonders: Where does the product of the workingman's labour end up?

By his labour, a worker makes something (cloth, machinery, tyres, books, houses...). But this object, by the fact of remaining the boss's property, turns Hey Presto! into merchandise (a commodity)...

Labour obviously doesn't produce things for the immediate benefit of the worker who makes them. Rather, it is grist for someone else's mill...

Alienation begins with the worker being squeezed dry...

...the alienation of the worker is expressed thus: the more he produces, the less he can consume; the more value he creates, the less value he has... Labour produces fabulous things for the rich, but misery for the poor, machines replace labour, and jobs diminish, while other workers turn into machines...

(This is how alienation makes its victims...)

Alienation not only degrades man, but also de-personalises him.

What can you expect?

Marx states:

The Boss imposes the kind of work, the method and the rhythm, but he never bothers if the worker ends up as:

A mere appendage of flesh on a machine of iron...

(Marx)
Marx goes even further and affirms: The combined means of production now in existence have been produced by the labour of previous generations who have thought, created and given their lives to attain something...

So? Who owns the inventions of Galileo, Newton, Leonardo, and thousands of others?

No entry. No private property.

Is it right that all of this should remain in the hands of the few? That the invention and labour of thousands of years should be the exclusive privilege of the wealthy few? No, it's not right!

Private ownership of the means of production is the maximum form of alienation...

"Social potential has become the private power of the few." Marx also submits: the labour of the many transforms itself into the capital of a privileged few.

The roots of capitalism.

And so—Marx concludes—the deepest essence of man, his creative act, has been transformed into a possession...

The worker's labour becomes merchandise in the hands of the owner, dead labour, possession, wealth, and the greater the capitalist's property becomes, the more impoverished the workers being...

"The less you are, the more you'll have. To have more, you must alienate yourself, you good-for-nothing!!!

Which changes into a thing...

That blessed "liberty" Hegel talked about, just doesn't exist. Money obliges those who haven't got any, to sell themselves body and soul—that is, to sell their labour-power (worker, peasant, intellectual)... This is alienation.

Exploitation...
TO POSSESS POSSESSIONS, A MAN WILL "SELL HIMSELF" TO HAVE WHAT ANOTHER HAS. BUT IT NEVER DAWNS ON HIM — THAT THE MORE HE GETS, THE LESS HE KEEPS OF HIMSELF...

This guy too aspires to own property. The purpose of his life is to possess more and more and more and...

Bye-bye "homo sapiens..."


The Countless Evils of the World Stem from the "Defence" of Private Property: The Evils of Envy, War, Egoism, Crime, Injustice, the Misery of the Masses and Luxury for the Very Few...

HOW CAN THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS BE CHANGED?

In no way!! Who's going to tangle with the rich, the powerful, the church...?

I have a hunch that this fellow Marx is going to cause us many a headache...

MARY SINGLE OUT THE EXISTENCE OF A "NEW CLASS:

The Proletariat

which came to life with the Industrial Revolution when machines began replacing the craftsmen of the past...

A proletarian: someone at the beck and call of the boss's machines...

MARY PREDICTED THAT THIS CLASS — THE WORKING CLASS — WAS GOING TO CHANGE THINGS...

Unlike the small-scale artisans who used to own the tools of their trade, the proletariat owns nothing, at all — neither the means, nor the end-products...

And shu less my labour...

UNLIKE ALL OTHER SOCIAL CLASSES, THE WORKING CLASS POSSESS ONLY ITS LABOUR POWER, I.E. WHAT IS COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE "WORK FORCE".

DIALECTICALLY SPEAKING, THIS IS WHAT SPECIFIES THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CONTRARIERS: CAPITAL ON ONE SIDE, LABOUR ON THE OTHER. THEY LIVE TOGETHER, SURE, BUT WITH OPPOSED INTERESTS...
THE OUTLINES OF THE PROBLEM ARE CLEAR: IT ONLY REQUIRES PRACTICAL PROOF, NOT THE WAYWARD LANGUAGE OF PHILOSOPHY WHICH BAFFLES EVERYONE...

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only ours when we have it — when it exists for us as capital, or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc. — in short, when it is used by us...

In place of all these physical and mental senses there has therefore come the sheer alienation of all these senses — the sense of having. The human being had to be reduced to this absolute poverty in order that he might yield his inner wealth to the outer world...

In order to abolish the idea of private property, the idea of communism is completely sufficient. It takes actual communist action to abolish actual private property. History will come to it; and this movement, which in theory we already know to be a self-transcending movement, will constitute in actual fact a very severe and protracted process...

1844

Marx (extracts from Manuscripts of 1844)

SORRY!!

IN HIS "MANUSCRIPTS OF 1844", MARX STILL SPEAKS LIKE A PURE PHILOSOPHER, WITHOUT REAL CONTACT WITH THE WORKING CLASS WHICH HE IS ONLY DISCOVERING. HE WON'T REALLY SEE THINGS CLEARLY UNTIL HE PENSES HIMSELF FROM BOURGEOIS CONCEPTIONS AND STARTS VIEWING REALITY FROM A PROLETARIAN ANGLE...

THE REASONS QUITE SIMPLE: THE ONLY PHILOSOPHY AROUND WAS BOURGEOIS, NOT PROLETARIAN... A PHILOSOPHY RESTRICTED TO THE FEW...

The working class doesn't have a philosophy of its own!

THAT'S WHAT MARX RECOGNIZED, AND SO HE SPENT HIS LIFE TRYING TO CREATE A PROLETARIAN PHILOSOPHY...

It's got to be materialist and dialectical...

"JUST AS PHILOSOPHY FINDS ITS MATERIAL WEAPONS IN THE PROLETARIAT, SO THE PROLETARIAT FINDS ITS INTELLECTUAL WEAPONS IN PHILOSOPHY... PHILOSOPHY CAN ONLY BE REALIZED BY THE ABOLITION OF THE PROLETARIAT, AND THE PROLETARIAT CAN ONLY BE ABOLISHED BY THE REALISATION OF PHILOSOPHY."

("Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.")

1844

BUT THE PRIMARY NECESSITY WAS TO KNOW WHAT THE PROLETARIAT THOUGHT, TO LIVE AMONG THEM FOR THE PURPOSE OF UNITING THEORY AND PRACTICE... AND THE COUNTRY IN WHICH REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE HAD MADE MOST PROGRESS WAS

FRANCE,

THE BIRTHPLACE IN 1789 OF THE FIRST GREAT REVOLUTION IN HUMAN HISTORY, THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION
AS WE'VE ALREADY SEEN (BUT PROBABLY FORGOTTEN), MARXISM HAS THREE BASIC SOURCES WHICH ARE:

GERMAN PHILOSOPHY
ENGLISH POLITICAL ECONOMY
FRENCH SOCIALISM

SINCE WE'VE HAD A LOOK AT THE PHILOSOPHICAL ORIGINS, LET'S GLANCE BRIEFLY AT FRENCH SOCIALISM, STARTING WITH:

GRACCHUS BABEUF
(PLEASED...)

WHEN THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD BEEN DEFEATED, AND THE WORTHY JACOBINS WERE IN RETREAT, A SMALL GROUP OF THEM KNOWN AS THE 'CONSPIRACY OF EQUALS'

HOPED TO CARRY ON THE ARMED STRUGGLE FOR POWER AND THE CREATION OF A SOCIALIST STATE...

Well, it's not known exactly, but, first, the expropriation of wealth and its equal redistribution, the establishment of common ownership, work and education compulsory for everyone. But the conspiracy was discovered and Babeuf condemned...

THE NEXT ATTEMPTS AT SOCIALISM ALSO OCCUR IN FRANCE, DURING NAPOLEON'S REGIME, BUT THESE ATTEMPTS WERE ONLY THEORETICAL.

THE BIG NAMES HERE ARE

SAINT-SIMON & FOURIER

KNOWN AS "UTOPIAN SOCIALISTS" BECAUSE WHAT THEY WANTED TO ACHIEVE SEEMED "UTOPIAN" OR "IDEALLY PERFECT"...

...planned economy under the direction of a central bank
...end the rule of the leisure class (nobiles, clergy and military)
...organise a new society directed by industrialists to promote the welfare of the larger and poorer classes
...found a new religion which recognises work as man's only merit
When Saint-Simon died, his disciples really started a religion with its own liturgy, rites and things of that sort. Saint-Simon's theory had no scientific basis at all and it did not acknowledge the class struggle...

Religious morality suffices to eliminate social inequalities...

Fourier

Unlike the aristocratic Saint-Simon, he was poor and spent his life trying to get the rich to finance his projects...

He must be mad! Imagine asking the rich to finance their own ruin!

What's he up to, the simpotin?!!

Oh! not much! He only wants to build a "communist" system of little communities in which everything belongs to everyone, with communal homes and consumers' co-operatives. To prevent the rise of wealth in any one sector, the richer would get a smaller part of the share, while the poorer got more, and thereby balance things out. He actually founded a few such communities (called "Phalansfres"). But he spent his last days in a madhouse...

Some of the ideas of Saint-Simon and Fourier were probably taken up by Marx (and Lenin) in their own, more practical theories.

But the biggest contribution came from three other French "socialists"...

Blanqui, Proudhon, and Blanc

A portion of class war and armed revolution who spent 33 years of his life in jail. He first spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat, even if it was a minority one, and not as Marx argued, in the majority...

Blanqui, 1805-1871

Anarchist and syndicalist, but despite this, anti-feminist and an avowed enemy of women's liberation from domestic slavery. He was the founder of mutual aid societies, "property is theft."

Proudhon, 1809-1866

Workers' leader, theorist of election-based, legislative socialism, not the violent revolutionary kind.

His most famous saying is: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

Blanc, 1811-1882

There's no doubt that a few of his ideas merit some consideration. For example, the elimination of competition among producers to stop them churning out useless things, duplicates and luxury items...
MARX CAME INTO CONTACT WITH THEM IN PARIS, OFTEN STRIVING TO SHOW THEM THEIR ERRORS. SOME WERE FISHING IN THE TROUBLED WATER OF ADVENTURISM, OTHERS DIDN'T GRASP MARX'S THEORY AND CALLED IT "UNREALISTIC FOLLY" OR "EXCESSIVELY RADICAL"...

"This Marx is a proper lunatic! We'll all be senile before his preaching comes to anything..."

BASICALLY, THE ERROR OF THESE "UTOPIAN SOCIALISTS" AND ANARCHISTS WAS AN ABSENCE OF FORESIGHT, OF PREPARATION, A CONTEMPT FOR STUDY AND SLOW, BUT METHODICAL ORGANIZATION, AND THE DENIAL OF A THEORY OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CLASS CONFLICT...

"They haven't grasped the class struggle! They imagine society's one big, happy family..."

FAMILY??
A HOLY FAMILY??
Hmmm...


IN TWO WORDS: THE CLASS STRUGGLE...

THE AMERICAN TWINS.
"United we stand, divided we fall."

THE HOLY FAMILY

E. H. ARNOLD

Die heilige Familie.

Kritik

Kritischen Kritik.

Gegen Bruno Bauer & Co.

Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx.

OR: "CRITIQUE OF CRITICAL CRITIQUE. AGAINST BRUNO BAUER & CO."

LABOUR & CAPITAL

THIS THESIS WAS OPPOSED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD...

INSTEAD OF CLASS STRUGGLE, CAPITALISM WANTS TO PREPARE AN "ALLIANCE" FOR PROGRESS..."
But the class struggle isn't just Marx's invention. It has always existed (and maybe always will) ever since the word began. (Although Marx tells us it won't always exist, as we shall see.)

In Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians and slaves...

In the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, master artisans, apprentices, serfs...

"The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society, has not done away with class antagonism. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle... Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps: Bourgeoisie and proletariat."

(That was written in the Manifesto of 1848. But don't go believing Marx was wrong. His epoch was very different from ours...)

What's important is to grasp that each social class has its own interests and each holds views about the government of the State consistent with the defence of those interests...

Social harmony which certain 'beautiful souls' profess, cannot exist...

He never denied what he owed to others—as in this letter to Weydemeyer, dated March 5, 1852:

'And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society, nor yet the struggle between them. Long before me, bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did was new was to prove: 1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historical phases in the development of production; 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."

It can't, because so long as any one class lives by exploiting another, a struggle will exist against such exploitation...

And this class struggle is necessary for human progress..."
Harmony between the classes would be ideal, of course, and an equitable redistribution of wealth and peace for all.

But...

It’s not on because the capitalist system has only one aim, profit, based on private property, which is obtained by exploiting the labours of the proletariat.

Nobody likes being exploited, unless they’re unaware of it...

...and many aren’t aware of it because they believe most how life is and you can’t change it...

*Note: In Marx’s day, the following religious beliefs predominated:

God made some to command and others to obey, and resignation is Christian...

Jesus was of this opinion. He saw no way out for the poor except for capitalism... Marx was convinced precisely of the contrary...

Marx proves with great precision that under this “new system,” (capitalism, that is) the worker is condemned never to enjoy the advantages which the system reserves only for the owners of the means of production...

Who ends up with the profits that you produce?

Who else but the boss, that’s who!

And why only the boss?

So Marx had to switch from philosophical problems to those which philosophy usually ignores, but he reckoned that it was necessary to come to grips with them before he could prove his theories:

**ECONOMIC PROBLEMS**

The peculiar Mr. Marx who never managed to solve his own financial problems (his family often went hungry) wants to rescue the problems of millions of exploited workers in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Brussels, I could go on all day...
Marx was by now living in the deepest poverty, without salary and without capital...

Except the one he was writing!

Marx to Engels, Sept. 8, 1852.

"You will have seen from my letters that, as usual when I am right in the shit myself and not merely hearing about it from a distance, I show complete indifference. Anyway, que faire? My house is in a hospital and the crisis is so disrupting that it requires all my attention... The atmosphere is very disturbed: my wife is ill, Jennychen is ill and Lenchen has a kind of nervous fever. I couldn't and can't call the doctor, because I have no money for the medicine. For eight or ten days I have managed to feed the family on bread and potatoes, but it is still doubtful whether I can get hold of any today... I have written no articles for Dana because I had not a penny to go and read the newspaper... Besides there is the baker, milkman, greengrocer, and old butcher's bills. How can I deal with all this devilish filth? And then finally, during the last eight or ten days I managed to borrow a few shillings and pence which were absolutely necessary if we were to avoid giving up the ghost..."

Marx begins:

WAGES

PRICES

CAPITAL

PROFITS

VALUE

RAW MATERIALS

THE HOLY EUCHARIST!

How is it defined?

If workers were asked: "How much are your wages?" one would reply: "I get a mark a day from my bourgeois," another "I get two marks," and so on. According to the different trades to which they belong, they would mention different sums of money which they receive from their respective bourgeois for a particular period of labour or for the completion of a particular piece of work, e.g. weaving a yard of linen or typesetting a printed sheet. In spite of the variety of their statements, they would all agree on one point: wages are the sum of money paid by the capitalist for a particular period of labour or for a particular output of labour.

The capitalist, it appears, therefore buys their labour with money. They sell him their labour for money. But this is merely the appearance. In reality what they sell to the capitalist is their labour power. The capitalist buys this labour power for a day, a week, a month, etc. And after he has bought it, he uses it by having the workers work for the stipulated time. For the same sum with which the capitalist has bought their labour power, e.g. two marks, he could have bought two pounds of sugar or a definite amount of any other commodity. The two marks, with which he bought two pounds of sugar, are the price of the two pounds of sugar. The two marks, with which he bought twelve hours' use of labour power, are the price of twelve hours' labour. Labour power, therefore, is a commodity, neither more nor less than sugar. The former is measured by the clock, the latter by the scales.

(Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital)

Have you understood?

The worker exchanges his commodity (labour-power) for an equivalent wage (so the boss says) to purchase what he needs to survive: light, food, roof, clothes...

or rather, just to keep afloat...
But if a worker's pay were calculated on his basic needs, it would have to be a very good pay, so the bosses might argue...

But it's not true!

Let us assume that our worker—a machinist—has to make a part of a machine which he can complete in one day. The raw material—iron and brass in the necessary previously prepared form—costs twenty marks. The consumption of coal by the steam-engine, the wear and tear of this same engine, of the lathe and other tools which our worker uses, represent for one day, and reckoned by his share of their use, a value of one mark. The wage for one day, according to our assumption, is three marks. This makes twenty-four marks in all for our machine part. But the capitalist calculates that he will obtain, on an average, twenty-seven marks from his customers in return, or three marks more than his outlay.

Whence came the three marks pocketed by the capitalist?

According to the assertion of classical economics, commodities are, on the average, sold at their values, that is, at prices corresponding to the amount of necessary labour contained in them. The average price of our machine part—twenty-seven marks—would thus be equal to its value, that is equal to the labour embodied in it. But of these twenty-seven marks, twenty-one marks were values already present before our machinist began work. Twenty marks were contained in the raw materials, one mark in the coal consumed during the work, or in the machines and tools which were used in the process and which were diminished in their efficiency to the value of this sum. There remain six marks which have been added to the value of the raw material. But according to the assumption of our economists themselves, these six marks can only arise from the labour added to the raw material by our worker. His twelve hours' labour has thus created a new value of six marks. The value of his twelve hours' labour would, therefore, be equal to six marks. And thereby we would at least have discovered what the "value of labour" is.

(Engels, Wage-Labour and Capital)

Six marks? But I only get three!!

In other words, the owner makes in a day what all the workers put together earn, and without dirtying his hands, whatever...

Yes, but I put up the money!

By keeping the worker's pay fixed, this means that in 12 hours of working time the boss earns the same sum multiplied by the number of workers he employs...

(OH, HARDLY WORTH MENTIONING!...)

And with such wages, a worker cannot ever afford to stop working...

But see here! I supply the money AND the factory!

It goes without saying—the worker works to live. What he earns goes into keeping his family alive, and so he passes the best years of his life doing what he doesn't like doing... while the boss grows richer and richer...

Look! How often must I say—I put up the money and...

Yes! And where did you get that money?

Gulp!

While the bosses run to consult their economists and ideologists, hoping to find some way to combat his theories, Marx continues: "Salary is the price of a given commodity... But how is the price of a commodity determined?..."
Prices

What determines the price of any product is competition, or, more exactly, three kinds of competition:

Seller versus seller

Purchaser versus purchaser

Seller versus purchaser

When there are 100 cars and 1000 possible buyers, the price of the vehicle jumps up according to the wishes of the seller... but if there are 100 cars and only 20 buyers, it's very probable the price will favour the buyer...

That's the law of "supply and demand", kiddo!!

But we still don't know what it is that determines prices...

Let's talk about the price of production... an automobile, for instance, just off the assembly line costs £1000; add to this all the hidden costs such as publicity, public relations exercises, the distributors' percentage, taxes, the producer's profit...

Result? The retail price to the public jumps to £2000...

When several vendors have the same merchandise to sell, they become competitors who may resort to cut-price tactics...

When a number of purchasers head for the same commodity, it goes to one who's willing to pay more for it...

Competition between seller and buyer occurs when one wants to sell high, and the other wants to buy cheap...

Here everything depends on the previous competition!

This raises prices

This lowers prices
Marx didn't know about such novelties as sales representatives, PR and ad men, all of whom grossly inflate the price of goods...

Anyway, the question has been asked whether (and by how much) the profits of the wealthy might be limited... by 10%? Is that "fair and decent"? But at this rate, the problem can never be resolved...

---

That's how our Charlie came to discover the basis of capitalism, the famous

**Surplus Value**

I promise not to yawn if you keep it simple...

O.K. Let's proceed. The basic formula of capitalism is very simple: buying so as to sell again for profit. This increase in the value of the money employed which results from the transaction, Marx calls surplus value.

Marx reasoned this: surplus value cannot derive from the mere exchange of goods, since this is an exchange of equivalent things, commodities are sold to buy other commodities...

So it's the labour-power of the worker which day by day swells the boss's capital, the rich become even richer, while the poor certainly don't get any fatter on their wages (which hardly keep pace...)

While the boss, the capitalist and the rich man make a fabulous profit from the worker's labour, the poor fellow doesn't make a penny extra for his work...

The world is all upside-down...!!

This drawing shows the process at work: the input of the capitalist and the worker (money from one and labour from the other) coming together to create a product. But the profit flows only in one direction, not both, as justice demands... so one grows fat while the other tightens what's left of his belt...
...even less does surplus value come from increases of price, since the reciprocal profit-and-loss between buyers and sellers tend to balance out...

If one gains, the other loses!

Well then!

To obtain surplus value (extra profit), the possessor of cash has got to kind on the market some other "commodity" with the current value having the one peculiar quality which makes it the source of value...

Simple! Human labour-power!

Gosh! and what is that commodity?

The capitalist buys the worker's labour-power as if it was any other kind of merchandise, and puts it to work eight hours a day (in Marx's time, the working day was 12 to 15 hours...)

In the two hours remaining he produces another commodity, a "surplus" product for which his boss doesn't pay him anything...

But the worker can make, say, in 6 hours ('necessary' working time) a product which is enough for his livelihood.

In six hours he produces his salary...

This surplus product, the boss's extra profit, is surplus value...

Thanks to surplus value, the boss gets richer, while the worker earns not a penny from it. Sure, some money is supposed to be used to improve working conditions... but it goes straight into the bank...

To fatten my capital some more...

This is the trap of present-day capitalism: increasing the worker's productive output and his efficiency, also increases surplus value...

A rise in productivity is nothing other than a way to augment the boss's capital—and the poverty of all workers...!!!
... Even less does surplus value come from increases of price, since the reciprocal profit-and-loss between buyers and sellers tend to balance out...

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In six hours he "produces his salary"...

This surplus product, the boss's extra profit, is surplus value...

Thanks to surplus value, the boss gets richer, while the worker earns not a penny from it. Sure, some money is supposed to be used to improve working conditions... but it goes straight into the bank...

To patronise capital some more...

This is the trap of present-day capitalism: increasing the worker's productive output and his efficiency, also increases surplus value...

A rise in productivity is nothing other than a way to augment the boss's capital — and the poverty of all workers...!!
OH. So what would workers live on if we didn't give 'em work? And what would you live off if we didn't work?

(Right on!!...) GULP!

SOMEONE IS SURE TO THINK EVERYTHING COULD BE RESOLVED BY A NICE RAISE IN SALARY

MARY DIDN'T AGREE WITH THIS BECAUSE...

WELL, JUST READ WHAT HE THOUGHT...

Real wages may remain the same; they may even rise, and yet relative wages fall. Let us suppose, for example, that all means of subsistence have gone down in price by two-thirds while wages per day have only fallen by one-third, that is to say, for example, from three marks to two marks. Although the worker can command a greater amount of commodities with these two marks than he previously could with three marks, yet his wages have gone down in relation to the profit of the capitalist. The profit of the capitalist (e.g. the manufacturer) has increased by one mark, that is, for a smaller sum of exchange values which he pays to the worker, the latter must produce a greater amount of exchange values than before. The share of capital relative to the share of labour has risen. The division of social wealth between capital and labour has become still more unequal. With the same capital, the capitalist commands a greater quantity of labour. The power of the capitalist class over the working class has grown, the social position of the worker has deteriorated, has been depressed one stage further below that of the capitalist.

What then is the general law which determines the rise and fall of wages and profits in their reciprocal relation? They stand in inverse ratio to each other. Capital's share, profit, rises in the same proportion as labour's share, wages, falls and vice versa. Profit rises to the extent that wages fall; it falls to the extent that wages rise.

(Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital)

(WHICH MEANS: THE BOSS NEVER WANTS TO LOSE....)

TAKE THE EXAMPLE OF CONSTRUCTION:

WELL, BY BUILDING APARTMENT BLOCKS IN WHICH YOU'LL NEVER LIVE AND FROM WHICH YOU'LL NEVER COLLECT RENT, YOU'RE ONLY HELPING THE CLASS WHICH EXPLOITS YOU TO GROW RICHER...

WHAT'VE I GOT TO DO WITH IT?

EVEN BY EARNING MORE – INDEED, DOUBLE – THE WORKER'S SITUATION WON'T CHANGE. MARX SAYS IT CLEARLY!

The best-salaried workers can get, under the most favourable conditions, only reveals in reality the strength and thickness of the golden chains which imprison them, and which only seem to permit them "greater" freedom of action...

MORE SALARY, MORE PROFIT FOR THE BOSS...

Hang on! That's not from Marx

(You're right! An American Marxist, Ernst Fischer, said it, and he goes on...)

"...the misery of the worker, above all, consists of the fact that by working for capitalism he reproduces capital, and by reproducing it, he also increases his own alienation and misery..."

By heck! And what do I do then?
The Manifesto was published as the platform of the Communist League, a workingmen's association, first exclusively German, later on international, and, under the political conditions of the Continent before 1848, unavoidably a secret society. At a Congress of the League, held in London in November 1847, Marx and Engels were commissioned to prepare for publication a complete theoretical and practical party program. Drawn up in German, in January 1848, the manuscript was sent to the printer in London a few weeks before the French revolution of February 24th. A French translation was brought out in Paris, shortly before the insurrection of June 1848. The first English translation, by Miss Helen Macfarlane, appeared in the Red Republican, London, 1850. A Danish and a Polish edition had also been published. The first Russian translation, made by Bakunin, was published at Herzen's Kolokol office in Geneva, about 1863...

However much the state of things may have altered during the last 25 years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct today as ever.

(Engels, 1888 preface to the Communist Manifesto)

Back in those days (1846-47), there was a group made up of German workers, artisans and intellectuals of the avant-garde (i.e. of advanced ideas) calling itself the "League of the Just", which met to talk politics and keep in touch with the "just" men in other countries...

And if justice doesn't get him, why justice, doesn't unjust injustice!

The "just" were half anarchist and preached a pretty strange form of socialism: destruction of the means of production (blowing up factories, preferably with the bosses in them) and a return to agriculture and artisan craftsman-ship... In February 1847, Marx and Engels were invited to join the League to help to reorganise it.
MARX AND ENGELS IMMEDIATELY GAINED THE LEAGUE'S FULL SYMPATHY, AND THANKS TO THEIR GREATER INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL MATURITY, THEY HAD A BIG INFLUENCE OVER THE LEAGUE... MARX, THE "ROUGH GUY" KNEW HOW TO COMMAND...

...to start, instead of the "Just", we'll call ourselves the League of Communists...

Right?...

NOTE: THIS KIND OF EASY-TO-READ CATECHISMA STYLE MADE ENGELS MORE POPULAR THAN MARX, WITH DEEPER AS HE WAS, SEEMED PRETTY HARD TO DIGEST...

Question 1: What is communism?
Answer: Communism is the doctrine of the prerequisites for the emanicipation of the proletariat.

Question 2: What is the proletariat?
Answer: The proletariat is that class of society whose means of livelihood entirely depend on the sale of its labor and not on the profit derived from capital; whose wage and wages, whose life and death, whose whole existence depend on the demand for labor, hence on the alternation of good times and bad, on the vagaries of unbridled competition. The proletariat, or class of proletarians, is, in a word, the working class of the 19th century.

Question 3: Proletarians, then, have not always existed?
Answer: No. Poor folk and working classes have always existed. The working classes have also for the most part been poor. But such poor, such workers as are living under conditions indicated above, hence proletarians, have not always existed, any more than free and unbridled competition has always existed.

Question 4: How did the proletariat originate?
Answer: The proletariat originated in the industrial revolution which took place in England during the second half of the 18th century and which has repeated itself since then in all the civilized countries of the world. This industrial revolution took place owing to the invention of the steam engine, of various spinning machines, of the power loom, and of a great number of other mechanical instruments. These machines were expensive and, consequently, could only be installed by persons who had plenty of capital to lay out. The introduction completely altered the existing method of production and displaced the existing workers. This was due to the fact that machinery could produce cheaper and better commodities than could the handicraftsmen with their imperfect spinning wheels and hand looms. Thus, these machines handed over industry entirely to the big capitalists and rendered the little property the workers possessed (tools, hand looms, etc.) entirely worthless. Soon the capitalists got all in their hands and nothing remained for the workers.

Question 7: In what way does the proletariat differ from the slave?
Answer: The slave is sold once and for all. The proletarian must sell himself by the hour or by the day. Each individual slave, being the direct property of a master, has his existence assured, be that existence ever so wretched, if only because of the interest of the slave owner. Each individual proletarian, the property as it were of the whole bourgeois class, whose labor is sold only when it is needed by the swarming class, has no security of life. Existence is merely guaranteed to the working class as a whole. The slave is excluded from competition; the proletariat is beaten by competition and is a prey to all its fluctuations. The slave is counted an object and not a member of civil society; the proletariat is recognized as a person, as a member of civil society. The slave may therefore be able to secure better conditions of life than can the proletarian, but the proletariat belongs to a higher stage of development of society than the slave. The slave frees himself by rapturing, of all relations of private ownership, only one, the relation of slavery and by this act becomes himself a proletarian; the proletarian can only achieve emancipation by abolishing private property in its entirety.

Question 16: Will it be possible to bring about the abolition of private property by peaceful methods?
Answer: This is greatly to be desired, and communists would be the last persons in the world to stand in the way of a peaceful solution. Communists know only too well that revolutions are not made deliberately and arbitrarily, but that everywhere and at all times revolutions have been the necessary outcome of circumstances quite independent of the will or the guidance of particular parties and whole classes. But they also perceive that the development of the proletariat in nearly all civilized countries is violently suppressed, and that in this way opponents of communism are working full force to promote a revolution. Should the oppressed proletariat at last thus be driven into a revolution, then we communists will rally to the cause of the workers and be just as prompt to act as we are now to speak.
Question 17: Will it be possible to abolish private property all at once?

Answer: No. This would be just as impossible as to multiply all at once the existing forces of production to the degree necessary for the inauguration of the community. The proletarian revolution, which in all probability is coming, will for this reason, only be able to transform present society gradually. Private property will be abolished only when the means of production have become available in sufficient quantities.

Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages.

We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of a series of revolutions in the modes of production and of exchange. 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 chivalric 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 indefatigable 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 born away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation.

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. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations set out of the ground—what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour?
Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labour, the work of the proletarian has lost all individual character, and, consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workmen is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labour, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases.

Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of labourers, crowded into the factory, are organised like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State: they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the over-looker, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful, and the more embittered it is.

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labour, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labour of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.

No sooner is the exploitation of the labourer by the manufacturer, so far, at an end, that he receives his wages in cash, than he is set upon by the other portions of the bourgeoisie, the landlord, the shopkeeper, the pawnbroker, etc.

But with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more. The various interests and conditions of life within the ranks of the proletariat are more and more equalised, in proportion as machinery obliterates all distinctions of labour, and nearly everywhere reduces wages to the same low level. The growing competition among the bourgeoisie, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The increasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious: the collisions between individual workmen and individual bourgeois take more and more the character of collisions between two classes. Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeoisie: they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they find permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. Here and there the contest breaks out into riots.

Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that place the workers of different localities in contact with one another. It was just this contact that was needed to centralise the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle. And that union, to attain which the burghers of the Middle Ages, with their miserable highways, required centuries, the modern proletarians, thanks to railways, achieve in a few years. This organisation of the proletarians into a class, and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset again by the competition between the workers themselves. But it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier. It compels legislative recognition of particular interests of the workers, by taking advantage of the divisions among the bourgeoisie itself. Thus the ten-hours' bill in England was carried.
All property relations in the past have continually been subject to historical change consequent upon the change in historical conditions.

The French Revolution, for example, abolished feudal property in favour of bourgeois property. The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property. But modern bourgeois private property is the final and most complete expression of the system of producing and appropriating products, that is based on class antagonisms, on the exploitation of the many by the few. In this sense, the theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property.

We Communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man's own labour, which property is alleged to be the ground work of all personal freedom, activity and independence. Hard-won, self-acquired, self-earned property! Do you mean the property of the petty artisan and of the small peasant, a form of property that preceded the bourgeois form? There is no need to abolish that; the development of industry has to a great extent already destroyed it, and is still destroying it daily. Or do you mean modern bourgeois private property? But does wage labour create such property for the labourer? Not a bit. It creates capital, i.e., that kind of property which exploits wage labour, and which cannot increase except upon condition of beguiling a new supply of wage labor for fresh exploitation. Property, in its present form, is based on the antagonism of capital and wage labour. Let us examine both sides of this antagonism.
You are horrified at our intending to do away with private property. But in your existing society, private property is already done away with for nine-tenths of the population; its existence for the few is solely due to its non-existence in the hands of those nine-tenths. You reproach us, therefore, with intending to do away with a form of property, the necessary condition for whose existence is, the non-existence of any property for the immense majority of society.

**BUT THE WORLD WOULD GO TO RACK AND RUIN OR SO THEY SAY...**

In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend. From the moment when labour can no longer be converted into capital, money, or rent, into a social power capable of being monopolised, i.e., from the moment when individual property can no longer be transformed into Bourgeois property, into capital, from that moment, you say, individuality vanishes. You must, therefore, confess that by “individual” you mean no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle-class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way, and made impossible.

Capital needs workers, but workers don't need capital. It's in the strength of their arms...!

It has been objected that upon the abolition of private property all work will cease, and universal laziness will take us. According to this, bourgeois society ought long ago to have gone to the dogs through sheer idleness; for those of its members who work, acquire nothing, and those who acquire anything, do not work. The whole of this objection is but another expression of the tautology: that there can no longer be any wage-labour when there is no longer any capital.

There's nothing but politics in this Manifesto!!

Not even a joke or two? Nothing about girls?

OH! OF COURSE THERE IS! MARX WAS THE FIRST TO CONDEMN THE EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN, AND IN THE MANIFESTO HE DID SO IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS!

(PLEASE KEEP COOL AND GO ON READING...)

The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the woman.

He has not even a suspicion that the real point aimed at is to do away with the status of women as mere instruments of production.

For the rest, nothing is more ridiculous than the virtuous indignation of our bourgeois at the community of women which, they pretend, is to be openly and officially established by the Communists. The Communists have no need to introduce community of women; it has existed almost from time immemorial.
Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives.

Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with, is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e. of prostitution both public and private.

And since we're talking about women, let's see what old Prof. Engels had to say...)

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This situation changed with the patriarchal family and even more with the monogamous individual family. The administration of the household lost its public character. It was no longer the concern of society. It became private service. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production. Only modern large-scale industry again threw open to her — and only to the proletarian women at that — the avenue to social production; but in such a way that, when she fulfills her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and when she wishes to take part in public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfill her family duties. What applies to the woman in the factory applies to her in all professions, right up to medicine and law. The modern individual family is based on the open or disguised domestic enslavement of the woman; and modern society is a mass composed solely of individual families as its molecules. Today, in the great majority of cases, the man has to be the earner, the breadwinner of the family, at least among the propertyed classes, and this gives him a dominating position which requires no special legal privileges. In the family, he is the bourgeois; the wife represents the proletariat.

Go on! Women's Lib is already 100 years old!!

We have seen above, that the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, 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 of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be achieved 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.

These measures will of course be different in different countries.
What are the socialist measures Charlie mentions?

You can see—listed below—the first practical programme for constructing socialism:
And if you compare it with present-day reality, two things become clear:
1. The influence of Marx everywhere in the world...
2. Countries today (after 100 years) which haven't yet implemented (and don't foresee doing so) even this minimum and incomplete programme...

Nevertheless, in the most advanced countries, the following will be pretty generally applicable:
1. Abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax.
3. Abolition of all right of inheritance.
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels.
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly.
6. Centralization of means of communication and transport in the hands of the State.
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State; the bringing into cultivation of waste-lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.
8. Equal liability of all to labour. Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture.
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country, by a more equal distribution of the population over the country.

Herr Karl Marx (alias the "guard goy") forcefully demonstrates that capitalism is incapable of resolving the problems of humanity. So long as the system goes on developing, everything will go from bad to worse... a decadent empire spreading like a plague everywhere...

Is that—gasp—North American Imperialism...?

Why's THAT?

What went wrong with the bourgeoisie that started off so well?

Why has it produced gangster representatives like Hitler, Trujillo, the Brazilian popes, Truman, Franco, Pincher, Nixon, and the rest...?

Marx couldn't make it any plainer. All systems which carry the destructive seeds of class war will eventually disappear... but before going under, they defend themselves to the death like savage, wounded beasts, until the up-and-coming system administers the coup-de-grâce...
CAPITALISM HAS PROVEN ITSELF UNABLE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS
OF THE PEOPLE LIVING UNDER IT (NOT TO MENTION PROBLEMS IN
GENERAL OF HUMANITY) ... AND IT'S WELL ON THE ROAD TO FINAL CRISIS
AND EVENTUAL COLLAPSE.

JUST AS ONCE
MARX "PROPHESIZED"
IT A CENTURY AGO...

HUMANITY—THOUGHT MARX—DID NOT REQUIRE 'OUTSIDE' HELP TO INVENT ITS
TOOLS. NO ANGEL APPEARED FROM HEAVEN TO TEACH MAN HOW TO CONSTRUCT
PLoughs AND WHEELS...

Wheel?!!
What I want to invent
is the lifebuoy!!

EACH GENERATION COMES ALONG TO CREATE, AND GRADUALLY PERFECT NEW
TOOLS—BY WORKING AND NOT THANKS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT! (EVEN IF NOT ALL THE
GREAT INVENTORS WERE ATHEISTS...)

BUT TOOLS CANNOT
WORK ALL BY
THEMSELVES.

PEOPLE HAVE TO SWEAT
TO KEEP THEM OPERATING...

The moving forces of society

HISTORY

History is the life
of people—period—
that’s all.
Nothing is produced in isolation. Human labour always has a social character. Society was formed by men as a help, as a protection against wild animals, to get better results from work...

The combination of "productive forces" (or units of production) and the relations of production, Marx defines by the concept of **Mode of Production**.

Indeed, Marx says—history becomes the history of the modes of production...

History isn't just the life and adventures of nobles, kings, priests and such, but it reveals the successive stages of the different modes of production by which mankind gained power over nature.

Marx distinguishes 5 systems or modes thus:

- **Primitive Community**
- **Slave State**
- **Feudal State**
- **Capitalist System**
- **Socialist Society**
Feudalism (hoping everybody'll understand it!)

Those who actually lived on the land had some claim to their bit of earth. But their labour belonged to the feudal overlord to whom they paid taxes and who used them whenever he went to war... when I say "king" by the way, you can just as well read "pope", because the church of Christ was also a feudal system like any other (and probably worse...)

Within Feudalism, the social classes seen from top to bottom were:

- Nobility
- Clergy
- Merchant
- Guild artisans
- Serfs

Feudalism comes from the Latin word, "feudum", the name given to the lands which the king divided up among his nobles in exchange for their support... (a "feudum" = a "fee")
As time went on, the merchants and guild artisans grew in numbers and power. They began to shrug off the burdensome yoke imposed on them by the nobles and clergy, the first intellectuals awoke, bringing new ideas into daylight. A new class is born, the Bourgeoisie.

I'm really fed up with paying taxes to these low-about bishops and kings. Long live Liberty!

Damn it!!!

Capitalism is already in its venerable old age. In practice, it saw the light of day in Paris, 1789, with the French Revolution...

The French Revolution was primarily a liberation movement. 'Liberation' from what? From the power of the monarch and the clergy.

For what? To defend private property and free enterprise.

For whose benefit? The Bourgeoisie; i.e., the rich who wanted the liberty to make more money and the liberty of the serfs so as to buy their labour freely.

The French Revolution was a general class struggle, a tough pitched battle in which everyone took sides against the common enemy: the nobility and the clergy.

Once defeated, their power went to the ascending class - the Bourgeoisie. The peasantry got something out of it: ownership of their lands. But the serf-labourers got nothing at all...

Except the "liberty" to exchange masters...
The Bourgeois Revolution (or the French: same difference) was followed by another revolution - the Industrial Revolution. Humanity invented machines which took the place of manual crafts. This completely revolutionized this mode of production.

On swiz! But these 'effin' machines won't work 'emeeching!!

The appearance on the scene of machine-produced goods brings with it a couple of new social classes: capitalists, or owners of the machines; and workers, or the operators tied to these infernal machines. With machinery comes a new mode of production which Marx calls Capitalism.

Now the worker isn't the slave of a feudal lord. He's a free citizen (I.e. free to sell himself to the highest bidder...)

Right! Anyone feel like paying me more?...

Just as everyone was settling down happily with capitalism (and like Hegel) thinking that society had finally taken the right road, along comes Marx and spoils the party...

'Ere! Who the 'ell invited you hippie?...

Mary's theory of class struggle - inevitable and historical - really hit capitalism below the belt. Sooner or later, says Marx, capitalism is going to have to retreat before a newer and fairer system...
Marx shows us how the laws of historical development determine the inevitable sequence of modes of production: from primitive to slavery, from feudalism on to capitalism... which led (and still leads) many to ask themselves:

"Then why the class struggle?"

"Why struggle for socialism, and fight the police, if it will happen anyway?"

**Marx Replies:**

Because men make history, not the other way round...

History doesn't do anything, it doesn't promote any struggle.

Capital will attempt to resist its own downfall. What will lead to its destruction are capitalism's internal contradictions, but only because of an adversary developing independently of capitalism's will, i.e. the proletariat...

Marx knows perfectly well that the rich will never freely surrender their wealth and privileges...

"You gotta persuade 'em with 'good manners."

My word! I'd like to know how the plebeian riff-raff will take over...

How?

Well, if anyone really wanted to know (including this fat Russian footling), Marx will unerringly explain the recipe for transforming capitalist society into a socialist one: expropriating the private means of production, replacing the government and state administration... i.e. Seizing power...

But how can the workers seize power??
MARX SUPPLIES THE FORMULA IN THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO...

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

A workers' party!

A hand is made up of 5 fingers, but a fist is the same 5 fingers united...

(Not for nothing, the fist is the symbol of the workers' struggle...)

And so?

MARX MAKES THE POINT CLEAR—AS IN THIS ILLUSTRATION:

A UNION

SEVERAL UNIONS

CONFEDERATION OF UNIONS

"In its struggle against the united power of the ruling class, only the working class—as an organised class—can activate a party of its own to oppose all other old, reactionary parties..."

Ulster Unionists

Liberal Tories

N.F.I.

L’INTERNATIONALE

But a mass party isn’t built overnight!!

(Or by parliamentary legislation...)
The first step must be to convince the worker that only unity will give him the means to change his existence. He must become aware of his power, of the reason why he lives badly, and that capitalism will never solve his problems. He must realise what socialism can offer him...

In a word (his got to be)

Only a politicised working class can move to the next stage: the organised struggle to safeguard its rights...

Even in Marx's day, some already believed that union campaigns only served to obtain higher wages and better living conditions... But, says Marx, this is the wrong way to understand unions...

"Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the temporary interests of the working class, but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that movement." (Manifesto)

The principle aim of any labour union must be change which anticipates socialism... or else it just wastes its time, as American unions do, struggling against on bended knee for capitalism's sake...

Thanks boss!

For the lovely raise

Now comes the interesting question, which many readers have probably asked themselves: peaceful road or armed struggle? Which?

Ranged against the working man's party, there's the U.S. government... the army, the police, laws, repression, the whole propaganda machine!

... and I'll add a dash of what's missing--life in Chile!!

Sooner or later--Marx said--the confrontation has got to turn deadly, and the working class will arrive at revolution. A workers' party may help the proletariat to screen concessions from the capitalists, but even that won't change the basic exploitative conditions (more or less exploited, maybe, but never completely free...)
The struggle of industrial and agrarian workers within the frame of unions, parties, and even parliament, is only a way to prepare, to organize, to gain the strength for the decisive blow...

"...in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character..."

"...that a small section of the ruling class, cut itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class...just as, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie..." (manifest)

This "small section" cutting itself adrift from the bourgeoisie includes intellectuals, like Marx and Engels, Lenin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro, Che, and lots of others who would have done nothing alone... Like the students who won't change anything unless they join forces with the workers and peasants... (amen!!)

Marx never imagined a working class movement separate from socialist theory, a socialist party without mass support is a phantom, a body without a head, or vice versa, like the leftist parties which have lost touch with the real problems of workers and peasants...

"...The teaching of Marx is all powerful because it is true. It is complete and harmonious, providing men with a consistent view of the universe, which cannot be reconciled with any superstition, any reaction, any defence of bourgeois oppression. It is the lawful successor of the best that has been created by humanity in the 19th century—German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism..."
LENIN WAS THE ONE TO CONTINUE MARY'S IDEAS.
HE CONTRIBUTED GREATLY TO REVOLUTIONARY
THEORY, DEFENDING IT AGAINST ITS
ENEMIES AND MISTAKEN
INTERPRETERS. HE WAS THE
ONE TO PROVE MARX
CORRECT...

But Marx, basing himself on the experience of the Paris
Commune, sought that the proletariat must smash the state machine
that the bourgeoisie had created and make for its own purposes
a new one for it. ... This new type of state machinery was created
by the Paris Commune, ... by the Russian Soviets of
Workers... [Lenin, vol. 26, p.90]

(BUT TO GO ON ABOUT
LENIN AND THE RUSSIAN
REVOLUTION CALLS FOR
A WHOLE OTHER BOOK...)

... I THINK THIS IS THE RIGHT PLACE
TO WRITE

The End...

(...well, not entirely...) ☹️

A LITTLE DICTIONARY
OF MARXIST TERMS... *

You're not obliged to read this now! Declare a holiday and start again - later on!
And I hope it will be clearer than the preceding pages...
AGNOSTICISM / (from the Greek, agnostos = unknown). Philosophical doctrine which maintains that human reason is limited and the true nature of things inaccessible to men. This doctrine holds that the world we observe and deal with is not an objective reality, but rather a product of the activity of our reason and sense organs. Agnosticism is disproved by experience and practice, now that science has cleared the way to the knowledge of things. There remains one difference: between what is already known and what is not yet known.

Agnostic philosophers include Hume, Kant, Comte, Schopenhauer, Mach etc.

ANALYSIS and SYNTHESIS / 1) analysis (in Greek, 'decomposition'), dis-integration of an object or phenomenon into its simple component parts. 2) synthesis (in Greek, 'composition'), recombination of the parts of an object or phenomenon as a whole. Metaphysics opposes analysis to synthesis. Dialectical materialism, instead, maintains the unity of these two procedures. “Without analysis there is no synthesis” (Engels). For example, when analysing the human body, anatomists study its organs separately; but to grasp the complete, deep significance and function of every organ, analysis is not enough. It is necessary to consider the organism as a whole: indeed, studying its parts, but as a synthesis.

ANIMISM / (from the Latin, anima: soul). The spiritualization of natural phenomena. The belief that behind every natural object there hides an invisible or ‘mental’ spirit force. “This tendency to personification had as a consequence the creation of the gods.” (Engels). Primitive animism was the basis of religion and later idealist thought.

ANTAGONISM / (from the Greek, agon = contest). An irreconcilable contradiction which is resolved by violence. As the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class is thus resolved by socialist revolution. Contradictions between the working class and peasantry have no antagonistic character.

ATHEISM / (from the Greek, ‘without god’). The scientific negation of religion. Atheism was born in ancient Greece with the materialist philosophers, Democritus and Epicurus, who denied the supernatural and stated that the world is nothing other than matter composed of atoms.

ANTI-DUHRING / The abbreviated title of a work by Engels: “The Scientific Revolution of Eugen Duhring”, a classic of Marxist literature. The work was aimed against the German philosopher, Duhring, who wished to refute Marxism by recourse to metaphysics. The ANTI-DUHRING is a masterly synthesis of Marx’s forty years of struggle and study.

ATOM / The idea of the atom was first introduced to science by Democritus and Epicurus, more than 2,000 years ago. The physicist, Newton, and the philosophers, Hobbes and Gasendi, worked on this theory.

BASE (or INFRA) and SUPERSTRUCTURE / The mode of production, i.e. the forces and relations of production which constitute the economic base: the foundation of society. Once the base (or infrastructure) is modified then the superstructure (including the political system, religion, philosophy, morality, art, science etc.) must also modify itself, at a more or less rapid rhythm. (see also ECONOMIC BASE)

CAPITAL / or ‘Das Kapital’, the principal work by Karl Marx. A detailed analysis of the laws governing the economic development of capitalism – but also an immense historical and philosophical treatise. In this work, the theory of historical materialism is fundamentally developed.

CATEGORIES / Notions which express the essential relations and laws of the real world. In dialectical materialism, these categories are: matter, motion, space, time, necessity, causality, quantity, substance, form, content, etc. In Historical Materialism, they are: the social-economic structure, forces of production, infra and super-structure, ideology, etc. These categories represent a generalization of the processes and phenomena of nature, independent of the consciousness of man.

CAUSALITY / One of the forms of general interdependence of phenomena in the objective world. In essence, cause and effect
"are only moments of interdependence and universal relation, of the connection of events; they are, above all, present in the chain of the development of matter." (Lenin) There can be no phenomena (events) without causes. All natural phenomena have natural and material causes. Cause and effect stand in reciprocal relation to each other. Between them exists an internal relation regulated by laws. Thus in the socialist system, the development of technology becomes a cause of the increasing well-being (effect) of workers.

CLASS STRUGGLE (see also SOCIAL CLASSES) / Struggle between exploiters and exploitates. Demonstration that class interests are irreconcilable. The forms of class struggle are diverse: economic, political, ideological, theoretical. But all such kinds are subordinate to the political struggle. With the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, class struggle does not cease but takes on new forms.

COMMUNISM / The doctrine of Marx and Engels formed the basis of the materialist conception of history. Communism is the stage following after socialism and when socialism ceases to exist. Communism does not yet exist in any country. The Soviet Union, China and other socialist countries are still in the phase of socialism where class struggle has not yet terminated.

CONDITIONS OF THE MATERIAL LIFE OF SOCIETY / The elements determining the conditions of material life in society are: 1) geographical situation and natural resources; 2) population density; 3) the mode of production by which it creates the material goods necessary to its existence. The fundamental force which determines development of a society, and also its passage from one kind of social system to another, is material production — the development of the "productive power of the society".

DARWIN, CHARLES (1809-1882) / Celebrated English thinker, founder of the theory of evolution. "Darwin put an end to the belief that the animal and vegetable species bear no relation to one another, except by chance, and that they were created by God, and hence immutable." (Lenin)

DETERMINISM and INDETERMINISM / Determinism: doctrine concerning the necessary relationship between events and phenomena and the accidental conditioning. For example, the anarchy of the capitalist mode of production fatally determines economic crisis; the development of class struggle inevitably determines a social revolution.

ECCLESIASTICISM / More mechanical link-ups of various concepts, without any pre-established principle. Ecclesiastic thinkers attempt to reconcile materialism and idealism.

ECLECTICISM / The mode of production at the basis of any social system. The economic base (or infrastructure) determines the totality of the social superstructure: the state, political institutions, ideas and theories, etc. "The structures of every society can change rapidly only by revolutionizing the economic base." (Mark)

ECLECTIC STRUCTURE / Ordering of society into classes: the relations of production which correspond to the specific level determined by the development of the material forces of production.

EMPIRICISIOM / Reactionary, idealistic current of philosophy which arose in Germany and Austria during the second half of the 19th century. Its initiator was Averarius and Mach. They affirmed that "elements of the world" i.e. "elements of experience" stood at the basis of all phenomena. Each thing is a "combination of elements". By the term 'elements', they meant the fact that sensation is at the basis of phenomena, but in such a way as to identify 'element' with sense-impression.

EPICURUS / (342-270 B.C.) Greek materialist philosopher, teacher and follower of Democritus.

EVALUATION and REVOLUTION / Quantitative changes, of an unappreciated, slow and interrupted kind, some about through evolution. Qualitative changes, on the contrary, happen all at once, by leaps, in a revolutionary manner. Development implies both, necessarily. Evolution prepares the way for revolution. But opportunism replaces revolutionary struggle by reform.

EXISTENCE / Philosophic term designating subjective reality, in matter.

EXISTENCE and SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS / From the viewpoint of dialectical materialism, existence is primary while consciousness, as a simple reflection of matter, of nature, of human thought, is secondary. Social existence — i.e. the mode of producing material goods, objects, food, clothing etc. — is the primary element which determines social consciousness and the spiritual, intellectual life of society (its culture). Marx extended materialism into the areas of social phenomena by demonstrating that social existence and the mode of production determine social consciousness.

EXPERIMENT / By experiment is currently understood the 'practical experience' of the procedures verifying knowledge by direct observation of phenomena — either in the laboratory or in objective reality. Philosophy explains experiment either in materialist or idealist form. For dialectical materialism, experience presupposes the presence of an objective, material world which exists independently of human consciousness. But for idealism, experience does not involve material objects or even phenomena: rather, it is concerned with our past impressions. It can therefore consider religious 'sentiment' alone as experimental proof enough of the existence of God.

FATALISM / (from the Latin, 'fate') Idealist notion which holds that historical development is pre-determined by some unknown force, by 'destiny'. Fatalism denies the creative function of people, history and political struggle, and considers humanity a plaything in the hands of God or fate, unable to influence things through ACTION.

FETISHISM / To deity or 'fetishize' objects means to give them occult, supernatural forces foreign to human nature. In primitive times, the fetish is an object of awe; later becoming a good or bad luck charm. In capitalism, the fetishism of money, property and commodities is the magic of capitalist ownership.

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FEUERBACH, LUDWIG (1804-72) / One of the major German materialists who proclaimed and defended atheism and influenced the founders of Marxism. Feuerbach, however, remains idealist in his concept of social phenomena. Neglecting the material basis of society, he distinguished the successive stages of human development according to the different forms of religious consciousness. Feuerbach did not grasp the importance of the revolutionary action, or the dialectical inter-relation between man and nature and the transformation of humanity in the process of production.

FIDEISM / (from the Latin, fides: ‘faith’) Doctrine especially in Latin countries which replaces understanding by faith and stresses the determining role it plays. Lenin sees idealist philosophy as a “more or less weakened or delated fideism”, so to speak, a clericalism. (See IDEALISM)

FORCES OF PRODUCTION / Instruments or tools with which material goods are produced; also persons who use these production forces to create material goods, thanks to experience and work training. Productive forces (machines, tools, raw materials etc.) and human labour-power must be present as the indispensable elements of work. Social life is determined by production forces which are in constant demand and the modes of production employed. Hence the importance of the social planning of these forces, which will only bear fruit with socialism.

FORM and CONTENT / In nature, society or thought, everything has its content and form. Agrarian reform, for instance, may be the content; but its form may vary according to the modes of application.

FORMAL LOGIC / Theory concerning the laws of human thought which separates nature from the inquiry into those laws. Formal logic does not presuppose itself with material truth i.e. the prinicipal assertion and conception of natural phenomena, but with ‘formal’ truth. Hence its name. Herein lies the basis of metaphysical method. Dialectics (i.e. natural logic) is the contrary of formal logic since it considers that the content of thought i.e. the prinicipal assertion and laws of logic, must correspond to materiality.

CONCEPTION of social reality proper to the then new-born bourgeoisie which struggled to liberate human personality and science from bondage to religious feudalism. Petrarch, Boecceio, Erasmus, Machiavelli etc., were some representatives of bourgeois humanism. Humanism cannot survive under a capitalistic regime because it is opposed to the exploitation of man by man, the very essence of capitalism. Only the real liberation of humanity can bring about genuine humanism.

HUME, DAVID / (1711-1776) English bourgeois philosopher, historian and economist. As and essayist, he reckoned insoluble the problem of the existence or non-existence of objective reality. He affirmed that we cannot know what things are in themselves and whether they exist or not. Deriving the material means of things and causality, Hume concluded that all alone exists is a flux of psychological perception in human consciousness, and that science leads only to the simple description of this current, with little possibility either of understanding or of conceiving its laws.

IDEALISM / Philosophy which considers reality as an incarnation of a ‘universal idea’ or of a ‘consciousness’. Idealism is closely linked with religion and leads more or less openly to the idea of God.

IDEOLOGY / Combination of ideas, assumptions, notions of determined concepts, representations. Politics, science, morals, art etc. are forms of ideology. All ideologies are reflections of social existence. In class-based society, ideology expresses and defends the interests of the classes in struggle. In bourgeois society, struggle develops between bourgeois and socialist ideologies. There is no intermediate term, since, as Lenin affirms, humanism has not elaborated a ‘third’ ideology.

INDUCTION (and DEDUCTION) / Induction: method of reasoning which consists of passing from the particular to the general, from facts to generalizations. Deduction: method which consists of passing from the general to the particular, from generalized proportions to particular conclusions.

INSTRUMENTS (or TOOLS) OF PRODUCTION / Principle elements of productive forces (i.e. machinery) employed by humanity to act upon nature and transform it into material goods. Marx says that economic epochs differ from each other not so much in what they produce but how they do so. How labour produces, the means of production are not simply material of human labour-power but also the indication of the relations by means of which work takes place.

KANT, IMMANUEL / (1724-1804) Founder of classical German idealism. He attempted to reconcile materialism and idealism. “When Kant admits that a certain ‘thing-in-itself’, outside us, must correspond to our representation of it, then he is a materialist. When he declares it impossible to know this ‘thing-in-itself’, he becomes an idealist.” (Larina) As Kant himself declares, the central problem of his theory of knowledge is to define the limits of the laws of reason, while still retaining a place for God beyond such limits. In his doctrine of ethics, Kant believes it “necessary to recognize the existence of God and the soul’s immortality, so as to maintain a basis for morality.


MATTER / (or MATERIAL) / By its nature, the world is material. The various phenomena in nature corresponds to the distinct forms of matter in motion. Lenin wrote that matter is a philosophical category to designate objective reality which presents itself to humanity through human perception. Matter is copied, 'photographed' or reflected through human sensations while retaining an existence proper to itself and independent of them.

MATHEMATICAL / One of the two main tendencies in philosophy which gives a specific reply to the fundamental problem of the relation between thought and existence. Materialism recognizes matter as the primary element, and consciousness (or thought) secondarily dependent on science—particularly the physical sciences. Dialectical
materialism recuperates the entire materialist tradition preceding it and re-elaborates everything of value in it. (see below)  

MATERIALISM (DIALECTICAL) / Philosophical doctrine formulated by Marx and Engels, so-called because of its dialectical method — interrelating, studying and understanding natural phenomena; and materialist by its manner of interpreting phenomena and drawing up its theory. Dialectical materialism is the only scientific interpretation of the world; and it is opposed to idealism which offers an interpretation based on religion.  

MATERIALISM (HISTORICAL) / Marxist doctrine of the development of human society. Historical materialism sees in the development of material goods necessary to human existence the primary force which determines all social life and which conditions the transition from one kind of social order to another.  

The growth of human power over nature finds its expression in the development of the productive forces of society. The transmutation of economic-social forces throughout history (primitive communitarism, slave, feudal and capital states) is, above all, the consequence of this dialectical process, which is accompanied by a change in man's modes and relations toward a more progressive society. Such change is the necessary effect, the cause of which are the laws to which social productive forces everywhere submit.  

Discovery of the real basis of life and social development (material production) allows one to see for the first time the importance of the creative spirit of the masses. Great men were not of their own accord to make history, but the workers, the real producers of the production process, who accomplished the material tasks necessary for social subsistence.  

MATERIALISM (MECHANISTIC) / Early form of materialism which sought to explain all natural phenomena by mechanical laws. It considers motion not as change in general but as the mechanical displacement of bodies in space due to external influences — the cause and effect of a series of events. Mechanistic materialism denies the spontaneous movement of bodies, their qualitative change, the development by leaps, the passage from inferior to superior.  

METAPHYSICS / (from the Greek, meta physics: those works of Aristotle after his Physics) Metaphysical method affirms that things and their mental reflections (i.e., concepts) are essentially discrete, unchanging, unchanging, given once for all, and can only be investigated separately, independently one from the other. Metaphysics posits in principle that nature is at rest, immutable, unchanging and unmovable. It considers the process of development uniquely on a quantitative and not qualitative level. Politically, the stance is one that denies class struggle and tries to show that the transition from capitalism to socialism can be realized without violent uprisings, by peaceful fusion of capitalism with socialism.  

METHODOLOGY / Doctrine of method: combination of procedures, techniques of inquiry applicable to all sciences.  

MONISM / (from the Greek, monos: one) Philosophical doctrine which, contrary to dualism, recognizes as the cause of all existence only a single principle or origin. Materialists, for instance, consider matter as the unique cause of all phenomena; and the idealism-monist, spirit or God or mind.  

MORALITY, MORALES / Norms of social life, human behavior, one of the forms of social consciousness. Materialists hold that morality changes with each change of social order. There exists a morality typical of the slave state, another in the feudal state, the bourgeois, and the communist. The ruling class imposes its own morality and puts it into practice in accord with its historical class interests.  

NEGATION OF NEGATION / The law of the negation of negation is fundamental to dialectics. Every phenomenon, because internally contradictory, contains in itself its own proper negation (or its opposite). Thus, within itself unfolds the conflict between what was and what is becoming — between old and new. Negation of the past state is not, however, a pure or true negation. It is a negation in becoming of the thing which has been (as metaphysics thinks). "Negation, in dialectics, does not signify merely saying No, or simply saying something does not exist, or destroying it in some manner." (Engels) Dialectics demands "demonstration of the relation between the negative and the positive; so as to encounter the positive in the negative." (Lenin) Communism, thus, declares that everything positive has been created by humanity — even what was obtained under the yoke of capitalism. This is the positive in the negative. Communist society, in its turn, is the negation of the exploitative class regime — i.e. the negation of the negation.  

OBJECTIVE / Opposite of subjective: what exists outside human consciousness, independently, but which human thought genuinely reflects.  

PANTHEISM / (from the Greek, pan: all, and theos: god) Philosophical doctrine according to which divinity, as a spiritual and impersonal first principle, is found throughout nature — so that everything is divine.  

PLATO / (427–347 B.C.) Greek philosopher, idealist of the slave-owning aristocracy; founder of objective idealism which maintains that the external world is a product of the mind. The Pantheists are the principal exponent of this view. Plato affirms that the external world has the idea of a 'trees', which is always identical, eternal, and this is the case for all of nature. According to Plato, things are only the shadows of ideas. Ideas are eternal, things transitory. Not perception, but reason and its concepts give one true knowledge of the essence of things in reality.  

PHILOSOPHY / (from the Greek, philos: love, friend, and sophos: science or wisdom) In dialectical materialism, the science of the most general laws of nature, human society and thought. The fundamental problem of philosophy is the whole relationship between existence and thought. To find the answer, all philosophical tendencies divide up into two camps — materialist and idealist.  

PHILOSOPHY, THE CLASSICAL GERMAN / Of the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. Kent, its founder, was succeeded by Fichte and Schelling. Hegel's system represents the culmination of this philosophical movement. Classical German philosophy reflects the influence of European revolutionary movements. But the full effect of such influences was deflected by the retrogressive socio-economic conditions of the epoch. This philosophy did contribute something fundamental — the renewal of dialectics as the theory of development. Taken up by Marx, it served as the basis for dialectical materialism. Engels has brilliantly analysed this philosophy in his work, "Ludwig Feuerbach And The End Of Classical German Philosophy."  

POSITIVISM / One of the most widespread of the idealist currents within modern bourgeois philosophy. Positivism, according to its founders, is based not upon abstract deductions but upon ‘positive’, real facts. August Comte, its creator, believed that the human mind must renounce any effort to know the very essence of things and content itself with the truth derived from observation and experiment. But this is only an "up to date" agnosticism.  

PROPERTY / Private property appeared long after the origins of humanity. In the primitive communal state, ownership of the means of production was held in common. In the slave state, the owner (or the person who makes use of the production) is the one who exploits the community, not to particular individuals — hence socialist property.  

RATIONALISM / Theory which tends to recognize reason as the unique source of true knowledge; contrary to empiricism which makes perception this source of knowledge. Descartes and Leibnitz were outstanding representatives of rationalism.  

RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION / Reciprocal relations established between people in the process of producing material goods. Production of goods, not only individually, but together by uniting and practising communal action. History determines five main types of such relations: 1) In the primitive communal state, ownership of the instruments of production and products was held in common. With the passage from stone tools to metal, the tribes turned to agriculture and commerce and began to accumulate
commodities. This led to the birth of private property, and monopolizing of accumulated wealth by a minority, and the rise of classes — the owners and the slaves. 2) In the slave epoch, free labour was replaced by slave exploitation: land was parcelled out to his share who worked for him partly freely, partly by payment in kind. 4) With the rise of the bourgeois or capitalist society, a minority capitalist class seizes the means of production and exploits a wage-earning class. 5) The socialist state restores common ownership of the means of production, gives the product back to the producer, and eliminates ruling class exploitation.

RELIGION / Combination of beliefs and cult-practices which subordinate human life to a divine super-order. It appears in history as a form of oppression of the people by the ruling class. Marxism views religion as exploitation of human ignorance and credulity.

REVISIONISM / Hostile counter-current to Marxism which seeks to 'correct' the philosophical foundations of dialectical materialism. Today, for instance, China and the USSR accuse each other of 'revisionism' in their modes of applying socialism.

SCHOLASTICISM / (from Latin, schola, school; and Greek akhole, leisure) Gathered under this name are the various schools of philosophy current in the Middle Ages. But each one was linked strictly to religious dogma, all equally "servants of theology", all overlooked nature. Such dogmatism lends its name, "scholastic", to all reasoning foreign to reality, all groundless philosophies, certain political discussions, etc. The main scholastics (or schoolmen) were Thomas Aquinas, Anselm of Canterbury, Duns Scotus, William of Occam, etc.

SOCIALISM / Economy, social and political doctrine which opposes the struggle for the equal distribution of wealth by eliminating private property and the exploitative ruling class. In practice, such a distribution of wealth is achieved by social ownership of the means of production, exchange and diffusion.

SOCIALISM (UTOPIAN) / Non-scientific socialism based on imaginary or optimist theories. Upheld by certain French and English utopian-socialists of the 19th century.

SOCIOLOGY / Science of society: as founded by Comte and Herbert Spencer, it takes no account of class-struggle. Marx succeeded in raising sociology to a science by demonstrating that the development of society is not solely determined by ideas but by the relations of production. Thus he showed the course of ideas obeys the course of things. Marx also made clear that the problem of scientific research into society consists of the elaboration of those particular historical laws which regulate the origin, existence, development and decline of any given social organism, and its transformation into another, superior one.

SOPHISM, SOPHISTRY / Incorrect reasoning presented in such a way as to appear correct, or persuasive, and thus which leads others into error. Sophistry is the application in discussion of such erroneous conclusions. The characteristic method of sophistry is: "To start from external resemblances between facts, apart from their relation to events." (Lenin) By relying on apparent analogies, sophists seek to apply the properties of one set of phenomena to others completely different.

SPINOZA, BARUCH / (1632-77) Jewish-Dutch philosopher, denied the existence of God as creator of nature. Considered that God was nature itself. By thus calling nature God, he explained that nature was its own cause. He continued the rationalism of Descartes, although his system was monist — a system in which thought originates in nature.

STATE / Political organization of the economically dominant class, having as its aim the defence of the existing economic order (status quo) — but also the annihilation of the resistance put up against it by other classes. "The state is a machine to maintain the domination of one class over another." (Lenin)

TIME AND SPACE / These represent the objective form of the existence of matter. Time and space are inseparable from matter, and vice-versa. Dialectical materialism teaches that nothing exists in the world outside of or beyond matter in motion, and that matter cannot move except in space and time. Opposing itself to materialism, idealism believes time and space to be products of human thought and it separates these categories from matter.

THEOLOGY / Pseudo-science which seeks to give foundation to religion by borrowing from philosophical argumentation.

THESIS, ANTITHESIS, SYNTHESIS / (from the Greek: affirmation, negation, union) Every process of development, according to Hegel passes through these three stages: thesis, anti-thesis, synthesis. Each stage refutes the one before, and the last re-unites in itself the dominant features of the first two — hence its name, 'synthesis'. This is the 'surface' aspect of dialectics.

UNITY AND CONFLICT BETWEEN CONTRARIES / Opposing metaphysics, dialectics posit on principle that, internal contradictions belong properly to all objects and natural phenomena, and within them everything is continually in motion, ever-changing. Each thing represents in itself the unity of contraries. Everything has a past and a future, a development and a decline, a positive and a negative aspect. This is why movement from a lower to a higher state is achieved by the struggle between opposite tendencies. Within the capitalist mode of production, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are at once related and opposed through struggle.
Tips for further reading

The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre said that Marxism is the philosophy of our time—that we cannot go beyond it because we have not gone beyond the circumstances that engendered it. The literature about, for and against Marx and Marxism is therefore vast and ever-increasing. The following lists contain only a tiny fraction of all the books written on the subject, chosen for non-experts on the basis of readability, availability and up-to-dateness.

Texts

The best way to study Marx is to read what he and Engels wrote. Their most famous short writings — The Communist Manifesto; Wage-Labour and Capital; Value, Price and Profit; Socialism: Utopian and Scientific; Ludwig Feuerbach And the End of Classical German Philosophy; The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State; The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon; and Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850 — are generally available in handy and cheap paperbacks published by Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, or Foreign Language Press, Peking. In the United States the International Publishing Company puts out these and many other writings by Marx and Engels.


The three volumes of Capital are available from Lawrence and Wishart, London and International Publishing Co., New York; while the first volume is now available in a Penguin
paperback edited by Ernest Mandel. Engels' *Anti-Duhring* is published by Progress Publishers, Moscow. The same publishers also produced the Marx-Engels *Selected Correspondence*, as well as useful anthologies of their writings: *On Britain; On Religion; On Colonialism; On Ireland*.

For those who want to go further into the study of Marx and Engels, an English edition of their *Collected Works* in approximately 50 volumes is now under way (Lawrence and Wishart, London; International Publishing Co., New York). Six volumes have appeared thus far. Volume 3 contains the important *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, and volume 5, *The German Ideology*.

**Commentaries**


**Biographies**

About the Author

Rius is the pseudonym of Eduardo del Río, the internationally acclaimed Mexican caricaturist and editorial cartoonist whose innovative work established a new field in comic strips: the political and documentary cartoon-book. He was chosen Best Editorial Cartoonist in Mexico in 1959, and in 1968 he received the Grand Prize of the International Salon of Caricature in Montreal. He currently lives and works in Cuernavaca, Mexico.
A cartoon book about Marx? Are you sure it’s Karl, not Groucho?
 How can you summarize the work of Karl Marx in cartoons?
 It took Rius to do it. He’s put it all in: the origins of Marxist philosophy, history, economics, of capital, labor, the class struggle, socialism; and there’s a biography of “Charlie” Marx besides.
 Like its companion volume, Lenin for Beginners, it’s accurate, understandable, and very, very funny.

Cover design by Louise Fili
Pantheon Books, New York

A Pantheon Documentary Comic Book