

*Workers of the World, Unite!*

# Unity & Struggle

Journal of the  
International Conference of  
Marxist-Leninist Parties  
and Organizations



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# **Unity & Struggle**

Journal of the International Conference  
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# Benin

## *Communist Party of Benin*

### **On the Bicentenary of the Birth of Karl Marx**

On May 5, 2018, the working class and progressive humanity commemorate the bicentenary of the birth of the great revolutionary thinker, Karl Marx. He was born in Trier (Germany) on May 5, 1818. This anniversary has a particular significance, because for the first time a monument has been erected in homage to Marx in his native city.

Marx continues to be a great giant of universal thought, the greatest philosopher, the greatest economic theorist that these two centuries have known. Whether one likes it or not, every thinker, every political activist or economic actor is forced to define himself (explicitly or in fact) in relation to his thought, which is a worldwide reference point.

As the years pass, Marx's ideas appear brighter, both in the field of philosophy and in the economic and political fields. Like a baobab<sup>1</sup> of our African forests that resists the winds and even the scourge of the desert, the structure of Marxist thought resists the great attacks, like a Judas kiss, of the "pseudo Marxists" who swarm in the world.

What has Marx contributed to universal thought?

#### **I. The contribution of Marx to universal thought**

His contributions can be separated into three areas: that of philosophy, of economics and of politics.

A. That of philosophy: His philosophical thinking is reflected in dialectical and historical materialism. Every thing, every phenomenon of nature, including society, is subjected to an uninterrupted process of birth, development and death. This seems simple, but the internal laws that govern this evolution, called dialectical materialism, that is, matter in motion, is not at all simple. These clash with the great interests of the followers of the different varieties of idealist and metaphysical thinking and with others like the fashionable

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<sup>1</sup> Baobab – Tropical tree of the Malvaceae family

anti-determinists in the extreme right-wing media that support Trump in the United States.

The chaos and arbitrariness that reigned in the understanding of history and politics has been succeeded by a coherent scientific theory that shows how from one form of social organization another, higher form arises and develops, due to the growth of the productive forces, as, for example feudalism is born from slavery, etc. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels created a paradigm shift in the thinking about human history. They answered the question about the way in which, during the course of history, one form of society passes over to another. Historical materialism shows how the great empires of humanity are born, grow and die; from Egypt of the Pharaohs, to the British Empire, passing through Alexander the Great, Philip of Macedonia, the Roman Empire of Julius Caesar, etc., not to forget the disappearance of the empire of Ghana, replaced by that of Mali. The motive force of these successive transformations is the class struggle.

This was said later in poetic form by Paul Valery: “We, civilized ones, know that we are mortal.”<sup>2</sup>

B. Economic thought. The second great discovery of Marx, and that is his original work, is the theory of surplus value. This theory is developed in his monumental work, *Capital*. “[I]t is the ultimate aim of this work,” said Marx in his Preface, “to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society,” that is, of capitalist society. With the discovery of the theory of surplus value, Marx explained the mechanism of the exploitation of the worker by the capitalist. He showed the inevitable process of the enrichment of the capitalists, and on the other hand, the impoverishment of the workers and their progressive exclusion from the process of production by machines, leading to unemployment, the crises of the capitalist system and its inevitable end. Marx also foresaw the disasters that would be caused in the environment by savage and uncontrolled exploitation of the natural riches of the earth.

C. In the political field. Marx and Engels arrived at the conclusion of the necessity of the struggle of the producers and the oppressed against the system, making the proletariat and the peoples of the world understand the nature of their struggle for liberation, both from the exploitation of capital and from imperialist domina-

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<sup>2</sup> Approximate translation

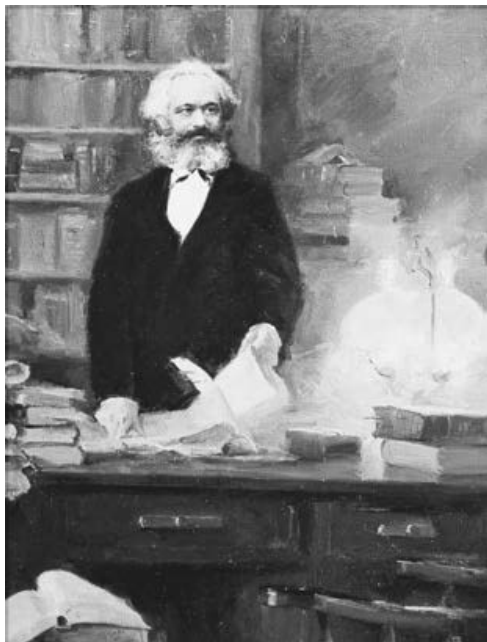
tion. Above all, they showed that this struggle necessarily leads in the first place to the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, and later to the suppression of classes with the disappearance of the exploitation of man by man.

## II. The Influence of Marx's Thought

Over more than one hundred and fifty years, in many aspects, Marxist thought has not aged in the least. That world capitalism is responsible for crises is something that is verified daily, and the crisis of 2008 proves it once again. Capitalism creates unemployment; on the one side is the extreme wealth of a small number of plutocrats, and on the other, the extreme poverty of the vast majority of the population. World reality shows daily that the proletariat fights against this system; the present strikes of railway workers in France, like the recent ones in Benin, show this. That the peoples struggle against imperialism – the highest stage of capitalism – we see clearly, in all places, in the subjugated regions of the planet, specifically in Africa and Latin America. Also for his decisive contribution to revolutionary thought, Karl Marx made a qualitative leap in the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples. The theory of the revolution is the work of Marx and Engels. Thanks to their doctrine there took place the Great October Revolution in Russia, the revolutions in China, Cuba and other formerly socialist countries. Thanks to this doctrine, the liberation of millions of people of the world has been achieved.

Marx's doctrine shows that it is alive, that it is still relevant in its essence.

The Communist



Party of Benin is proud to have adopted Marx's thought as a guide to its philosophy and political action. If the Communist Party of Benin has been able to overcome many attacks and obstacles, various plots of the world counter-revolution, to remain at the side of the proletariat and the Beninese people in their struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialist domination, if it has been able at decisive moments of the history of our people, for forty years, to foresee difficult situations, to warn the people against attacks, is thanks to the thought of Marx and Engels.

Eternal glory to Karl Marx, founder of modern communism and great teacher of the international proletariat.

**Long live Marxism!**

Cotonou  
May 2018



# Bolivia

## *Revolutionary Communist Party – PCR*

### The Relevance of the Thought of Karl Marx

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”  
(Marx, Theses on Feuerbach)

This year, 2018, we are celebrating the bicentenary of the birth of Karl Marx, whose contributions to revolutionary theory mark the beginning of scientific socialism. Marx teaches us the role that human beings have in transforming the reality in which they live, starting from an objective knowledge of that reality. There are many ideological tendencies that have sought to tame Marx, to reduce his thought to a simple method, isolate his social and economic analysis from his militant political commitment to the cause of the working class, and distort his thought in order to justify their class conciliation or social democracy. We are not nor will we be desktop ‘Marxists’, who limit Marx’s thought to the academic sphere; we are militant Marxists, conscious of Lenin’s teachings that: “Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.”

For the anti-revisionist communists it is a task of the first order to study Marx from his classical texts, not as a dogma nor as a religious incantation, but to grasp the weapon of Marxism in the struggle for the seizure of power. Lenin, in *Marxism and Revisionism* [*Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1963, Vol. 15, p. 39], stated that:

“What we now frequently experience only in the domain of ideology, namely, disputes over theoretical amendments to Marx; what now crops up in practice only over individual side issues of the labour movement, as tactical differences with the revisionists and splits on this basis – is bound to be experienced by the working class on an incomparably larger scale when the proletarian revolution will sharpen all disputed issues, will focus all differences on points which are of the most immediate importance in determining the conduct of the masses, and will make it necessary in the heat of the fight to distinguish enemies

from friends, and to cast out bad allies in order to deal decisive blows at the enemy.”

We do not hide our intentions, we fight for the most dignified and noble ideal, for the profound and complete transformation of society, for a world without exploited or exploiters, with full social justice. We fight against capitalism, against imperialism, for the revolution and scientific Socialism. We are conscious that we are taking part in a class struggle, in which we must take up the responsibility of leading the working class, using all the means of struggle, including revolutionary violence, to achieve our historical objective.

The badly-named ‘21st century socialists’ or ‘communitarian socialists’ are no more than modern social democrats, who use revolutionary terms and advocate symbolic changes without attacking the problem at its root – capitalist exploitation. If there is no direct combat against the capitalist system, the only thing that one does is to cover up this mode of production, maintaining the relations of exploitation and oppression. In the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Marx clearly and forcefully states that:

“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.”

The farce of ‘nationalization’ that have taken place in countries governed by populism, such as our country, has not wrested the means of production from the bourgeoisie; instead it has modified the relations between the State and the transnational corporations, allowing a greater redistribution of wealth but without touching large private property. In Bolivia, the present government calls itself ‘leftist’ while maintaining the privileges of transnational corporations such as Repsol, Petrobras, Shell, Vintage, Cancabria, Gazprom, GEPI, Bolivia Energy and Pluspetrol, handing over the resources of the Direct Tax on Hydrocarbons (IDH) to foreign companies as a bonus for exploration and maintaining the service contracts. On the other hand, the government of Evo Morales has expanded the agricultural frontier, allowing for the expansion of the large agro-industrial companies despite the discourse of defense of Mother Earth. In the ‘process of change,’ the workers have not taken any control over the means of production; rather the

Plurinational State maintains the developmentalist and extractivist model, in close alliance with the oligarchy and transnational capital.

Marx teaches us that capitalism creates its own gravediggers, the proletariat, the social class called upon to make the socialist revolution by the socialization of labor created by capitalism, in which the only form of liberation from exploitation is collective. He does not reject the possibility and even the need to forge alliances with other social classes, such as with the peasantry and the impoverished petty bourgeoisie, but Marx makes clear that the main revolutionary subject under capitalism is the proletariat (because of its antagonistic relationship with the bourgeoisie). The organization of the working class, although in the economic struggles it is through the union, for the struggle for the seizure of power it is through the Communist Party, with a monolithic unity in the political, ideological and organizational sphere. On the other hand, “21st century socialism” states that the social subject is constituted by the social movements, entities that are characterized by their ideological plurality, within a vision of complementarity between exploited and exploiters. The governments of “21st century socialism” state that social movements supersede the need for a revolutionary party, in addition to stating that the necessary changes can be achieved through elections. They thus even ignore the fact that their own rise to power was due to the processes of popular insurrection (for example, the Water War and Gas War in Bolivia). For Marx, the motive force of history is the class struggle. Revisionism has historically tried to eradicate this main element of Marxism. Lenin in *Marxism and Revisionism* denounces that:

“Political freedom, democracy and universal suffrage remove the ground for the class struggle – we were told – and render untrue the old proposition of the *Communist Manifesto* that the working men have no country. For, they said, since the ‘will of the majority’ prevails in a democracy, one must neither regard the state as an organ of class rule, nor reject alliances with the progressive, social-reform bourgeoisie against the reactionaries.”

Today, revisionism continues to raise the possibility of transforming the state through mechanisms of bourgeois democracy and the supposed need to establish alliances with the ‘progressive’ bourgeoisie in order to counteract reaction (as always, the neoliberals, the empire, etc.). We Marxist-Leninist organizations should be

clear about our position to build the revolutionary and class alternative, with the goal to seize power. We must learn from the historical experiences of the Bolivian workers, such as the People's Assembly (1970) in which the working class showed its capacity for organization and resistance.

We Marxist-Leninists do not deny the struggle for reforms, but we must never forget the clear goal of seizing power and building a society without exploited or exploiters. Lenin explains in *Marxism and Reformism* [*Collected Works*, Vol. 13, p. 372] that:

“[T]he Marxists recognise struggle for reforms, i.e., for measures that improve the conditions of the working people without destroying the power of the ruling class. At the same time, however, the Marxists wage a most resolute struggle against the reformists, who, directly or indirectly, restrict the aims and activities of the working class to the winning of reforms. Reformism is bourgeois deception of the workers, who, despite individual improvements, will always remain wage-slaves, as long as there is the domination of capital.”

Marxism combats those tendencies that restrict their actions to reforms within the bourgeois state, as the governments of “21st century socialism” do, and it has a clear vision that as long as the rule of capital exists, the class struggle will continue to exist. Revisionism today makes the excuse that through gradual changes and small reforms they will achieve better living conditions for the working class majority, while they demobilize them with speeches about the unconditional defense of populist governments. We understand reforms as gains of the mobilized working class, not as concessions by ‘well-intentioned governments. The reforms must serve to further organize and mobilize the exploited majorities, not to demobilize them as revisionism does.

Marxism came to Bolivia at the beginning of the 20th century, through the influence of the Russian Revolution. Several initiatives were organized, such as the newspaper “Red Flag,” the Workers’ Federation of Labor and the first Bolivian Communist Party [PCB] among whose members we can highlight Carlos Mendoza Mamani, Ricardo Cloza Valle and José Antonio Arze. The first efforts to organize the workers’ movement under the scientific ideology of Marxism were frustrated by the Chaco War. On the bases of the disorganized Marxist left the PIR (Party of the Revolutionary Left) was founded, which contributed to the development of Marxist

thought in the country and in the popular and youth struggles. The profound political and ideological debates within the PIR (and above all among its youth) gave rise to the formation of communist nuclei and eventually the Communist Party of Bolivia. In the National Revolution of 1952, the communist militants fought in the worker and peasant militias; among the red combatants we can highlight Manuel Miranda, who gave his life in the fight against the feudal-mining clique.

The debate within the Bolivian communist movement was evident in the tactical and strategic debates that broke out in the 1960s with the arrival of Comandante Che Guevara (formation of the ELN [Army of National Liberation]) and the Sino-Soviet split (formation of the MLCP [Marxist-Leninist Communist Party]). These experiences teach us the importance of a dialectical understanding of Marxism, that is, not to mechanically copy dogmatic models from abroad but to learn from our own revolutionary history and to trust in the creative capacity of the masses. We can highlight Bolivian Marxists who have contributed intellectually to the understanding of our complex and variegated national reality, such as Roberto Alvarado Daza (assassinated by the Banzer dictatorship), Jorge Ovando Sanz (leader of the PCB in its

## Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels

### Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei



first years) and René Zavaleta (exiled by the dictatorships). There is the example of the commitment of the communist militants such as Rosendo García (martyr of the mining proletariat), Inti and Coco Peredo, and the hundreds of communists who gave their lives for a red dawn. The nefarious role of revisionism (in its various forms), by taking over the leadership and offering itself up to the service of social democracy has forced the Marxist-Leninists to organize themselves into a revolutionary vanguard – the PCR, whose fundamental task at this moment is to consolidate and fortify itself with its gaze fixed on the Revolution.

Today in Bolivia, the government of Evo Morales is publishing and presenting works of Marx in pompous acts, as an attempt to cleanse its image, while applying policies of handing over our natural resources to the transnationals, repressing the popular mobilizations and seeking to control the trade union movement through perks and corporatism. The high authorities of the government have publicly called themselves Marxists, Leninists and Communists, but they have not understood in the least the revolutionary essence of Marxism. These statements only manage to confuse the people and create hatred towards the left. They try to disable the opposition by calling them all rightists, imperialists or capitalists, since the government is a supposedly anti-imperialist ‘left’ force. Revisionism is fulfilling a nefarious role as the tail of the government, uncritically justifying everything it does.

Marx provides us a theoretical arsenal that allows us to understand more clearly the true character of the government of Evo Morales as a semi-Bonapartist, who plays the role of conciliation and equilibrium among sectors of the bourgeoisie (agro-industrial, commercial, banking) in conflict. The State, despite calling itself Plurinational, has never ceased to be a bourgeois state whose role is to protect private property of the means of production. The centralization of the State in the personality of Evo Morales (reinforced by his intention of re-re-re-election) and the growing repression against popular movements (indigenous peoples, coca growers, peasants, university students, the disabled, workers and many others) only confirms this characterization.

Two centuries after the birth of Karl Marx, we Bolivian communists, organized in the Revolutionary Communist Party, do not wish to make a commemorative act or a red funeral mass; rather we consider it urgent to study Marx’s texts in order to empower and

train the future generation of fighters for the Revolution. We will not remain silent before the attempts to usurp Marx's image by the populists who govern us today. Our task is to raise our political-ideological training, reinforce the ranks of the Party with an iron discipline, ready to fight by all means and all forms for the Revolution and for Socialism. On this road, it is essential to strengthen the bonds of proletarian internationalism within the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO), learning from the revolutionary experiences on a world level and raising the banners of struggle that we have inherited from Karl Marx.

*August, 2018*

# Brazil

## *Revolutionary Communist Party - PCR*

### **Karl Marx and the Importance of the Construction of the Communist Party**

Karl Marx's contributions to humanity are innumerable. Friedrich Engels, his comrade and inseparable friend in the joys and sufferings of life, stated in his Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx that he was the greatest genius in history in that: "Just as Darwin discovered the law of development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history... Marx also discovered the special law of motion governing the present-day capitalist mode of production and the bourgeois society.... Marx was before all else a revolutionist.... Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival."<sup>1</sup>

In this sense, among the immense contributions of Karl Marx to the cause of the liberation of the working class and the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, we must emphasize his struggle for the construction of an independent political party of the working class, the Communist Party, and the elaboration of the theoretical foundations of this party.

During the 1840s, a severe economic crisis struck the main countries of Europe, in particular France and Germany, but also the United States of America. Workers organized strikes in France, and various riots for bread occurred in Germany. In 1847, Karl Marx was 29 years old and worked firmly with Engels to unite the main leaders of the labor movement, aiming at the creation of a workers' political party in line with his doctrine of the historical role of the proletariat in the revolutionary transformation of society and in the construction of a new world.

Already at that time, Marx and Engels understood the need for the proletariat to act independently of the bourgeoisie and build its own political organization. The experiences of the organizations of the English workers and the formation of the Chartist party inspired

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels, March 17, 1883, at the gravesite of Karl Marx at Highgate Cemetery, London, England.



Marx, but also led him to understand that these were organizations that were still far from what the proletarian class really needed to fight and defeat the power of the bourgeoisie.

For Marx, however, the formation of a genuine revolutionary proletarian organization would only be possible if there were a large and widespread diffusion of the ideas of communism beforehand, as well as a greater development of the revolutionary actions of the working class. With that objective, Marx and Engels founded, at the beginning of 1846, the Communist Correspondence Committee of Brussels, aiming to propagate the ideals of communism. They intended to form new committees in all the major cities of Europe, and developed a large correspondence for that purpose.

At the same time, they understood that it was necessary to act and intervene in the existing workers' organizations and decided to contact, and coordinate their actions with, the members of the League of the Just, an organization founded by Germans who had emigrated to Paris. This decision showed itself to be extremely correct and was responsible, soon thereafter, for the convening of a congress of the League of the Just, from June 2 to 9, 1847, in London. There it was decided to adopt the name Communist League. For his part Engels, in that same year, wrote the ideological principles of the new organization, which he did with great mastery in his well-known work *The Principles of Communism*, initially titled *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith*. On a proposal by Marx and Engels, the League, which until then had used the slogan "All men are brothers", went on to adopt a communist principle of appeal to the working class of the whole world: "Workers of the world, unite!"

The revolutionary movement was growing throughout Europe and it was urgent that the working class develop its program and ideology, and present them openly to society. Thus the Communist League decided to hold its Second Congress with the aim of defining its statutes and program. Marx and Engels once again acted together to develop the ideological conceptions and tactics of a proletarian party. The Second Congress of the Communist League was held from November 29 to December 8, 1847. There, Marx and Engels intervened firmly in favor of the principles of scientific communism, and their proposals were enthusiastically approved by the delegates present at the Congress. It then established, in the first paragraph of the League's program, that the "aim of the league is

the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the rule of the proletariat, the abolition of the old bourgeois society which rests on the antagonism of classes, and the foundation of a new society without classes and without private property.”

The Congress then appointed Marx and Engels to draft the League’s program in the form of a manifesto for wide dissemination. When writing the manifesto, Marx and Engels put all their revolutionary fervor into it and explained with clarity and depth the scientific theory that they had been elaborating. They did not know that they were writing a work that would survive for centuries, and, as brilliantly stated by V. I. Lenin: “This little pamphlet speaks entire volumes: it inspires and animates to this day the organized and combative proletariat of the world”.

In spite of seeing, in several other writings and interventions of Marx, a clear position in defense of the formation of a revolutionary party of the working class, there is no doubt that in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* he presents, in a precise way, the bases of the doctrine of the proletarian party as the leading vanguard organization of the working class. He clearly states for communist revolutionaries, that without the creation of that organization, of the vanguard party, the seizure of political power by the proletariat and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible.

Therefore, one must read those deeply current lines of Marxist thought written in the *Manifesto*:

“The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins its struggle with the bourgeoisie. At first the contest is carried on by individual laborers, then by the workpeople of a factory, then by the operatives of one trade, in one locality, against the individual bourgeois who directly exploits them...)

“(T)he workers begin to form combinations (Trades’ Unions) against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found 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...)

It was just this contact that was

needed to centralize the numerous local struggles, all of the same character, into one national struggle between classes. But every class struggle is a political struggle.... This organization 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....

“Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product....

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

“The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degree, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat organized as the ruling class.”

In other words, the party of the working class represents and

defends its immediate rights, but it must also fight for its strategic interests; its struggle must have the objective of seizing political power; to put an end to all kinds of exploitation and oppression, to put end to private owner-



ship of the means of production and achieve the true emancipation of humanity.

Beyond defining the bases of the need for the revolutionary party of the proletariat, its tactics and objectives, Marx and Engels also made clear that the communists and their party must act in a way to always be the vanguard, the conscious and advanced detachment of the proletariat: “The Communists, therefore, are on the one hand, practically, the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others; on the other hand, theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement.”

With the development of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and its widespread diffusion among the working class, the conscious workers knew exactly what they needed to do: build their own party, and even what the party’s program should be. The bourgeoisie tried in many ways to prevent the dissemination of the *Manifesto*, and declared the mere printing of it to be a crime. This dying class knew that the *Manifesto*, besides expressing a revolutionary conception of the world and emphasizing that the proletariat should play the role of gravedigger of capitalism, was also capable of “infecting” all wage slaves, all those exploited and oppressed by capitalism. It acted, therefore, exactly as Marx and Engels foresaw in the last words of this great work:

“Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. **Workers of the World, Unite!**”

**Long Live Karl Marx!**  
**Long Live Marxism-Leninism!**  
**Long Live the Communist Revolution!**

*July 25, 2018*

*Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party –  
PCR Brazil*

# Burkina Faso

## *Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta – PCRV*

### **The Thought of Karl Marx Remains Young and Immortal**

The international Marxist-Leninist movement, the proletariat and the peoples of the world, celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of Karl Marx, founder of scientific communism, great educator and guide of the world proletariat, inspirer and organizer of the First International (International Workingmen’s Association).

The bourgeois ideologues, who do not cease to proclaim the “death of communism”, are forced to recognize the timeliness of Marx’s thought and his scientific critique of capitalism. Bourgeois economists are inclined to the scientific theories elaborated by Karl Marx, and recognize their current validity on the analysis of the structure that grips the capitalist-imperialist system. At the same time, they try to unite covertly with the revisionist and opportunist currents to disguise the fundamental principles of Marxism by opposing the “young Marx” to the “communist Marx”, the guide of the world proletariat. In their anticommunist diatribe they try to separate the classics of Marxism-Leninism and oppose Marx and Engels to Lenin and Stalin.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta (PCRV), in its work to guide the working class, people and popular youth of our country, in order to arm them for the revolutionary struggle, issues this statement about Karl Marx, founder of scientific socialism.

Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier (Germany) in a family of the middle bourgeoisie. His father was a lawyer. He finished his studies brilliantly at secondary school, and continued at the universities of Bonn and Berlin, where he joined the group of “Left Hegelians” of a revolutionary tendency. Having completed his doctoral thesis, Marx participated in the editing of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, organ of the radical bourgeoisie. He published his work “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right” in 1843. That work was the beginning of his transition from the idealist conception to the materialist conception of the world, and from revolutionary democratism to communism. Marx clearly stated his position:

“As philosophy finds its material weapon in the proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapon in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people, the emancipation of the *Germans* into *men* will be accomplished.” (*Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>)

For its critical, democratic and revolutionary positions, the *Rheinische Zeitung* was censored and finally banned.

At the end of 1843, Marx, driven into exile, took refuge in Paris. There he contributed to the founding of the *Franco-German Annals*, a journal in which he published articles that confirmed his revolutionary commitment, among them, “A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right.” Lenin wrote about this:

“In his articles in this magazine Marx already appears as a revolutionary; he advocates the ‘merciless criticism of everything existing,’ and in particular the ‘criticism by weapon,’ and appeals to the *masses* and to the *proletariat*.” (Lenin, *Karl Marx*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970, p. 3.)

Marx confirms his dual role, that of philosopher and that of revolutionary militant; that of scientific researcher and that of intellectual at the service of the historical mission of the proletariat, causes to which he dedicated his life.

At that time, Engels resided in the industrial center of the city of Manchester, England, and carried out a similar activity. The collaboration between the two friends was reinforced and gave rise to a great intimacy, to the point that the name of the two great educators of the proletariat is combined in numerous works and writings such as *The Holy Family*. At the beginning of 1845, Marx, was expelled from France at the request of the Prussian authorities, and settled in Brussels, Belgium, where he carried out a deep and systematic critique of Hegel’s idealism and Feuerbach’s metaphysical materialism. On this basis, Marx elaborated the scientific conception of the world of the proletariat: dialectical and historical materialism.

Karl Marx linked his theoretical work to the mobilization and organization of the workers against capitalist exploitation. He founded the Association of German workers.

In 1847, Marx and Engels joined the League of the Just, which would later become the Communist League. The Second Congress of the League commissioned Marx and Engels to write their pro-

gram. Thus, in 1848, the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* was published, exposing to the world the Marxist doctrine as the revolutionary theory and compass of the proletariat. Of that work Lenin wrote:

“With the clarity and brilliance of genius, this work outlines the new world conception, consistent materialism, which also embraces the realm of social life, dialectics, as the most comprehensive and profound doctrine of development, the theory of the class struggle and of the world-historic revolutionary role of the proletariat -- the creator of a new, communist society.” (Ibid., p. 3-4.)

In 1848, revolution shook France and influenced the neighboring countries, namely Belgium and Germany. The frightened Belgian government suddenly expelled Marx who, after the revolution of 1848, moved to Cologne (Germany), where he founded the magazine *The New Rhenish Gazette*. The counter-revolution in Germany unleashed a great repression. Marx was again condemned and expelled to Paris. In Paris he suffered the same fate, and after the uprising of June 1849, he was expelled. He settled in London, where he resided until his death.

### **The Thought of Marx and the Class Struggle in the Social Movement**

The immense theoretical and scientific work of Marx grew with new publications linked to the political and social events of his time. *The Class Struggles in France* and *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* constitute an accurate analysis of the revolution of 1848-1851 in France. Marx devoted himself to the monumental work of his life, *Capital*. In 1859 he published “A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy,” in which he put forward his theory of value for the first time. In 1867, the first volume of *Capital* appeared. Engels emphasized the depth of this major work:

“As long as there have been capitalists and workers on earth, no book has appeared which is of as much importance for the workers as the one before us. The relation between capital and labour, the axis on which our entire present system of society turns, is here treated scientifically for the first time.” [“Review of Volume One of *Capital* for the *Demokratisches Wochenblatt*” in Marx & Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 231.]

The early 1860s were marked by a booming labor movement and the struggles against capitalist exploitation in the different industrial-

ized countries. Marx found this development in the breadth and depth of the social movement, the opportunity to carry out his aspiration: to found an international organization of the proletariat, with the essential objective of uniting, educating and directing it towards its social emancipation. In September, 1864, he promoted the creation of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International), of which he was the main inspirer and editor of its founding documents. This international organization contributed decisively to the unity of the workers' movement and against its dispersion. The Association drew its orientation based on Marxist, revolutionary principles, and carried out a systematic struggle against the different opportunist and non-proletarian socialist currents.

The defeat of the Paris Commune was the prelude to the difficulties in the functioning of the First International, forced, provisionally, to leave the political scene. However, the labor movement continued its extension into the period of construction of numerous parties that claimed to be socialist. Despite the dissolution of the First International, Marx and Engels continued the task of directing the labor movement, with criticism and guidance, and published works of great ideological and political scope.

After the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871, Marx published his famous *The Civil War in France*, in which he raised the lessons of that first experience of the seizure of power by the proletariat.

Several writings such as *The Critique of the Gotha Program* and *Anti-Dühring*, etc. illustrate the life and work of Karl Marx and his friend Engels. The prodigious genius of Marx discovered the scientific laws of the development of capitalist society in the 19th century. He analyzed the contradictions between the relations of production and the development of the productive forces, the crises caused by the overproduction of commodities, at the same time as the pauperization of the working class increased. The contradiction between capital and labor is developed and materialized by the struggles of the proletariat. At first these struggles had a spontaneous character. It is precisely there where the scientific thought of Marx was decisive for the consciousness of the proletariat. He creatively and critically developed the three main currents of thought of the 19th century: classical German philosophy, English political economy and French utopian socialism.



In the philosophical sphere, his development of dialectical and historical materialism gave the proletariat and humanity a method of analyzing the laws of social evolution and the class struggle:

“Thanks to the complete study of the economic and political life of bourgeois society, Marx describes the origins of capitalism, defines the laws and trends of its development, and proves the ineluctability of its demise. He showed that capitalism had a transitory character, and that the victory of a new social system, of communism, is inevitable.” (*Abbreviated Philosophical Dictionary*, translated from the Spanish edition, page 321.)

He continued writing *Capital*, Volumes II, III and IV. But illness prevented him from completing that immense task. Karl Marx died on March 14, 1883, in London, at the age of 65.

Marx’s theoretical thinking is a coherent and harmonious whole. It is useless, as the opportunists, revisionists and anti-communists try to do, to separate into different periods the acceptable “young Marx” and to reject the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” Throughout his life, Marx was in the front ranks of the struggle of the proletariat, permanently assuming the work of organization, education and leadership in revolutionary action. He was a revolutionary militant, not just a thinker.

The precise cornerstone that allows us to unmask all those falsifiers lies in the fundamental principles emphasized by Marx, starting from an objective analysis of the different social classes in the capitalist system.

“Of all the classes that stand



face to face with the bourgeoisie to-day, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.” (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*)

Marx clearly indicated the world historical role of the proletariat as the gravedigger of capitalism and the builder of the new society, the communist society without classes, without exploitation of man by man. He showed the proletariat the only way to liberate itself: under the leadership of its vanguard, the communist party, the proletariat allied with the peasantry uses revolutionary violence to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie and to seize power. From this point of view, the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the cardinal point of the Marxist theory of scientific socialism.

The doctrine of Marx has been developed under the conditions of imperialism by Lenin and then by Stalin. Marxism-Leninism is enriched by incorporating the new scientific discoveries and the mutations of capitalism with all its fundamental contradictions. Lenin developed Marxism in the conditions of a new epoch, that of imperialism and the proletarian revolutions.

### **Marxist-Leninist Thought and the Path of Revolution in Upper Volta, Called Burkina Faso**

Our party, the PCRV, since its foundation in 1978, has been fighting untiringly to apply Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of our country, a backward neo-colony dominated by French imperialism. The PCRV has traced the path of the revolution in our country and widely disseminated, as a pioneer, communist ideas within the working class and the people, despite barbarous repression, the maneuvers and attempts of the reactionary bourgeoisie and its different parties to liquidate us.

The revisionist and opportunist small groups, (PAI [African Independence Party], Proletarian ULC [Union of Communist Struggles], etc.) that once camouflaged themselves with a pseudo-Marxist phraseology, have been unmasked in the fire of the class struggle, and their true counterrevolutionary and anti-communist nature has appeared serving the coupist clans of the colonial army and of international, mainly French, imperialism. These small groups have disappeared from the political arena a long time ago. The parties of the bourgeoisie in power and the so-called opposition, who have an obsessive dream of eliminating the PCRV, are undermined by internal convulsions, and they are fearful of the development of the revolutionary spirit, accumulated by our heroic

people since the popular insurrection of October 30 and 31, 2014, and of the resistance against the fascist and counter-revolutionary coup of September 2015.

The PCRV, oriented with the compass of Marxism-Leninism, calls on the working class, the popular youth, the men and women of the people, both in the cities and in the countryside, to unite to achieve the National Democratic and Popular Revolution, through the armed general insurrection, to expel imperialism, specifically French imperialism, and its local allies, to form a Provisional Revolutionary Government, to convoke a Constituent Assembly and to establish a Modern Democratic Republic that applies the minimum program of the transition to scientific socialism.

The PCRV thus confirms its fidelity to the thought of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, as proclaimed in the *Communist Manifesto*:

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

Eternal glory to Marx! Long live Marxism-Leninism!  
**Long Live the PCRV, Party of Revolutionary Action!**

*Central Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party of Volta  
May 2018*

# Denmark

**Klaus Riis**

**Workers' Communist Party of Denmark – APK**

## **Karl Marx – Communist Revolutionary**

The bicentennial of Karl Marx – born May 5th 1818 – was widely noticed in the bourgeois media. No one can deny his world-wide significance. There were many articles, at times accompanied by a modest praise, quite often with their favorite Marx quote: ““If anything is certain, it is that I myself am not a Marxist.””

These days Marxism is not devoured by burning flames. Hitler Germany lost the war. Though direct censorship and repression of Marxist books and ideas still exist, the main method applied against this revolutionary theory is so-called repressive tolerance, in the name of pluralism. So for a day or so Marx and his portrait may be in the newspapers or even on TV, but it rapidly disappears again.

The workers, the communists and the revolutionaries all over the world have a different approach. Karl Marx is celebrated throughout the bicentennial. 2018 is the Year of Karl Marx. This means not only that his biography and his work is examined in the historical light of the present. First and foremost it means that his writings and ideas are studied, because they are still valid and relevant for the workers, the revolutionaries and the entire world. The living Marx is at the center, at public meetings, in study circles and tutorials.

His works are rich – revolutionary philosophy for understanding the world of today. Actually for the understanding of the life and existence of every individual in class society and as a member of a distinct social class or stratum.

If there is one book to bring along if you end up on a lonely island it would be the *Selected Works of Marx and Engels* – about one thousand pages in two volumes. It belongs on your book shelf, close at hand. This edition, originally published in the Soviet Union, is very good and still available all over the world. It is a major source of Marxism.

It includes some of the most important articles and writings of the two lifelong comrades-in-arms. Among them are their extremely

important joint works like the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* - written before they had turned thirty.

### **Man of action – man of organization**

Karl Marx was by no means the greyish scholar, trapped inside a smoke-filled study or in a library, engaged in arduous studies of economics, as he is often portrayed. He was a revolutionary organizer, agitator and propagandist.

Since his youth he was a man of action and organization, an avid participant in the revolutionary struggle in Germany against the remnants of feudalism, the princes in power and Prussian military might. He was deeply engaged in the struggle for another society, for democracy and the peoples' rights.

He grew up in a rather wealthy family in town of Trier; his father was a lawyer. After becoming a student there, he studied law and philosophy, mostly in Berlin. Early on he became a participant in the radical left student movement. At the age of 23 he wrote his doctoral thesis about the classical philosophy of nature.

As a result of his radical views he found his way barred to an academic career. In 1842 he moved to Cologne becoming a journalist of the newly founded radical newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*. It won quite a widespread circulation, not the least thanks to the efforts of Marx. But already in the following year (1843) the paper was closed down by the authorities, allegedly after pressure from the Russian czar, as a reaction to a critical article.

For Marx and his family, this began a period of banishment and exile that took him to France, Belgium and finally England.

By 1843 Marx was married and became a family man. His wife Jenny von Westphalen had been his fiancée for seven years. She was a revolutionary communist in her own right. During her entire life she stood by Marx through all the struggles that followed – in poverty, exile, political persecution. They had seven children – three girls who grew up to become active socialists as adults, a boy who died at eight, a boy and a girl, who died as one-year olds. The last died at birth.

Marx and his family primarily survived on the modest income from his journalism, but also on support from family and later on friends and comrades that made it possible for him to live as a professional revolutionary.

## Marxism at the beginnings

After the closure of *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx and Jenny moved to Paris in October 1843. Here he started publishing the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Yearbooks*). Only one, but weighty, issue appeared, with two major contributions by Marx. The magazine was immediately forbidden and seized by the German authorities.

Marx then started writing in the German biweekly emigrant journal *Vorwärts*, which was close to the League of Just – an association of revolutionary artisan emigrants. Marx did not join the League, but worked closely with it.

Here in Paris Marx developed and put forward his views on socialism, based on dialectical materialism.

In August 1844 Marx and Engels met in Paris and established a lifelong political and literary partnership. They already knew of each other. Engels – born 1820 – had anonymously contributed some articles to the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

As a very young man Engels wrote fiction and political journalism. At age 22 he was sent to Manchester, England, by his manufacturer father to work in his company there, in the hope that this would cure his son of his radical ideas.

But here Engels wrote *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, a splendid tour-de-force of socialist sociology. Marx read it in admiration after their meeting. This work might be viewed as a pioneer work of *Capital* (*Das Kapital*), the main work of all time on capitalist economics.

The magazine *Vorwärts* was closed down in 1845 by the French government after a German request. Marx was expelled from France, and in February the family moved to Brussels. He was granted a residence permit – but only on the condition that he did not publish anything on present-day politics.

Marx became a main figure among the exiled socialists there, and in April Engels moved there from Bremen to work together with Marx to create what would be the predecessor of the communist party. Engels' lifelong spouse Mary Burns came from England to live in Brussels with Engels.

In the summer of 1845, Marx and Engels went to England to establish connections to the strong Chartist movement – a radical workers' movement that raised radical political demands of the

time, among those the demand for voting rights and democratic elections.

It was during the years 1844-45 that Marxism was basically developed and formulated.

### **The Manifesto of the Communist Party**

Marx and Engels worked at the same time to lay the foundations of a communist organization, a true Communist Party. Marx continued his collaboration with the League of the Just and in 1847 it was dissolved and amalgamated with other communist forces, when the League of Communists – the first communist organization ever – was created.

The League of Communists was founded on June 1st of that year as an international communist workers' organization, the first communist party ever, a party that addressed itself directly to the working class. Marx and Engels collaborated to write its program and organizational principles (statutes).

The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (misleadingly often called the *Communist Manifesto*) is the basic programmatic document of Marxism. It was written by Marx and Engels in December 1847/January 1848, according to a decision of the League of Communists, as a program of principle and a program of action of the new communist party, which was expected to have offshoots and sections in many countries. It was printed right before the revolution of February in that great year of revolutions, 1848.

It is introduced by the famous words:

“A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism” and states: “It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a manifesto of the party itself.”

The world is told in a text that tears apart all capitalist fairy tales and myths. History has so far been the history of class society and class struggles, always ending up with a revolutionary transformation of society – if not with the common ruin of the contending classes, it is cautiously and realistically added.

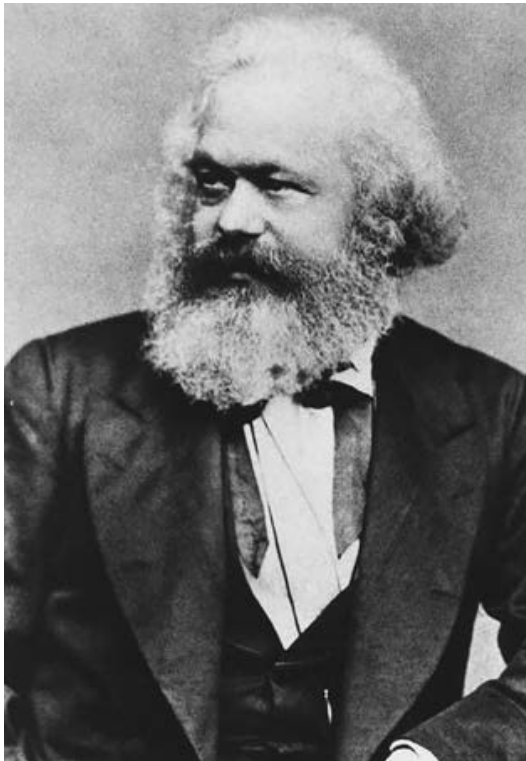
The ruling class of the present time – the capitalists, the bourgeoisie – fought and won political power in and with the modern parliamentary state. It is underlined that “The executive of the mod-

ern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

In this way the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* tears apart the myths and lies about capitalist society and the capitalist state, one after the other. Its economic base is laid bare, its ideological superstructure revealed. 170 years separates the present day from 1848, but the description and characterization of the ruling class is unsurpassed.

“The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones.”

But capitalism has also developed means of production which rebel against the narrow bourgeois property relations. The social character of production and the private appropriation of its fruits is a glaring contradiction that again and again leads to conflicts and crisis. With the working class, the proletariat, the wage slaves, the accessory of the machines, the force has been created that can bury the capitalists, the exploiting capitalist society and all exploitation. And at the same time the force has been created that is able to create another society, a society without capital-





ists, and build a new society of human beings, of the majority.

The *Manifesto* is also today a treasure of knowledge for every new generation growing up nurtured by the glorified picture capitalism paints of itself. That is why Hitler burned it, that is why the factory owners don't want it on the premises, and that is why it is not handed out for study in schools and high schools. But it may be found all over – and it is read and studied everywhere there is a struggle for another society.

### **Lessons of the revolutionary years**

In France the February revolution of 1848 overthrew the monarchy. Revolutionary movements developed in many countries. In Denmark it led to the end of the absolutist monarchy and the first capitalist constitution and bourgeois parliament.

Karl Marx was expelled from Belgium, accused by the ministry of justice of planning a workers' revolt. He went with his family to a changed France with new rulers, and moved on to Cologne to assist the spread of the democratic revolution in Germany, as the editor of *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, that turned into a revolutionary daily. The newspaper carried the subtitle *Organ der Demokratie (Voice of Democracy)*. Friedrich Engels and other communists also contributed to the paper.

Marx was constantly harassed by the police and taken to court. The newspaper was closed down. On the 16th of May he was once more exiled and went to Paris, which was now in the hands of counter-revolution, and he was expelled again.

This time he went to London as a political refugee. Jenny, pregnant with the fourth child, followed later. They lived in England for the rest of their lives, until Jenny died of liver cancer in December 1881. Karl died fifteen months later.

Engels came to England as soon as he could. He had participated militarily in the revolution and escaped at the last moment to Switzerland.

From this moment the center of the communist movement became England, the most advanced capitalist country of the day, and the only country where the workers made up the majority.

The revolutionary years 1848-49 were a decisive test of the Marxist ideas about the role of the working class in the revolutions and of revolutions fought on a scientific basis, on the basis of an

analysis of the strength of the class forces and with active communist organizations in the struggle.

The revolutions were defeated in the end, but they contributed to the enormous development of the working class as an independent class, with its own party, organized on an international scale, and with its own class organizations, among these not least revolutionary trade unions.

In the setback following the revolutions and in exile in England during a period, where brutal reaction ruled the continent and new workers' revolutions were not on the agenda, their lessons had to be drawn also from their mistakes and shortcomings. Attention had to be placed on the long-term creation of new organizations, equipped with the revolutionary experiences. This was the focal point of the communists, and particularly of Marx and Engels.

In two major works, *The Class Struggles in France 1848–1850* (published as articles in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung Revue* January to October 1850) and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) Marx used his method of dialectical and historical materialism to analyze and write contemporary history and to understand the fundamental causes of the outbreak of the revolutions. Not the least, in the latter work he presents his understanding of historical materialism, of the class struggle, of the role of the proletariat and the conditions for its victory. Marxism was developing and maturing.

In his short article *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism* (1913) Lenin noted: “The Marxist doctrine is omnipotent because it is true. It is comprehensive and harmonious, and provides men with an integral world outlook irreconcilable with any form of superstition, reaction, or defense of bourgeois oppression. It is the legitimate successor to the best that man produced in the nineteenth century, as represented by German philosophy, English political economy and French socialism.”

Both Marx and Engels returned to journalism. Marx had an income from articles to U.S. newspapers for a number of years, especially a long period with articles for the progressive *New York Daily Tribune*, a working-class newspaper. Many of these articles are vivid and sharp analyses of the political conditions in Europe, later also of the United States and of the global struggle around the development of the world market.

In this period Marx also had the possibility to advance his economic studies of capitalism and its laws, and of the relation between

the objective and subjective factors of revolution. He authored a major manuscript on economics (first published in the Soviet Union in the 1930s). In 1859 he published *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, a major work on economics with a deep-going critique of the classics of capitalist theorists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo.

This was to be the biggest literary success of his life. It was favorably received, sold well and meant that Marx was ranked among the top economists of his era. This also motivated him to continue working on *Capital* and *Theories of Surplus Value*.

Only the first volume of his main work *Capital* was published in his lifetime, in 1867. In the next years this volume was published in several languages in editions revised by Marx. But the second and third volumes were not published until after his death. This was done by Engels, in 1885 and 1894 respectively.

### **The International**

Not until 1864 had the international workers' movement recovered so much that the question of creating an international organization of labor could be placed on the agenda.

The First International – called the “International Working Men’s Association” – was founded in London on September 28th of that year. It was organized by English and French trade union leaders. At its peak, about the next great year of European revolutions – 1871 – it had about 8 million members in different countries.

Marx participated in its founding. He hailed it in the article *Inaugural Address of the International Working Men’s Association* (October 1864), stating:

“To conquer political power has, therefore, become the great duty of the working classes. They seem to have comprehended this, for in England, Germany, Italy, and France, there have taken place simultaneous revivals, and simultaneous efforts are being made at the political organization of the workmen’s party.

“One element of success they possess — numbers; but numbers weigh in the balance only if united by combination and led by knowledge. Past experience has shown how disregard of that bond of brotherhood which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries, and incite them to stand firmly by each other in all their struggles for emancipation, will be chastised by the common discomfiture of their incoherent efforts. This thought prompted the

workingmen of different countries assembled on September 28, 1864, in public meeting at St. Martin's Hall, to found the International Association."

Marx was appointed a member of the committee to work out a program and membership rules for the organization.

Marx authored the General Rules of the Association. They begin with the following:

"Considering,

"That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves, that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule;

"That the economical subjection of the man of labor to the monopolizer of the means of labor — that is, the source of life — lies at the bottom of servitude in all its forms, of all social misery, mental degradation, and political dependence;

"That the economical emancipation of the working classes is therefore the great end to which every political movement ought to be subordinate as a means;

"That all efforts aiming at the great end hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labor in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries;

"That the emancipation of labor is neither a local nor a national, but a social problem, embracing all countries in which modern society exists, and depending for its solution on the concurrence, practical and theoretical, of the most advanced countries;

"That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors, and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements;

"For these reasons —

"The International Working Men's Association has been founded."

Finally an international organization of the working class had been created.

In Denmark the first socialist organization, the first workers' party, was founded in 1871 with the formation of "The Internal Workers' Association of Denmark." It was prohibited by law in

1873; its leaders were jailed and sent into exile. It was revived as the social democratic party and later put on a reformist course.

But this was the Marxist foundation of the organization of the Danish working class. However, this revolutionary origin is carefully hidden and lied about in the history books, including the social-democratic ones, and presented as a non-revolutionary project of class collaboration.

The history of the labor movement is closely interwoven with the struggle for revolution and socialism. The Danish working class movement was, as the international, revolutionary at birth.

In 1871 the International was split in two major groupings after the brief triumph of the Paris Commune and the ensuing barbaric repression. It was dissolved in 1876.

But already in 1889 the Second International was founded, and in 1919 the Third International – The Communist International – was established following the triumph of the October Socialist Revolution.

The international organization of the communist parties and the revolutionary forces are of decisive importance for the victory of the revolution and socialism, yesterday and today, as Karl Marx formulated and acted on.

### **Combining theory and practice**

Even during the last years of his life, when he was increasingly ridden by illness – but busy as always – Marx made new contributions to the development of the revolutionary theory and practice, for instance with his *Critique of the Gotha Program* of German social democracy (1875). At the same time he continued his writing and published new editions of his books and articles.

All through his life as a revolutionary communist, Marx brilliantly combined theory and practice, inseparably knitting the two together. The red thread was always the demands and needs of the revolution and the working class.

During the centenary of his birth, much rubbish has been said about Karl Marx, trying to wipe out the revolutionary essence of his life and works.

Why not let Marx himself say, what his main contribution was to the invincible cause of socialism and its revolutionary theory?

In a famous letter to his comrade Weydemeyer of March 5th 1852 he stated:

“Now as for myself, I do not claim to have discovered either the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me, bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this struggle between the classes, as had bourgeois economists their economic anatomy.

“My own contribution was

“1. to show that the existence of classes is merely bound up with certain 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 constitutes no more than a transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”

This is Marxism, scientific socialism. It is also the program for the revolutions and the revolutionary movements of our epoch.

# Dominican Republic

**Aquiles Castro**

**Communist Party of Labor – PCT**

## **Karl Marx: On the Theory of Crises in *Capital***

### **I. Capitalism, Capital and Crises**

A key starting point for the analysis of the functioning of capitalism is found in the statement: “in bourgeois society, the commodity-form of the product of labour – or value-form of the commodity – is the economic cell-form” (From the Preface to the First German Edition, 1867).

Capital can be understood as “a value in motion that experiences a **continuous expansion** through the production of surplus value.”

In other words, to function “normally” capital requires the creation of profit.

The relation on which capitalist expansion rests is that of domination or subordination that exists between the owners of capital and the owners of labor power, the two fundamental social classes in capitalist society. It is the relation in which the latter have only the ability to sell their labor power in exchange for a salary in order to survive.

The cycle of capital works successfully when capital in the form of money can be realized by buying raw materials, labor power and machinery in order to carry out the process of production. The result of the combination of all these factors translates into commodities that are placed on the market. A commodity is realized **as a commodity** when its circulation in the market transforms it into money.

### **Capitalist production, its “reason for being” under the clinical eye of Marx:**

Allow me to abuse the reader a little by sharing a quotation of several lines from Volume III of *Capital*. I think that it provides a good central reference point for the present article:

“Capitalist production seeks continually to overcome these immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means which

again place these barriers in its way and on a more formidable scale.

“The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. It is that capital and its self-expansion appear as the starting and the closing point, the motive and the purpose of production; that production is only production for capital and not vice versa, the means of production are not mere means for a constant expansion of the living process of the society of producers. The limits within which the preservation and self-expansion of the value of capital resting on the expropriation and pauperisation of the great mass of producers can alone move – these limits come continually into conflict with the methods of production employed by capital for its purposes, which drive towards unlimited extension of production, towards production as an end in itself, towards unconditional development of the social productivity of labour.” (Marx, *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 15, Section 2, p. 176, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-III.pdf>).

**The concept of crisis** in capitalism shows that there has been a break in the cycle of the normal operation of capital, which is a cycle of continuous expansion.

This crisis, in which the system does not function normally, is a **crisis of the realization of capital**, equivalent to stagnation.

Capital finds itself in crisis, among other scenarios, when: the capitalist prefers to keep his capital in the form of money without investing it, because he understands that the outlook for the economy does not guarantee the expected level of profit.

Capital stagnates in the form of money when it cannot get access to the raw materials necessary for its materialization.

In the phase of productive capital, there may be stagnation if the machinery is not used to its full productive potential; when there is a forced stoppage, when commodities do not circulate because they do not find buyers at a certain level of prices.

In this regard, Marx explained when capital is destroyed or not realized:

“Machinery which is not used is not capital. Labour which is not exploited is equivalent to lost production. Raw material which lies unused is no capital. Buildings (also newly built machinery) which are either unused or remain unfinished, commodities which rot in warehouses—all this is destruction of



capital. All this means that the process of reproduction is checked and that the existing means of production are not really used as means of production, are not put into operation. Thus their use-value and their exchange-value go to the devil. Secondly, however, the destruction of capital through crises means the depreciation of values (...) A large part of the nominal capital of the society, i.e., of the exchange-value of the existing capital, is once for all destroyed.” (In Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Theory of Surplus Value* (Volume IV of *Capital*), Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, Volume II, pp. 495-496 at: <http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/TSV-Part%202.pdf>).

Crisis are inherent in the system; they are part of the logic of its operation. The crises arise from the internal contradictions of the system; so, when we are not facing a crisis and the system is functioning “normally,” the factors of contradiction within it are constantly creating the conditions that bring about crisis.

When the renewal of the cycle of the system allows it to revive, these crisis factors can be neutralized, but they do not disappear. However, its ability to self-expand, the process of accumulation has a contradictory character due to which it successively experiences crises up to the point where these contradictions compromise its capacity for reproduction.

The very conditions for the reproduction of capital are those that create the conditions for the emergence of the crises and eventually create the favorable climate to overcome capitalism.

Marxist theory theoretically dismantled the supposed eternal character of capitalism that the defenders of the system proclaim; these crises historically validate the postulates of Marxism on its operation.

Capitalism is a class structure in which the existence and continuation of the capitalist class demands the existence and continuation of the working class. However, it sets capitalists against capitalists, capitalists against workers and workers against workers.

### **The non-Marxist explanation of crises**

This perspective is based on the assumption that capitalism is the social order that is really capable of responding appropriately to human needs. That it can function without external intervention to the economic system itself, thus assuring its infinite reproduction. It can do so because in social life, everyone tries to exclusively satisfy

their particular interest and all of those personal actions will lead society to its collective interest. That is, the realization of the collective interest will be achieved spontaneously to the degree that those individual interests are realized. In that view there is no place for crises.

This viewpoint supposes a process of operation of capitalism without upheavals, that is, that “the thing” keeps “operating” eternally in a regular, normal way.

Therefore, from that point of view, crises should not occur because there would always be a demand for everything that is produced.

But what happens in reality: as we know, the crises that paralyze or interrupt this operation result.

### **How do the bourgeois ideologists try to explain crises?**

Since they understand it as alien to the system itself, they try to explain the cause by external factors: **natural ones** (such as bad harvests); and **human ones** (wars, political interference, succession of psychological cycles of optimism or pessimism among the so-called “economic agents,” etc.).

According to them, capitalism has nothing directly to do with the crises that affect it; these are caused by factors outside the system whose logic of operation, without the intervention of these external factors that destabilize it, would automatically reproduce itself without any problems.

As we know, the crisis that erupted in 1929 shook the foundations of capitalism, including the theories that justified it. In this context, within the system itself, the orthodoxy of pure supply and demand or “laissez faire” was abandoned, and Keynes stated that demand sets the level of activity for the normal operation of the system in the short term; and since the workers’ demand is based on their salaries, the investment of the capitalists becomes the fundamental piece of the system.

But as we also know, the levels of investment will depend on the expectations of profit that the capitalist has, and with these expectations, because of its changing nature, one cannot plan it. Within the framework of the system there is nothing that encourages the capitalist to plan the investment necessary to achieve full employment. Unemployment and inflation arise from the system’s own logic of operation.

As they are stuck, at this point the supporters of this theory then claimed that State intervention was the key factor of equilibrium: the state would manipulate demand to keep the economy at the level of full employment and without inflation.

Experience has convincingly shown us that this has not worked, and that the cycles of the crises, especially after the 1970s, confirm that the Keynesian proposal does not offer a sustainable solution.

At the bottom of all this, within the framework of the limits of the capitalist system it is not possible to get rid of the crises that are part of the very nature of the system. That is what Marx explained to us in his classic work. If, as we will see later, Marx is still right, then we must admit that a social order that seeks to rid society of the terrible consequences brought about by the crises of capitalism, must rely on the gains won under capitalism in order to build a new form of social relations that dialectically rejects the logic on which current social relations rest.

Obviously this cannot be expressed or defended by any thinker or theoretician whose intellectual work is at the service of the reproduction of capitalism. That is why Marx not only studied and analyzed the mechanisms on which the operation of capitalism rests, but at the same time he took sides, becoming the main ideologist of the cause that, challenging capitalism, proposes a new social order: the cause of socialism.

## II. How Marx Develops His Explanation

Capital's reason for existence is to constantly seek profits, which are what allows its realization, its accumulation.

The conditions under which the process of accumulation takes place tend to progressively reduce profitability. This constitutes a tremendous contradiction within capital itself: the same process that makes possible its growth in the long term leads to its own limitation: it is what Marx calls the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

According to Marx, the **rate of exploitation** is the ratio between surplus value and the value of labor power,  $p / v$ .

Surplus value and the rate of exploitation can be increased: by increasing the length of the working day; or by reducing the labor necessary for the reproduction of **labor power**, which would leave a greater proportion of the working day dedicated to the production of surplus value.

The reduction of the labor necessary for the reproduction of labor power is achieved through two alternatives: through the reduction of the real wages of the workers, or through the increase in their productivity (less working time to produce the same quantity of products).

The capitalist, who always seeks to increase his profits, invests in means of production, raw materials and labor power. His goal is to achieve the maximum surplus or surplus value.

The ratio of surplus value obtained by the capitalist compared to his total investment gives us the **rate of profit**: surplus value / (constant capital + value of labor power).

This **ratio between surplus value and total investment** is the true regulator of the whole dynamic of capitalism; it establishes where it invests and how it does so.

The main consequence of the phenomenon of the decreasing rate of profit is that it leads to a harsh competition among capitalists for markets, raw materials and cheap labor. As a result of this competition, the best positioned capitals devour the disadvantaged ones, creating the concentration that leads to monopoly.

In this situation, the capitalists will insist, by necessity, on resolving “their problem” by appealing directly to low wages or through technology, importing cheap labor and / or exporting capital where they consider its profitability to be greater.

The whole point of the matter regarding the difficulties in increasing the rate of surplus value in proportion to the new increase in investment is that the rate of exploitation can only increase at a decreasing rate, because more and more investment in fixed or constant capital is required to achieve an increase in profit. This increase in constant capital is what Marx in his work called the organic composition of capital.

In addition, the rate of exploitation is to some extent restricted by factors such as the limitations in placing the burden on the workers due to the class struggle and the need to allow them a certain capacity of consumption, as subjects of the market.

Capitalists respond to the fall in the rate of profit in two ways, which we have seen repeated again and again in the contemporary national and international context: on the one hand by measures to increase the productivity of labor, through new strategies of reorganization of the labor process, increasing the pace of production to seek greater productivity, reducing the rest time and other benefits

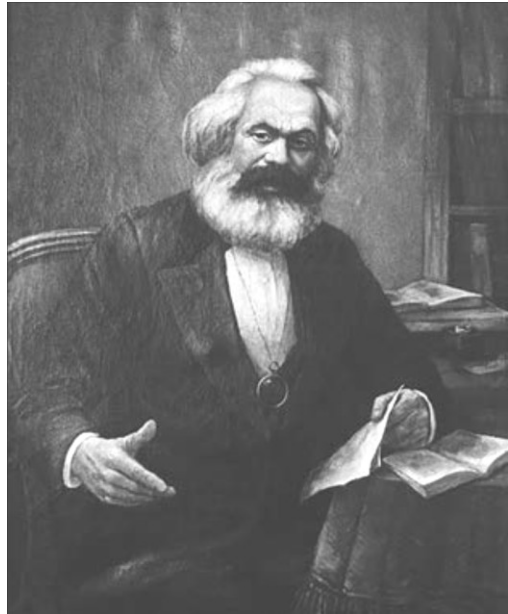
of the workers, etc.; on the other hand, calling on the State to promote new legislation in its interests, such as labor flexibility, reduction of the cost of layoffs, various forms of subsidies, reduction of investment in social security, occupational health and other cuts to the rights that had been won.

This framework in which the system experiences a fall in the rate of profit and the capitalists struggle to recover it, keeps this economic system in permanent check.

Capitalism is unable to overcome crises because these crises are the only way that the system has to get out of the accumulation of the contradiction (which reaches its climax in a given period) between the development of the productive forces and the social relations in which this development takes place. Marx summarizes this in two points when he explains the barriers which the capitalist system encounters in its evolution:

“1) In that the development of the productivity of labour creates out of the falling rate of profit a law which at a certain point comes into antagonistic conflict with this development and **must be overcome constantly through crises.**

“2) In that the expansion or contraction of production are determined by the appropriation of unpaid labour and the proportion of this unpaid labour to materialised labour in general, or, to speak the language of the capitalists, by profit and the proportion of this profit to the employed capital, thus by a definite rate of profit, rather than the relation of production to social requirements, i.e., to the requirements



of socially developed human beings. It is for this reason that the capitalist mode of production meets with barriers at a certain expanded stage of production which, if viewed from the other premise, would reversely have been altogether inadequate. **It comes to a standstill at a point fixed by the production and realisation of profit**, and not the satisfaction of requirements.” (K. Marx, *Capital*, Volume III, p. 181.)

### **III. The Political and Social Effects of This Situation**

Among the consequences of the crises, in addition to the tendency to monopolies, we must add that the slowing down of the economy increases unemployment, which in turn will lead the workers to accept worse conditions of exploitation in order to maintain their jobs. And these worse conditions of exploitation imply lower purchasing power, lower demand in the market, which in turn depresses the prices of commodities and therefore we return to a standstill. Because as we already know, if something is produced but it is not bought or sold there is no circulation in the market, and without this there is no effective realization of the commodity, that is, one of the forms of existence of capital.

As long as the system can count on the increase in the reserve army of labor (through forced unemployment), it can continue with the super-exploitation of labor power and thereby increase **surplus value**, the key factor in the **rate of profit**; capital is thus able to revive, but this same factor creates the conditions for a new cycle of economic recovery, but at the same time it creates the bases for a new crisis.

#### **The question of the explanation of crises and its relevance for political action for the transformation**

“Intrinsically, it is not a question of the higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms that result from the natural laws of capitalist production. It is a question of these laws themselves, of these tendencies working with iron necessity towards inevitable results.” (From the Preface to the First German Edition, 1867.)

The understanding of the fundamentals that explain the crises and the inevitable cyclical character of these crises under capitalism allows one to construct and argue convincingly the alternative

proposal of socialism as a new social order that will supersede capitalism.

Capitalism cannot evolve and develop without permanently developing the productive forces, but at the same time as this takes place, its logic of operation produces the obstacles that obstruct and impede the further development of those productive forces, and periods of crises result in which the productive forces are destroyed, capital is destroyed.

### **The contradiction between capital and labor**

This is the cornerstone that sustains the political struggle from the standpoint of socialism within capitalism, and this antagonistic contradiction between the interests of these two classes is precisely the process that we have analyzed in the theory of crises according to Marx in *Capital*.

As we have emphasized in this article, the existence of the contradictions that characterize capitalism are those that systematically produce crises in shorter or longer but inevitable periods. To free humanity from of the consequences of the crises means to free it from capitalist exploitation. Therefore the alternative continues to be socialism, as a social order conceived on a basis that guarantees the collective interests of society. This is a principle that does not exist under capitalism, a problem that becomes the source of the main flaws of this system.

In this sense, the organization of the struggle of the working class and other classes and sectors affected by exploitation, oppression and injustice is the task of those who challenge the ruling system, in order to build processes that contribute to its overthrow, because no crisis has overthrown systems or regimes of domination by itself. Crises contribute to the maturing of conditions favorable to the collapse of the system, but as someone once said, “we must help it fall.”

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# Ecuador

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## Class consciousness in the doctrine of Karl Marx

The validity of conceptions is measured in objective reality. “In order to abolish the *idea* of private property, the idea of communism is quite sufficient. It takes *actual* communist action to abolish *actual* private property.”

Karl Marx, *Economic &  
Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*

“When you look at a tree, you are aware of the tree. When you have a thought or feeling, you are aware of that thought or feeling. When you have a pleasant or painful experience, you are aware of that experience. These seem true and obvious statements. Yet if you examine them closely, you will find that in a subtle way their very structure contains a fundamental illusion, an illusion which is unavoidable when you use language. Thought and language create an apparent duality and a separate person where there is none. The truth is you are not somebody who is aware of the tree, the thought, feeling or experience. You are the awareness or consciousness in and by which those things appear.” (Tolle, 2003)

Even today there are people who think this way, even though in the philosophical debate about the real or non-real existence of the world, of everything that surrounds us, that is, the relationship between the material and mental, between being and thinking, materialism destroyed the viewpoints of those who presented the objective world as a projection of individual consciousness.

This debate, which now more than before, would seem far from people’s practical life, is important due to the frustration that the masses experience due to what capitalism provides them. The solution that can be given to this problem has implicit social and political consequences; the attitude of people to reality depends on it, their way of conceiving social life, the role of human beings in the historical development of societies, their moral principles, etc.



The materialist interpretation of the world and its phenomena allows us to understand and find the way to transform social life; the idealist denies this possibility, leaves it to contrition and the search for individual salvation in a non-earthly world, causing a mental enslavement of the peoples.

In this struggle waged over the course of several centuries, Marxism put things in order even in the ranks of materialism itself, while the most advanced thinkers of the 19th century still suffered from a simplistic, mechanical materialism, and, on the other hand, among those who had developed a dialectical vision of development and progress there were those imbued with mysticism.

Karl Marx revolutionized philosophy, he went beyond the limitations of materialism up to that time, he “enriched it with the achievements of German classical philosophy, especially of Hegel’s system, which in its turn had led to the materialism of Feuerbach. The main achievement was *dialectics*, i.e., the doctrine of development in its fullest, deepest and most comprehensive form, the doctrine of the relativity of the human knowledge that provides us with a reflection of eternally developing matter.” (Lenin, *The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism*.) But he turned Hegel’s thought “right-side up” (Umstülpung). This is what Marx says to Engels in a letter in January 1858, and in the Preface to the Second German Edition of *Capital*, he recalls how the “mediocre Epigones who now talk large in cultured Germany” attacked Hegel, treating him as “dead dog.” Therefore he “openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker”, but since in Hegel the dialectic appears “standing on its head,” it would only be necessary to “turn it right side up again” and, in this way, discover “the rational kernel within the mystical shell.”

“My dialectical method,” Marx stated, “is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of ‘the Idea,’ he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of ‘the Idea.’ With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.” (Marx, *Ibid.*)

By merging materialism with dialectics, Marx and Engels gave the world a philosophical conception that: allows one to scientific-

ly study and understand the phenomena that occur in nature, human society and thought. It makes it possible to discover the forces that act on them, the contradictions that operate inside and outside, determining the course and form of the phenomena that appear in them.

Where should one look to find the cause of the grave social problems that affect the laboring classes in a class society? Materialism explains the phenomenon by analyzing the conditions of people's material life, in the economic system of society, in its class structure; idealism looks in the conditions of spiritual life, in the errors of people, in their moral defects. (Konstantinov.)

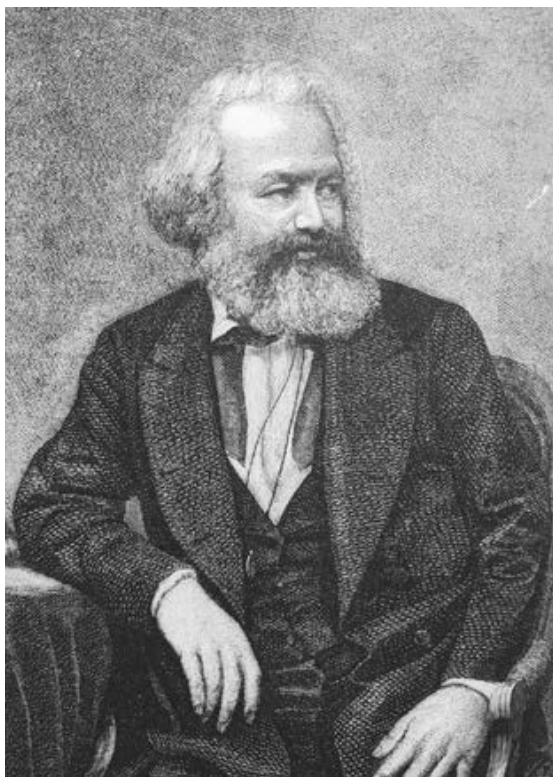
In his work *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, written between August 1858 and January 1859, Marx stated the following: "The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness." But earlier, in the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), he states that "the materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that men themselves change circumstances and that the educator himself must be educated." (Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1976).

These two formulations are fundamental to comprehensively understand the thought of Marx and Engels regarding the dialectical relationship, the reciprocal relation between the material conditions of life and the consciousness of people. This element is important because the "critics" of Marxism – and those who do not have an integral understanding of it – accuse it of "reductionism" or "positivist determinism" in explaining the historical development of the different societies that humanity has known until now, because it maintains that the characteristics of a given society are determined by the material base on which it emerges, while for Marxism this underestimates or completely denies the role played by ideas in the development of society. (Rios 2017)

These misunderstandings and misrepresentations occurred even in the years when Marx and Engels formulated their theory. "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasise the main principle *vis-à-vis* our adversaries,

who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to give their due to the other elements involved in the interaction....,” says F. Engels in a letter addressed to Joseph Bloch on September 21, 1890. (*Historical Materialism (Marx, Engels, Lenin)*, Progress Publishers, 1972. [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90\\_09\\_21.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1890/letters/90_09_21.htm).)

Here the dialectical relationship between the economic base and the elements of the superstructure that emerge from it is made clear. “According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Other than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure — political forms of the class struggle and its results, to wit: constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas — also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in



many cases preponderate in determining their *form*. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent, as negligible), the economic movement finally asserts itself as necessary. Otherwise the application of the theory to any period of history would be easier than the solution of a simple equation of the first degree.” (Ibid.)

He refers to this in similar terms in a letter to W. Borgius on January 25, 1894. “Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic base. It is not that the economic position is the *cause and alone active*, while everything else only has a passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of the economic necessity, which *ultimately* always asserts itself. The state, for instance, exercises an influence by tariffs, free trade, good or bad fiscal system... So it is not, as people try here and there conveniently to imagine, that the economic position produces an automatic effect. Men make their history themselves, only in given surroundings which condition it and on the basis of actual relations already existing, among which the economic relations, however much they may be influenced by the other political and ideological ones, are still ultimately the decisive ones, forming the red thread which runs through them and alone leads to understanding.” (*Marx and Engels Correspondence*, International Publishers, 1968. [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894/letters/94\\_01\\_25.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1894/letters/94_01_25.htm))

It is fundamental to have this comprehensive understanding of the factors that act in the development of societies, because, while providing us with a scientific interpretation of the historical evolution of humanity and its projection into the future, it confirms the fundamental role that the workers and peoples play in the course of history, as a driving force that leads society forward and, moreover, justifies the existence and determines the action of revolutionary forces in accelerating these processes.

**“What the vital activities of individuals are,  
they are themselves”**

The coexistence and reciprocal action of the living conditions and the consciousness of people in the concrete historical-social circumstance have been proposed up to now, a phenomenon in which Marx establishes that life is the one that determines consciousness.

We do not speak of consciousness as an individual phenomenon or attribute, but as a “social product,” because, people are social beings, we live, act and produce collectively. We are in touch with the world not as observers or passive subjects; we act and with our activity we create the conditions for our survival and we transform the world, creating an experience that is no longer an individual one but becomes a social experience. Thus, not only do we have a social being but also a social consciousness. Consciousness, therefore, is the product of practice – mainly of the productive activity of the human being – and is in constant development. (Rios 2017.) Individuals are the way they manifest themselves in life, which depends on the material conditions of their production, Marx says.

Historically people have different roles in the productive process and the position that they fulfill in them determines a specific social condition and also the conditions for the development of a particular perception – as a group, not individually – of society and of the role in it that they are destined to fulfill. Thus a class psychology emerges, determined by the objective situation of the individuals in the system of relations of production. In the words of Marx, “Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought, and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations.” (Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1852/18th-brumaire/ch03.htm>)

Although Marxism affirms that the mental consciousness is a reflection of the world that surrounds people, this does not mean that it is something like a mirror in which the objective world is reflected in the same way for all those who look at it; even more so when not only nature forms part of the objective reality, but also the existing historical and social circumstances. All these elements are

reflected in consciousness, but the reading and interpretation of this phenomenon is not identical in all because, despite speaking of consciousness in general, in reality there are various ones, since the consciousness of people is determined by their material conditions of life, by their class condition.

For Karl Marx, the class consciousness of the proletariat is: the consciousness of the fundamental and common interests of the proletariat as a class; the consciousness that the interests of the proletariat are antagonistic to the interests of the bourgeoisie; and, to be conscious of the need to organize and act to seize political power and exercise its rule. In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx points out that this consciousness is indispensable for the proletariat to become a “**class for itself**.”

This is developed in the course of a historical process that includes the daily productive practice, the class confrontation with the exploiting bourgeoisie, the search to put an end to their situation of oppression and achieve emancipation. Marx considered that the working class, by itself, in the class confrontation, creates the conditions for the advancement and development of its own consciousness at higher levels.

“As soon as it has risen up, a class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated finds the content and the material for its revolutionary activity directly in its own situation: foes to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggle to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task” Marx states in *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.

The last part of the text quoted in no way suggests an underestimation of revolutionary theory or praise of spontaneity. Marx makes clear that it is the material conditions of life that push the proletariat to rise up against exploitation and that its movement is not the result of theory, because, as we know, the latter is the fruit of the historical experience of the proletariat. So much so that, in *The Poverty of Philosophy*, he states the following: “So long as the proletariat is not yet sufficiently developed to constitute itself as a class, and consequently so long as the very struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie has not yet assumed a political character, and the productive forces are not yet sufficiently developed in the bosom of the bourgeoisie itself to enable us to catch a glimpse of the material conditions necessary for the emancipation of the prole-

tariat and for the formation of a new society, these theoreticians are merely utopians...” But then he says: “...in the measure that history moves forward, and with it the struggle of the proletariat assumes clearer outlines, they no longer need to seek science in their minds; they have only to take note of what is happening before their eyes and to become its mouthpiece.” Marx describes as utopians those who elaborate a theory apart from the real movement, unlike those who develop a theory that reflects reality.

There is, thus, a distinction between class consciousness, achieved by the proletariat with its own forces in the midst of its struggle, and the doctrine scientifically elaborated by the theorists of the class. These are related, they are interdependent: class consciousness needs scientific theory to rise to a higher level; in turn, the theory is based on class consciousness and can be developed only from a class point of view. (Sanchez Vazquez 1980)

How much or to what degree can the class consciousness of the proletariat develop is a point under discussion. Marx considers, above all, that this is the result of a historical process of struggle that has different levels; and that the working class by its own effort rises to a certain level of class consciousness, which even leads to the conclusion of organizing to take power. Lenin, on the other hand, states that “The history of all countries shows that the working class exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness.” (Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*)

The history of the international workers movement shows that Marx was right, and even Lenin himself reinforces this view by referring to the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871 and the emergence of the Soviets in the 1905 revolution.

“In rising against the old regime the proletariat undertook two tasks – one of them national and the other of a class character – the liberation of France from the German invasion and the socialist emancipation of the workers from capitalism. This union of two tasks forms a unique feature of the Commune.... The Commune taught the European proletariat to pose concretely the tasks of the socialist revolution,” Lenin states in the article *Lessons of the Commune*, written in 1908. In a later article, *In Memory of the Commune*, he states the following: “**The Commune sprang up spontaneously.** No one consciously prepared it in an organised way. The unsuccessful war with Germany, the privations suffered during the siege, the unemployment among the proletariat and the ruin among

the lower middle classes; the indignation of the masses against the upper classes and against authorities who had displayed utter incompetence, the vague unrest among the working class, which was discontented with its lot and was striving for a different social system; the reactionary composition of the National Assembly, which roused apprehensions as to the fate of the republic – all this and many other factors combined to drive the population of Paris to revolution on March 18, which unexpectedly placed power in the hands of the National Guard, in the hands of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie which had sided with it.”<sup>1</sup>

Karl Marx in analyzing this event says that “It [the Commune] was essentially *a working-class government*, the produce of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, **the political form at last discovered** under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour...”<sup>2</sup> (Quoted by Lenin in *The State and Revolution*).

The emergence of the Soviets in the course of the Russian Revolution of 1905 has similar characteristics. Their creation was the spontaneous work of the masses during the development of revolutionary events; initially, they sought to lead the strike movement, but they were transformed into organizations representative of the interests of the entire working class, up to playing the role of instruments of the insurrection and being the embryo of the future proletarian power. “They acted as if they were already the power” says Lenin, and in a short speech in 1919, *What Is Soviet Power?*, he points out that this “is the road to socialism that was **discovered by the masses of working people**,<sup>3</sup> and that is why it is the true road, that is why it is invincible.”

The harsh material conditions of life and the development of the political struggle “pushed forward” the working class until it understood the need to establish its own form of government, its own power.

These experiences form part of the “historical process of struggles” of the working class that allows it to form and develop its class consciousness. However, this phenomenon does not imply that the lessons learned by the proletariat of one country at a specific

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<sup>1</sup> Our emphasis.

<sup>2</sup> Our emphasis.

<sup>3</sup> Our emphasis.



period in history, which are shown to be indispensable actions to achieve its emancipation, appear spontaneously in the new generations of workers. These must also learn in the midst of their own class confrontation, they must learn in the midst of the struggle. There theory plays a fundamental role, as a synthesis of historical experience, and the most advanced sectors of the proletariat, the communists, have the obligation to spread that revolutionary theory so that the struggles of the working class to win their emancipation find them in better ideological conditions.

Marx states that the working class, in the course of the political struggle against bourgeois rule, is capable of rising to a certain level of class consciousness; this does not at all mean underestimating the role of the theory. What greater proof is there than his theoretical work and that of Friedrich Engels to show its enormous importance!

There is no doubt that class consciousness needs scientific theory, Marxism-Leninism, to raise it to the highest levels, because class consciousness is not the same as socialist consciousness. The Communists “have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole. They do not set up any sectarian principles of their own, by which to shape and mould the proletarian movement.... theoretically, they have over the great mass of the proletariat at the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement,” says the *Communist Manifesto*.

### **Socialist consciousness**

The rule exercised by the bourgeoisie over the working class and the rest of the laboring classes, having as its basis the process of production in which the exploitation of labor takes place, is based on other mechanisms of an ideological-political nature, which act as instruments of coercion and cohesion of society. Among the former are the apparatuses of repression; among the latter are the school, church, culture, laws, art, etc. They all guarantee that the members of society, forcibly or above all voluntarily – as a result of ideological cohesion – take as their own the interpretation that the ruling class has over society and its development and as indispensable to act under the parameters established by the class that holds power in order to achieve progress. In this way the economic rule of the bourgeoisie extends to the political and ideological fields and thus the ruling ideology in a society is that of the ruling class.

When a social class has had the ability to unravel the essence of things by removing the appearance that conceals it and, facing that reality, understands and commits itself to the role that the historical circumstance imposes on it, it acquires class consciousness and goes from being, as Marx says, “a class in itself to a class for itself.” In these circumstances the class is able to see the world with its own eyes, to understand it based on its own experiences and reflections and to act on it according to its own interests.

Until this takes place, individuals are victims of a false consciousness, that is, they are bearers of a view that does not correspond to their material conditions of existence. This explains, for example, why there are workers who adopt bourgeois ideology as their own, who make their own a vision of the world that does not accord with their individual and class interests, but with the class interests of the bourgeoisie. This is what is known as alienation. If the social activity of individuals is alienated (does not correspond to their needs and desires) their consciousness will also be alienated. (Rios 2017)

That in the course of history, in the midst of constant and serious struggles, the working class has developed a class consciousness does not mean – as we pointed out above – that the new generations of workers will spontaneously come along with that historically accumulated consciousness or even that all workers will be its bearers. This leads Lenin to raise the need for the revolutionary party to take as its primary responsibility to work to develop this class consciousness and raise it to the highest levels. “The task of the Social Democrats... is to *convert* trade union politics into Social-Democratic political struggle, to *utilize* the sparks of political consciousness, which the economic struggle generates among the workers, for the purpose of *raising* them to the level of *Social-Democratic* political consciousness,” says Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*

As long as and to the degree that the workers’ and popular movement does not free itself from the ideological shackles imposed by the bourgeoisie, its answers to the problems created by capitalism maintain the stamp of bourgeois or petty bourgeois thought and its struggle will not go beyond the limits that the bourgeoisie itself has set as permissible in the political game of its own institutions, even on the occasions when its actions appear radical and violent. Only a workers’ and popular movement with a high

degree of class consciousness, influenced by socialist thought, is able to make its struggle the instrument to free itself from the chains of capitalist rule with the triumph of the social revolution.

To fulfill the role within the workers movement of the conscious agent, of the ideological and political vanguard, which points out the road along which the revolutionary movement of the proletariat must pass in order to put an end to capitalism, is the challenge that every Marxist-Leninist party has in order to fulfill its historic commitment.

In order to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat has as its fundamental weapons its class consciousness and the theory of scientific socialism. By taking up the revolutionary ideals in the consciousness of the masses, they become a material force in the action of those who promote them and fight for their application. “The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism by weapons, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses....” says Marx (*Introduction to A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*).

March 2018

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# France

## ***Workers' Communist Party of France – PCOF***

### **Marx and France**

The quote that we reproduce below, often cited in studies on Marx and his relationship with France, gives us a good introduction to this article for the journal *Unity and Struggle* dedicated to Marx on the occasion of the bicentenary of his birth on May 5, 1818.

“But to achieve this, Marx’s thorough knowledge of French history was needed. France is the country where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were fought out to a decisive conclusion every time, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they move and in which their results are summarized have been stamped in the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model of a unified monarchy based on social estates since the Renaissance, France demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the aspiring proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie appeared here in an acute form unknown elsewhere. This was the reason why Marx not only studied the past history of France with particular predilection, but also followed her current history in every detail, stored up the material for future use and, consequently, events never took him by surprise.” (Extract from F. Engels Preface to the third German edition of “The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte.” Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1978, p. 7)

### **Marx’s Stays in France**

Marx was born in 1818 in what is today Germany, which at that time was still the Prussian Empire. His family, especially his father, were Francophiles, admirers of the ideas of the French Revolution and the philosophers of the Enlightenment. Marx learned French in school, he not only spoke our language, he also read and wrote it perfectly. As proof, in 1845/46 he wrote his pamphlet “The Poverty of Philosophy” directly in French. His command of the language allowed him to access publications in French; it is known is that of the nearly 500 works contained in his library in France, half were in the French language and a quarter of those books were about

France. It is also known that Marx, dissatisfied with the French translation of the first volume of *Capital* (1872), did not limit himself to correcting it, but rewrote the document to make it easier for French readers to read it.

The knowledge of our language also allowed him to participate in the political life of the capital, to meet with the different existing workers groups and, specifically, to contact the leaders of the League of the Just,<sup>1</sup> and different secret workers' associations. He frequented the circles of socialist workers and their meetings, of which Anthony Burlaud said, he "made an admiring frame in the manuscripts of 1844." (See our sources).

Marx's longest stay in France lasted from the autumn of 1843 to January 1845. He later returned several times for short periods, but he was always closely linked to our country, to the extent that his daughters, specifically Laura and Jenny, married French socialist militants.<sup>2</sup>

When Marx arrived in Paris, expelled, like many other dissidents, by the Prussian political police, he was 25 years old. That is, a young man who fell into "the great magic pot in which the history of the world is boiling." That year was for Marx an experience of exceptional intensity. In France, socialism was in formation, a socialism still full of idealism and religiosity. Different currents were mixed together: the utopians, the anarchists, the neo-Jacobin cur-

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<sup>1</sup> A clandestine working-class organization that brought together mainly German exiles, which quickly took on an internationalist character, later transformed by contact with the ideas of Marx into the League of Communists, predecessor of the First International. (Some words on the history of the League of Communists, Engels, October 1885)

<sup>2</sup> Marx's three daughters united with French socialist militants (Lafargue, Longuet and Lissagaray). Laura married Paul Lafargue in 1868, and spread Marxism, particularly in France and Spain. Jenny, his eldest daughter (1844-1883, a socialist militant, married the commu-nard Charles Longuet, their son was the French socialist leader Jean Longuet. Eleanor, the youngest and closely linked to Marx, together with Lissagaray for some time, translated his *History of the Commune* into English; later she was together with an English socialist activist. At the death of Marx, she was the testamentary executor, along with Engels, of his work.

rent, etc. Currents with their bosses: Fourier, Blanqui, Bakunin, Proudhon. As Engels would say, it was in Paris that socialism and communism could best be studied. It was also in France that the nascent working class was particularly politically mobilized; after the revolution of 1789, that class continued the struggle to impose its class interests, distinct from those of the bourgeoisie; in 1830, after the insurrection of May of 1839<sup>3</sup>; during the days of February and June of 1848, and then in March of 1871, the seizure of power and the establishment of the Paris Commune.

In France and later in Brussels and London, Marx followed events closely; linked and in close relationship with the chief actors of the movement. During his stay in Paris, he completed his training as a materialist philosopher with that of a historian and economist; during those and the following years he would develop his theory of dialectical and historical materialism. His first stay in Paris was, as A. Cornu<sup>4</sup> wrote, “a decisive turn in the development of his thought and action.”

We also know that it was during his first stay in Paris, precisely in September of 1844, that he met Engels. They spent ten days together<sup>5</sup> that would mark



<sup>3</sup> On May 12, 1839, the republican secret society “Les Saisons” (“the Seasons”), whose activists were Martin Bernard, Armand Barbès and August Blanqui, launched an insurrectionary operation. They took some hundreds of their followers to the attack on the Hotel de Ville (City Hall) in Paris. The operation failed, crushed by the National Guard. The leaders were arrested.

<sup>4</sup> The work of A. Cornu “Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. His life and his work.” Volume 3, *Marx in Paris*, (Puif-1962), quoted by A. Burlaud.

<sup>5</sup> The 2016 film by Raoul Peck “The young Marx,” concretely tells of this decisive episode for the life and the thought of these two men.

the beginning of a friendship and an intellectual collaboration which only the death of Marx would end.

Upon his arrival in France, Marx engaged in the study of the French Revolution through the writings of distinguished historians (specifically Guizot and Thierry – quoted by Marx), historians who told the history of the Third Estate since the Middle Ages and showed that the history of France was a continuous class struggle.<sup>6</sup> Marx intended to write a history of the Convention,<sup>7</sup> for which he accumulated a huge amount of documentation and numerous notes, but that work did not come to light. However, he would use a good part of these preparatory works in his work *The Holy Family*.<sup>8</sup>

In Paris, Marx met Proudhon, who at that time exercised a notable influence on the labor movement. Marx explained that he spent hours and nights arguing with him to make him understand Hegel's philosophy. Marx admired the work of Proudhon entitled *What is Property?* in which he saw the first scientific examination of the modern proletariat; however, he soon raised a contradiction with the doctrine of Proudhon, and when Proudhon sent his book *The Philosophy of Poverty*, Marx answered directly in French with the work *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1846), in which dismantled the petty-bourgeois theories of Proudhon. The project of Marx and Ruge<sup>9</sup> to create in Paris the *Franco-German Annals* to “work on the approximation of German thought and French praxis,” did not come together for various reasons (particularly the disagreements between Marx and Ruge), and only a single number of the proposed journal was published. But in Paris, the capital of political exiles, there were a lot of German political refugees, many of them militants (liberals, republicans, and also socialists). From the beginning of the 1840s, the magazine *Vorwärts (Forward)* was published in Paris

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<sup>6</sup> Marx would recognize that it was not he who originated the concept of the “class struggle” as the motive force of history.

<sup>7</sup> The Convention was the Assembly (elected by universal male suffrage during the summer of 1792) that led the French Republic from September 21, 1792, to October 26, 1795.

<sup>8</sup> The first work written in collaboration with Engels to combat Bauer's theses (1845).

<sup>9</sup> Arnold Ruge (1802-1880), a German political thinker of the Hegelian left. For a time close to Marx, he more quickly distanced himself and evolved differently.



twice a week, with which Marx collaborated. In June of 1844, he wrote an article about the rebellion of the weavers of Silesia.<sup>10</sup> The Prussian government, hard pressed by the French government to, if not prohibit the magazine, at least expel those of its collaborators that they considered most dangerous. Marx was one of those to whom the decree of expulsion was applied. He was forced to leave Paris.

### Marx's Works on France

Although Marx was forced to leave Paris (he first went to Brussels, then to London), he did not stop following the events there. He wrote three works on the political situation in France and the struggle of the French working class.

\* *The Class Struggles in France* (1848-1850), which Engels would say in his extensive introduction of 1895, “was Marx’s first attempt, with the aid of his materialist conception, to explain a section of contemporary history from the given economic situation.” He further added that in this text for the first time he formulated the thesis by which the modern workers’ socialism is distinguished from the various other tendencies, and quoted the text:

“But behind the right to work stands the power over capital; behind the power over capital, the appropriation of the means of production, their subjection to the associated working class and, therefore, the abolition of wage labor as well as of capital and of their mutual relationships.” (Our emphasis.)

\* *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852). This work revisited the plot of the previous book (*The Class Struggles in France*) and expanded on it, but also introduced a new idea, the need to suppress the state apparatus and its army of officials. In this work that Marx published the day after the coup d’état, he exposed the nature and class function of Bonapartism.

\* *The Civil War in France* (1871), undoubtedly the best known and most read of these three works, is an analysis of the Paris Commune. The analysis of the experience of the first seizure of

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<sup>10</sup> On June 4, 1844, the weavers of Peterswaldau and Langenbielau rose up against the factories. About 5,000 of them broke the machines in which, despite their work, they did not escape from hunger; they rose up against the elegant buildings of the factory owners, looted and destroyed them.

power by the working class led Marx to formulate the need to destroy the machine of the bourgeois State and to replace it with a new State.<sup>11</sup>

Obviously these three works of Marx, although based on the history of France between 1848 and 1871, are of an extent that far exceeds our borders. Translated into all languages, they are classics of Marxism and each of them has contributed to the elaboration of dialectical and historical materialism applied to the study of periods in the history of France.

### **The Penetration of Marxism into the French Labor Movement**

According to different studies about Marx and France, it is clear that the works of Marx, his ideas, took some time to gain influence in the French labor movement. As we have seen previously, in the workers' movement there were different currents of socialism whose theorists of social revolution dominated the Parisian political scene: Proudhon, Babeuf, Luis Blanc, Blanqui, Fourier, among others.

Only with the Commune and the *Directive of the International* drafted by Marx did Marxism, at last, receive a certain recognition. In Marx's and Engels' fought within the First International against the ideas of Proudhon, Fourier and Bakunin. They gained support from French labor militants such as Leo Fränkel and Eugène Varlin, who communicated with Marx during the Commune and asked him to advise them. Eduardo Vaillant and Charles Longuet were "Marxists" and members of the General Council of the International Workers' Association (IWA). In 1880 Marx went to meet Jules Guesde and wrote the theoretical part of the socialist program of the Workers Party (PO).

It was in the 1880s, during the last ten years of Engels' life, that Marxism truly entered the French labor movement, and in particular the work of the Guesdist group (Guesde, Lafarge and Deville), thanks to the translation of the works of Marx, tasks to which Paul and Laura Lafargue and Louis Longuet dedicated themselves.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See our prologue to the reissue by Editions en Avant of this major work of Marx (September of 2018).

<sup>12</sup> The Guesdists, under Marxist influence, met in Roanne in September 1882 and created the Workers Party (PO). On this, read our

As we have just demonstrated, Marx maintained close relations with the French labor movement. In the 1840s Paris was a training ground for the young Marx. His knowledge, his hard work, his extraordinary intelligence, made him take advantage of his Parisian stay to establish ties that he continued to maintain with France in the following years. In his text on Marx, Lenin wrote: “Marx was the genius who continued and completed the three main ideological currents of the nineteenth century... classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism together with French revolutionary doctrines in general.”<sup>13</sup>

The knowledge of Marx’s life and work confirms that it was formed closely linked to the practice of the labor movement. That gives it its strength and vitality. And this requires us to know him better, to study his works in depth, clearly those devoted to the history of France; above all we must strive to assimilate his method, dialectical and historical materialism, and use it to analyze the reality that we must transform. It is indispensable to make our theory, Marxism-Leninism, a guide for action, a weapon for the revolutionary struggle of today.

*August of 2018*

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- \* The different prefaces of Engels to Marx’s works on France.
- \* Lenin: Karl Marx (A Brief Biographical Sketch with an Exposition of Marxism).
- \* Franz Mehring, Karl Marx, The Story of His Life.
- \* Prologue by Henry Mougín to the edition of *The Poverty of Philosophy*.
- \* Prologue to “The Work of Marx, a French Passion.” (La Découverte, 2018, of which Antony Burlaud together with Jean-Numa Ducange, is coordinator. An excerpt from this prologue was published as an article in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May, 2018
- \* Two courses of Jacqueline Morne (philosopher): Marx penseur de l’histoire. À propos de *La Guerre civile en France* (Marx, 1871) [*Marx, Thinker of History. On “The Civil War in*

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article in the 90th Anniversary Special Issue of Unity & Struggle on the October Revolution (November 2007, page 36).

<sup>13</sup> Lenin: “Karl Marx,” Foreign Languages Press, Peking, page 7.

*France*” (Marx, 1871)] Marx penseur de l’histoire. Le cas du *18 Brumaire de Louis Bonaparte* [*The Case of “The 18 Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”*] (May 16, 2007)], published on the site: <http://pierre.campion2.free/ressources.htm>

**Marxism has been enriched by Lenin, concretely on the question of imperialism and the socialist revolution and the role of the communist party; later by Stalin, on the problems of the building of socialism and on the national question. For this reason, together with all the parties of the Conference that edit this journal, our ideological reference, our theoretical basis, is Marxism-Leninism.**

# India

## *Revolutionary Democracy*

### **On the Bicentenary of the Birth of Karl Marx**

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx, the father of scientific socialism. As such he remains a beacon for the struggle for social justice and against exploitation in the modern age. Karl Marx is without a reasonable doubt the most influential philosopher and economist in modern history.

Capitalism came to replace feudalism. While more progressive with respect to the latter, it did not liquidate exploitation of man by man, as it only replaced one form of exploitation by another. Together with capitalism emerged the resistance to it from the side of the exploited masses. In this historical context utopian socialism reveals itself as a reaction to bourgeois thought and as a means to expose the contradictions of capitalism. However, as utopian socialism was not scientific, it failed to grasp the essence of the capitalist mode of production and the objective conditions that lead to the establishment of socialism. Utopian socialists did not see in the industrial proletariat that social force destined to carry out the fundamental social transformation that will engender a new mode of production devoid of exploitation of man by man. It was with Karl Marx and his long-time collaborator, Friedrich Engels, that the criticism of capitalism and its temporary character is embedded in a rigorous system of thoughts that we refer to as scientific socialism.

The emergence of the bourgeoisie as the ruling class and capitalism as the leading mode of production in Western Europe is coupled with fundamental changes in the perception of social phenomena. The Age of Enlightenment was an international movement that challenged the influence of the aristocracy and the Church. The Enlightenment disputed the old worldview in favour of what is referred to as a rational interpretation of man and society. The ideas of the Enlightenment paved the way towards social revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels evolve into and establish Marxism as we know it in this historical context. But unlike others, Marx surpasses and overcomes this context in that it

embeds it into a historical perspective, thus establishing its transient character.

Karl Marx made a titanic effort to analyze and synthesize the work of philosophers, historians and economists before and contemporaneous to him. Here the study and criticism of Hegel plays a pivotal role for the development of a scientific method that has come to be known as Dialectical Materialism. Marx embarks in processing massive amounts of concrete historical and economic material. It is on this basis that he dissects the guts of capitalist society only to create a new, more advanced understanding of capitalism, and with that engenders a new world view. Karl Marx examines vast amounts of material through which the economic relations of capitalism are manifested. Marx goes from the surface of the phenomena to the essence of the laws that govern those same phenomena through a complex chain of analysis, synthesis and dialectical categories.

Karl Marx's contribution signifies the turning point in the history of scientific thought in that the way is paved for social disciplines to acquire the status of sciences. Karl Marx demonstrated that philosophers, political scientists, economists before him, and those after him do not adopt the precept of the scientific method that is Dialectical Materialism, are hindered by the concrete social and historical conditions that dictate their own perception of the world. Bourgeois thought in Karl Marx's time and nowadays is hopelessly afflicted by the belief that capitalism is the natural state of socio-economic relations.

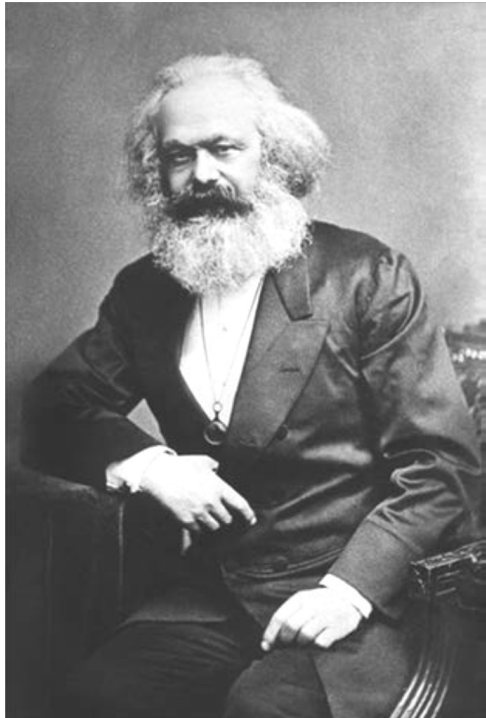
In lacking a clearly defined methodological approach to the study of social phenomena, bourgeois thought is rendered superficial and erratic. Bourgeois thought to date presents itself as an intricate system of factors with dubious interconnections and abstract notions devoid of appropriate material basis. The different schools in bourgeois thought wrestle with Marxism and with each other by confronting social phenomena with a confused system of considerations and classifications. By contrast, Karl Marx places social disciplines, such as Philosophy, History, Economics on their feet, where bourgeois thought fails dramatically to provide a scientific substratum.

Karl Marx is in the best position to summarize the essence of his contribution to revolutionary thought. In a letter to J. Weydemeyer in 1852 Karl Marx states:

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists, the economic economy of the classes. What I did that 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, and (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”

The revolutionary character of Marxism lies not in the proposition that social classes and exploitation are inherent to capitalism, but that classes and exploitation are not inherent to society in that they are determined by concrete historical conditions that are impermanent. The demise of capitalism is inevitable, as a historical necessity, where the establishment of a classless society becomes objectively inexorable.

By implementing Dialectical and Historical Materialism in economics, Karl Marx becomes the founder of political economy as a scientific discipline. Marxist Political Economy is a scientific system of thoughts not just to comprehend the complexity of economic phenomena, to unveil its laws, but with which to implement tangible transformation. The dictatorship of the proletariat armed with Marxist Political Economy fulfils its historical duty to transform the econom-



ic basis and relations of society. In this sense the revolutionary character of Marxism manifests itself extensively.

In *Capital*, Marx analyzes and synthesizes capitalism as it presented itself in the 19th century. By following the development of scientific knowledge from the abstract to the concrete, from the simpler to the more complex, the use of dialectical categories on materialist grounds, *Capital* becomes a symphony of scientific thought that transcends time. Marx unveils the nature of capitalist relations of production on the basis of this theory of value. The refusal of the ideologists of the bourgeoisie to grasp this basic notion renders bourgeois economic thought superficial, or as Marx put it, vulgar. Modern bourgeois economic thought to date remains inherently vulgar and superficial.

Is Marxism, as displayed in the works of Marx and Engels, a static system of propositions? No, absolutely not. Marxism provides a scientific methodology with which to unveil the laws of society, with the intention to fundamentally transform it. Karl Marx studied capitalism as it presented itself in the 19th century, where its future monopolistic character appeared in incipient forms. Does this mean that Marxism becomes outdated in the conditions of capitalism in the 20th and 21st centuries? Absolutely not, much the contrary. It was only on the basis of Marxist methodology that Lenin was able to unveil the economic laws of capitalism in its new and last phase of development, imperialism. In this context we talk about the development of Marxism, into what we know as Marxism-Leninism. It is for this reason that Stalin in “Foundations of Leninism” defined Leninism as follows:

“Leninism is Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.”

In essence, Marxism and Marxist notions need to evolve with the development of historical conditions. It is on the basis of Marxist methodology that Marxism evolves. In the conditions of the last stage of capitalism, imperialism, Marxism becomes Marxism-Leninism. Refuting Leninism is tantamount to decrying Marxism, as anti-Leninism is rendered a form of anti-Marxism. Marxism today cannot be understood without Lenin’s contribution to Marxism.

In this light, the discussions revolving around the feasibility of constructing socialism in one country became a cornerstone at the



time. It is known that, while not fundamentally opposed to the possibility of the revolution triumphing in one country, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels believed that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be victorious first in the most advanced industrialized countries. Lenin developed the Marxist political economy of capitalism in new concrete-historical conditions. This served as the theoretical substantiation of the possibility of constructing socialism first in one country or a small group of countries. In Lenin's writings of 1915-1917 he discusses the feasibility and historical necessity of constructing socialism in one country. In October 1916, Lenin wrote in the "Military Programme of the Proletarian Revolution"

"The development of capitalism proceeds extremely unevenly in different countries. It cannot be otherwise under commodity production. From this it follows irrefutably that socialism cannot achieve victory simultaneously in all countries. It will achieve victory first in one or several countries, while the others will for some time remain bourgeois or pre-bourgeois."

Were Marx and Engels wrong? Did they underestimate the potential for the dictatorship of the proletariat in less industrially developed countries? Was Trotsky more of a Marxist for decrying the theory of construction of socialism in one country? We have to answer these questions in the negative. Engels abridged the essence of Marxism, later echoed by Stalin in the 1920s, in that it is not a dogma, but a guide to action. By condemning the theory of construction of socialism in one country, Trotsky lambasted Leninism, and with it Marxism. Hand in hand with the bourgeoisie, Trotskyism hysterically excoriates the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union. The construction of socialism in the Soviet Union materialized in history the correctness of Marxist scientific socialism. It is no surprise that the bourgeoisie has made and continues to make every effort to tarnish this invaluable historical experience. An attack on the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union becomes invariably an attack on Marxism and scientific socialism. The bourgeoisie is terrified at the prospect that the exploited masses come to comprehend the true essence underpinning anti-Marxist fallacies. It is for this reason that it will not falter in its determination to vilify Marxism. Vituperation against the construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union plays a pivotal role in this campaign. The struggle of the bourgeoisie against Marxism today greatly relies on perpetuat-

ing a certain mythology with regards to the history of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies.

Does the development of Marxism stop with the understanding of capitalism in its most advanced and last stage, imperialism? No, it does not. Does the development of Marxism stop with the death of Lenin? No, it most certainly does not. History does not stop with capitalism nor with Lenin's passing. Capitalism is overtaken by socialism. The political economy of socialism comes to the fore as the old capitalist relations are superseded by relations of a new kind. Marx gave general characteristics of how the political economy of socialism would eventually emerge in history. However, Marx could not examine the vast concrete-historical material corresponding to the construction of socialism in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies in the 1930s-1950s. Lenin made strides in the development of the political economy of socialism. However, Lenin did not live to see a thriving industrialized society where the main means of production are socialized. The massive concrete-historical material that ensued from the transformations of the 1930s-1950s inescapably brings the political economy of socialism to a whole new level of development.

Modern revisionism, Trotskyism and bourgeois ideologists have made every possible effort to conceal or blemish the resounding success of the Soviet industrialization in the 1930s-1950s. The bourgeoisie upholds the fallacy that the collapse of the revisionist regimes in 1989-1991 was allegedly due to the inevitable failure of socialist ideas. In reality the collapse of revisionism bears witness to quite the opposite: the demise of the postulates of the so-called market socialism. The theories of so-called market socialism represent the negation of Marxist scientific socialism and led to the liquidation of the socialist character of the economic relations. The revisionist, anti-Marxist political economy that became prevalent with the economic reforms of the mid to late 1950s is a regression towards pre-Marxist conceptions epitomized by Bukharin, Bogdanov and, ultimately, non-scientific utopian socialism. If anything, the collapse of revisionism speaks one more time to the correctness and scientific character of Marxist political economy. *August of 2018*

## Italy

### ***Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy***

#### **Karl Marx, Leader of the International Workingmen's Association**

*“Marx was before all else a revolutionist”*, said Engels in his speech at the grave of Karl Marx, on March 17, 1883. As a revolutionist, engaged in the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat, Marx during his life always tied up in an indissoluble way the theoretical struggle and practical activity, providing an admirable example to all communists.

From his participation in the “*Rheinische Zeitung*”, which was suppressed by the Prussian government in 1843, to the Parisian “*Vorwärts!*” in 1844; from his adherence to the “*League of the Just*” to his collaboration with the “*Deutsche Brusseler Zeitung*” in 1847; from his leadership of the “*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*” from 1848-49 to his writing for the “*New York Tribune*” from 1852-61; from his reconstruction of the Central Committee of the League of Communists to his work in Paris, Brussels, and London, until the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International), Marx always took a direct part in the revolutionary battles and the theoretical, political and organisational work of the labour movement.

The doctrine of communism cannot be deeply understood if we treat it separately from the revolutionary action and political experience of Marx.

Marx's work for the formation of the First International is connected to his whole activity, developed, together with Engels, in order to merge scientific socialism and the labour movement a whole.

#### **Foundation of the International Workingmen's Association**

Ten years after the defeat of the 1948 working class movement in Europe, in 1857 there were signs of a new proletarian impulse, particularly in France and England: the development of economic strikes, struggles for the reduction of labour time and for the right to form trade unions, the push towards the organisation and connection

of the workers on the national and international scale, solidarity with the rights of oppressed peoples, denunciation and condemnation of the foreign policy of the bourgeois countries.

The conditions of the struggle suggested to the workers the need to form an international association of the proletarian forces for certain aims, including opposing the competition between the workers of different countries, instigated by the capitalists in order to impose the worst economic conditions.

Between 1862 and 1864 there were many meetings between delegations of French, English, Belgian, German workers, etc. The bonds were strengthened and unity of action was developed around certain international questions— at that moment the struggle for the freedom of Poland, which was under the tsarist yoke – laying the foundations for a closer and more lasting connection between the workers of various countries.

These relations had their crowning achievement with the organisation of a meeting in London in September 1864, with the attendance of French, English, Italian, Irish and Polish delegates of different political tendencies (above all English trade unionists and French Proudhonists), united by feelings of fellowship and the desire to struggle together against the economic and political tyranny of capital.

Marx – who was in exile in London since 1849 – was invited by the organising committee to take part in that meeting as representative of the German workers. He understood immediately the importance of the event, accepted the invitation and proposed to be present at the meeting together with his friend Johan Eccarius, a German tailor who became one of the leaders of the First International.

At the end of that public meeting, which took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 1864 in St. Martin Hall, a resolution was put to the vote and carried by acclamation to found the International Workingmen's Association.

As Marx observed some years later, *“What was new in the International was that it was established by the working men themselves and for themselves. Before the foundation of the International all the different organizations had been societies founded by some radicals among the ruling classes for the working classes, but the International was established by the working men for themselves.”*

(K. Marx, Speech on the Seventh Anniversary of the International, September 26, 1871).

The General Provisional Counsel resident in London, composed of workers of various countries, had the task of connecting the associations of workers existing in European countries (and subsequently in the United States). At that meeting Marx was elected a member of that Counsel and right after to the subcommittee entrusted with the writing of the Address and Rules of the new association. He was the right person at the right place.

As Engels remembered, the first draft of the Program and the Rules written immediately after the meeting at St. Martin Hall “*was in Mazzini’s usual style: bourgeois democracy offering the workers political rights so that the social privileges of the middle and upper classes could be preserved*” (Engels, Mazzini’s Statement against the International Workingmen’s Association, July 28, 1871).

For Marx it was very difficult to convince the trade-union leaders and other speakers to free themselves from Mazzini’s “moralism” and “democraticism” and to accept revolutionary and class principles and criteria. But he succeeded brilliantly. In October of the same year he wrote the “Inaugural Address” and the “Provisional Rules” of the Association.

### **Marx laid the foundations of the international class organisation**

In these two famous documents that should be read and considered together, Marx introduced some fundamental concepts and principles, expression of the demands and historical aspirations of the working class.

- The development of the productive forces under capitalism does not eliminate poverty, the physical and intellectual ruin of the mass of workers, but creates a wider and deeper social abyss and sharpens the class antagonisms;
- In the face of the utilisation, by the owner classes, of their political privileges in order to prevent the emancipation of labour, and in the face of the limits of the cooperative and trade-union movement, unable to smash the ruling social relations, the seizure of the political power is “*the great duty of the working class*”, the indispensable condition for the realisation of the economic emancipation of the exploited and for the foundation of the new society.

- Not only their number, but their organisation and class consciousness are the fundamental elements for the success of the workers in their struggle;
- The solidarity and cooperation of the workers of all countries are necessary in all struggles against the policy of robbery and oppression by the bourgeoisie and for the complete emancipation of the working class;
- The basic concept according to which the emancipation of the working class, involving the whole substitution of wage labour by cooperative labour, “*must be the work of the workers themselves*”.
- The abolition of the economic subjection of the working class and the elimination of every class regime and privilege as the purpose of the political movement.

In direct continuity with the “Manifesto of the Communist Party”, written two decades earlier, the “Inaugural Address of the International Workingmen’s Association” concludes with the same slogan as the Manifesto: “*Workers of the world, unite!*”

At the fourth sitting of the General Council (1 November 1864) Marx read his work, which, with some variations of style, was approved unanimously and published on 5 November in the English worker’s journal “The Bee-Hive”.

On these bases, established by Marx, was founded not only the First International, but the whole international and national workers’ and communist movement to our day.

### **At the head of the First International**

Marx devoted the majority of his time and energy to the First International, especially in the period immediately after its foundation, finding himself *de facto* at the head of the General Council since its establishment.

Marx played a crucial role in the International Workingmen’s Association in the whole period of its existence. He was present at almost all the meetings of the General Council, wrote almost all its principal documents: the resolutions, discourses, reports about various items on the agenda, replies to the calumnies of the reactionary press and the petty-bourgeois tendencies, including his famous analysis of the activities and historical meaning of the Paris Commune (“The Civil War in France”).

Marx was involved also in secondary aspects, such as the calling of meetings and issuance of membership cards, while he continued writing his masterpiece, "Capital".

As Engels observed, "*To describe Marx's activity in the International is to write the history of this Association*" (Engels, Karl Marx, 1877).

Marx's fundamental role of the First International is easily explainable. On account of his theoretical training and practical experience, Marx was able to provide a correct explanation of the historical course of the proletarian struggle. He was able to grasp the essence of the movement, to understand its fundamental causes, to explain the conditions of its development, to keep firmly to the revolutionary class point of view. His skill as a theoretical and political leader matched his skill in finding the appropriate tactic for the development and unification of the international workers' movement.

### **The work for the development of proletarian internationalism**

In a short time the mass of the advanced workers joined the sections and groups of the International Workingmen's Association. Requests for admission arrived from many parts of England (miners, construction workers, etc.), France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, etc. In its assemblies and public lectures thousands of workers took part.

Fifteen months after the birth of the Association Marx wrote to Ludwig Kugelmann:

*"Our Association has made great progress. It already has 3 official organs, one in*



*London, The Workman's Advocate, one in Brussels, La Tribune du Peuple, one put out by the French section in Switzerland, Journal de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs, Section de la Suisse Romande (Geneva), and in a few days time a journal is to be put out by the German-Swiss section, Der Vorbote, under the editorship of J. P. Becker.... We have succeeded in attracting into the movement the only really big workers' organisation, the English 'trade unions', which previously concerned themselves exclusively with the wage question. With their help, the English society we founded to achieve universal suffrage (half of its Central Committee consists of members — working men — of our Central Committee) held a giant meeting a few weeks ago, at which only working men spoke.”* (Marx, Letter to Kugelmann, January 15, 1866.)

Marx observed that, after 1864, the International expanded peacefully and gradually for about three years around some principal nuclei, France, Switzerland and Belgium, and, later, in other countries, such as Italy, Spain, Germany and the United States.

Beyond the number of its sections (some hundreds of “workingmen’s societies”) and of its members (which reached 8 million in the period of its greatest expansion), much more important was its direct influence in the workers’ struggles and in the political discussions.

In May 1865 there began a debate in the General Counsel about workers’ wages and union wage demands. That let Marx to refute the incorrect theses and to present a synthetic exposition of his studies for “Capital”, which he presented the following month in a famous lecture (published in 1898 under the title “Wages, Price and Profit”).

At the Geneva Congress in September 1866 an important subject was debated, beside some changes to the Rules: whether or not to limit adherence to the First International exclusively to manual workers, excluding intellectuals and other non-manual labourers. Marx was not present personally at the Congress, because he was entirely absorbed in his work on “Capital”, but from afar he was able to oppose the attempt of French delegates to exclude all non-manual workers, thus maintaining the political character of the Association.

In the “Instructions for the delegates”, read in that Congress by Eccarius, he concentrated attention on the conditions of the working class, on the reduction of the working day to eight hours, on the



limitations of children's work, women's work, night work, in order to strengthen the collaboration, struggle and organisation of the workers.

At the same time he explained the limits of the trade associations (the trade unions of that time), asserting that "*they must now learn to act deliberately as organising centres of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. They must aid every social and political movement tending in that direction.*" (Marx, Instructions for the Delegates of the Provisional General Council, August 1866.)

Marx also pointed to another fundamental target of the International Workingmen's Association: "*It is one of the great purposes of the Association to make the workmen of different countries not only feel but act as brothers and comrades in the army of emancipation*" (Ibid).

So the principle of proletarian internationalism acquired a more mature formulation, and its living practice of struggle would become more and more an element that would distinguish the revolutionary proletarians from the opportunists and sectarians.

The Marxist theses, accepted by the Congress, became the basic documents of the First International, and are of fundamental importance to understanding the development and successes of the international workers' movement.

### **From one Congress to another**

Marx, engaged in the publication of Volume I of "Capital", did not succeed in attending the following Congress, held in Lausanne in 1867, which had a larger participation of delegates and showed the expansion of the International. Anyway Marx's influence was

realized in the definitive adoption of the Address and Rules, in the final resolution and in the attitude taken towards the "League of Peace and



Freedom”.

Marx in his presentation to the General Counsel was opposed to the participation of the International at the Congress of that generally pacifist formation, asserting that the International Workingmen’s Association was already a Congress for peace, “*as the union of workingmen will one day make impossible war between nations*”. The Lausanne Congress confirmed the class position on the question of peace and war.

Marx instead participated in the following Brussels Congress of 1868, with a clear intention: “*I shall personally deliver a knock-out blow to these Proudhonist jackasses.*” (Marx, Letter to Engels, September 11, 1867.)

The Congress approved Marx’s tactics towards the “League for Peace”, making an appeal to the working class to combine its efforts with those of all progressive anti-militarist forces. Very important was Marx’s intervention about the working day, that led to a resolution approved by the Congress in order to practically raise the question in the different countries.

The following Basel Congress (1869) opened with a presentation by Marx on the revival of the class struggle in Switzerland, Belgium, France, Austria, Prussia, etc., The Congress saw the conflict between the consistent socialist position of Marx and the mutualist Proudhonists, and saw also the first clash with the anarchist Bakunin, who entered the International with his followers in order to transform the Association into his personal tool.

### **Fundamental lessons of the Paris Commune**

The activity of the International developed with growing force in the following years, and the internationalist appeal was also heard in far-off countries and regions. In this expanding process must be placed the historic event of the Paris Commune, which also marked the highest point of Marx’s activity inside the First International.

Marx, conscious of the great difficulties in which the French working class was acting, understood the danger of a premature insurrection, but when it broke out, he threw himself to its side and called on all sections of the International Workingmen’s Association to take up active and unconditional support of the Commune, convinced that “*whatever the immediate results may be, a new point of departure of world-historic importance has been gained*” (Marx, Letter to Kugelmann, April 17, 1871).

The Paris Commune saw the Parisian workers seize political power and establish the first government of the producing class against the exploiting class: *“the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor”* (Marx, Civil War in France, May 1871).

In spite of its brief duration and its bloody suppression, the Commune enabled Marx to draw an extremely important lesson: *“the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes”* (Marx, Civil War in France, May 1871). The old State apparatus had to be broken up and replaced by a State of a new type, one a thousand times more democratic than the bourgeois one: the dictatorship of the proletariat.

With the publication of “The Civil War in France”, the First International and Marx gained a great notoriety. However, the European governments asked the British government to ban the Association, while the pressure on Marx grew immensely.

*“Throughout the period of the last Paris revolution I was denounced continuously as the ‘grand chef de l’Internationale’ by the Versailles papers (Stieber collaborating) and ‘par répercussion’ by the press here in England. And now the Address, which you will have received. It is making the devil of a noise and I have the honour to be at this moment the best calumniated and the most menaced man of London. That really does one good after a tedious twenty years’ idyll in my den”* (Marx, Letter to Kugelmann, June 18, 1871).

The experience of the Commune and its defeat also sharpened the differences with the English trade unionists and with the anarchist Bakunin. The defeat of the Paris Commune created unfavourable conditions for the International. The British trade unions prevailed in the General Counsel. The German movement was defeated because of the repression in which Bebel and Liebknecht were imprisoned. The labour movement in France remained entirely paralysed.

But the idea of the *“emancipation of the working class by the workers themselves”*, that until then had remained abstract, after the Paris Commune became a concrete and real fact, driving the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie in a new phase.

## The struggle against Bakunin

With the expansion of the International the disagreements that had been previously raised developed on the necessity of organisation, namely of the seizure of political power by a proletarian party, in direct opposition to the bourgeois parties and movements.

The defeat of the Paris Commune not only gave rise to a temporary demoralisation of the working class, but it heightened the internal disagreements about the necessity of the party of the proletariat and the method and manner of struggle against the capitalist system and its States.

The principal conflict was with the anarchists headed by Bakunin, who had entered the International in 1868. Bakunin with his intrigues in various countries was trying to undermine the leadership of the International – beginning with Marx, whom he attacked as a “dictator”.

Bakunin did not consider the working class to be the subject of the social revolution; he bet on the peasants, on the *lumpenproletariat*, on the impoverished and desperate elements of the petty bourgeoisie. He believed that the political struggle for the seizure of power was wrong; he was inclined to separate the social question from the political one, he supported the struggle for the abolition of every type of State (independent of its class nature). But this struggle was practically reduced to the abolition of the right of inheritance. Instead of the abolition of all class domination he preached the absurd “equality of classes”. The attempt of the anarchists to impose their pseudo-revolutionary and conspiratorial line would have reduced the International to a sect.

The first serious clash with Bakunin occurred in 1869 at the Basel Congress, in which he carried out a conspiracy to win the majority, but without success. In September 1871, at the London Conference, Marx made two important speeches about the necessity of political action by the proletarian party “*with all necessary means*”, in a way suitable to the conditions of the different countries, against abstentionism and sectarianism.

The Resolutions approved by the Conference, drawn up by Marx and by Engels, confirmed the struggle against sectarianism, the indissoluble unity of the economic and the political movement of the working class, the necessity for the class to constitute itself in

a political party distinct and separate from all the parties of the owner classes.

Together with those Resolutions some organisational measures were adopted, defeating the theses and plots of the anarchists.

As Marx himself pointed out, *“the history of the International was a continual struggle on the part of the General Council against the sects and amateur experiments which attempted to assert themselves within the International itself against the genuine movement of the working class.”* (Marx, Letter to Bolte, November 23, 1871).

### **The Congress at The Hague**

Immediately after that, another conflict developed that was even more serious. Bakunin declared open war on the General Council of the International and asked to discuss the questions again at a Congress, which took place in The Hague in September 1872.

Marx attended the Congress since *“it will be a matter of life or death for the International; and before I retire I want at least to protect it from disintegrating elements”* (Marx, Letter to Kugelmann, July 29, 1872).

After the debate on political action, the General Council's position was ratified and the Bakuninists were defeated. A commission examined all the documents concerning the organisation of the anarchists and concluded that a secret association was acting inside the International. Consequently the expulsion of Bakunin was proposed and adopted.

This struggle, in which Marx triumphed, was decisive for the following events of the workers' and communist movement, and thanks to this the first independent and revolutionary parties of proletariat were constructed.

In this sense, the Resolution on Statutes was particularly important, which inserted a new article after article 7, strongly supported by Marx and Engels, that stated:

*“Against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes.*

*“This constitution of the working class into a political party is indispensable in order to assure the triumph of the social revolution and its ultimate end -- the abolition of classes.*

*“The combination of forces which the working class has already effected by its economic struggles ought at the same time to serve as a lever for its struggles against the political power of landlords and capitalists.*

*“The lords of the land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defense and perpetuation of their economic monopolies and for enslaving labor. To conquer political power has therefore become the great duty of the working classes.”*

The necessity to organize a party in every country that would be able to bring scientific socialism to the labour movement and to develop the struggle against capitalist society on political and social grounds in order to make the revolution became, from that moment on, a fundamental goal of the proletarian revolutionaries.

The Congress at The Hague adopted another important decision: because of the political climate existing in Europe after the defeat of the Paris Commune, which made impossible the carrying out of practical activity except with very heavy sacrifices of the worker militants, it was decided to transfer the seat of the General Council to New York, protecting it from repression, menaces and plots.

After the end of the Congress Marx made a speech in Amsterdam that concluded with these words: *“So far as I am concerned, I will continue my work and constantly strive to strengthen among all workers this solidarity that is so fruitful for the future. No, I do not withdraw from the International, and all the rest of my life will be, as have been all my efforts of the past, dedicated to the triumph of the social ideas which — you may be assured! — will lead to the world domination by the proletariat.”* (Marx, Speech in Amsterdam, September 8, 1872).

### **With the First International Marxism gained acceptance**

Marx and Engels achieved a great success in the Congress at The Hague and gave constant support, chiefly theoretical, to the General Council, continuing the battle against the anarchist splitters, who founded an “anti-authoritarian International”. But Marx and Engels were also the first to understand that the experience of the International Workingmen’s Association was coming to an end, while new dynamics were emerging (for example, the expansion of the movement in Eastern Europe).

This led them to strengthen the orientation, which had become a patrimony of the International, that it was necessary to concentrate its efforts towards the formation of a working-class party in every country, all with the same aims and with constant internationalist relations among them.

The First International had run its essential cycle. Some years later, in 1876, it was formally dissolved, after having contributed to the spread of communist ideas in America.

In spite of its dissolution, it was not a defeat: quite the opposite. The working class, at the period of the dissolution of the International, was very different from the class in 1864, the year of the foundation of the Association. Among the workers socialism was no longer a dream of a better future, but the scientific socialism expounded in the “Manifesto of the Communist Party” of Marx and Engels, based on the laws of development of society.

Thanks to the practical demonstrations of class solidarity, the First International was a formidable tool for spreading the ideas of Marx and Engels. Not only in the more advanced sections of the working class, but in its mass organs too, in the trade unions, the influence of Marxism increased.

As Marx wrote, the International Workingmen's Association was “*the spontaneous growth of the proletarian movement, which itself is the offspring of the natural and irrepressible tendencies of modern society.*” (Marx, The Fourth Annual Report to the General Council, September 1, 1868.)

In it three fundamental tendencies were present: the communist, the trade unionist and the anarchist. The history of the Association is characterized by the struggle between these tendencies, but – if we observe its historic development as a whole – we clearly see that its character was given by the group guided by Marx, which gave the Association a clear orientation, thanks to the theoretical and political superiority of scientific socialism.

The First International provided the proletariat with a heritage that became a permanent and precious benefit. The activity carried out by Marx in the Association, starting with its principles and programs, developed proletarian internationalism inside the working class and contributed to providing strength and skill to the labour movement in many countries. This process led to the formation of political parties that united the working class on the basis of Marxism.

The work of Marx and by Engels in the First International produced its fruits in 1889 with the formation of the Second International, composed of parties of the working class that openly adopted Marxism, and afterwards with the establishment of the Third International (1919-1943), which made a further huge contribution to the theoretical, political and organisational formation of the communist parties.

### **Some lessons**

There are many lessons that we can draw from the experience of the First International and the work developed in it by Marx; here we limit ourselves to two fundamental lessons.

The first is the importance of revolutionary theory. A scientific and well developed basis was the fundamental weapon that allowed Marx to have a determining influence on the development of the International Workingmen's Association, defeating the position opposed to proletarian socialism.

Marx's struggle to win the workers' movement first in Europe and then in America concentrated on certain fundamental principles: political participation in the class struggle without ever losing sight of the goal of the seizure of political power; the struggle against nationalism and for proletarian internationalism; the necessity for the working class to undertake the responsibility of the transformation of society without trusting in the "democratic" and "radical" representatives of other social classes and strata, but organising itself in a distinct, independent party with its own policy, ideology and organisation.

The achievement of these principles was decisive for the development of the workers' movement and the construction of the communist parties.

The second lesson is the ability of Marx and Engels to evaluate the mutual relations among the classes, the conditions in which the class struggle develops, and their necessity of entering into the movement of the working class at its real level.

This is the opportunity that Marx seized in September 1864. He was able to draft the basic texts of the International so that the doctrine of scientific socialism would appear in a form understandable to the workers' movement that had been defeated and strongly influenced by the positions of Owen, Proudhon, Mazzini, etc., and at the same time open to its future development.



Besides, Marx, without altering the revolutionary and communist ends, began a program of concrete work, based on the immediate needs of the working class that could be accepted as a whole by the International. In all the phases of activity of the First International, Marx always examined the particularities and the specificities of the situation, refusing a dogmatic and stereotyped approach, considering the class essence of the problems.

These two lessons express the unity of theory and practice that characterized the work of Karl Marx and are indispensable for the revolutionary transformation of society by the proletariat.

We Marxist-Leninists, united in the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations, are the heirs and successors of the principles and the practices of the International Workingmen's Association. Therefore we should treasure these lessons in order to work toward the creation of a new Communist International, the unitary guide of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed peoples.

The development of the class struggle of the exploited and oppressed against the exploiters and oppressors, the strengthening of the existing Communist Parties and the creation of new communist Parties, will make easier the solution of this problem that is posed and must be solved.

*May of 2018*

# Mexico

## ***Communist Party of Mexico (Marxist-Leninist)***

### **Karl Marx's *Capital*: a weapon of struggle of the workers and peoples**

Marx's intellectual interest encompassed various areas of knowledge. In his doctoral thesis he analyzed the differences between the conceptions of Democritus and Epicurus about physics; there are reflections on the atom, time, meteors and infinity. His mathematical manuscripts, in which he studied concepts of mathematical analysis, show a general knowledge of the development achieved in that discipline up to that time. In the correspondence between Marx and Engels, there are many references to natural and mathematical-physical sciences that show their understanding of the subjects of biology, geology, physics, chemistry, physiology, the theory of evolution, etc. In these letters we find comments on the contributions of scientists such as Darwin, Pasteur, Mendeleyev, Laplace, Euler, D 'Alambert, Volta, Kepler, Newton, Leibniz and Lagrange, among others.

Marx recognized that the scientific analysis of reality is essential to transcend the appearance of phenomena and make possible their understanding.

“All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided.”<sup>1</sup>

But Marx did not conceive intellectual work as an end in itself, as mere contemplation and understanding. He recognized the importance of the study of reality since it constitutes a condition for the conscious transformation of reality in the interest of the human race. Hence his criticism of Ludwig Feuerbach in the thesis “*The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.*”

His study of the social sciences, his knowledge of philosophy, politics, history, law and economics, led Marx to formulate *the materialist conception of history*, in which he identified the *social relations of production* – those that human beings establish among

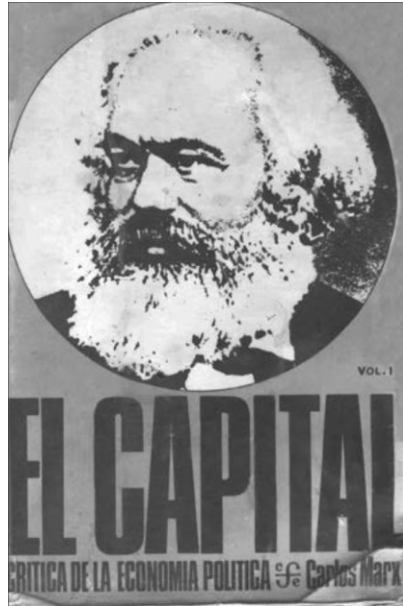
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<sup>1</sup> *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 48, III, p. 592, International Publishers, NY, n.d.

themselves and with nature in the social production of their existence – with the *economic structure* of society, upon which is erected the political and legal order, as well as the ways in which individuals represent reality, their social consciousness. In this conception the dialectic helps us understand the finite being up to its essence, which Marx takes from classical German philosophy, stripping it of the idealist mantle that covers it.

For Hegel, *constant change* occurs in the realm of ideas; it is the ideas that form a unity and it is in them that the contradiction is located. Marx, by separating dialectics from the idealist conceptions, places each of the principles of dialectics in the material world, whose existence is independent of consciousness. Thus *constant change* is verified in objective reality, and it is in the material conditions in which the contradictions arise. *Everything that is real is rational; everything that is rational is real, everything real must perish.*

Historical materialism recognizes *constant change* in society, thus breaking with the idea preached by the ruling classes about the immutability of the social order. The principle of *unity of the totality* is shown here in the interaction between the various sectors of a social formation, with the economic structure ultimately determining the character of the legal, political and ideological superstructure.<sup>2</sup> Marx shows that



<sup>2</sup> “The capitalist process of production is a historically determined form of the social process of production in general. The latter is as much a production process of material conditions of human life as a process taking place under specific historical and economic production relations, producing and reproducing these production relations themselves, and thereby also the bearers of this process, their material condi-

*it is not consciousness that determines social being but social being that determines consciousness.* The principal contradiction that gives rise to the transition from one mode of production to another is the one between the development of the productive forces and the social relations of production, when these become an obstacle to the continuity of the development of the productive forces. With this contradiction an epoch of social revolution begins.<sup>3</sup>

When Marx identified the economic structure as the central determining factor of a social formation, he focused his attention on the study of the social relations of production that define the capitalist mode of production. This was the work that he developed in depth in *Capital*. This work begins with the analysis of the commodity, the form in which social labor is materialized in capitalist society. As the product of human labor destined for private exchange and unit of wealth, the commodity is already recognized in English political economy as *use value and exchange value*, a dual nature that Marx associates with the dual character of labor itself. This can be considered as *concrete labor* – recognizing the specificity of the labor objectified in a particular use value – as well as *abstract labor*, expenditure of labor power, mere wear of nerve and muscle. Exchange value or value – the proportion in which one commodity is exchanged for others – is precisely clarified by recognizing that it is determined by the amount of abstract labor crystallized in the commodity, by the *labor time socially necessary* for its production, understood as the labor time required to produce the commodity with average skill, intensity and with the productive forces in general use. Concrete labor thus creates use value, while abstract labor creates exchange value.

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tions of existence and their mutual relations, i.e., their particular socio-economic form. For the aggregate of these relations, in which the agents of this production stand with respect to Nature and to one another, and in which they produce, is precisely society, considered from the standpoint of its economic structure. “Ibid., p. 592

<sup>3</sup> Dialectical materialism, for its part, recognizes that the world is knowable; it rejects myths as well as beliefs in the supernatural, giving an explanation of natural processes based on a materialist and dialectical scientific analysis of reality. It explains life as the result of the development of matter and consciousness, inextricably linked to the human brain, as an attribute of highly organized matter.

Marx demystifies money by presenting it as one more commodity, which separates itself from the rest of the commodities by assuming the form of a universal equivalent, a general measure of value and means of purchase. Capital is defined as a value that, changing its form, its value increases. Value appears initially in the form of money, which is exchanged for means of production and labor power that are consumed in the process of production, from which a commodity emerges. With its sale, the already increased value recovers its monetary form. Thus a cycle of capital is fulfilled. Surplus value is the increase in value. In this way, money acquires, together with its original functions, that of acting as capital. Money is a commodity and capital is money. The capitalist is the one who makes use of money as capital.

After showing that surplus value does not arise from the sphere of circulation, that is, from the mere purchase and sale of commodities, Marx explains its origin in the sphere of production as a result of the appropriation of the labor of others. The working class lacks the means of production, it only possesses its labor power which it has to sell as a commodity as a condition for its subsistence. Labor power is reproduced through the worker's own consumption of a set of commodities – the means of subsistence – that allow him to preserve himself as a historically determined being, thus reproducing his physical and intellectual capacities that constitute his labor power. Thus, its value is precisely the value of the daily means of subsistence of the worker and his descendants – who will have to replace the workers who stop working because they are worn out or die. Marx distinguishes between labor and labor power; that for which the capitalist pays the worker is not the labor that he carries out but the value of his labor power. If the worker, in order to reproduce his labor power consumes daily commodities that are the objectification of, for example, 2 hours of labor, this does not prevent him from working 8 hours, which are materialized in the product, that is in the commodities produced by the worker and that belong to the capitalist. The difference between the duration of the working day (8 hours) and the time objectified in the daily means of subsistence of the worker and his offspring (2 hours) is 6 hours. This constitutes the surplus value, the profit of the capitalist. In this way, of the value created by the worker throughout the working day, one part reproduces the value of his labor power, and the rest is value that the capitalist appropriates without remuneration. Profit is

revealed as dispossession, the capitalist class as a parasitic class and the capitalist mode of production as a system based on the exploitation of labor power.<sup>4</sup> The capitalist “obtains this surplus-labour without an equivalent, and in essence it always remains forced labour – no matter how much it may seem to result from free contractual agreement.”<sup>5</sup>

“The Roman slave was held by fetters: the wage labourer is bound to his owner by invisible threads. The appearance of independence is kept up by means of a constant change of employers, and by the fictio juris of a contract.... Capitalist production, therefore, of itself reproduces the separation between labour-power and the means of labour. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the condition for exploiting the labourer. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live.... In reality, the labourer belongs to capital before he has sold himself to capital. His economic bondage is both brought about and concealed by the periodic sale of himself, by his change of masters, and by the oscillations in the market-price of labour-power.

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<sup>4</sup> It is of interest to the capitalist that the worker consumes his means of subsistence so that he is in a position to continue working and generating surplus value. This is the individual consumption of the worker, as opposed to his productive consumption, which refers to the consumption of the means of production during the labor process. In referring to the individual worker’s consumption, Marx wrote: “The fact that the labourer consumes his means of subsistence for his own purposes, and not to please the capitalist, has no bearing on the matter. The consumption of food by a beast of burden is none the less a necessary factor in the process of production, because the beast enjoys what it eats. The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition to the reproduction of capital.... the capitalist and his ideological representative, the political economist, consider that part alone of the labourer’s individual consumption to be productive, which is requisite for the perpetuation of the class, and which therefore must take place in order that the capitalist may have labour-power to consume; what the labourer consumes for his own pleasure beyond that part, is unproductive consumption.” K. Marx, *Capital*. Volume I, Chapter 23, p. 404. Progress Publishers, Moscow.

<sup>5</sup> *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 48, III, p. 593

“Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer.”<sup>6</sup>

Marx analyzed in *Capital* the forms through which the degree of exploitation of labor power increases in order to increase surplus value. The increase in the length of the working day, the reduction in wage, the technological development that allows one to produce the means of subsistence of the worker in less time, thus also reducing its value, as well as the increase in the intensity with which the worker labors, that is, the speed with which he carries out his work, are all mechanisms that capital uses to increase surplus value.

Marx explained commercial and banking profit as appropriation of one part of the surplus value created in production. On the other hand, he analyzed the *process of accumulation of capital*, the investment of surplus value as capital, which implies the acquisition by the capitalist of an additional quantity of both labor power and means of production. This is all bought with the surplus value previously obtained, with the unpaid labor of the working class. The purchase of labor power thus becomes only an appearance.

“The exchange of equivalents, the original operation with which we started, has now become turned round in such a way that there is only an apparent exchange. This is owing to the fact, first, that the capital which is exchanged for labour-power is itself but a portion of the product of others’ labour appropriated without an equivalent; and, secondly, that this capital must not only be replaced by its producer, but replaced together with an added surplus. The relation of exchange subsisting between capitalist and labourer becomes a mere semblance appertaining to the process of circulation, a mere form, foreign to the real nature of the transaction, and only mystifying it. The ever repeated purchase and sale of labour-power is now the mere form; what really takes place is this – the capitalist again and again appropriates, without equivalent, a portion of the previously materialised labour of others, and exchanges it for a greater quantity of living labour.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 23, p. 405, 407.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 24, Section 1, p. 412

With the development of the process of accumulation there takes place the development of productive forces, the investment of capital is increasingly oriented to the purchase of means of production; hence the relative decline in investment in labor power. The number of employed workers thus does not increase at the same pace as the investment of capital; it forms what Marx called the *industrial reserve army*, the mass of unemployed people who are available for the varying needs of capital and who exert an ever increasing pressure on the employed, who are forced to work in growing conditions of exploitation.

“The overwork of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of the reserve, whilst conversely the greater pressure that the latter by its competition exerts on the former, forces these to submit to overwork and to subjugation under the dictates of capital. The condemnation of one part of the working class to enforced idleness by the overwork of the other part, and the converse, becomes a means of enriching the individual capitalists, and accelerates at the same time the production of the industrial reserve army on a scale corresponding with the advance of social accumulation.”<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, capital is concentrated in an ever smaller number of large capitalists who displace others who do not have the same capacity to invest and innovate. Thus the *General Law of Capitalist Accumulation* is shown to be true: to the degree that accumulation increases and with it the social wealth, and the greater the productive force of labor, the greater the proportional magnitude of the reserve army, and therefore the greater super-exploitation of labor power.

The growing accumulation of capital leads to a growing concentration of capital; fewer and fewer capitalists but with a greater power.

“Thus grows the power of capital, the alienation of the conditions of social production personified in the capitalist from the real producers. Capital comes more and more to the fore as a social power, whose agent is the capitalist. This social power no longer stands in any possible relation to that which the labour of a single individual can create. It becomes an alienated, independent, social power, which stands opposed to socie-

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 25, Section 3, p. 446.



ty as an object, and as an object that is the capitalist’s source of power. The contradiction between the general social power into which capital develops, on the one hand, and the private power of the individual capitalists over these social conditions of production, on the other, becomes ever more irreconcilable,... it implies at the same time the transformation of the conditions of production into general, common, social, conditions.”<sup>9</sup>

The process of accumulation requires increasing masses of surplus value, which is achieved –among other ways – by increasing the productivity of labor. Marx showed that, within the capitalist mode of production, the methods of increasing the productivity of labor turn against the worker.

“[A]ll methods for raising the social productiveness of labour are brought about at the cost of the individual labourer; all means for the development of production transform themselves into means of domination over, and exploitation of, the producers; they mutilate the labourer into a fragment of a man, degrade him to the level of an appendage of a machine, destroy every remnant of charm in his work and turn it into a hated toil; they estrange from him the intellectual potentialities of the labour process in the same proportion as science is incorporated in it as an independent power; they distort the conditions under which he works, subject him during the labour process to a despotism the more hateful for its meanness; they transform his life-time into working-time, and drag his wife and child beneath the wheels of the Juggernaut of capital.... It follows therefore that in proportion

as capital accumulates, the lot of the labourer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse. The law, finally, that *always equilibrates the relative*



<sup>9</sup> *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 15, p. 184.

*surplus population, or industrial reserve army, to the extent and energy of accumulation, this law rivets the labourer to capital more firmly than the wedges of Vulcan did Prometheus to the rock. It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole, i.e., on the side of the class that produces its own product in the form of capital.”<sup>10</sup>*

In Part IV of Volume I of *Capital*, studying the immediate effects that machine industry exerts over the worker, Marx showed that the introduction of machinery – moved by the force of wind, steam or water – allows capital to appropriate the labor of women and children since the muscular strength of adult men is no longer necessary. With this, the exploitation of the working class increased.

“The value of labour-power was determined, not only by the labour-time necessary to maintain the individual adult labourer, but also by that necessary to maintain his family. Machinery, by throwing every member of that family on to the labour-market, spreads the value of the man’s labour-power over his whole family. It thus depreciates his labour-power.”<sup>11</sup>

The introduction of machinery and of all technical innovation in the process of production has no other purpose, in the capitalist mode of production, than to increase surplus value, subjecting the working class more and more and converting the individual worker into an appendage of the machine inside of a routine and alienating labor process.

“In handicrafts and manufacture, the workman makes use of a tool, in the factory, the machine makes use of him. There the movements of the instrument of labour proceed from him, here it is the movements of the machine that he must follow. In manufacture the workmen are parts of a living mechanism. In the factory we have a lifeless mechanism independent of the workman, who becomes its mere living appendage. ‘The miserable routine of endless drudgery and toil in which the same mechanical process is gone through over and over again, is like the

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<sup>10</sup> *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 25, Section 4, p. 451.

<sup>11</sup> *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 15, Section 3 A, p. 272.

labour of Sisyphus. The burden of labour, like the rock, keeps ever falling back on the worn-out labourer.’ At the same time that factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and intellectual activity. The lightening of the labour, even, becomes a sort of torture, since the machine does not free the labourer from work, but deprives the work of all interest.”<sup>12</sup>

The increase in labor productivity and the inherent growth of investment in means of production in relation to investment in labor power, translates into a tendency to decrease the profitable levels of capital investment. Surplus value is obtained from the exploitation of the labor power and with the development of the productive forces each worker consumes a greater quantity of the means of production, which implies that to exploit his labor power, the capitalist requires more and more investment of capital. The rate of profit, the variable that measures the level of profitability of the capital investment – defined as the surplus value divided by the capital invested to obtain it –tends to decrease, thus decreasing the rate of accumulation. The decline in the rate of profit

“checks the formation of new independent capitals and thus appears as a threat to the development of the capitalist production process. It breeds over-production, speculation, crises, and surplus-capital alongside surplus-population....

Production “comes to a standstill at a point fixed by the production and realisation of profit, and not the satisfaction of requirements.... The rate of profit is the motive power of capitalist production. Things are produced only so long as they can be produced with a profit.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Chapter 15, Section 4, p. 285-286

<sup>13</sup> *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 15, Section I, p. 171, Section III, p. 181. The fall in the rate of profit “comes to the surface here in a purely economic way – *i.e.*, from the bourgeois point of view, within the limitations of capitalist understanding, from the standpoint of capitalist production itself – that it has its barrier, that it is relative, that it is not an absolute, but only a historical mode of production corresponding to a definite limited epoch in the development of the material requirements of production.” Ibid., Section III, p. 182-183

As accumulation becomes slower, the reserve industrial army expands. At the same time, capital seeks other areas of investment outside of productive investment. Speculation takes place in the financial sector, in which no surplus value is generated. To deal with the decline in the rate of profit, capital increases the degree of exploitation of the labor force, among other forms, through the reduction of the real wage. This leads to the accumulation of commodities, the overproduction associated with the limits of the level of consumption of society “based on antagonistic conditions of distribution, which reduce the consumption of the bulk of society to a minimum.”<sup>14</sup> Balance is restored by inactivation or even annihilation of capital by paralyzing a part of the productive enterprises. With the crisis, the condition for the revival of capital is temporarily restored.

With the decline in the rate of profit beyond a certain limit, the historical mission of capital enters into contradiction with the social relations of production inherent to it; the crisis arises, not only of a cyclical or conjunctural nature, but an irresolvable crisis within of the capitalist economic structure, which marks a limit to the existence of this mode of production. This fact is consistent with the thesis of historical materialism concerning the fact that the development of the productive forces establishes limits to the permanence of the economic structure, opening a period of social revolution. In this way, in Volume III of *Capital*, Marx stated:

“[C]apitalist production meets in the development of its productive forces a barrier which has nothing to do with the production of wealth as such; and this peculiar barrier testifies to the limitations and to the merely historical, transitory character of the capitalist mode of production; testifies that for the production of wealth, it is not an absolute mode, moreover, that at a certain stage it rather conflicts with its further development.... Development of the productive forces of social labour is the historical task and justification of capital. This is just the way in which it unconsciously creates the material requirements of a higher mode of production.”<sup>15</sup>

In *Capital* Marx also analyzed the process of primitive accumulation that is the genesis of the capitalist mode of production, and with which the separation between the producer and his means of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., Section III, p. 173.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 171, 181

production took place. The basis of this process was the separation of the peasants from the land. Conquests, war, looting, fraud, assassination and general subjection through violence were the means to dispossess entire peoples, thus incorporating the land into capital and forming the proletariat as a class lacking any means of production, forced to put their labor power on sale. The masses separated from the land were not absorbed as wage workers as fast as they were thrown off the land to join the working class, nor did they quickly adapt to the discipline required by the productive process in its capitalist form.<sup>16</sup> Thus beggars, thieves and vagabonds arose, created by the circumstances. Therefore, a bloodthirsty legislation against vagrancy was established in order to subject the masses to the conditions of the system of capitalist production; lashes, whips, red-hot marks and mutilations were the methods sanctioned by law to subdue the nascent working class. Marx showed that “capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt”<sup>17</sup> and illustrated the fact that “force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.”<sup>18</sup>

Concerning the emergence of capitalist private property and its abolition, to be replaced by collective property, Marx wrote:

“[T]he expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of

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<sup>16</sup> “Factory discipline... The place of the slave-driver’s lash is taken by the overlooker’s book of penalties. All punishments naturally resolve themselves into fines and deductions from wages, and the law-giving talent of the factory Lyncurgus so arranges matters, that a violation of his laws is, if possible, more profitable to him than the keeping of them.” *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 15, Section 4, p. 286.

<sup>17</sup> *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 31, p. 538. In reference to the manner in which the commune of Paris was drowned in blood, Marx wrote “The civilization and justice of bourgeois order comes out in its lurid light whenever the slaves and drudges of that order rise against their masters.. Then this civilization and justice stand forth as undisguised savagery and lawless revenge. Each new crisis in the class struggle between the appropriator and the producer brings out this fact more glaringly.” K. Marx, *The Civil War in France*, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1977, p. 93.

<sup>18</sup> *Capital*, Volume I, Chapter 31, p. 534.

labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital....

“The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self -earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others... as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital... the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever -extending scale, the co-operative form of the labour process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point

where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated....

“The transformation of scattered private property, arising from individual labour, into capitalist private property is, naturally, a process, incomparably more protracted, violent, and difficult, than the transformation of capitalistic private property, already practically resting on socialised production, into socialised property. In the former case, we had the expropriation of the mass of the people by a few usurpers; in the latter, we have the expropriation of a few usurpers by the mass of the people.”<sup>19</sup>

Marx consistently united his scientific practice with his political practice. In 1847 he joined the League of Communists with Friedrich Engels, for which he wrote the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. In 1864 he participated in the founding of the International Workingmen’s Association.

*Capital* is not only relevant, but constitutes, together with the political, economic and philosophical theses of Marxism-Leninism in general, the fundamental basis for understanding the present and the perspectives of the development of capitalism. It is a weapon of the working class and peoples that allows us to understand the scope of our struggle. It is our responsibility to deepen our study and understanding of the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production, developing in a consistent manner the political organization of the proletariat, raising its forms of struggle and its class consciousness to the understanding of the fact that the fulfillment of its historical interests can only be achieved through the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, the socialization of the means of production, the seizure of political power and the establishment of its dictatorship.

This is the great contribution of Karl Marx to the patient and collective process in which the tactics and strategy of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, which we have inherited from the class struggle of the world proletariat in theory and practice, have been developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., Chapter 32, pp. 541-542.

# Spain

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## **Karl Marx and Women**

This year is the 200th anniversary of Karl Marx' birth, which has resulted in many discussions about his life and work from different sources.

Marx's legacy is still relevant today. How could it not be relevant when capitalism is suffering a grave crisis, which broke out in the center of the empire just a few years ago and continues to affect us and push us towards a new cycle of debt, leading us to unprecedented levels of inequality.

In this open debate on the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth we want to deepen our analysis of the oppression of women from the perspective of the categories which Marx dealt with in *Capital* in order to analyze the profound structural processes through which the capitalist mode of production reproduces itself. This topic has already been taken up by Marxist feminists such as theoreticians Lise Vogel and Susan Ferguson, etc., but which continues to be open to debate and investigation.

It is a controversial matter because a large number of feminists broke away from Marxism during the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, there has been an ebb in the popular movement, accompanied by the loss of many of the social and labor gains as a result of adjustments of the capitalist mode of production. Disorientations, disaffections and reorientations resulted in an ever weaker commitment to revolutionary politics and emancipation. The reason given to depart from Marxism and reject Marxist political economy was its supposed reductionist and inadequate framework to build a comprehensive theory of the oppression of women. There were and are false ideas that are repeated ceaselessly and which have no factual basis. Marx was never a vulgar materialist or economist. There are passages in *Capital*, such as those on primitive accumulation, in which the active intervention of the State, coercion, and the class struggle are the main components of a relation of exploitation, which are not determined by purely economic or mechanical laws.



At the same time, in bourgeois feminism patriarchy goes from being a form of family organization to a form of social organization. For many feminists of the period, Patriarchy is an independent ideological system, whose motive force resides in the process of production of the meanings and interpretations of the world; but ideology is the way in which we interpret our conditions of life and our relations to these determined conditions, etc. What is the relation between ideology and the social conditions of existence? This connection does not exist or is not explained, and as a result they fall into a conception of patriarchy which is fetishist and ahistoric.

The concept of patriarchy as an independent system within capitalist society is most common, not only among feminist theoreticians, but also among activists, because in the end it has to do with the most immediate and intuitive interpretation of the forms of oppression and power based on gender, which we experience daily; they accuse Marxist feminism of reducing the many-sided complexity of society to mere economic laws, but without correctly understanding the irreducibility of the relations of power. This accusation would make sense if capitalism were merely understood as a strictly economic process of extraction of surplus value, and therefore, as a series of economic laws that determine this process; and if Marxist feminists believed that relations of power are the automatic and mechanical result of the process of extraction of surplus value. But this type of reductionism has no place in the complex and rich ideas of Marx, or in most of Marxist tradition. (“Remarks on Gender: Patriarchy or Capitalism”: Cinzia Arruzza)

The materialist conception of history is the great legacy of Marx. As Silvia Federici says in “Patri-



archy of Salary,” it has been of great importance for a feminist perspective that in order to understand history and society we have to understand the material conditions of social reproduction; to recognize that social subordination is a product of history, whose roots are in the specific organization of labor. This has had a liberating effect for women because it has changed the nature of the sexual division of labor and the identities constructed as a result of this, which conceived gender categories not just as social constructions, but also as concepts whose content is under constant redefinition. These are infinitely mobile, open to change, which always have a political weight. To analyze the social position of women from the perspective of the capitalist exploitation of labor also makes obvious the continued discrimination based on gender and that based on race, and allows us to transcend the politics of laws which accepts as a fact the permanence of the existing social order and does not deal with the antagonistic social forces which block the way to the liberation of women.

The conception of patriarchy as an independent ideological system brought with it the theory of the duality of the causes of the oppression of women and therefore the theoretical and practical dispersion of the struggle for the emancipation of women. The construction of a unified theory that explains the causes of oppression of women under capitalism is one of the tasks in which Marxist feminists such as Nancy Fraser, Cinzia Arruzza, Lise Vogel, Susan Ferguson, Iris Young and many others continue to put all their energies and efforts. It is within this effort that we make the analysis of women’s oppression, putting the matter of the reproduction of labor power at the center of capitalist production.

### **Social Reproduction**

According to Marx, labor power is the commodity that makes possible the whole mode of production of surplus value. Capital “can spring into life, only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence meets in the market with the free labourer selling his labour-power. And this one historical condition comprises a world’s history.” (Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1 Chapter 6.)

Having identified labor power as the center around which the entire system revolves, Marx stated: “We must now examine more closely this peculiar commodity, labour-power. Like all others it has a value. How is that value determined?”

In the theory of social reproduction, it is usually understood that there exist two separate spheres and two separate processes of production: the economic and the social, usually understood as the workplace and the home. It is understood that the worker creates surplus value in the workplace, and is therefore part of production, of the total wealth of society. At the end of the workday, since under capitalism the worker is a free person, capital must renounce its control over his process of regeneration and therefore over the reproduction of labor power.

However, Marx has a very specific understanding and proposal for the concept of social reproduction.

In the social reproduction of the system of capital there is no separation between a non-economic and an economic sphere; rather the economic impulse of capitalist production conditions what we call the non-economic. The non-economic includes, among other things, what type of State, legal institutions and forms of property exist in a society, while these are conditioned, but not always determined, by the economy. Marx understands every specific level of the increase of capital as a part of a totality, which leads him to clearly state in *Capital*: “When viewed, therefore, as a connected whole, and as flowing on with incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction.” (Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 23.)

“Capitalist production, therefore, under its aspect of a continuous connected process, of a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus-value, but it also produces and reproduces the capitalist relation; on the one side the capitalist, on the other the wage labourer.” (Ibid.)

Marx refers to the reproduction of the totality of society, which takes us back to the unique commodity, labor power, which needs to be replenished and eventually replaced without any brakes or interruption of the continuous cycle of production and reproduction.

The understanding of this process of production of commodities and the reproduction of labor power as united leads us to abandon not only the framework of differentiated spheres of production and reproduction, but also, since reproduction is linked to production under capitalism, we must abandon the idea that capital renounces its control over the workers when they leave the workplace. (Tithi Bhattacharya in “Social Reproduction of Labor and the Global Working Class.”)

Connected to this point, the home, the private sphere, is controlled by capital and forms part of the process of production and reproduction of capital; therefore, what interests us regarding the family unit, the working class family where labor power is produced and reproduced, is not only an internal structure, not only is it organized on the basis of differences of gender and age; what interests us and is fundamental is the structural relation that links it to the reproduction of capital.

The material social basis of the oppression of women is not found in the relations of gender that are produced within the home, though it would be easy to come to that conclusion because it is the first thing evident, but these are a consequence. The essential element of the oppression of women in capitalist societies is not housework for the benefit of men and children, as oppressive as it may be. The production and reproduction of labor power is an essential condition for the dynamic of the capitalist system, making the reproduction of capitalism possible. (Susan Ferguson and David McNally, "Capital, Labour-Power and Gender-Relations.")

The fact that the production of labor power is within the private sphere and that the sexual bodies of women are needed for its reproduction and nursing explains why capital and the capitalist State need to regulate the biological ability of women in order to produce the next generation of workers. The heterosexual nuclear family and a patriarchal family organization that was already in existence, through modifications and reinforcements of parental links, through social policies of the capitalist States, was what resulted in the family form compatible with the private reproduction of labor power, adapting it to the new order of the bourgeois gender hierarchy.

As a result, and as a consequence of what has been said, the framework of the analysis is not the home as such, but in relation to the reproduction of capital. The cause of women's oppression in capitalist societies is found in the central relations of the capitalist mode of production.

With the goal of maintaining the production and regeneration of labor power, capitalism requires institutionalized mechanisms by which it can exert its control over biological reproduction, the forms of family, the raising of children and maintaining of gender hierarchy. Although the relations between men and women at home may express and socially reproduce a gender hierarchy in which the male is dominant, this cannot explain all the forms of oppression to

which women are subjected. That is, the capitalist gender hierarchy is supported by a structure, not of a trans-historic patriarchy or of a separate mode of domestic production, but on the entire social connection between the capitalist mode of production and the homes of the working class. This is a connection that is vital for the production and reproduction of labor power.

### **The Appearance of the New Worker’s Family and the Figure of the “Housewife”**

In Volume 1 of *Capital*, Marx describes the brutality of work under capitalism in crude terms; he refers to the condition of the working class in the first industrial Revolution, putting special emphasis on describing the conditions of women and children, the degradation of the worker’s family, the overcrowded conditions under which they live, the infant mortality.

The vitality, health and resistance of the working class were gradually worn down during the first phase of industrialization. Workers were exhausted at a very young age and their children were sick and weak. They grew up and lived under miserable conditions, they were put to work at the ages of 8 or 10. Exploited, malnourished and living in crowded, marginal neighborhoods, the workers in the spinning centers of England lived sick and died early. In the 1860s, the lifespan was less than 30 years. Infant mortality was very high as a consequence of the lack of maternal attention.

Factory inspectors understood that because they were not home most of the day, women workers had no choice but to leave their children with some elderly woman, who fed them bread and water and gave them large doses of opiates to tranquilize them.



(Margaret Hewitt, “Infant’s Preservatives,” Chapter X of *Wives and Mother in Victorian Industry*.)

The working class, with low wages and interminable hours of work, could not reproduce itself and provide a stable flow of workers.

Between 1850 and the end of the century, the second Industrial Revolution produced a great transformation in the system of production with the changeover from light to heavy industry, that is from textile to steel, iron and coal as the principal sectors of industry and primary sources of accumulation of capital. These new industries demanded a stronger and more productive worker.

Starting from those dates there was a reduction in the number of hours worked by women in factories, especially married women, so that they could carry out their domestic chores. That is how the new worker’s family arose, the nuclear family of one man, one woman and their children. The role of the man was to work full-time and earn a salary that could provide a minimum standard of living for the family. The woman, the housewife, had the duty to replenish the labor power of the man as well as to give life to and take care of the children. The need for a new type of worker, healthier, stronger, more productive and above all more disciplined and domesticated, is one of the causes of the appearance of this family model. This is why gradually women and children were removed from the factories, a family income was introduced, women were educated in the virtues of domesticity, a new reproductive system and a new social contract was established.

It would be incorrect to think that the working men or women put up any resistance to the establishment of the new worker’s family: for women the family model in which they would be maintained while they educated their children was a good alternative to the 12 hours a day that they had been enslaved in the factory with the obligation to raise their children at the same time. For working men as well as women the family was a way to guarantee companionship and affection.

The link between the production and reproduction of capital and the worker’s family is clear; the family is one of the pillars of the capitalist system and it perfectly fits with it and guarantees that the needed labor power produces and reproduces itself with adequate characteristics for capital to also be produced and reproduced. The “creation” of the new worker’s family with the establishment of the Housewife introduces a new reproductive system in which the

woman loses her economic independence and therefore her autonomy. The gender hierarchy is reinforced as well as the sexual division of labor and the affective sexual relations are submerged in biological reproduction and dependence on the male. The loss of economic independence as a result of dependence on the male's salary was institutionalized and the unequal division of power in the nuclear family has disciplined the lives of both women and men, because also our dependence on a single salary has kept men tied to their jobs and their working conditions.

### **Household Labor**

What is the nature of the social process by which labor power reproduces itself? This question was given an incorrect answer in the 1960s and 1970s and it resulted in the demand for wages for housework; this analysis argued that since household labor produced labor power that in turn creates value and surplus value for capital, thus household labor also had to be a form of labor that creates value. But the truth is that labor in the home is not commodified; it produces use values, not commodities whose sale produces surplus value for the capitalist. In the worker's family, household labor oppresses the woman; this is evident, but the socio-material cause of the oppression of woman is the need for capital to regulate and control this labor of restoring and producing the next generation of workers that makes possible the reproduction of capitalism. That is why, backed by the State and the other social and religious institutions, it forms a family model in which the gender hierarchy helps to perpetuate the roles imposed by the needs of capital.

Household labor is socially necessary for the production and reproduction of capital. Marx refers to necessary labor as that which is an expense needed by capital, labor which must be paid (in wages) from the funds of capital. That is why Marx refers to salaries as variable capital. There is much more unpaid labor, labor which does not have to be paid by capital, that is necessary for the reproduction of a capitalist society. And capital is, in effect, enormously helped by the fact that children are born, raised, fed, and educated in units based on parenthood, in the same way as adults are reproduced physically, socially and psychologically. Even more, individual capitals benefit here from a social practice that does not make up a part of any of its necessary expenses. Here, therefore, there is no rate of

exploitation, because these practices are not commodified (they produce use value but not value), and because there is not a direct structured expense for capital. As a result, household labor is not necessary in the sense that Marx understands it, although it is essential.

Marx establishes that activities which reproduce labor power are essential for capitalist accumulation; he makes it clear that this labor which is so despised, so denaturalized, so disdained, constitutes the fundamental pillar of the capitalist organization of labor, and would resolve the relation between gender and class.

### **The Value of Labor Power**

How is the value of labor power determined? The value of labor power, like that of any other commodity, is determined by the labor time needed for its production, in this case, for the reproduction of the worker. Thus Marx points out: “For his maintenance he requires a given quantity of the means of subsistence. Therefore the labour-time requisite for the production of labour-power reduces itself to that necessary for the production of those means of subsistence; in other words, the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of the labourer.” (Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, Chapter 6.) The worker uses a certain amount of muscle, cerebral energy and nerves which must be replaced in order to carry out his work during the work week. But in addition, the worker has other needs such as food, heat, housing and clothing, which vary according to conditions of climate, geography and culture of each country. Marx adds that, unlike other commodities, “there enters into the determination of the value of labour-power a historical and moral element. Nevertheless, in a given country, at a given period, the average quantity of the means of subsistence necessary for the labourer is practically known.” “The minimum limit of the value of labour-power is determined by the value of the commodities, without the daily supply of which the labourer cannot renew his vital energy, consequently by the value of those means of subsistence that are physically indispensable.” (Ibid.)

Therefore, if the price of labor power falls below this minimum, it will result in the worker not being able to develop sufficiently. A necessary element for the system to maintain itself and for value to continue to increase is that the sellers of labor power can perpetuate themselves over time, since human beings are mortal and thus there



reaches a point when labor power abandons forever the cycle of exchange and must be replaced by another worker. On this matter Marx writes:

“Hence the sum of the means of subsistence necessary for the production of labour-power must include the means necessary for the labourer’s substitutes, i.e., his children, in order that this race of peculiar commodity-owners may perpetuate its appearance in the market.” (Ibid.) Marx also mentions the fact that the worker must acquire certain abilities and skills, which implies his training or education, what today is known as “human capital”: “The expenses of this education (excessively small in the case of ordinary labour-power), enter pro tanto into the total value spent in its production.” (Ibid.)

As a result, so that the special commodity, labor power, can produce and reproduce itself, household labor is essential, in other words, without household labor workers cannot reproduce themselves, and without workers, in turn, capital cannot reproduce itself. The value of labor power is not determined by the amount of labor time necessary for its production, because labor power is a commodity produced outside of the cycles and mode of capitalist production, although it is controlled by capital. Capital pays for that special commodity not the time necessary to produce it, but what it costs to reproduce it, the cost of its subsistence, etc. the value of everything that workers need to reproduce themselves, except the female labor to which capital does not assign a value. It is a labor which does not have value.

Therefore, we can conclude that the theory of social reproduction is a great advance towards achieving a unitary theory that explains the oppression of women under capitalism, based on the understanding that Marx has of capitalism as something more than just an economic system. For Marx, capitalism is a broad social formation which includes “the reproduction of the working class” as an essential condition of the production of value.

*August of 2018*

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# Turkey

## *Party of Labour – EMEP*

### Money: The World Upside-Down

“...money is thus the general distorting of *individualities* which turns them into their opposite and confers contradictory attributes upon their attributes.”  
Marx, *Manuscripts*, “The Power of Money”

Those who try to limit **Marx** and his theory to the strict labyrinth of economics tend to compare his premises on various themes such as money, production, distribution and value with other economic approaches by use of stereotypical criteria; they either find these premises insufficient or ignore them. Yet Marx was not a blind “economist”. His theory went beyond economics and was nourished by philosophy and art. Therefore, you see a quotation from **Dante**’s *Divine Comedy* or a sonnet from **Shakespeare** when he expresses the most complicated theories in *Capital* or in his earlier works (*Manuscripts*, *Grundrisse*, *Contribution to the Critique of Economy Politics*, etc.). It is this aspect that makes **Marx** and his theory unique and universally applicable – an aspect nourished by life itself. It is for this reason that 200 year old **Marx** and his 151 year old *Capital* explain the present and the future still in the clearest way...

Paul Lafargue, Marx’s son-in-law and **Laura**’s husband, explains **Marx**’s genius in the following way:

“Marx had the two qualities of a genius: he had an incomparable talent for dissecting a thing into its constituent parts, and he was past master at reconstituting the dissected object out of its parts, with all its different forms of development, and discovering their mutual inner relations. His demonstrations were not abstractions – which was the reproach made to him by economists who were themselves incapable of thinking; his method was not that of the geometrician who takes his definitions from the world around him but completely disregards reality in drawing his conclusions. **Capital** does not give isolated definitions or isolated formulas; it gives a series of most searching analyses which bring out the most evasive shades and the

most elusive gradations.” (Paul Lafargue, *Reminiscences of Marx*)

What shines through all his works and makes visible what was not seen before is his powerful observation and narrative. It was this narrative which began with his sisters in early childhood, continued with his wife in his youth and with his children in later years that differentiated **Marx** from other economists, philosophers, political scientists and scientists in general. **Marx**’s narrative was nourished by the authors and poets whose works he had etched in his mind.

The cultural bases that shaped Marx’s methodology did not only add a unique power of exposition but also made it possible for him to explain the relations of production, which had been made incomprehensible due to a high level of abstraction, touching upon the right points.

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In his Manuscripts of 1844 Marx states that “Money is the procurer between man’s need and the object, between his life and his means of life. But that which mediates my life for me, also mediates the existence of other people for me. For me it is the other person.”

And he brings this out with the following verses from Goethe’s *Faust*:

*“What, man! confound it, hands and feet,  
and head and backside, all are yours!  
And what we take while life is sweet,  
is that to be declared not ours?  
Six stallions, say, I can afford,  
is not their strength my property?  
I tear along, a sporting lord,  
as if their legs belonged to me.”*

Then we come across Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens*:

*“Gold? Yellow, glittering, precious gold?... Thus much of this  
will make black white, foul fair, wrong right, base noble, old young,  
coward valiant... Come damn’d Earth, thou common whore of man-  
kind, that puttes oddes among the rout of nations...”*

Then Marx begins to explain how money was described in these two literary examples. First, the quote from Goethe... He states that with these verses Goethe says “*that which is for me through the medium of money – that for which I can pay (i.e., what money can buy) – that am I myself, the possessor of the money*”. He believes

Goethe means to say that “*The extent of the power of money is the extent of my power. Money’s properties are my – the possessor’s – properties and essential powers*”, that by means of money one can do whatever one wants, and that it is an instrument which transforms its beholder’s incapacities into their opposite. This highlights the nature of money as an instrument of exchange: money as transformed into the commodity that it buys, i.e. into its opposite...

In his quote from Shakespeare, Marx says two properties of money are stressed:

i) the visible divinity – the transformation of all human and natural properties into their opposites, the universal confounding and distorting of things: impossibilities are soldered together by it.

ii) the common whore, the common procurer of people and nations.

Following these two strong literary quotations **Marx** goes on to say that “Since money, as the existing and active concept of value, confounds and confuses all things, it is the general confounding and confusing of all things – the world upside-down – the confounding and confusing of all natural and human qualities.”

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In his *Grundrisse* Marx explains the role and the importance of money in the relations of production in the following simplified way:

*“Since it is an individuated, tangible object, money may be randomly searched for, found, stolen, discovered; and thus general wealth may be tangibly brought into the possession of a particular individual. From its servile role, in which it appears as mere medium of circulation it suddenly changes into the lord and god of the world of commodities. It represents the divine existence of commodities, while they represent its earthly form.”*

Marx states that as an instrument of accumulation of capital, money gets an abstract form in such a way as to go beyond the commodity form of capital and is transformed into a “spirit” ascending the commodity and shaping it.

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In his *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, **Marx** explains the function of gold and silver as follows:

“Gold and silver constitute money not as the result of any activity of the person who accumulates them, but as crystals of the process of circulation which takes place without his assistance. He need do nothing but put them aside, piling one lot upon another, a completely senseless activity, which if applied to any other commodity would result in its devaluation.” And he goes on to say that *“Horace, therefore, knows nothing of the philosophy of hoarding treasures, when he says ‘If a man were to buy harps, and soon as bought were to pile them together, though feeling no interest in the harp or any Muse; if, though no cobbler, he did the same with shoes, knives and lasts; with ships’ sails, though set against a trader’s life -- everyone would call him crazy and mad, and rightly too. How differs from these the man who hoards up silver and gold, though he knows not how to use his store, and fears to touch it as though hallowed?’”*

In this way, Marx considers culture not only as a supporting element in his explanation but also as a force in his debate.

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Marx reaches maturity in his “narrative” with *Capital*. In his preface to this work he explains what kind of work the reader should expect in the following way:

*“If, however, the German reader shrugs his shoulders at the condition of the English industrial and agricultural labourers, or in optimist fashion comforts himself with the thought that in Germany things are not nearly so bad; I must plainly tell him, ‘De te fabula narratur!’”* [It is of you that the story is told. – Horace] These words that Marx borrowed from Horace’s Satires show how a literary work has the power to explain effectively the reality of life even if it seems distant from it, when used in the right context.

*“We see then, commodities are in love with money” says Marx, and again borrows from Shakespeare to reinforce his statement: “but the course of true love never does run smooth.” For Marx “The quantitative division of labour is brought about in exactly the same spontaneous and accidental manner as its qualitative division. The owners of commodities therefore find out, that the same division of labour that turns them into independent private producers, also frees the social process of production and the relations of the individual producers to each*

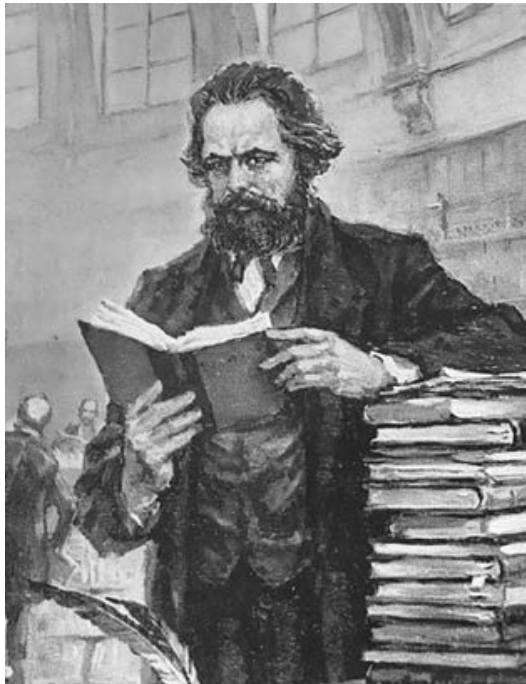
*other within that process, from all dependence on the will of those producers, and that the seeming mutual independence of the individuals is supplemented by a system of general and mutual dependence through or by means of the products.”*

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*“Now this coin is well-examined,  
and now we know its alloy and its weight.  
But tell me: do you have it in your purse?”*  
(Dante, Divine Comedy)

Being the main theme of examination for **Marx** and having a key role within the relations of production, division and circulation, *money* is an organic component of the theory developed by him. To understand money correctly with its functions is vital for the comprehension of the relations of production as a whole. The fact that money, as an instrument of buying, is transformed into the thing it buys and turns the existing reality upside down, led almost all those people who studied it, from ancient Greek philosophers to classical economists, to consider it as something ‘irresolvable’.

Money is something that confuses people! It was this complexity that made Marx ‘anxious’ about his explication of money. In order to overcome this complexity it was necessary to make clarifications and simplifications. Therefore, he set out clearing up the mess; and his main reference here was the literary masterpieces that he had mastered since his childhood.



In dealing with the subject of money Marx was exhausted by two main difficulties, i.e. money as a theory and the lack of it for him as a means of living. In the complicated path of the theory of money Marx used the literary classics as a beacon. However, there was not much he could do about being penniless. Despite losing three of his children Marx never lived as someone turned upside down by money. It is for this reason that even after 200 years he continues to tell the same story with the same enthusiasm!

*August of 2018*

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# Venezuela

## ***Marxist-Leninist Communist Party of Venezuela – PCMLV***

### **200 Years since the Birth of the Prometheus of Trier: Marxism Continues to Grow**

Karl Marx is a name stamped in history, growing over time thanks to the indissoluble link between its owner and the struggles of the working class. That is why, since this class the bearer of immense potentialities for transforming reality, that name grows every day to the same degree that humanity struggles to free itself from the chains of exploitation.

During these first 200 years, the name Karl Marx has been linked to hundreds of struggles on all continents, opening a historic period that makes its way forward towards the paths of the realization of communism. Without realizing it, we are living in the historical period of Marxism, a doctrine that has irreversibly pervaded humanity, the sciences and struggles, the daily way of life with the analytic method of dialectical materialism, advancing as never before in the objective and truly scientific study of the development of humanity.

Not only has Marxism put its stamp on the fertile ground of theory; it also has had the influence on practice, on the action of organization, on the approaches to strategy and tactics. It has created the bases for structures and norms of operation that, with the contributions of the experience of Lenin and of the history of the revolutionary movement, can be called Marxism-Leninism. Not to accept this is to move to the field of pragmatism and to turn away from the theory one claims to be taking up, although hundreds of justifications are sought for this.

Unlike the revolutionary changes that occurred in other periods that were initiated by improvisation and spontaneity, in the historical period of Marxism the struggles of the oppressed, and especially of the proletariat, have a program, method and organizational means that give the working class a never-before-seen advantage. It has a theory, a method and a set of experiences analyzed and systematized by its own leaders, as well as other factors of strategy and tac-

tics that together determine an infallible formula for success, if it is applied without deviations.

Marxism is a guide to action, a guide that gathers a wealth of past experiences that cannot be ignored without facing the consequences. Therefore, we must analyze the experiences and the theoretical approaches that are put forward at every moment to arrive at the correct conclusions that the revolutionary forces can channel towards victory.

In the elaboration of tactics and their adaptations, we consider fundamental the theoretical-historical references; that is why our party constantly analyzes and studies the positions of Marxism-Leninism, looking for the orientations that, in relation to the reality that we are experiencing, can give an answer to the problems put forward, rejecting the schemes and pragmatism that can lead us to confuse the masses with erratic changes of direction and lose our strategic goal.

We also study and spread the experiences of the classics and in particular of Marx in relation to the organizational structures and respect for their constituent elements. At the risk of appearing formal, we think that we must fulfill, and demand from others the fulfillment of the organizational premises of Marxism-Leninism, rejecting any trace of revisionism, pragmatism or anarchism, in complete harmony with the approaches of our classics.

### **The small great work of Marx**

One of the most widespread materials and pillar of the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism is the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. This pamphlet, written jointly by Marx and Engels, was published in 1848; it is a work of immense significance for the training of communists who find in its pages general and deep notions, of great relevance, in spite of its 170 years.

From the first page to the last, with its prefaces, the richness of its definitions and the style of its writing make those who read it acquire a solid idea of what socialism and communism mean, as well as the elements that sustain the capitalist mode of production, both in theory and in practice.

The tasks of the proletariat, as well as the characteristics of the bourgeoisie and its political forms, were analyzed very sharply by Marx and Engels, leaving us hundreds of examples of their intellectual stature, expressing with completely clear ideas their definitions

of how to carry out the struggle against the bourgeoisie, as well as the policy of agreements and alliances. We think that these play an important role in the expositions of the *Manifesto*, and particularly its chapters III and IV, where reference is made to socialist and communist literature in chapter III, and the role of the communist party towards the other opposition parties in chapter IV.

We have taken into account the explanation of Engels in the Preface to the German edition of 1872 where he warns us: Needless to say, “it is self-evident that the criticism of socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time, because it comes down only to 1847; also, that the remarks on the relation of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV), although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated...”

With this clarification in mind we have studied Marx and Engels in order to reach conclusions about the policy of alliances with other forces, but never with the most reactionary forces, clearly expressing the possibility and need to support reformist organizations against the most reactionary ones.

*“The Communists fight for the attainment of the immediate aims, for the enforcement of the momentary interests of the working class; but in the movement of the present, they also represent and take care of the future of that*



*movement. In France the Communists ally themselves with the Social-Democrats, against the conservative and radical bourgeoisie, reserving, however, the right to take up a critical position in regard to phrases and illusions traditionally handed down from the great Revolution.”*

These chapters allow us to better take up the burning issues of political practice that are found today in the international communist movement. In open debate we must grasp Marx’s approaches in order to shine light on “positions of differentiated policies.”

The teachings of the Prometheus of Trier have led us to formulate a tactic of critical support with demands that are based on some forms of the *Communist Manifesto*, of the theses on the national and colonial question of the Communist International, and on the experiences of that international in Asia and other regions, in the positions of various member parties of the ICMLPO and in concrete practice with its tangible results.

Marx and Engels tell us:

*“In Germany they [the communists] fight with the bourgeoisie whenever it acts in a revolutionary way, against the absolute monarchy, the feudal squirearchy, and the petty bourgeoisie.*

*“But they never cease, for a single instant, to instill into the working class the clearest possible recognition of the hostile antagonism between bourgeoisie and proletariat, in order that the German workers may straightway use, as so many weapons against the bourgeoisie, the social and political conditions that the bourgeoisie must necessarily introduce along with its supremacy, and in order that, after the fall of the reactionary classes in Germany, the fight against the bourgeoisie itself may immediately begin.”*

Acting in a complex period, when the proletariat was being born and its organizations saw the light of day in the midst of harsh combat, the teachers of the working class were able to look to the light and correctly define the course that the struggles would take.

That is why, 200 years after the birth of Karl Heinrich Marx, we pay tribute to this Prometheus who broke the chains of time to become eternal in the hearts of the vanguard fighters who grasped the weapon of criticism and with the criticism of weapons at hand; without fears or disguises, we move forward towards the organization of the proletarian revolution to say again with them:

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

**Workers of the World, unite!**

CC of the PCMLV  
*August 2018*