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[Template:Marxism](/wiki/Template:Marxism) [Template:Use British (Oxford) English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_(Oxford)_English) *Marxism* is a method of [socioeconomic](/wiki/Socioeconomics) analysis, that analyzes [class](/wiki/Social_class) relations and societal conflict using a [materialist interpretation of historical development](/wiki/Historical_materialism) and a [dialectical](/wiki/Dialectic) view of social transformation. It originates from the mid-to-late 19th century works of German philosophers [Karl Marx](/wiki/Karl_Marx) and [Friedrich Engels](/wiki/Friedrich_Engels).

Marxist methodology originally used a method of [economic](/wiki/Economic) and [sociopolitical](/wiki/Sociopolitical) inquiry known as [historical materialism](/wiki/Historical_materialism) to analyze and critique the development of [capitalism](/wiki/Capitalism) and the role of [class struggle](/wiki/Class_struggle) in systemic economic change. According to Marxist perspective, class conflict within capitalism arises due to intensifying contradictions between the highly productive mechanized and [socialized production](/wiki/Socialization_(economics)) performed by the [proletariat](/wiki/Proletariat), and the private ownership and appropriation of the [surplus product](/wiki/Surplus_product) (profit) by a small minority of private owners called the [bourgeoisie](/wiki/Bourgeoisie). As the contradiction becomes apparent to the proletariat through the [alienation of labor](/wiki/Alienation_of_labor), social unrest between the two antagonistic classes will intensify, until it culminates in [social revolution](/wiki/Social_revolution). The eventual long-term outcome of this revolution would be the establishment of [socialism](/wiki/Socialism) – a socioeconomic system based on social ownership of the means of production, [distribution based on one's contribution](/wiki/To_each_according_to_his_contribution), and [production organized directly for use](/wiki/Production_for_use). As the productive forces and technology continued to advance, Marx hypothesized that socialism would eventually give way to a [communist](/wiki/Communism) stage of social development, which would be a classless, stateless, humane society erected on [common ownership](/wiki/Common_ownership) and the principle of "[From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs](/wiki/From_each_according_to_his_ability,_to_each_according_to_his_need)".

Marxism has since developed into different branches and schools of thought, and there is now no single definitive Marxist theory.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Different Marxian schools place a greater emphasis on certain aspects of [classical Marxism](/wiki/Classical_Marxism) while de-emphasizing or rejecting other aspects, and sometimes combine Marxist analysis with non-Marxian concepts; as a result, they might reach contradictory conclusions from one another.[[2]](#cite_note-2) Marxist analyses and methodologies have influenced multiple political ideologies and social movements, and [Marxist understandings of history](/wiki/Marxist_historiography) and society have been adopted by some academics in the disciplines of [archaeology](/wiki/Marxist_archaeology), [anthropology](/wiki/Anthropology),[[3]](#cite_note-3) [media studies](/wiki/Media_studies),[[4]](#cite_note-4) [political science](/wiki/Political_science), [theater](/wiki/Theater), [history](/wiki/History), [sociology](/wiki/Marxist_sociology), [art history](/wiki/Art_history) [and theory](/wiki/Art_theory), [cultural studies](/wiki/Cultural_studies), [education](/wiki/Education), [economics](/wiki/Marxian_economics), [geography](/wiki/Marxist_geography), [literary criticism](/wiki/Marxist_literary_criticism), [aesthetics](/wiki/Marxist_aesthetics), [critical psychology](/wiki/Critical_psychology), and [philosophy](/wiki/Marxist_philosophy).[[5]](#cite_note-5)

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## Overview[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[thumb|right|200px|](/wiki/File:Karl_Marx_001.jpg)[Karl Marx](/wiki/Karl_Marx)The Marxian analysis begins with an analysis of the material conditions and the economic activities required to satisfy society's material needs. It is assumed that the form of economic organization, or [mode of production](/wiki/Mode_of_production), gives rise to, or at least directly influences, most other social phenomena – including social relations, political and legal systems, morality and ideology. The economic system and these social relations form a [base and superstructure](/wiki/Base_and_superstructure). As [forces of production](/wiki/Productive_forces), most notably [technology](/wiki/Technology), improve, existing forms of social organization become inefficient and stifle further progress. As [Karl Marx](/wiki/Karl_Marx) observed: "At a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution*."*[*[6]*](#cite_note-6)*These inefficiencies manifest themselves as social contradictions in society in the form of* [*class struggle*](/wiki/Class_struggle)*.*[*[7]*](#cite_note-7) *Under the* [*capitalist mode of production*](/wiki/Capitalist_mode_of_production_(Marxist_theory))*, this struggle materializes between the minority (the* [*bourgeoisie*](/wiki/Bourgeoisie)*) who own the* [*means of production*](/wiki/Means_of_production)*, and the vast majority of the population (the* [*proletariat*](/wiki/Proletariat)*) who produce goods and services. Starting with the assumption that* [*social change*](/wiki/Social_change) *occurs because of the struggle between different* [*classes*](/wiki/Social_class) *within society who are under contradiction against each other, a Marxist analyst would summarize by saying that* [*capitalism*](/wiki/Capitalism) *exploits and oppresses the proletariat, which leads to a* [*proletarian revolution*](/wiki/Proletarian_revolution)*.*

Capitalism (according to Marxist theory) can no longer sustain the living standards of the population due to its need to compensate for [falling rates of profit](/wiki/Tendency_of_the_rate_of_profit_to_fall) by driving down wages, cutting social benefits and pursuing military aggression. The [socialist](/wiki/Socialism_(Marxism)) system would succeed capitalism as humanity's mode of production through workers' [revolution](/wiki/Revolution). According to Marxism, especially arising from [crisis theory](/wiki/Crisis_theory), [socialism](/wiki/Socialism) is a historical necessity (but not an inevitability).[[8]](#cite_note-8) In a socialist society [private property](/wiki/Private_property), in the form of the [means of production](/wiki/Means_of_production), would be replaced by co-operative ownership. A socialist economy would not base production on the creation of private profits, but on the criteria of satisfying human needs – that is, [production would be carried out directly for use](/wiki/Production_for_use). As Engels said: "Then the capitalist mode of appropriation in which the product enslaves first the producer, and then appropriator, is replaced by the mode of appropriation of the product that is based upon the nature of the modern means of production; upon the one hand, direct social appropriation, as means to the maintenance and extension of production on the other, direct individual appropriation, as means of subsistence and of enjoyment."'[[9]](#cite_note-9)

## Concepts[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

### Historical Materialism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

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The historical materialist theory of history[[10]](#cite_note-10) analyses the underlying causes of societal development and change from the perspective of the collective ways that humans make their living. All constituent features of a society (social classes, political pyramid, ideologies) are assumed to stem from economic activity, an idea often portrayed with the metaphor of the [base and superstructure](/wiki/Base_and_superstructure).

The base and superstructure metaphor portrays the totality of social relations by which humans produce and re-produce their social existence. According to Marx, “The sum total of the forces of production accessible to men determines the condition of society,” and forms a society's economic *base*. The base includes the material forces of production, that is, the labour and material means of production, and relations of production, i.e. the social and political arrangements that regulate production and distribution. From this base rises a *superstructure* of legal and political “forms of social consciousness” of political and legal institutions that derive from the economic base which conditions the superstructure and a societies dominant ideology. Conflicts between the development of material productive forces and the relations of production provokes social revolutions, and thus, the resultant changes to the economic base will lead to the transformation of the superstructure.[[11]](#cite_note-11) This relationship is reflexive; at first the base gives rise to the superstructure and remains the foundation of a form of social organization. Hence, that formed social organization can act again upon both parts of the base and superstructure, so, that relationship not one-way but a dialogue (a [dialectic](/wiki/Dialectic)), expressed and driven by conflicts and contradictions. As [Friedrich Engels](/wiki/Friedrich_Engels) clarified: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."'[[12]](#cite_note-12) Marx considered these socio-economic conflicts as the driving force of human history since these recurring conflicts have manifested themselves as distinct transitional stages of development in Western Europe. Accordingly, Marx designated human history as encompassing four stages of development in relations of production.[[13]](#cite_note-13)

1. [*Primitive Communism*](/wiki/Primitive_communism)*:* as in co-operative tribal societies.
2. [*Slave*](/wiki/Slave) *Society:* a development of tribal to city-state; aristocracy is born.
3. [*Feudalism*](/wiki/Feudalism)*:* aristocrats are the ruling class; merchants evolve into capitalists.
4. [*Capitalism*](/wiki/Capitalism)*:* capitalists are the ruling class, who create and employ the proletariat.

### Criticism of capitalism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

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According to the Marxist theoretician and [revolutionary](/wiki/Revolutionary) [Vladimir Lenin](/wiki/Vladimir_Lenin), "the principal content of Marxism" was "Marx's economic doctrine".[[14]](#cite_note-14) Marx believed that the capitalist bourgeois and their economists were promoting what he saw as the lie that "The interests of the capitalist and those of the worker are ... one and the same"; he believed that they did this by purporting the concept that "the fastest possible growth of productive [capital](/wiki/Capital_(economics))" was best not only for the wealthy capitalists but also for the workers because it provided them with employment.[[15]](#cite_note-15) Exploitation is a matter of [surplus labour](/wiki/Surplus_labour) – the amount of labour one performs beyond what one receives in goods. Exploitation has been a socioeconomic feature of every class society, and is one of the principal features distinguishing the social classes. The power of one social class to control the [means of production](/wiki/Means_of_production) enables its exploitation of the other classes.

In capitalism, the [labour theory of value](/wiki/Labor_theory_of_value) is the operative concern; the [value](/wiki/Value_(economics)) of a [commodity](/wiki/Commodity_(Marxism)) equals the socially necessary labour time required to produce it. Under that condition, [surplus value](/wiki/Surplus_value) (the difference between the value produced and the value received by a labourer) is synonymous with the term "surplus labour"; thus, capitalist exploitation is realised as deriving surplus value from the worker.

In pre-capitalist economies, exploitation of the worker was achieved via physical coercion. In the capitalist mode of production, that result is more subtly achieved; because the worker does not own the means of production, he or she must voluntarily enter into an exploitive work relationship with a capitalist in order to earn the necessities of life. The worker's entry into such employment is voluntary in that he or she chooses which capitalist to work for. However, the worker must work or starve. Thus, exploitation is inevitable, and the "voluntary" nature of a worker participating in a capitalist society is illusory.

[Alienation](/wiki/Marx's_theory_of_alienation) is the estrangement of people from their humanity (German: *Gattungswesen*, "species-essence", "species-being"), which is a systematic result of capitalism. Under capitalism, the fruits of production belong to the employers, who expropriate the surplus created by others, and so generate alienated labourers.[[16]](#cite_note-16) In Marx's view, alienation is an objective characterization of the worker's situation in capitalism – his or her self-awareness of this condition is not prerequisite.

### Social classes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

The identity of a social class derives from its relationship to the [means of production](/wiki/Means_of_production); Marx describes the social classes in capitalist societies:

* [Proletariat](/wiki/Proletariat): "the class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live".[[17]](#cite_note-17) As Andrei Platonov expressed "The working class is my home country and my future is linked with the proletariat."[[18]](#cite_note-18) The capitalist mode of production establishes the conditions enabling the bourgeoisie to [exploit](/wiki/Exploitation_(Marxism)) the proletariat because the workers' labour generates a [surplus value](/wiki/Surplus_value) greater than the workers' [wages](/wiki/Wages).
* [Bourgeoisie](/wiki/Bourgeoisie): those who "own the means of production" and buy labour power from the proletariat, thus exploiting the proletariat; they subdivide as bourgeoisie and the petit bourgeoisie.
  + [Petit bourgeoisie](/wiki/Petit_bourgeoisie) are those who work and can afford to buy little labour power i.e. small business owners, peasant landlords, trade workers et al. Marxism predicts that the continual reinvention of the means of production eventually would destroy the petit bourgeoisie, degrading them from the middle class to the proletariat.
* [Lumpenproletariat](/wiki/Lumpenproletariat): The outcasts of society such as criminals, vagabonds, beggars, prostitutes, et al., who have no stake in the economy and no mind of their own and so are decoyed by every bidder.
* [Landlords](/wiki/Landlords): a historically important social class who retain some wealth and power.
* [Peasantry](/wiki/Peasantry) and [farmers](/wiki/Farmers): a scattered class incapable of organizing and effecting socio-economic change, most of whom would enter the proletariat, and some become landlords.

[Class consciousness](/wiki/Class_consciousness) denotes the awareness – of itself and the social world – that a social class possesses, and its capacity to rationally act in their best interests; hence, class consciousness is required *before* they can effect a successful revolution.

Without defining [ideology](/wiki/Ideology#Ideology_as_an_instrument_of_social_reproduction),[[19]](#cite_note-19) Marx used the term to denote the production of images of social reality; according to Engels, "ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remain unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. Hence he imagines false or seeming motive forces".[[20]](#cite_note-20) Because the ruling class controls the society's means of production, the superstructure of society (the ruling social ideas), are determined by the best interests of the ruling class. In *The German Ideology*, "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is, at the same time, its ruling intellectual force".[[21]](#cite_note-21) The term "[political economy](/wiki/Political_economy)" originally denoted the study of the conditions under which economic production was organised in the capitalist system. In Marxism, political economy is the study of the means of production, specifically of capital, and how that manifests as economic activity.

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## Relation with industrial revolution[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

This new way of thinking was invented because socialists believed that public ownership will help workers that were abused by their employers. They also thought that the government having control of factories, mines, textile industries and other businesses would abolish poverty and increase equality. These thoughts argued that the government should plan the economy rather than depend on the free market capitalism (invisible hand). One of Marx's arguments was that the bourgeoisie abused the proletariat. Marx thought that with Marxism this situation would stop. He believed that capitalism will destroy itself, because the proletariat would revolt and produce what society needs. This would give economic equality to all the population and for this to happen there would not be private property and this will cause social classes to disappear. This would bring an equal share of goods and services.

## Revolution, socialism, and communism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

Marxists believe that the transition from capitalism to socialism is an inevitable part of the development of human society; as Lenin stated, "it is evident that Marx deduces the inevitability of the transformation of capitalist society [into a socialist society] wholly and exclusively from the economic law of motion of contemporary society."[[22]](#cite_note-22) Marxists believe that a socialist society will be far better for the majority of the populace than its capitalist counterpart. Prior to the [Russian revolution](/wiki/Russian_Revolution_(1917)) of 1917, Lenin wrote that "The socialization of production is bound to lead to the conversion of the means of production into the property of society ... This conversion will directly result in an immense increase in productivity of labour, a reduction of working hours, and the replacement of the remnants, the ruins of small-scale, primitive, disunited production by collective and improved labour."[[23]](#cite_note-23) The failure of 1905 revolution and the socialist movements failure to resist the outbreak of the first World War led to renewed theoretical effort and valuable contributions from [Lenin](/wiki/Lenin) and [Rosa Luxemburg](/wiki/Rosa_Luxemburg) towards an appreciation of Marx's [Crisis theory](/wiki/Crisis_theory) and efforts to formulate a [Theory of Imperialism](/wiki/Theory_of_Imperialism)[[24]](#cite_note-24)

## Classical Marxism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) The term Classical Marxism denotes the collection of socio-eco-political theories expounded by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. "Marxism," as [Ernest Mandel](/wiki/Ernest_Mandel) remarked, "is always open, always critical, always self-critical." As such, Classical Marxism distinguishes between "Marxism" as broadly perceived, and "what Marx believed;" thus, in 1883, Marx wrote to the French labour leader [Jules Guesde](/wiki/Jules_Guesde) and to [Paul Lafargue](/wiki/Paul_Lafargue) (Marx's son-in-law) – both of whom claimed to represent Marxist principles – accusing them of "revolutionary phrase-mongering" and of denying the value of reformist struggle; from Marx's letter derives the paraphrase: "If that is Marxism, then I am not a Marxist."[[25]](#cite_note-25) American Marxist scholar [Hal Draper](/wiki/Hal_Draper) responded to this comment by saying, "there are few thinkers in modern history whose thought has been so badly misrepresented, by Marxists and anti-Marxists alike".[[26]](#cite_note-26)

### Criticism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

Some Marxists have criticised the academic [institutionalisation](/wiki/Institution) of Marxism for being too shallow and detached from political action. For instance, Zimbabwean [Trotskyist](/wiki/Trotskyism) [Alex Callinicos](/wiki/Alex_Callinicos), himself a professional academic, stated that "Its practitioners remind one of [Narcissus](/wiki/Narcissus_(mythology)), who in the Greek legend fell in love with his own reflection ... Sometimes it is necessary to devote time to clarifying and developing the concepts that we use, but indeed for Western Marxists this has become an end in itself. The result is a body of writings incomprehensible to all but a tiny minority of highly qualified scholars."[[27]](#cite_note-27)

## Academic Marxism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

[200px|thumb|right|One of the 20th century's most prominent Marxist academics; the Australian archaeologist](/wiki/File:Gordon_Childe.jpg) [V. Gordon Childe](/wiki/V._Gordon_Childe) Marxism has been adopted by a large number of academics and other scholars working in various disciplines.

The [theoretical development](/wiki/Archaeological_theory) of [Marxist archaeology](/wiki/Marxist_archaeology) was first developed in the Soviet Union in 1929, when a young archaeologist named Vladislav I. Ravdonikas (1894–1976) published a report entitled "For a Soviet history of material culture". Within this work, the very discipline of archaeology as it then stood was criticised as being inherently bourgeoisie and therefore anti-socialist, and so, as a part of the academic reforms instituted in the Soviet Union under the administration of Premier [Joseph Stalin](/wiki/Joseph_Stalin), a great emphasis was placed on the adoption of Marxist archaeology throughout the country.[[28]](#cite_note-28) These theoretical developments were subsequently adopted by archaeologists working in capitalist states outside of the Leninist bloc, most notably by the Australian academic [V. Gordon Childe](/wiki/V._Gordon_Childe) (1892–1957), who used Marxist theory in his understandings of the development of human society.[[29]](#cite_note-29)

## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

The term "Marxism" was popularized by [Karl Kautsky](/wiki/Karl_Kautsky) who considered himself an "orthodox" Marxist during the dispute between the orthodox and revisionist followers of Marx.[[30]](#cite_note-30) Kautsky's revisionist rival [Eduard Bernstein](/wiki/Eduard_Bernstein) also later adopted use of the term.[[30]](#cite_note-30) Engels did not support the use of the term "Marxism" to describe either Marx's or his views.[[31]](#cite_note-31) Engels claimed that the term was being abusively used as a rhetorical qualifier by those attempting to cast themselves as "real" followers of Marx while casting others in different terms, such as "Lassallians".[[31]](#cite_note-31) In 1882, Engels claimed that Marx had criticized self-proclaimed "Marxist" [Paul Lafargue](/wiki/Paul_Lafargue), by saying that if Lafargue's views were considered "Marxist", then "[o]ne thing is certain and that is that I am not a Marxist".[[31]](#cite_note-31)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

### Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

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Karl Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German [philosopher](/wiki/Philosophy), political economist, and socialist revolutionary, who addressed the matters of [alienation](/wiki/Marx's_theory_of_alienation) and [exploitation](/wiki/Exploitation_of_labour) of the working class, the [capitalist mode of production](/wiki/Capitalist_mode_of_production_(Marxist_theory)), and historical materialism. He is famous for analysing history in terms of class struggle, summarised in the initial line introducing the [*Communist Manifesto*](/wiki/Communist_Manifesto) (1848): "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles".

Friedrich Engels (28 November 1820 – 5 August 1895) was a German [political philosopher](/wiki/Political_philosophy) and Karl Marx's co-developer of communist theory. Marx and Engels met in September 1844; discovering that they shared like views of philosophy and socialism, they collaborated and wrote works such as *Die heilige Familie* ([*The Holy Family*](/wiki/The_Holy_Family_(book))). After Marx was deported from France in January 1845, Engels and Marx moved to Belgium, which then permitted greater [freedom of expression](/wiki/Freedom_of_expression) than other European countries; in January 1846, they returned to Brussels to establish the Communist Correspondence Committee.

In 1847, they began writing *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), based on Engels' *The Principles of Communism*; six weeks later, they published the 12,000-word pamphlet in February 1848. In March, Belgium expelled them, and they moved to [Cologne](/wiki/Cologne), where they published the [*Neue Rheinische Zeitung*](/wiki/Neue_Rheinische_Zeitung), a politically [radical](/wiki/Political_radicalism) newspaper. Again, by 1849, they had to leave Cologne for London. The Prussian authorities pressured the British government to expel Marx and Engels, but Prime Minister [Lord John Russell](/wiki/John_Russell,_1st_Earl_Russell) refused.

After Karl Marx's death in 1883, Friedrich Engels became the [editor](/wiki/Editor_in_chief) and [translator](/wiki/Translation) of Marx's writings. With his [*Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State*](/wiki/Origins_of_the_Family,_Private_Property,_and_the_State) (1884) – analysing [monogamous](/wiki/Monogamy) [marriage](/wiki/Marriage) as guaranteeing male social domination of women, a concept analogous, in communist theory, to the capitalist class's economic domination of the working class – Engels made [intellectually](/wiki/Intellectual) significant contributions to [feminist theory](/wiki/Feminist_theory) and [Marxist feminism](/wiki/Marxist_feminism).

### Late 20th century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

#### Political Marxism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

In 1959, the [Cuban Revolution](/wiki/Cuban_Revolution) led to the victory of [Fidel Castro](/wiki/Fidel_Castro) and his [July 26 Movement](/wiki/July_26_Movement). Although the revolution had not been explicitly socialist, upon victory Castro ascended to the position of Prime Minister and eventually adopted the Leninist model of socialist development, forging an alliance with the Soviet Union.[[32]](#cite_note-32) One of the leaders of the revolution, the Argentine Marxist revolutionary [Che Guevara](/wiki/Che_Guevara) (1928–1967), subsequently went on to aid revolutionary socialist movements in [Congo-Kinshasa](/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo) and Bolivia, eventually being killed by the Bolivian government, possibly on the orders of the CIA, though the CIA agent sent to search for Guevara, Felix Rodriguez expressed a desire to keep him alive as a possible bargaining tool with the Cuban government; he would posthumously go on to become an internationally recognised icon.

In the People's Republic of China, the Maoist government undertook the [Cultural Revolution](/wiki/Cultural_Revolution) from 1966 through to 1976 in order to purge capitalist elements from Chinese society and entrench socialism. However, upon Mao's death, his rivals seized political power and under the Premiership of Deng Xiaoping (1978–1992), many of Mao's Cultural Revolution era policies were revised or abandoned and much of the state sector privatised.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw the collapse of most of those socialist states that had professed a Marxist–Leninist ideology. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the emergence of the [New Right](/wiki/New_Right) and [neoliberal capitalism](/wiki/Neoliberalism) as the dominant ideological trends in western politics – championed by U.S. [President](/wiki/Presidency_of_the_United_States) [Ronald Reagan](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) and [U.K. Prime Minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_the_United_Kingdom) [Margaret Thatcher](/wiki/Margaret_Thatcher) – led the west to take a more aggressive stand against the Soviet Union and its Leninist allies. Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, the reformist [Mikhael Gorbachev](/wiki/Mikhael_Gorbachev) (1931–) became Premier in March 1985, and began to move away from Leninist-based models of development towards social democracy. Ultimately, Gorbachev's reforms, coupled with rising levels of popular ethnic nationalism in the Soviet Union, led to the state's dissolution in late 1991 into a series of constituent nations, all of which abandoned Marxist–Leninist models for socialism, with most converting to capitalist economies.

### 21st century[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

#### Political Marxism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

At the turn of the 21st century, China, Cuba, Laos and Vietnam remained the only officially Marxist–Leninist states remaining, although a Maoist government led by [Prachanda](/wiki/Prachanda) (1954–) was elected into power in Nepal in 2008 following a long guerrilla struggle. The early 21st century also saw the election of socialist governments in several Latin American nations, in what has come to be known as the "[Pink tide](/wiki/Pink_tide)". Dominated by the Venezuelan government of [Hugo Chávez](/wiki/Hugo_Chávez), this trend also saw the election of [Evo Morales](/wiki/Evo_Morales) in Bolivia, [Rafael Correa](/wiki/Rafael_Correa) in Ecuador and [Daniel Ortega](/wiki/Daniel_Ortega) in Nicaragua; forging political and economic alliances through international organisations like the [Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas](/wiki/Bolivarian_Alliance_for_the_Americas), these socialist governments allied themselves with Marxist–Leninist Cuba, and although none of them espoused a Leninist path directly, most admitted to being significantly influenced by Marxist theory. For Italian Marxist Gianni Vattimo in his 2011 book [*Hermeneutic Communism*](/wiki/Hermeneutic_Communism) "this new weak communism differs substantially from its previous Soviet (and current Chinese) realization, because the South American countries follow democratic electoral procedures and also manage to decentralize the state bureaucratic system through the [misiones (social missions for community projects)](/wiki/Bolivarian_Missions). In sum, if weakened communism is felt as a specter in the West, it is not only because of media distortions but also for the alternative it represents through the same democratic procedures that the West constantly professes to cherish but is hesitant to apply"[[33]](#cite_note-33)

## Criticisms[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

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Criticisms of Marxism have come from various political ideologies. Additionally, there are intellectual critiques of Marxism that contest certain assumptions prevalent in Marx's thought and Marxism after him, without exactly rejecting Marxist politics.[[34]](#cite_note-34) Other, contemporary supporters of Marxism argue that many aspects of Marxist thought are viable, but that the corpus is incomplete or outdated in regards to certain aspects of economic, political or [social theory](/wiki/Social_theory). They may therefore combine some Marxist concepts with the ideas of other theorists such as [Max Weber](/wiki/Max_Weber): the [Frankfurt school](/wiki/Frankfurt_school) is one example.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Socialist critiques[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Democratic socialists](/wiki/Democratic_socialists) and [social democrats](/wiki/Social_democrats) reject the idea that socialism can be accomplished only through extra-legal class conflict and a proletarian revolution. The relationship between Marx and other socialist thinkers and organizations—rooted in Marxism's "scientific" and anti-utopian socialism, among other factors—has divided Marxists from other socialists since Marx's life. After Marx's death, and with the emergence of Marxism, there have additionally been dissensions within Marxism itself—the splitting of the [Russian Social Democratic Labour Party](/wiki/Russian_Social_Democratic_Labour_Party) into [Bolsheviks](/wiki/Bolsheviks) and [Mensheviks](/wiki/Mensheviks) is a notable example. [Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify)

### Anarchist and libertarian critiques[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

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Anarchism has had a strained relationship with Marxism since Marx's life. [Anarchists](/wiki/Anarchism) and [libertarian socialists](/wiki/Libertarian_socialism) reject the need for a [transitory state phase](/wiki/Dictatorship_of_the_proletariat), claiming that socialism can only be established through decentralized, non-coercive organization. [Individualist anarchists](/wiki/Individualist_anarchism), who are often neither socialists nor capitalists, reject Marxism as a [statist](/wiki/Statism) ideology. Anarchist [Mikhail Bakunin](/wiki/Mikhail_Bakunin) criticized Marx for his authoritarian bent.<ref name=Bakunin1872>[Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)</ref> The phrases "barracks socialism" or "[barracks communism](/wiki/Barracks_communism)" became a shorthand for this critique, evoking the image of citizens' lives being as regimented as the lives of [conscripts](/wiki/Conscription) in a [barracks](/wiki/Barracks).[[35]](#cite_note-35)

### Economic critiques[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

Other critiques come from an economic standpoint. V. K. Dmitriev, writing in 1898,[[36]](#cite_note-36) [Ladislaus von Bortkiewicz](/wiki/Ladislaus_Bortkiewicz), writing in 1906–07,[[37]](#cite_note-37) and subsequent critics have alleged that Marx's [value theory](/wiki/Value_theory) and law of the [tendency of the rate of profit to fall](/wiki/Tendency_of_the_rate_of_profit_to_fall) are internally inconsistent. In other words, the critics allege that Marx drew conclusions that actually do not follow from his theoretical premises. Once these alleged errors are corrected, his conclusion that aggregate price and profit are determined by, and equal to, aggregate value and surplus value no longer holds true. This result calls into question his theory that the exploitation of workers is the sole source of profit.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Both Marxism and socialism have received considerable critical analysis from multiple generations of [Austrian economists](/wiki/Austrian_economics) in terms of scientific methodology, economic theory, and political implications.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) During the [marginal revolution](/wiki/Marginal_utility#The_Marginal_Revolution), subjective value theory was rediscovered by [Carl Menger](/wiki/Carl_Menger), a development which undermined the British cost theories of value fundamentally. The restoration of subjectivism and [praxeological](/wiki/Praxeology) methodology previously used by classical economists including [Richard Cantillon](/wiki/Richard_Cantillon), [Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot](/wiki/Anne-Robert-Jacques_Turgot), [Jean-Baptiste Say](/wiki/Jean-Baptiste_Say), and [Frédéric Bastiat](/wiki/Frédéric_Bastiat) led Menger to criticise [historicist](/wiki/Historicist) methodology in general. Second-generation Austrian economist [Eugen Böhm von Bawerk](/wiki/Eugen_Böhm_von_Bawerk) used praxeological and subjectivist methodology to attack the law of value fundamentally. Non-Marxist economists have regarded his criticism as definitive, with [Gottfried Haberler](/wiki/Gottfried_Haberler) arguing that Böhm-Bawerk's critique of Marx's economics was so thorough and devastating that as of the 1960s no Marxian scholar had conclusively refuted it.[[41]](#cite_note-41) Third-generation Austrian [Ludwig von Mises](/wiki/Ludwig_von_Mises) sparked the [economic calculation debate](/wiki/Economic_calculation_problem) by identifying that without price signals in capital goods, all other aspects of the market economy are irrational. This led him to declare "... that rational economic activity is impossible in a socialist [commonwealth](/wiki/Commonwealth)."[[42]](#cite_note-42)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

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* [Analytical Marxism](/wiki/Analytical_Marxism)
* [Austromarxism](/wiki/Austromarxism)
* [Criticisms of Marxism](/wiki/Criticisms_of_Marxism)
* [Democracy in Marxism](/wiki/Democracy_in_Marxism)
* [Freudo-Marxism](/wiki/Freudo-Marxism)
* [Instrumental Marxism](/wiki/Instrumental_Marxism)
* [Karl Marx House](/wiki/Karl_Marx_House)
* [Karl Marx in film](/wiki/Karl_Marx_in_film)
* [*Karl Marx's Theory of History*](/wiki/Karl_Marx's_Theory_of_History:_A_Defence)
* [Legal Marxism](/wiki/Legal_Marxism)
* [Libertarian Marxism](/wiki/Libertarian_Marxism)
* [*Living Marxism*](/wiki/Living_Marxism)
* [Marxian Class Theory](/wiki/Marxian_Class_Theory)
* [Marxism and religion](/wiki/Marxism_and_religion)
* [*Marxism and Freedom*](/wiki/Marxism_and_Freedom:_From_1776_Until_Today)

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* [*Marxism and the U.S.A.*](/wiki/Marxism_and_the_U.S.A.)
* [*Marxism Today*](/wiki/Marxism_Today)
* [Marxist film theory](/wiki/Marxist_film_theory)
* [Marxist hip hop](/wiki/Political_hip_hop#Marxism)
* [Marxist international relations theory](/wiki/Marxist_international_relations_theory)
* [Marxist Workers' League (US)](/wiki/Marxist_Workers'_League_(US))
* [*Marxists Internet Archive*](/wiki/Marxists_Internet_Archive)
* [Marx Memorial Library](/wiki/Marx_Memorial_Library)

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* [Marx's notebooks on technology](/wiki/Marx's_notebooks_on_the_history_of_technology)
* [Marx's theory of human nature](/wiki/Marx's_theory_of_human_nature)
* [Neo-Marxism](/wiki/Neo-Marxism)
* [Open Marxism](/wiki/Open_Marxism)
* [Post-Marxism](/wiki/Post-Marxism)
* [Pre-Marx socialists](/wiki/Pre-Marx_socialists)
* [Reification (Marxism)](/wiki/Reification_(Marxism))
* [*Rethinking Marxism*](/wiki/Rethinking_Marxism)
* [Revolutionary Marxist League](/wiki/Revolutionary_Marxist_League)
* [*Specters of Marx*](/wiki/Specters_of_Marx)
* [*The Marxism of Che Guevara*](/wiki/The_Marxism_of_Che_Guevara)

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

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### Bibliography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

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* [Stefan Gandler](/wiki/Stefan_Gandler), [*Critical Marxism in Mexico: Adolfo Sánchez Vázquez and Bolívar Echeverría*](http://www.brill.com/products/book/critical-marxism-mexico), Leiden/Boston, Brill Academic Press, 2015. 467 pages. ISBN 978-90-04-22428-5.
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* [Rummel, R.J.](/wiki/R._J._Rummel) (1977) [*Conflict In Perspective*](http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/NOTE12.HTM) Chap. 5 [*Marxism, Class Conflict, and the Conflict Helix*](http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/CIP.CHAP5.HTM)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

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### General resources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

* [Marxists Internet Archive](http://www.marxists.org/) ([MIA](/wiki/Marxists_Internet_Archive))
* [Marxmail.org](http://www.marxmail.org/)
* [Marx Myths & Legends](http://marxmyths.org/)
* [Marxism Page](http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/)
* [London Philosophy Study Guide on Marxism](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/philosophy/LPSG/Marx.htm) (offers many suggestions on what to read, depending on the student's familiarity with the subject)

### Introductory articles[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

* [History of Economic Thought: Marxian School](https://web.archive.org/20110222030120/http://homepage.newschool.edu:80/~het/schools/marxian.htm)
* [History of Economic Thought: Neo Marxian](https://web.archive.org/20090629215838/http://homepage.newschool.edu:80/~het/schools/neomarx.htm)

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[Template:Authority control](/wiki/Template:Authority_control)

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