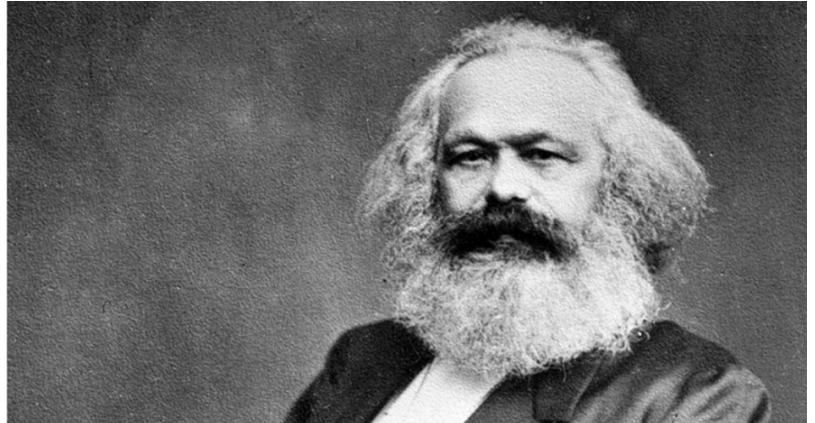




Please Don't Celebrate Karl Marx's 200th Birthday

Karl Marx was anti-religion, anti-private property, and anti-family. His philosophy led to misery for untold millions.



Karl Marx was born in Trier, in the German Confederation, on May 5, 1818, 200 years ago today. His was not a “working-class” family, as both his mother and father were descended from scholars, professionals and rabbis. While Marx is certainly a central figure in the history of communism, he was by no means the lone originator of communism. And his background demonstrates that communism did not spring from the toiling masses of the working class. The reality is that Marx, like almost all socialist revolutionaries, was a product of academia and self-proclaimed intellectual secret societies, not the grim factories found in the early days of the Industrial Revolution.

His father, Heinrich, defected from the Jewish faith, and joined the Lutherans, largely to maintain his lucrative law practice. When Karl was placed in a university-preparatory school in 1830, it was a privilege open only to about a quarter of the town's population. Marx was sent off to the University of Bonn to follow in his father's profession of law, but he spent far too much time in local taverns, drinking too much and getting into fights.

The next year, Marx went to the University of Berlin, switched from law to philosophy, and became a much more serious student. It was here that he became immersed in a host of radical leftist ideas. He soon became a devotee of Georg Wilhelm Hegel's philosophy of “dialectics.” Simply put, this theory postulated that repeated interaction with a new framework of perception would lead to a new framework, and that the process would repeat itself over and over.

It was not the only radical influence upon Marx. His professor of legal history, Edward Gans, was an advocate of the Saint Simonians, early French socialists. Another Hegel disciple, Bruno Bauer, was a lecturer at Berlin who became a mentor to young Marx. He wrote *Historical Criticism of the Synoptic Gospels*. Bauer argued that the gospel accounts were pious forgeries, and that Jesus had not even existed.

While Marx obtained a doctorate in 1841, his hopes of becoming a university professor were dashed, largely because of his association with Bauer. Marx dabbled in journalism off and on for the next several years — never earning a great amount for his articles, though he did raise his name



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 5, 2018

identification throughout Europe, and even in America.

Probably the only real friend Marx ever had was Friedrich Engels, the son of a textile manufacturer. Engels was a convert to atheism and radicalism, and the two traveled to England in 1845 to research English political economists at the Manchester Public Library. On their way back to Brussels, where he was now living, they stopped in London to meet some English and German radicals that Engels had met the previous year — a secret society known as The League of the Just.

The group's goal was to unite all the socialist movements across Europe. By 1847, Marx had become increasingly involved with the League. With its emergence from a host of secret societies in Europe, the exact origins of "communism," a variant of revolutionary socialism, will probably never be known. However, it should be quite clear that communism did not originate in the mind of one frustrated academic named Marx.

His importance in the history of communism is that the League of the Just decided to change its name to the Communist League, and they hired Marx and Engels to write the platform — *The Communist Manifesto* — of the new political party they were forming. Marx's sources for this work were many, including the French radicals such Jean-Paul Marat, a prominent atheist and Jacobin, who wrote, "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains."

Among the planks found in the *Manifesto* are abolition of private property, a heavy and graduated progressive income tax, abolition of the rights of inheritance, centralization of credit in the hands of the state, and free education for all children in public schools. Even a cursory reading of these planks reveals that Marxism is not just an abstract 19th century philosophy.

Perhaps the greatest fallacy of communism is its atheism. Marx called religion "the opiate of the people," a phrase he borrowed from Bauer. He believed that religion kept the workers sedated, causing them to not rise up and throw off their chains. The rejection of private property is another fallacy, rooted in the rejection of biblical morality. And so is his rejection of the family.

"The closing years for Karl Marx were sterile, lonely ones," Cleon Skousen wrote in *The Naked Communist*. Two daughters committed suicide. His own health declined rapidly, particularly after his long-suffering wife died in 1881. That was followed by the unexpected death of another daughter, then two months later his own death on March 18, 1883. He was just 64 years old.

Marx was buried at Highgate Cemetery in London, where his friend Engels read a funeral oration. At the time of his death, it appeared the socialist tide had ebbed. Yet, within a generation, the first communist state was established in Russia. Other communist states followed, and by the end of the 20th century communist rulers had killed some 100 million people.

It is uncertain how the world would be different today had Marx never been born, or if his life had taken a different path. But we can safely say that the world is much different today because of him, and that this difference was not for the good.

Photo: Karl Marx



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