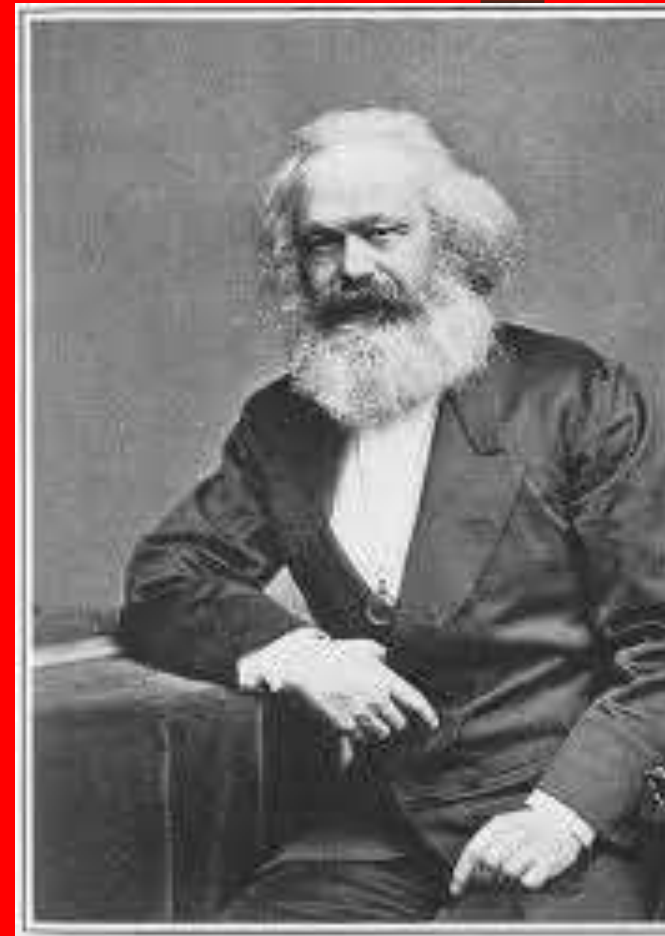


PHILOSOPHY FOR BEGINNERS

MORAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

**Week 11. Marx,
Communism and Anarchism
27th March 2019**





THE WORLD'S
62 **RICHEST PEOPLE OWN**
THE SAME WEALTH
AS THE 3.6 BILLION
POOREST PEOPLE

Worth a second glance

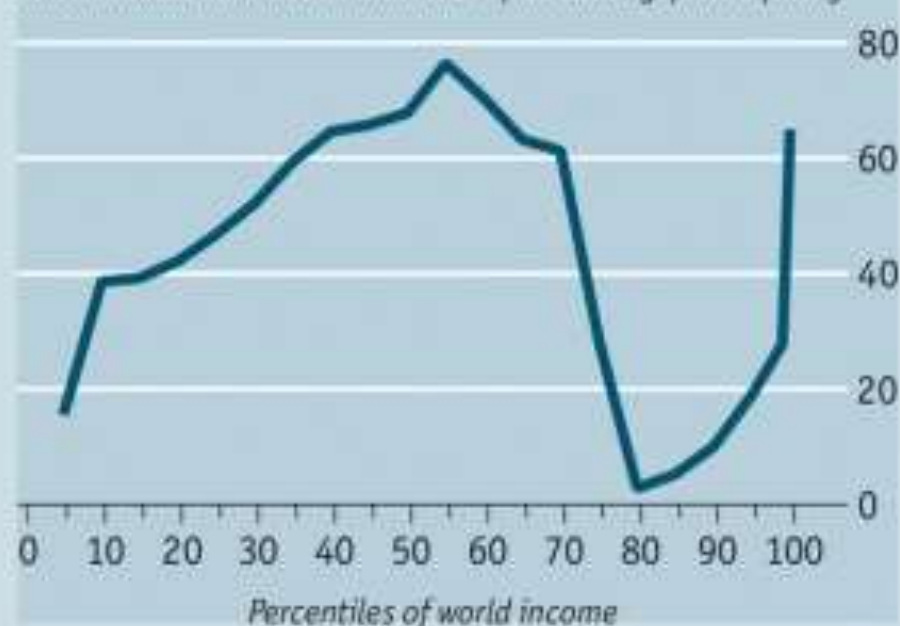
Global net household wealth

% share held by:



Real income per person

% change between 1988–2008 for people at different levels of world income distribution at 2005 purchasing-power parity



Sources: Credit Suisse; Oxfam; "Global Income Inequality in Numbers", by Branko Milanovic, *Global Policy*, May 2013

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Office for National Statistics

Britain's richest 1% own as much as poorest 55% of population

ONS figures reveal growing wealth disparity and north-south divide, with nation's top 10% owning 44% of household wealth

Phillip Inman, *economics correspondent*

Thu 15 May 2014 19.22 BST



🕒 This article is over 3 years old

🔗 4,982 | 💬 1,312



NUMBER OF 3 DAY EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES GIVEN TO PEOPLE IN CRISIS BY TRUSSELL TRUST FOODBANKS



April 2016 - April 2017

1,182,954



Where Britain's foodbanks are most in demand

Number of emergency food supplies given by Trussell Trust foodbanks in 2015-2016



@StatistaCharts Source: Trussell Trust



INDEPENDENT

statista

**SCANDAL OF
1/4 MILLION
SURVIVING
ON FOOD
HANDOUTS**

Even people in work are on breadline





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Non est potestas Super Terram quae Comparetur ei Iob. 41. 24.





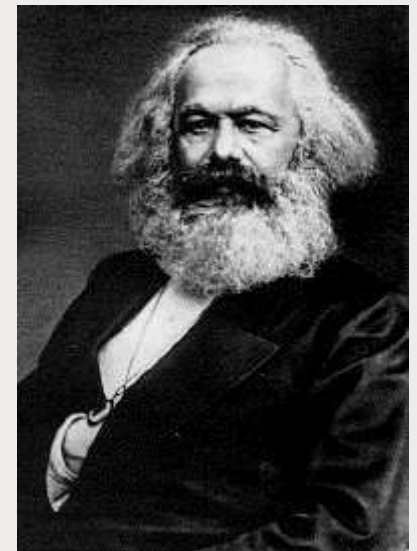
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PRIVATE EYE

OSBORNE COMEBACK AS NEWSPAPER EDITOR



‘The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.’



Who is Karl Marx? (1818-63)

- Liberal, Jewish, German background
- Student at University of Berlin, part of Young Hegelians Hegelians
- But became dissatisfied with purely theoretical questions, becoming politically aware as a journalist on the *Rheinische Zeitung* from 1842...
- Considered the father of modern Socialism and Communism
- Marxism has become a Western intellectual tradition, comprising of a political theory; a philosophy of history; and an economic analysis of capitalism

What is Marxism?

- Jewish descent, Liberal Jewish family
- Student at University of Berlin, part of Young Hegelians or left-wing Hegelians.
- But became dissatisfied with purely theoretical questions, becoming politically aware as a journalist on the *Rheinische Zeitung* from 1842...
- Considered the father of modern Socialism and Communism
- Marxism has become a Western intellectual tradition, comprising of a political theory; a philosophy of history; and an economic analysis of capitalism





Marx vs Hegel

“The outstanding achievement of Hegel’s Phenomenology and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus first that Hegel conceives the self creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of labour and comprehends objective man – true, because real man – as the outcome of man’s own labour.”

Marx vs Hegel

- Marx is sympathetic to Hegel's view of history as the "objectification of spirit" (i.e. the view that history is process of self-development)
- Also that the development of this process is dialectical, proceeding by way of contradictions and conflict, which are then surpassed
- But.... He felt that Hegel's approach was abstract and one-sided, seeing the development of human spirit as only really occurring at the level of consciousness and ideas
- Marx does *not* deny the reality of these phenomenon but feels that they are not the real motor of history

Marx – key topics

- The economical is political
- Capitalism is the latest in a historical development of economic forms
- With its fixation on surplus value and profit-making, it has exploitation and inequality embedded in it
- It is also subject to regular crisis
- External changes (work, social status) result in profound internal changes (alienation, false consciousness, commodity fetishism))

The Communist Manifesto (1848)

- 'A spectre is haunting Europe'
- Let's turn to the text now. In groups, we'll discuss Marx's famous view of history
- Read and discuss the excerpt in small groups...
- What do you think Marx means?
- What might be the implications?

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CAPITALISM

WE RULE YOU

WE FOOL YOU

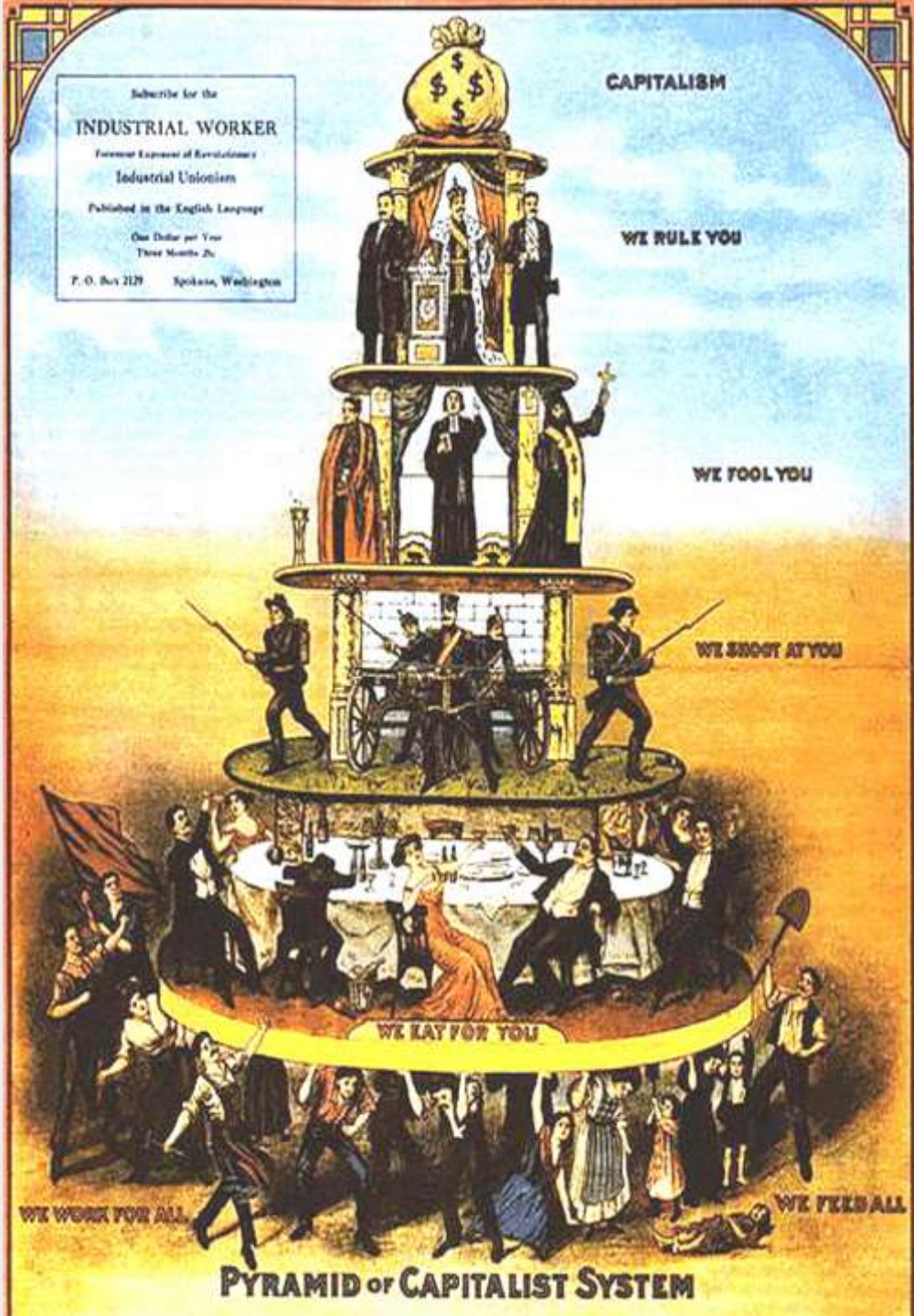
WE SHOOT AT YOU

WE LAY FOR YOU

WE WORK FOR ALL

WE FEED ALL

PYRAMID OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM



Materialist theory of history

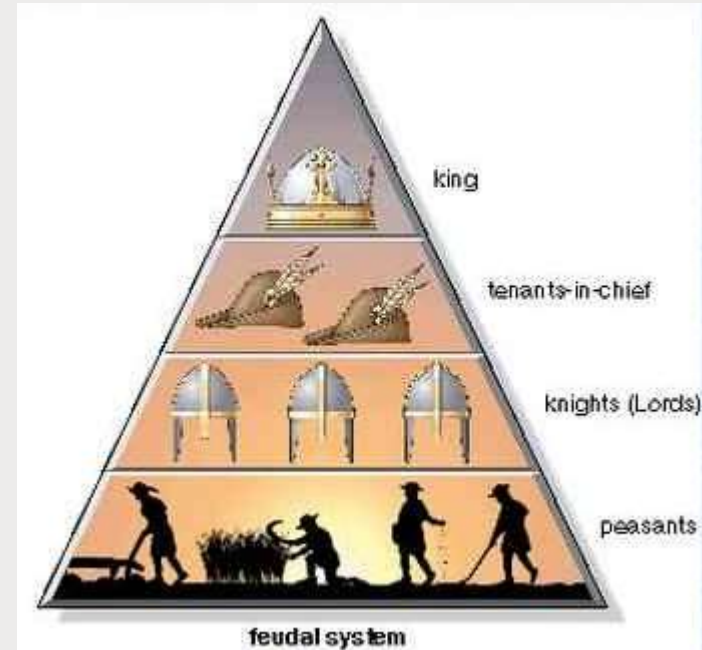
“The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human individuals. Thus the first fact to be established is the physical organisation of these individuals and their consequent relation to the rest of nature....Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life” - *The German Ideology*

Materialist theory of history

- So what is more important than what people think or believe?
- ... What they do and make – how they live.
Everyone everywhere has to produce their means of subsistence
- Production is primary: you need food, shelter and security before you can begin philosophising
- For Marx the analysis of history should start from a materialist viewpoint then...
- Found in the way that human beings produce and re-produce their own conditions of existence

Base and superstructure

- Social Superstructure:
Catholic Church, divine right of kings, patriarchal family
- Economic base:
 - *Forces of production: agricultural production*
 - *Relations of production: landlords and peasants*



History as revolution

- For Marx, capitalism came about as a result of a revolution against the previous feudal society – and one of which he very much approves
- The development of industrialisation and the form of *capital* required to produce this came into conflict with the existing social relations of production – the master/serf relationship based on the physical ownership of land
- Serfs and lords are replaced with wage labourers (the *proletariat*) and their bosses (*bourgeoisie*)
- The capitalist or bourgeoisie is a revolutionary class

Changes in work

- As societies have historically changed, so has our forms of work
- Let's turn to what Marx makes of this development.

Group 1, read and discuss 'The Proletariat'

Group 2, read and discuss 'Alienation'

What is Marx's argument?

How convinced are you?





What is capitalism?

- A social order characterised by two conditions:
 1. Commodities are produced for sale in order to make a profit
 - *Not for immediate use or need*
 2. Production is based on wage labour – people who must sell their capacity to work in order to survive
 - *The workers do not own the machines they use (means of production), nor the wealth they produce, nor the profits of what they make...*

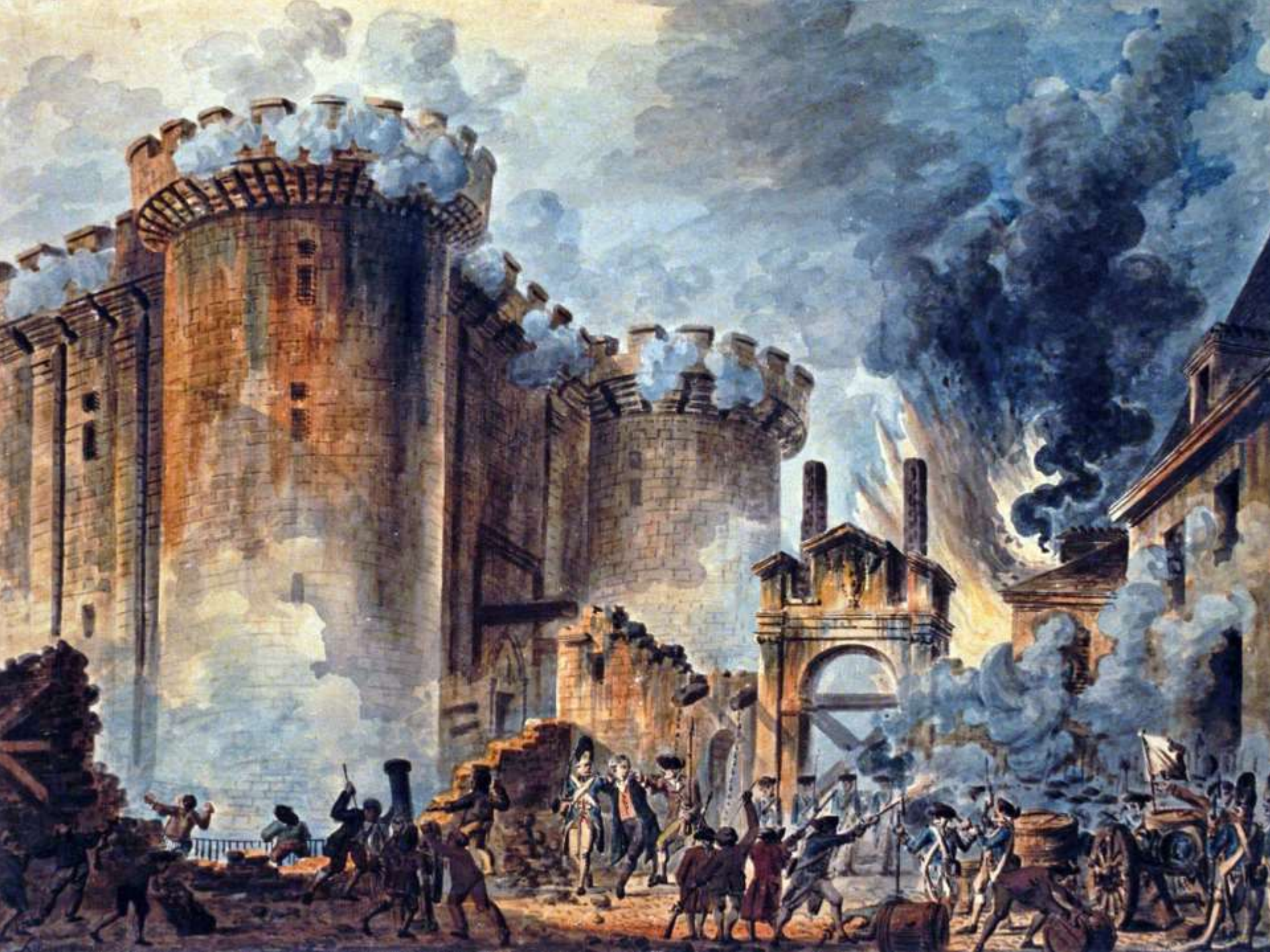
Class conflict emerges

- “The history of all human societies heretofore is the history of class struggle” (Communist Manifesto)
- Capitalism inevitably leads to a conflict of interests, requiring large numbers of workers while placing control in a small number of owners
- Workers are exploited, producing all the wealth but receiving only a fraction of it
- *Surplus value* is the value of what workers produce above what they receive in wages

“The development of Modern Industry, therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.”

- *The Communist Manifesto*





Capitalism's inevitable collapse

- Capitalists compete for faster growth and larger market share by increasing output and cutting labour costs
- Machinery is introduced, creating an unemployed 'reserve army of labour', alienated
- This leads to a *Crisis of Over-production*, as people no longer have the money to buy goods
- And a *Falling rate of Profit*, as machinery grows in expense
- Capitalism is inevitably doomed to collapse...

How does capitalism stay in power?

- Turn to the 4th excerpt now and discuss:

What is the purpose of religion in society?





‘The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them, high and
lowly,
And order’d their estate’

- “All Things Bright and
Beautiful”

False consciousness

- ‘Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering... It is the opium of the people.’
- Religion is an effective medicine for the alienation workers feel from the misery of their own lives
- Ruling ideas are imposed on the workers, who mistakenly believe that the particular interests of the few are actually for the good of all
- The real cure is to establish a society where the means of production is owned in common, and where people have rational control over their own lives

What is to be done?

- Given all this exploitation, poverty, alienation, and inevitable economic crises, what is the answer?
- Take a look at Marx's definition of communism, the alternative society he wanted

Discuss: what are its features?

How convinced are you by it?

Communism

- Establish a classless, egalitarian society
- Property and the means of production are *socialised*, belonging to society as a whole
- End of the division of labour and social classes
- A society where ‘everyone could give himself a complete education in whatever domain he fancied’, with each person having ‘the possibility to do this today and that tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, to go fishing in the afternoon, to do cattle breeding in the evening, to criticise after dinner’, as he chose’ (*German Ideology*)

ДА
ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ
СССР
ОТЕЧЕСТВО ТРУДЯЩИХСЯ
ВСЕГО МИРА

LONG LIVE THE
SOVIET UNION,
THE FATHERLAND
OF THE WORKING
PEOPLE

ET VIVE LA
U.S.S.R.
PAYS D'ORIGINE DES
TRAVAILLEURS DU
MONDE ENTIER





毛主席革命路线胜利万岁



ДА ЗДРАВСТВУЕТ ВОЖДЬ СОВЕТСКОГО НАРОДА
ВЕЛИКИЙ **СТАЛИН!**

“among the great authoritarian founders of new faiths, ruthless subverters and innovators who interpret the world in terms of a single, clear, passionately held principle, denouncing and destroying all that conflicts with it.

His faith . . . was of that boundless, absolute kind which puts an end to all questions and dissolves all difficulties.”

– Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx: His Life and Environment*



Anarchism

- Anarchism shares a lot with Communism – e.g. common ownership of property,
- But it goes further: any kind of state is politically harmful and undesirable
- Power should instead be shared by non-hierarchical, voluntary associations
- Freedom of the individual is paramount



Anarchism

- Take a look at the final excerpt, from an introduction by Liz Highleyman
- In the same two groups as before, we'll read each part separately
- As we round up, please discuss:
- What are the basic features of Anarchism?
- What makes it different from Communism?

Anarchism

- Take a look at the final excerpt, from an introduction by Liz Highleyman
- In the same two groups as before, we'll read each part separately

As we round up, please discuss:

What are the basic features of Anarchism?

What makes it different from Communism?

Anarchism vs Communism

- Anarchism focuses on individual self-determination and refuses all forms of authority
- Whereas Communism sees a positive role for the state
- Some Communists believe that there must be an intermediary stage after revolution to consolidate power, the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'
- Anarchists (and others) would accuse them of supporting totalitarian rule
- Whereas they'd accuse Anarchists of being impractical



“As for politics, I’m an anarchist. I hate governments and rules and fetters. Can’t stand caged animals. People must be free.” – Charlie Chaplin

Class recap

- Introduce Karl Marx and Marxism
- Identify the Materialist theory of history
- Determine why Marx claims that class conflict and the collapse of capitalism is inevitable
- Evaluate Communism in relation to Anarchism

Next week: course round-up!

Research a political issue close to you and think of how one of our theorists can be applied to it.