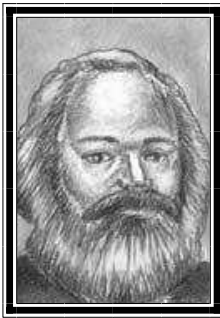


### 3.6. KARL MARX (1818 – 1883)



Karl Marx is **simultaneously** one of history's most **revered** – and most **reviled** personalities. The powerful **implications** of his ideas spark feelings of either respect or disgust. But whether one agrees or disagrees with the doctrines set forth by this nineteenth – century revolutionary, his place in history is fixed. Although Marx died more than a century ago, millions of people still **cling to**, and fight for, his ideals. Few people have had such an impact on human society.

Karl Marx was born on May 5, 1818, in Trier, Prussia. Born a Jew, Karl's father **converted** to Christianity in order to practice law, a profession then forbidden to Jews. Accordingly, Karl was **baptized** into the Lutheran church in 1824 at the age of 6. At 12 he enrolled in a Lutheran school where he studied until he was 17. He became **proficient** in French and Latin and enjoyed the classics, especially the works of Shakespeare.

In 1835 Marx entered Bonn University, where he decided to pursue a degree in philosophy. Marx's career at the university was a disaster. He enrolled in nine courses his first semester and, with no time to do justice to any of them, performed miserably in all. Marx's troubles didn't end with his schoolwork. His lack of discipline about money became **startlingly** clear while he was at the university. Eventually Marx's parents convinced him to transfer to Berlin University. Here he became more serious about his work and finished his doctoral dissertation in philosophy in 1841. Later that year he returned to Trier to marry the beautiful Jenny Von Westphalen, whom he had known since high school. The two would remain passionately in love for a lifetime.

In 1842 Marx became an editor of **Rheinische Zeitung**, a liberal newspaper based in Cologne, Germany, where the couple moved later that year. After a short stay in Cologne, they moved to Paris. In Paris Marx met 24-year-old Friedrich Engels. The two young men had similar backgrounds and became friends at once. Sharing an interest in economics, they studied the subject together and began developing ideas about the way an economic system should work. Engels had previously studied communism, and he introduced his friend to communist ideas. In 1845 the government of France **expelled** Marx, whose activities with working-class leaders had aroused **suspicion**. He moved to Brussels, where he founded the German Workers' party and became an active member of the Communist League. The League **commissioned** Marx and Engels to write a tract that would serve as a statement of purpose for the group.

Their **assignment** was not only to **clarify** the League's principles, but also to **incite** the masses to revolt against their governments. The **Communist Manifesto** was published in 1848. Perhaps the most important political **treatise** ever written, the **Communist Manifesto** emphasized the issue of class conflict and struggle. Capitalist societies were divided into two classes: the working class, or proletariat, and the capitalists, or bourgeoisie. Marx and Engels believed that the capitalists exploited workers by paying them less than they were worth. The difference between workers' productivity and the amount they were actually paid was profit in the capitalists' pockets. The **Communist Manifesto urged** workers to revolt against the bourgeoisie and **eliminate its dominance** in the society. Capitalism would be replaced by a communist system, which would be characterized by the absence of classes. The **Communist Manifesto** proclaimed that this was the **ultimate** goal of human historical development.

Marx's association with the Communist League did not **endear** him to government officials, who expelled him from Belgium the year the **Communist Manifesto** was published. He lived briefly in Cologne before being exiled again by the French. In 1849 Marx moved to London, where he lived the remaining 34 years of his life. In London the Marx family lived in **abject poverty**. Marx worked as a foreign correspondent for the **New York Daily Tribune** and in 10 years contributed 350 articles. The job offered a paltry salary, which he attempted to supplement by submitting articles to other English-language newspapers, but he earned very little. In a particularly desperate three-year period, three of Marx's children died. The family would have been in far worse **straits** were it not for the financial support of Engels. Ironically, Engels became a member of the wealthy bourgeoisie when he took over father's business.

Despite his poverty and poor health, Marx dedicated countless hours to research and writing. In 1859 he published **Critique of Political Economy**. That was followed in 1867 by Volume I of **Das Kapital**, a treatise scholars still study today. He worked on Volumes II and III through 1879, but they were not published until after his death. **Theories of Surplus Value**, which Marx completed in 1863, was also published posthumously.

Marx was ill with variety of **ailments** during the last year of his life. **A man of charm and wit**, a loving father and husband to the last, Marx died in his home on March 14, at the age of 64.