

TOPIC: COMMUNISM, also known as MARXISM.  
AIM: How did Karl Marx's theory of Communism provide an answer to the problems of the Industrial Revolution?

## Scientific Socialism

As the Industrial Revolution spread, industrial workers grew in numbers and political strength, and some socialists began to argue that the ideas of the utopians were foolish and did nothing to meet the needs of society as a whole. Among those who felt this way were two Germans, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They developed a theory that they called "scientific socialism." Marx and Engels based scientific socialism on the idea that history was determined by the struggle between the classes of society.

Karl Marx was the son of a prosperous German lawyer. He studied law, history, and philosophy at various German universities. When he could not get a teaching position because of his radical views, he went to work as a newspaper editor. His writings were too controversial for the Prussian government, so it banned them, and he was forced to leave Germany.

Eventually he went to Paris, where in 1844 he met Friedrich Engels, the son of a German manufacturer. Engels was just passing through on his way to Manchester, England, to begin a job in a textile factory in which his father had an interest.

When Engels got to Manchester, he was so horrified by the conditions he found there that in 1845 he wrote a book about them, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. The book attracted wide attention and impressed many, including Karl Marx.

Marx and Engels soon became lifelong friends and cooperated on several works. In the late 1840s they both settled in London. Marx worked off and on as a newspaper correspondent. He hardly earned enough to support his family, and they lived in poverty, often on the brink of starvation. Fortunately for Marx, Engels was a success in business. He shared his wealth with Marx, providing him enough financial aid to allow him to devote his life to research and writing.



Karl Marx, seen here in his passport photo, spent years researching and writing in the library of the British Museum. What three-volume work resulted from his studies in London?

## The Father of Communism

Few 19th-century theories have had as much influence in the world as those written by Karl Marx (1818-1883). Marx, a German writer and economist, was the founder of modern communism.

Karl Marx was born into a middle-class family. As a university student, his attacks on government policies prevented him from becoming a teacher. Instead, he became a newspaper editor and writer. In 1843, he moved to Paris where he met Friedrich Engels, another German writer. Together, they helped form the Communist League. Engels also worked with Marx on several articles and books about politics.

In 1848, Marx moved back to Germany, where he published a journal for democratic reform. With the collapse of the revolution of 1848 in Germany, Marx fled to London. With financial help from Engels, Marx was able to spend most of his time there writing. Marx's most famous works are the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (Capital), the first volume published in 1867. In much of this work Marx was aided by his friend Engels.

The *Manifesto* outlines those social, economic, and political theories that became known as *Marxism*. Marx believed that society was shaped by a class struggle between the workers and the owners, or capitalists. The workers produced goods. The owners controlled the means of producing those goods, such as the labor of the workers, factories, and natural resources. Therefore, according to Marx, the owners exploited the workers for their own gain. Marx believed that the means of production should be publicly, not privately, owned. Economic equality would occur and lead to social equality. The class struggle would disappear.

Marx urged the workers of the world to overthrow the capitalist system in order to build a classless society in which all people would be equal.

By the end of the 19th century, the followers of Marx's theories had split into two camps—Communists and socialists. The socialists believed that democratic methods could be used to replace the capitalist system. The Communists believed that revolution, armed if necessary, was the only way to wipe out the capitalist system.

• Why is Karl Marx called the "father of communism"?



Karl Marx

## LONG ISLAND UTOPIA

A short, thick-set stranger strode down the Long Island Rail Road tracks in late 1850 and, with bright, restless, blue eyes, surveyed the acres of shrub oak where Brentwood stands today.

He was Josiah Warren, declared anarchist, advocate of free love and social philosopher. He was planning a new town called Modern Times.

He had just purchased 750 acres for about \$2.50 each. That day he mapped out streets and building lots for the poor, unemployed and anyone else who would help him build an isolated town on the sandy soil.

Warren, who was 52, was a gentle, idealistic man with a big idea. A few weeks later he advertised in the New York *Tribune* for pioneers to Modern Times. He planned that the town would have no government, courts, jails, policemen or even marriages—he believed they were evil because they suppressed the individual. He promised each settler a piece of land and “Equity,” meaning each person would be sovereign and free to dispose of his own person, property and time at his own cost.

“Society can have no peace until every member is really free,” Warren wrote.

Soon poor and unemployed families from the city came to Modern Times, and also laborers, scholars, clergymen, musicians, physicians and a blacksmith. They cleared land, built cabins and planted trees, flowers and large vegetable gardens.

Modern Times grew and flourished under Warren's principles of Equity, which he had tested for many years in Ohio, where he had worked with another social reformer, Richard Owen, in his community of New Harmony.

Warren's pioneers grew food for themselves and to trade. They didn't use conventional money, but wrote their own “labor notes,” which were based on an hour of their own labor. They used these notes at the town's only shop, the Time Store, where they paid the cost price of each item plus a charge for the time the shopkeeper spent with them.

In just a few years, Modern Times was a peaceful village with broad avenues, tree-lined streets and trim green and white cottages with strawberry patches and vegetable and flower gardens. Most women dressed like peasants in an opera—in bouffant skirts, white stockings and wide brimmed hats. The town had sports, concerts and plays, but no rum shops or crime—a peddler dropped a gold watch and found it ten days later on the town bulletin board.

News of the town's success spread among philosophical circles; a visiting scholar wondered if he would reach it by “railroad or rainbow.” But neighbors in Suffolk County were shocked because many Modern Times pioneers practiced free love.

Temporarily married partners wore red strings in place of wedding bands. When they removed the strings, they were divorced. Neighbors in Modern Times never inquired about the parentage of children, but the outsiders gossiped.

Wild ideas flourished in the town and often embarrassed Warren, but he never interfered because each person was free to seek his salvation in his own way. Some found it in spiritualism, hypnotism or the Water Cure. One woman ate only beans for a year and died. One man advocated nudity, and Warren wrote, “inflicted his views upon his hapless children.”

Despite its first years of success, Modern Times couldn't be supported by agriculture alone. In 1857, seven years after it was founded, the town was declining. It suffered in the economic panic of that year and also from increasing anti-free-love agitation. The town needed industry, but Warren shunned publicity and didn't provide the leadership to attract new investment.

In the next four or five years many citizens sought jobs outside the town or moved away. Warren himself, now in his early sixties, became ill and moved to Boston, where he had been born. He died there in 1874.

The beginning of the Civil War dealt the final blow. Shortly after, the community changed its name to Brentwood and organized a conventional government. Soon the only traces of Modern Times were the tall pines that had been planted by its pioneers.

In the past wide gaps in social services such as education and health care existed among the social classes in Europe. Richer Europeans could, of course, pay for any service they needed. The rest had to get by with what they could afford. National governments did little for them. Since World War II, however, this has been changing. Most Western European nations have capitalist economies. Many, however, mix capitalism with a form of socialism called democratic socialism. With democratic socialism, governments usually control only some sections of the economy rather than the entire economy. They place major emphasis on social programs.

Great Britain, for example, is one of the world's major capitalist nations. It also has some socialist features. By the early 20th century the nation had some social programs such as pensions and health insurance. But when the Labor party was voted into office in 1945, it increased the amount of these programs. A free national health service was set up. The social security system was expanded. The Bank of England and such industries as steel, coal and gas, the railroads, and the airlines were nationalized. In the last few decades the degree of socialism in Great Britain has depended on the party in office. Conservative governments have tended to reduce controls on business and to leave business to succeed or fail on its own. Labor party governments have tended to help business and expand social programs.

France, like Great Britain, nationalized many industries after World War II and increased social programs. In Scandinavia, democratic socialists have built far-reaching social welfare systems. People receive free education and health care, paid vacations, child care, disability payments, and unemployment and retirement benefits. But all these services are expensive to maintain. As a result, taxes are very high.

During the 1970s and early 1980s inflation and unemployment increasingly became problems in Europe. As a result, a number of countries voted socialists out of power. For example, in 1979 the Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher defeated the Labor party by campaigning for reduced social programs and encouragement of free enterprise. The Swedes, unhappy with the high taxes needed to pay for social programs, voted the socialists out of office after 44 years. The Social Democrats in West Germany, too, lost power in 1982 because of economic problems.

At the same time, however, a number of nations attempted to set up their own mix of capitalism and socialism. In the early 1980s France, Spain, and Greece elected socialist governments for the first time in many years. Like socialists elsewhere, they met with varying success once in office.