

# Marxism



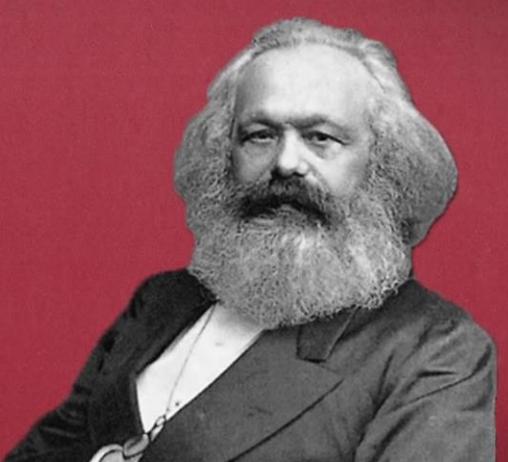
Prepared by Pallab Das, Assistant Professor,  
Department of English, Mankar College  
(for Sem VI)

# FOUNDERS

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883)

Frederick Engels (1820-1895)

KARL  
MARX



# KARL MARX, WHO?



- Karl Marx (1818 - 1883) was initially inspired by Hegel's philosophical framework of *absolute idealism*, which briefly infers that our sense of self and our comprehension of the world are both shaped up by the interaction of opposites, though we do not position ourselves in opposition but rather as part of an all-inclusive whole.
- Marx gradually rejected theology and turned to materialism as a mind-set and worldview.
- Marxism therefore engages in social analysis in terms of economic standards, focusing on class relations and socio-economic disparities.



# Debts

- Marxism is largely indebted to Hegel for Dialectic.
- The materialism of Feuerbach – God as an illusion.
- Utopian Socialists who talked about a large egalitarian society.
- Many branches of modern criticism including , historicism, feminism, deconstruction, postcolonial and cultural criticism – are indebted to insights of Marxism.

# Fundamental Principles of Marxist Thought

# A. Critique of Capitalist Society

- One particular class owned the means of economic production.
- Oppression and exploitation of the working class.
- Imperialistic nature of bourgeois enterprise.

# Marx on Bourgeoisie:

The bourgeoisie (enterprise of capitalism and its supporters) "creates a world after its own image." Finally capitalism reduces all human relationships to a 'cash' nexus, self interested and egotistical calculation.

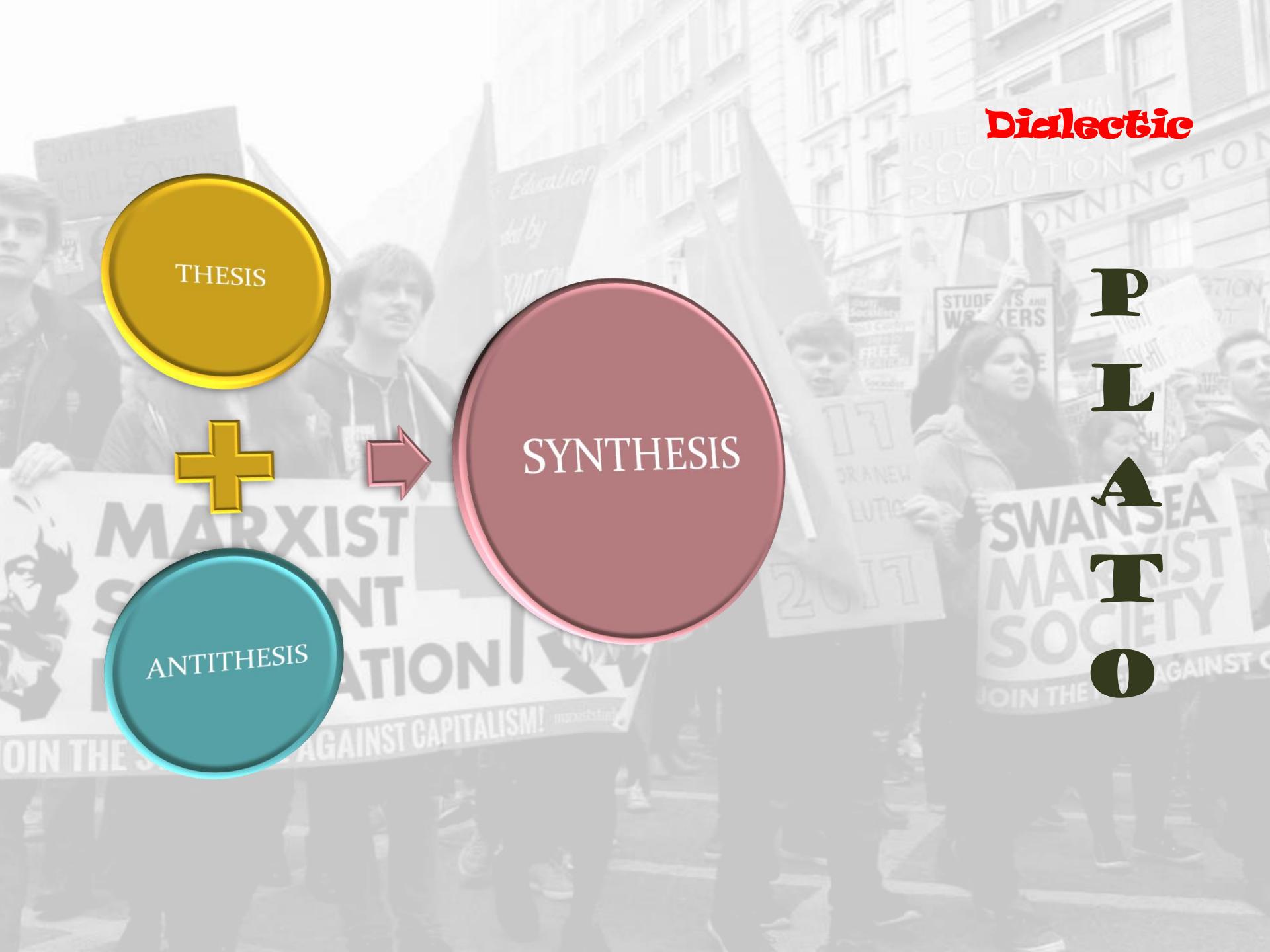
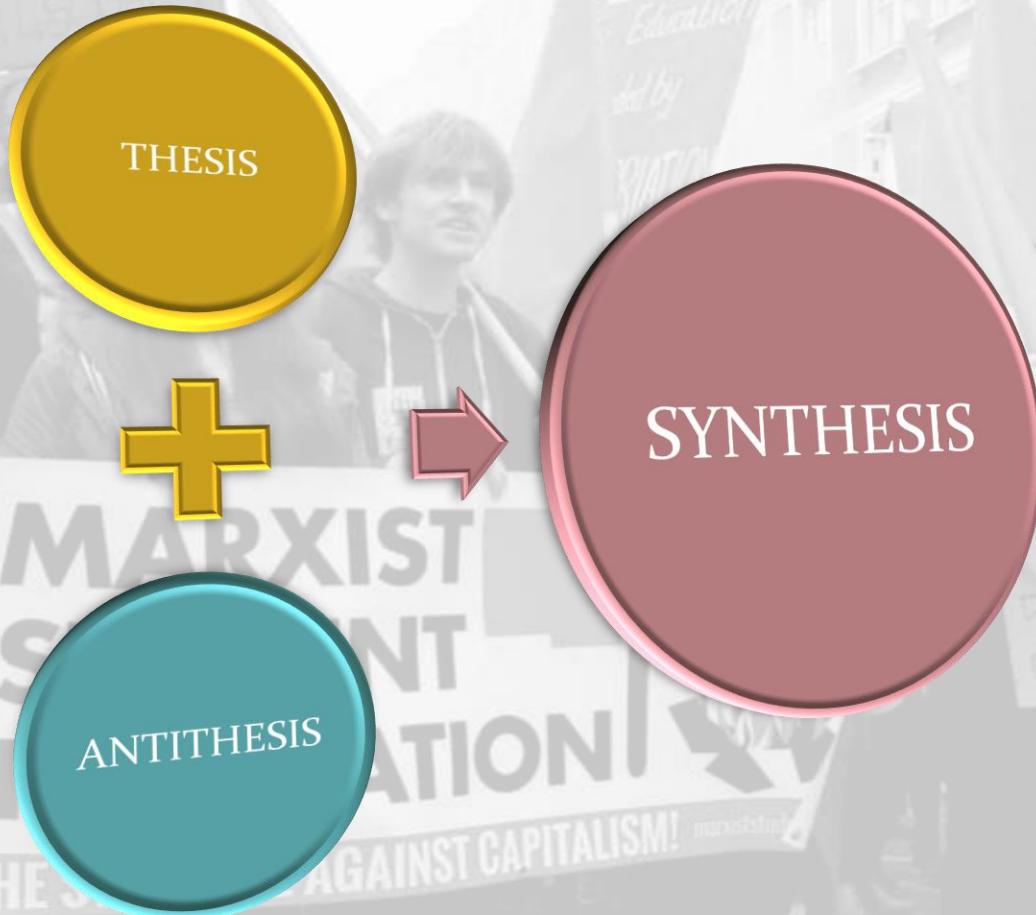


## B. Adaptation of Hegelian Dialectic

- ❖ Marx took help from Hegelian concept of Dialectic.
- ❖ The concept of dialectic was first found in none other than Plato.

Dialectic

P  
L  
A  
T  
O



**HEGEL**

DIALECTIC

LOGICAL  
DIAMENTION

HISTORICAL  
DIAMENTION

**DIALECTIC**

**H  
E  
G  
E  
L**

# HEGEL'S LOGICAL DIAMENTION

STAGE 1

- An object taken as simple dictum – a simply given fact.

STAGE 2

- “Externalized” – having no independent identity but constituted by its relation with other objects.

STAGE 3

- “Meditated Unity” – perceived as a principal of unity between universal and particular, between essence and appearance.

# Hegel's Historical Method

*The underlying principles of one society eventually give way to new society based on different principles, but which incorporates whatever was valuable in the previous principles.*

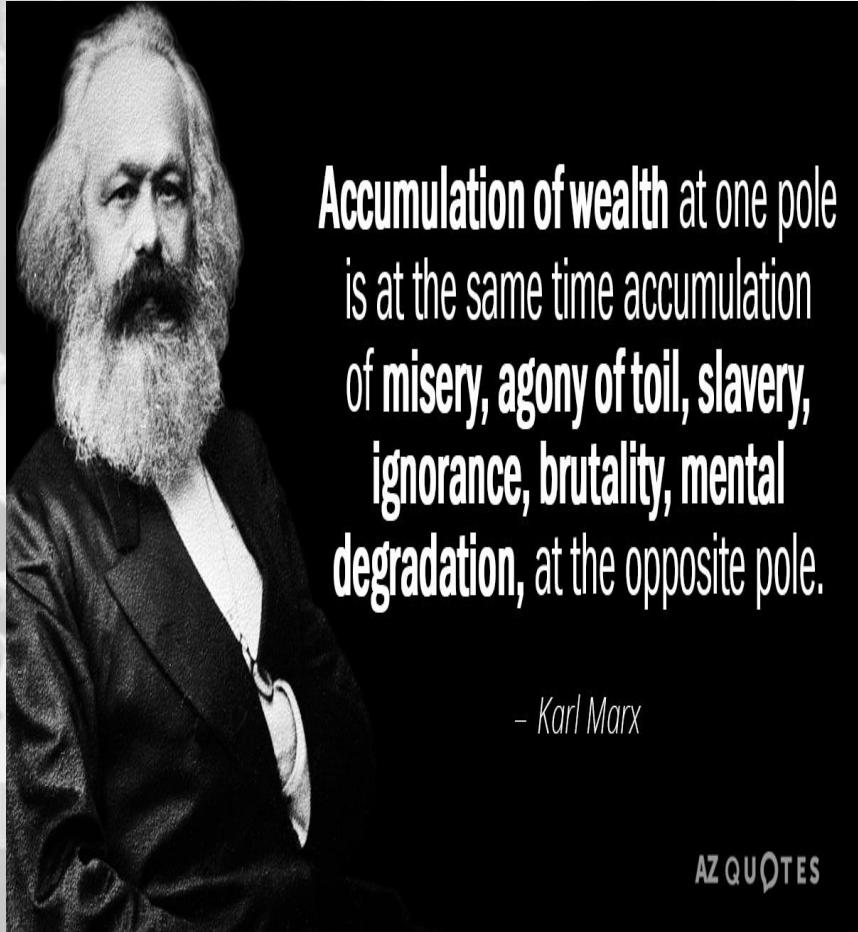
*Society's laws become more and more rationale while the individual's corrective rational growth enables him to see in the law his own free will. History – a movement towards freedom.*

*Whatever we examine, Hegel advises, we place in a historical context – as a product of certain historical relations and tendencies.*

# MARX AND DIALECTIC

- ❖ Marx says ‘freedom’ is only enjoyed by the bourgeoisie, as they break free from the earlier superstitious and irrational edifice of feudalism and absolutism.
- ❖ They establish a more rational free market economy and a society on rational principal (Capitalism).
- ❖ However, in it too, like earlier social structures, the humble section of the population is neglected and oppressed.

# Advocates Mr. Marx...



- ❖ Marx advocates Hegel's importance of labour through which man creates himself. But rejects his standpoint on religion.
- ❖ Advocates theoretical humanism- suppression of God (Atheism).
- ❖ Advocates practical humanism – suppression of private property (communism ).

## c. Material Concept of History

### Dialectic Materialism:

- Both Hegel and Marx considered the world, human beings and history as a product of human labour.
- Hegel insisted that the dialectical movement in history is driven by an absolute power of God.
- Marx insisted that this dialectical movement was motivated by MATERIAL forces and relations of economic production. In particular, he viewed history as driven by CLASS STRUGGLE.

# Different Class Struggles in History

Slaves and Freeman

Patricians  
and  
Plebeians

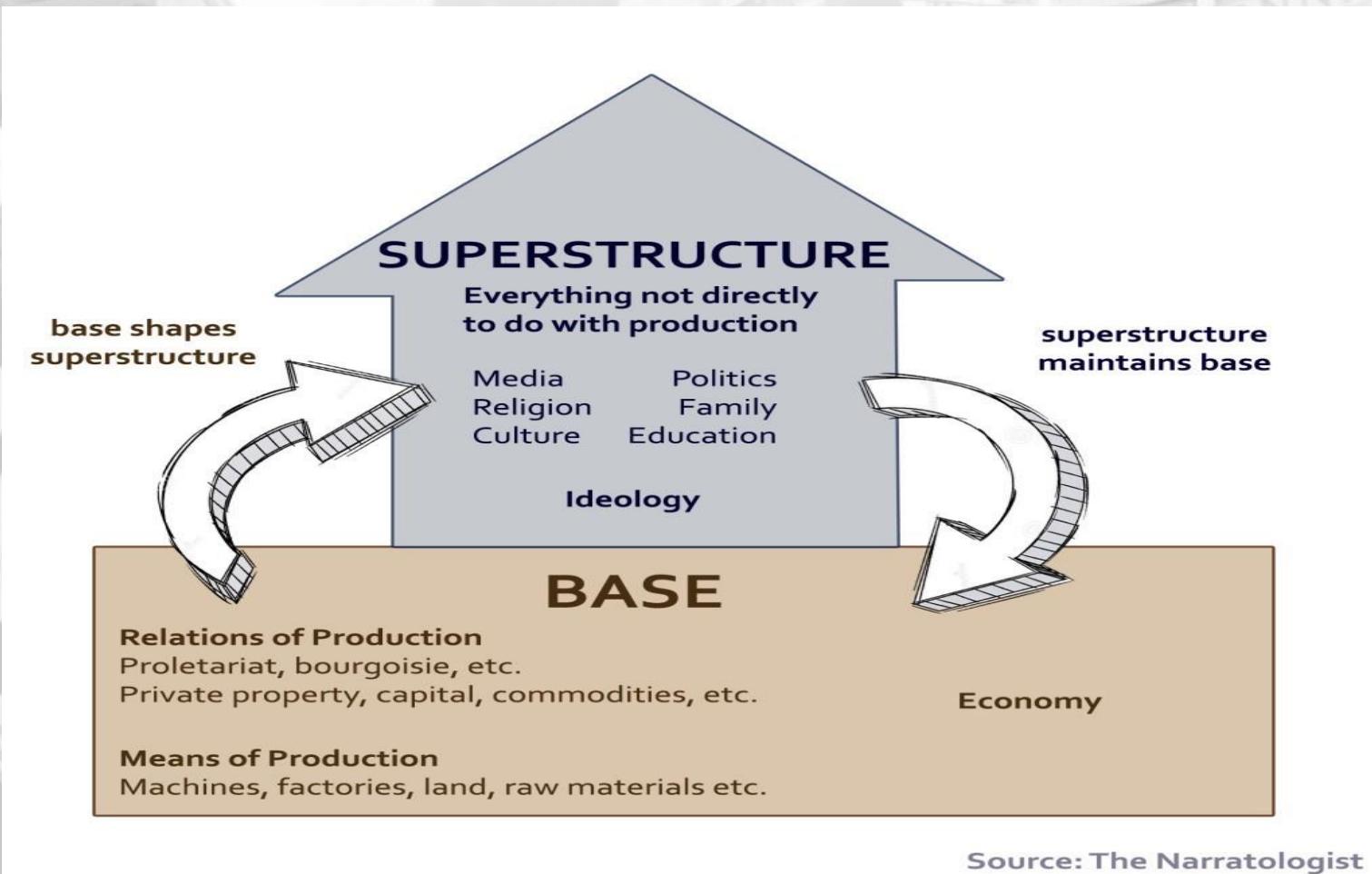
Lords and  
Surfs

Bourgeoisie  
and  
Proletariat

# Marx shows the course of History



# Base and Superstructure



*Man's first historical act is the production of means to satisfy his material needs. The production of life through both labour and procreation, is both natural and social.*



# And.....

## The Superstructure

Marx saw that certain structures act to support this financial power-base. The 2 main ways this can happen is via repression or ideologically.

<b>Repressive Structures:</b> Those that threaten to act with force if rules are not upheld.	<b>Ideological Structures:</b> Those that act to construct the values and ideologies which govern the way people behave.
THE ARMY 	SCHOOLS 
THE POLICE 	RELIGION 
THE LEGAL SYSTEM 	FAMILIES 



## D. The Division of Labour

- ❖ Marx analyses state, class and ideology in terms of the history of division of labour.
- ❖ He argues that division of labour is an index of the extent to which production has been developed.
- ❖ This also leads to separation of industrial and commercial labour from agricultural labour, hence, suggesting a conflict of interest between town and country,
- ❖ This also effects in separation of individual and community interests.

## Consequences of Social Division of Labour

- A. The unequal distribution of labour and its products – hence, private property.
- B. The division of labour implying a contradiction between individual or family and community interest, the later assumes an independent form as the state.
- C. Alienation of labour or social activity: man's own deeds become an alien power opposed to him. And the social power appears to him as an alien force existing outside them (demand supply being man's own deed is regulated by external force – trade).

# Marx on State:

- “Illusory communal life”.
- Based specially on classes one dominating over other.
- All struggles within the state are disguised versions of class struggle.

# E. Marx's Notion of Ideology

- ❖ The ruling class represents its own interests and the interests of the people as a whole. The modern state, as Marx says, “is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie”.
- ❖ Marx observes that the class which is struggling, must gain political power in order to represent its interest as general interest.

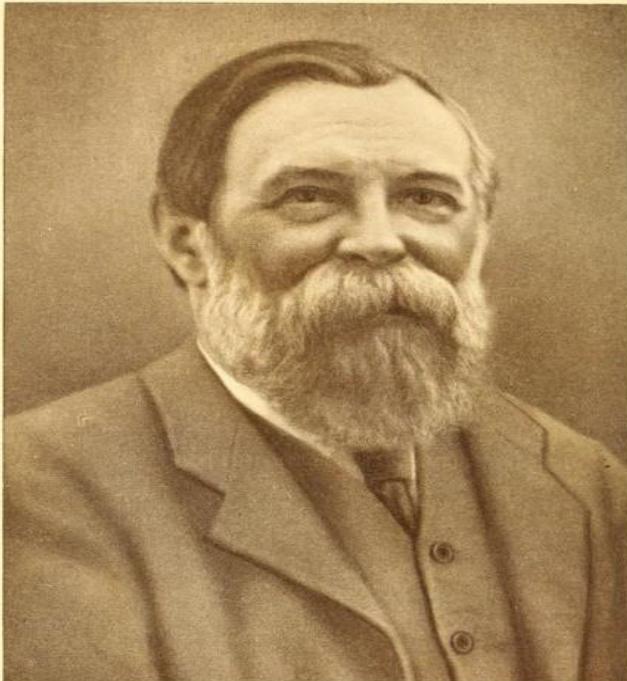
## F. Marx's Economic Views

1. Developing the distinction between use value and exchange value, Marx arrived at the notion of surplus value, whereby, labour power as embodied in products is incompletely compensated.
2. Marx saw this form of economic exploitation as underlying the ultimate downfall of capitalism.
3. Capitalism will ultimately give way to **Communism** leading to common ownership of land and means of production.

# Feminism: Marxist point of view



Marxist explanation and cravings for women's rights were first mentioned in the work of Frederick Engels in the book shown below.



FRIEDRICH ENGELS (1893)

FRIEDRICH ENGELS

THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY,  
PRIVATE PROPERTY  
AND THE STATE

*In the Light of the Researches of*  
LEWIS H. MORGAN

WITH AN APPENDIX

A Newly Discovered Case of Group Marriage (1892)  
By F. ENGELS

# *Explains Mr. Engels...*

- *Three main forms of marriage -> period of savagery – group marriage; period of barbarism – pairing marriage; civilisation – monogamy supplemented by adultery and prostitution.*
- *As importance of wealth increased (private property over common property) the man acquired a more important role in the family, and the “mother right” was eventually overthrown – “Historical defeat of female sex.”*
- *Father right and monogamy gaining priority , marriage becomes an economic relationship.*
- *Husband is the bourgeois and the wife represents the proletariat.*

## *Prescribes Mr. Engels...*

- The first premise for the emancipation of women is the reintroduction of the entire female sex into republic industry.
- When the means of production become common property, the individual family will cease to be economic unit of the society. Thus economic foundation of monogamy will vanish.

## Next Class: Marxism – relevance and scope; as Literary Theory

thanks