



Karl Heinrich Marx **1818-1883**

Life

- Born in Rhineland, son of attorney—member of haut bourgeoisie. Protestant, but of Jewish descent.
- Studied at Universities of Bonn, Berlin, and Jena—philosophy, especially Hegel. Too radical (some say—too Jewish) to get academic appointment.
- Married 1843 to daughter of high Prussian official, had seven children (three daughters survived). Constant struggle to maintain family.
- Worked as journalist. Involved in the (mostly liberal) revolutionary ferment of the 1840s.
- Forced by the unfriendly authorities to move constantly—from Koln to Paris to Brussels to Koln and Paris again—until the revolution of 1848, when he moved to London and stayed there, within circle of fellow radical exiles.
- His life was a struggle—disappointed in academic life, hardship in raising his family. His personal struggles not only embittered him toward capitalism, but made him something of a man of action, rather than purely an intellectual.
- Both a German (not committed to individual liberty, as an Englishman might have been) and an outsider (his status as neither Protestant nor Jew, his years in exile).

Ideas

- Scientific Socialism vs. Utopian Socialism
- Materialism: Means of Production → Social Relations of Production → Ideology
- Dialectic: Bourgeois (thesis) → Proletariat (antithesis) → Classless Society
- Class Conflict: Motor of History
- Modes of Production: Archaic → Tributary → Slavery → Feudal → Capitalist → Socialist → Communist

Technical Economics

- Labor Value of Goods = Wage + Surplus Value
- Profit = f(Surplus Value)
- Diminishing Rate of Profit: Surplus Value↑ → Physical Capital↑ → Number of Workers↓ → Surplus Value↓
- Crisis of Overproduction: Wages↑ → Machinery↑ → Number of Workers↓
 - 1) → Profits ↓
 - 2) → Demand for Goods↓ → Overproduction



Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (b. Jan. 15, 1809, Besançon, France; d. Jan. 19, 1865, Paris)

Proudhon's father was a cooper and tavern-keeper, no more successful than his peasant customers. Though a brilliant student, poverty forced Proudhon to work his way through school, including a stint as cowherd in the Jura mountains. It has been remarked that Proudhon's background stamped him with a desire for a world in which peasants and small artisans could live in peace and comfort. [Compare Veblen]

His family's poverty forced Proudhon to abandon a college scholarship, and take up the craft of printing. In large part he was an autodidact. Printers of the 19th century were famous for radicalism [Compare Henry George], and it was among printers that he first began discussing the ideas of socialism and liberalism. He also made the acquaintance of that other famous socialist from Besançon: Charles Fourier.

Failing to establish his own press, Proudhon focused on writing, and developed a prose style much

admired by his contemporaries. Moving to Paris, he wrote *Qu'est-ce que la propriété?* in 1840. In this book he displayed his talent for the striking phrase: in answer to the question "What is property?" he answered, "Property is theft!" However, he regarded the property of the small peasant or artisan as a necessary element of freedom, and only attacked the property of the rich who hired others to perform labor. [Compare Marx] This book is his most important: he lays the theoretical groundwork for anarchism, openly calling himself an anarchist.

Anarchism: From the Greek word *archos* (without a rule); originally used as a pejorative by conservative opponents of the Diggers and Levelers of the English Civil War. Anarchists believe in the natural goodness of humans, maintaining, however, that they are corrupted by institutions. They therefore advocate that all coercive institutions be destroyed, and be replaced by voluntary associations. [Compare William Godwin]

Qu'est-ce que la propriété? 1840. (What is property?)

Avertissement aux propriétaires 1842. (Warning to Proprietors).

Système des contradictions économiques, ou Philosophie de la misère. 1846. (System of Economic Contradictions: or, The Philosophy of Poverty)

Confessions d'un révolutionnaire. 1849. (Confessions of a Revolutionary).

Idée générale de la révolution au XIXe siècle. 1851 (The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century).

De la justice dans la Révolution et dans l'église. 1858 (Justice in the Revolution and in the Church).

Du Principe fédératif. 1863 (On the Principle of Federation).

De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières. 1865 (On the Political Capacity of the Working Class).

Moving to Lyon in 1843, he encountered a weavers' secret society, the "Mutualists," who believed that manufacturing could be carried out by voluntary workers' associations, and that economic action (strikes, etc.) rather than violence, would usher in the new order. Proudhon adopted the name Mutualism to describe his ideas. Also acquainted with socialist intellectuals Karl Marx, Mikhail Bakunin, and Aleksandr Herzen. Opposing Marx's brand of authoritarian socialism, Proudhon favored what one could describe as libertarian socialism. He participated in the revolution of 1848, publishing a paper: *Le Représentant du Peuple.*, and editing three others. Attempted to start a "People's Bank" which paid workers in proportion to time spent working (failed). Imprisoned 1849-1852 for criticizing Emperor Napoleon III. Harassed by the police after release, eventually fled to Belgium 1858. Returning to Paris in 1862, he became an important influence on French labor movements.