



Born in Prussia on May 5, 1818, **Karl Marx** began exploring sociopolitical theories at university among the Young Hegelians. He became a journalist, and his socialist writings would get him expelled from Germany and France. In 1848, he published *The Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels and was exiled to London, where he wrote the first volume of *Das Kapital* and lived the remainder of his life.

Karl Heinrich Marx was the oldest surviving boy of nine children. His father, Heinrich, a successful lawyer, was a man of the Enlightenment, devoted to Kant and Voltaire, who took part in agitations for a constitution in Prussia. His mother, born Henrietta Pressburg, was from Holland.

Both parents were Jewish and were descended from a long line of rabbis, but, a year or so before Karl was born, his father—probably because his professional career required it—was baptized in the Evangelical Established Church. Karl was baptized when he was six years old. Although as a youth Karl was influenced less by religion than by the critical, sometimes radical social policies of the Enlightenment, his Jewish background exposed him to prejudice and discrimination that may have led him to question the role of religion in society and contributed to his desire for social change.

Marx's analysis of history saw human development as occurring due to a series of class struggles between the ruling class, those who possess the means of production. To Marx, feudal lords, land owners and capitalists were pitted against the ruled working class. This claim is summed up in the opening line of *The Communist Manifesto*: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle." Marx predicted the demise of capitalism through a workers' revolution that would lead to a utopian "classless society" where, according to Marx, "people work according to their ability and get according to their needs" and "in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

His vision and ideals inspired Vladimir Lenin. Lenin

	embraced Marx's vision, but made certain adjustments in Marxist theories and practice and orchestrated the first communist revolution. Marxism, as understood and implemented by Lenin resulted in totalitarian control.
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