

# 5

## SOCIALISM AND CAPITALISM

*The communist revolution [ ... ] does away with labour, and abolishes the rule of all classes with the classes themselves, because it is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognized as a class, and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities, etc. within present society.*

.....  
**Karl Marx**

*If freedom led to wider inequality, I would prefer that to a world in which I got artificial equality at the expense of freedom.*

.....  
**Milton Friedman**

### Talking Points of the Left and the Right

Before beginning our examination of different political and economic theories, the importance of language must once again be addressed.

There are some typical arguments—*talking points*, or rhetoric used *ad nauseam*, to propagandize—that are often repeated by those who like to borrow their ideas rather than think about the topics. Some terms, phrases, and slogans often used to attack capitalism include *dog eat dog*, *exploitation*, *wage-slave*, *democratization* (*democratize industry*, *democratize the classroom*, etc.), *robber baron*, *alienation*, *income gap*, *income inequality*, and *the rich get richer while the poor get poorer*. The pro-capitalist lexicon is less impressive; some of the language those on the right might use include *do-gooder* (although linguists would argue it should be *good-doer*), *communist*, and *Marxist*. It seems that the Left has won the war of words, creating a far more impressive accumulation of linguistic ammunition. Increasingly, in the last few years, we've heard the word *fair*, particularly *fair-share*, both vague words which don't really mean anything. In our analysis of the political dichotomy, we have to be aware of when loaded and fallacious terms occur, and we must be careful to avoid them. As we review the theories and claims of capitalists and socialists, we have to be aware of glittering generalities and clichéd points. Several of the most familiar talking points can be found in Marxism.

## SOCIALISM

### Marxism

Karl Marx was an economic determinist who insisted that human history was evolutionary. In other words, material forces create philosophy, religion, power, and all human beliefs. The economic base drives political and cultural institutions, and the institutions in power spread their ideology (*cultural capital*). In essence, the ruling class determines the ruling ideas, and the capitalist class exploits the working class.

Through Marxism, modern concepts such as “democratization” of the workplace, of culture, and of industry have come to fruition. Marxism suggests that capitalism will eventually implode and collapse, and “everyone would give according to his ability and take according to his needs.” *Cultural Marxism* (as practiced by neo-Marxists) stresses a bottom-up, postmodern, deconstructionist, revolution—a “quiet revolution.”

The political war being fought in all areas of human intellectual achievement is generally not fully understood by the public. People tend to be somewhat informed of the takeover of the universities, the media, and the arts by the Left, but they do not really know the historical details of the “quiet revolution” and the methods used by those involved in the coup. The founding fathers of the Marxist revolution began their silent seizure of power in the schools across America and are responsible for transformations we see taking place today. No other groups have had more influence on the development of the current propaganda than the psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, and other cultural theorists whom we can fairly call *neo-Marxists*. Many conservative cultural critics recognize that the techniques and terminology that have been applied rigorously in academia, which is also like the political correctness corporations and politicians utilize, have sprung from what we might call *cultural Marxism* (the usurpation of a people's ideas, art, and language):

The cultural Marxism of Political Correctness, like economic Marxism, has a single factor explanation of history. Economic Marxism says that all of history is determined by ownership of means of production. Cultural Marxism, or Political Correctness, says that all history is determined by power, by which groups defined in terms of race, sex, etc., have power over which other groups. Nothing else matters. All literature, indeed, is about that. Everything in the past is about that one thing. [ ... ]

Just as in classical economic Marxism certain groups, i.e. workers and peasants, are *a priori* good, and other groups, i.e., the bourgeoisie and capital owners, are evil. In the cultural Marxism of Political Correctness certain groups are good. [ ... ] These groups are determined to be “victims,” and therefore automatically good regardless of what any of them do. [ ... ]

Both economic and cultural Marxism rely on expropriation. When the classical Marxists, the communists, took over a country like Russia, they expropriated the bourgeoisie, they took away their property. Similarly, when the cultural Marxists take over a university campus, they expropriate through things like quotas for admissions. [ ... ]

And finally, both have a method of analysis that automatically gives the answers they want. For the classical Marxist, it's Marxist economics. For the cultural Marxist, it's deconstruction. (Lind par. 7-10)

A brief glimpse into the theories of some of the more prominent neo-Marxists of the early twentieth century will permit readers to realize how the control of language, art, and all other intellectual activities can lead to the control of ideas, resulting in the accumulation of what sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called *cultural capital*. An examination of the neo-Marxist critical theorists of the *Frankfurt School* is required to understand how language, literature, and the traditions of the West have been of primary interest for them.

## Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School

When I was studying Literary Theory in graduate school, most of the texts we were given focused on what is called *critical theory* (the term was first used by Max Horkheimer in *Traditional and Critical Theory* (1937)). Of course, there was very little discussion about the criticism of the theory and the strengths of classical Western thought. Most of the students and faculty were neo-Marxists, cultural relativists, and postmodernists who attempted to purge our society of the great classics, to remove standards, hierarchies, and to spark radical cultural change—they were not pure scholars and lovers of literature but political activists. To understand this deconstruction promoted by critical theorists, one must first familiarize himself with the school of thought where the concept originated.

In English departments—where literary studies is sometimes replaced by social studies, politics, and the discussion of cultural problems—students are often required to take Critical Theory courses, along with Multiculturalism, Gender Studies, or Feminist Literature classes. When I was pursuing my MA in English, I came in contact with a number of professors teaching anthologies consisting mostly of the works of cultural Marxists, writings considered part of the canon of critical theory. These neo-Marxist writers learned that when economic wars could not be waged that cultural wars still could. Cultural Marxists followed the plan set out by Marx, which he outlines in *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*; there, we find the steps the modern Marxist has been following to reconstruct the world according to Marx's design:

It is, therefore, *the task of history*, once the *other-world of truth* has vanished, to establish the *truth of this world*. It is the immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, to unmask self-estrangement in its *unholy forms* once the *holy form* of human self-estrangement has been unmasked. Thus, the criticism of Heaven turns into the criticism of Earth, the *criticism of religion* into the *criticism of law*, and the *criticism of theology* into the *criticism of politics*. (par. 5)

Here, Marx has set the stages for deconstruction: a worship of nature will replace that of heaven, the reverence we pay to the divine—our traditional, religious beliefs—will be substituted with obedience to the socialist state (the law), and any responsibility the Christian may have, as the Bible tells him, will no longer exist—his civic duty will only be determined by politicians. The earth, the state, and the politician will replace heaven, scripture, and God. Every step taken by the neo-Marxist revolutionaries of the Frankfurt School involved removing the values set by one's traditional culture and replacing them with the postmodern propaganda of class warfare, atheism, and cultural and ethical relativism.

The Institute for Social Research—more famously known as the Frankfurt School—was formed in 1923 and included many members over the years (Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Georg Lukács, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm are just a few of the more famous names associated with the group). These Marxists were the progenitors of modern propaganda; they were critics of modern capitalism, traditional ideology and hierarchies, and class structure. Unfortunately, “in 1933, when the Nazis came to power in Germany, the members of the Frankfurt School fled to the United States” (Atkinson par. 4), bringing with them their ideology. This ideology found its ways into most of our major institutions. Dr. Gerald Atkinson tells us, in “About the Frankfurt School,” just how these intellectuals intended to ideologically subvert the traditional culture of the US:

By the end of the World War II, almost all the original Frankfurt School members had become American citizens. This meant the beginning of a new English-speaking audience for the school. Now the focus was on American forms of authoritarianism. With this shift in subject matter came a subtle change in the center of the Institute's work. In America, authoritarianism appeared in different forms than its European counterpart. Instead of terror or coercion, more genteel forms of enforced conformism had been developed. According to Martin Jay, [18] “Perhaps the most effective of these were to be found in the cultural field. American mass culture thus became one of the central concerns of the Frankfurt School.” (par. 25)

Atkinson calls the Frankfurt School's approach to deconstruct America “a quiet revolution,” one which “could not be resisted by force” (22).

The dissidents of the Frankfurt School resisted traditional forms in modern art and literature and called for cultural, academic, and economic revolutionary change. Through the acquisition of revolutionary psychological and philosophical thought, such as Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious and sexual stages, Erich Fromm's interpretation of Marx, and Herbert Marcuse's polemics, they have accomplished some of their goals of deconstruction; the neo-Marxist academician has psychologically deconstructed the West through conditioning—the postmodern sexual revolution of the 60s helped achieve this—and successfully achieved demoralization, removing traditional concepts in an attempt to restructure society and create an atheistic Marxist society. Courses in modern art and literature, which show discontent towards traditional aesthetic standards, are often taught by instructors who have disdain for the customs and culture typically associated with conservative America. Many college professors are indeed critical theorists, and they have substituted popular, postmodern urban art and entertainment (graffiti art, rap lyrics, comic books, and even adult movies) for the classic material traditionally taught in universities, in order to, some may say, demoralize the West (to remove standards, to condition the masses to believe that anyone who morally judges is narrow-minded).

## Erich Fromm

The Left generally holds the notion that the members of society are socially, psychologically, sexually, and economically in need of freedom, an escape from the burden of the *Super-ego* (the parent in Freud's trinity), and they continuously attack conservative values by associating those on the Right with religious zealots and fascist dictatorships. The doctrines of *Humanism*, which

can be found in the works of Erich Fromm, are partly responsible for these liberal principles embraced by secular progressives.

Erich Fromm (1900-1980) was a psychoanalyst, humanist, and member of the Socialist Party of America. He praised Karl Marx and wrote extensively on Marxist ideology, claiming, “Marx’s concept of socialism follows from his concept of man. It should be clear by now that according to this concept, socialism is not a society of regimented, automatized individuals,” that “the aim of socialism [for Marx] was freedom” (par. 1-6). Although the goals of socialism for Fromm—man, his freedom, and love for one another—may sound wonderful, and Fromm’s passion may have been genuine, the emotional appeal does not conceal the fact that the ideas behind socialist thought are flawed; the idealistic theory whose ends do not justify its means, much like Nazi ideology, often consists of the destruction of religion, the plundering of a nation, and—often in the past and quite possibly again in the future if complete revolution and deconstruction is achieved—the imprisonment and execution of political foes.

Although compared to today’s liberal Fromm’s views may be considered soft neo-Marxism, we should know that it was he who aided in bringing the writings of Freud, Marx, and Trotsky to the attention of the public. Kevin B. Anderson—Professor of Political Science, Sociology, and Women’s Studies at Purdue University—confirms the importance of Fromm’s work and appeal:

None deny that it was Fromm who first introduced the Frankfurt School to a form of Freudian Marxism that was at the root of all of their subsequent efforts to theorize “authoritarian personalities.” [ ... ]

With his book *Marx’s Concept of Man* (1961), Fromm probably did more than any other individual to introduce Marx’s 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* to the American public. [ ... ]

Fromm’s stature as a public intellectual and his extremely popular form of presentation helped to spark a far wider discussion of the young Marx, not only among the broad intellectual public, but also in mass media outlets. [ ... ]

Always searching for a pathway out of the alienated world of capitalism, he played a major role in the discussions of Marx and of the socialist humanism in the U.S. and internationally. (par. 4-18)

## Herbert Marcuse

Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) was one of the more popular members of the Frankfurt School. Through his writing and involvement with the student protests of the 1960s, he influenced the counterculture movement. Like Fromm, Marcuse was a Freudian Marxist who also argued for the importance of Marx’s earlier works:

The publication of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* written by Marx in 1844 must become a crucial event in the history of Marxist studies. These manuscripts could put the discussion about the origins and original meaning of historical materialism, and the entire theory of ‘scientific socialism’, on a new footing. (“The Foundation of Historical Materialism” par. 1)

Marcuse considered Marx’s work important because “its sense and purpose are not at all philosophical but practical and revolutionary: the overthrow of the capitalist system through

the economic and political struggle of the proletariat" (5). The Frankfurt School's critique of society emulated Marx's. Marcuse's interpretation of the texts of Marx resulted in a proposition that a revolutionary arm of the Left, which would deconstruct our history and economic system, was necessary:

With these introductory remarks we can proceed to describe the overall content of the *Manuscripts*. Marx himself describes their purpose as the *critique of political economy*—a 'positive' critique, and thus one which, by revealing the mistake of political economy and its inadequacy for the subject, also provides it with a basis to make it adequate for its task. The positive critique of political economy is thus a critical foundation of political economy. Within this critique the idea of political economy is completely transformed: it becomes the science of the necessary conditions for the communist revolution. This revolution itself signifies—quite apart from economic upheavals—a revolution in the whole history of man and the definition of his being: 'This communism ... is the genuine resolution of the conflict, between man and nature and between man and man—the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution' (p.135). ("The Foundation of Historical Materialism" par. 6)

Marcuse and the Frankfurt School's introduction of Marxist revolution "in the whole history of man and the definition of his being" seems to have been successful when we look at the pedagogy of the modern academician; for today we find in education what is called the *interdisciplinary* approach to learning; this approach applies Marxist theory to all fields of study, transforming the liberal arts and sciences into areas that reflect and represent Marxist dogma. This method over the years has been completely essential for the Left; for when Marxist thought is disguised as pedagogy that is interdisciplinary and beneficial to the students and faculty, we find collaborative efforts between Marxists who are unrecognizable and those who are simply educators; the latter, under the will of the former, may eventually compromise his principles. One theory says that this is why the Marxist enjoys collaborative work—he knows that a rational man with values will eventually succumb to Marxist ideas; therefore, any intellectual argument focused on reasoning, historical facts, and observable reality is not in the best interest of the socialist propagandist, as Ayn Rand reminds us:

In any collaboration between two men (or groups) who hold different basic principles, it is the more evil or irrational one who wins. The rational (principle, premise, idea, policy, or action) is that which is consonant with the facts of reality; the irrational is that which contradicts the facts and attempts to get away with it. A collaboration is a joint undertaking, a common course of action. The rational (the good) has nothing to gain from the irrational (the evil), except a share of its failures and crimes [ ... ]

When opposite basic principles are clearly and openly defined, it works to the advantage of the rational side; when they are not clearly defined, but are hidden or evaded, it works to the advantage of the irrational side.

In order to win, the rational side of any controversy requires that its goals be understood; it has nothing to hide, since reality is its ally. The irrational side has to deceive, to confuse, to evade, to hide its goals. Fog, murk, and blindness are not the tools of irrationality. (*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* 147-149)

Politicians who want to advance their agenda often do not disclose all of the details of certain pieces of legislation. Likewise, Marcuse knew that a “silent” revolution could proceed successfully through propaganda in the schools and through cultural capital; he understood that unadulterated socialism couldn’t contest reality and rationalism in an open argument:

If you say to anyone in the United States today, “What we want is socialism and the expropriation of private property in the means of production and collective control,” then people run away from you. That does not mean that the idea of socialism is false to the contrary. But it does mean that we have not at all succeeded in awakening the consciousness of the need for socialism, and that we must struggle for its realization if we are not to be barbarized and destroyed. (“The Problems of Violence: Questions and Answers” 9)

Is the deconstruction of Western culture by design or part of the natural evolution—if one can call it that (Friedrich Nietzsche, after all, reminds his readers that not all civilizations necessarily “progress”)—of humanity? There is, however, certainly enough political evidence to suggest that there are those who have attempted to “remove any meaning from it and re-insert their own” and make some branches of knowledge—philosophy, literature, and psychology—not about the development of ideas but about struggles for power; that has always been the goal of critical theory. Marxist critical theory has accomplished much of what it has set out to do; the result is a postmodern society. Reviewing pedagogy, aesthetics, American politics and class warfare, the ethics of the cultural relativist, and the propaganda of environmentalism, one can see how the critical theory of the deconstructionists can be found with no difficulty in the Western world, in both the public and private sectors. More recently, we can find its continued influence down on Wall Street.

## Occupy Wall Street

Neo-Marxist class warfare begins with the recruitment of the discontented youth. Many youngsters have taken part in the Occupy Wall Street movement. OWS is an anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist protest directed towards those in New York City’s financial district. OWS makes use of the slogan “we are the 99%” in order to communicate to the public that a minority—the bankers on Wall Street—control a majority of the wealth. On its website, those in the movement define OWS as

a people-powered movement that began on September 17, 2011 in Liberty Square in Manhattan’s Financial District, and has spread to over 100 cities in the United States and actions in over 1,500 cities globally. OWS is fighting back against the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process, and the role of Wall Street in creating an economic collapse that has caused the greatest recessions in generations. The movement is inspired by popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and aims to fight back against the richest 1% of people that are writing the rules of an unfair global economy that is foreclosing on our future. ([occupywallstreet.org](http://occupywallstreet.org))

Although it seems to have a genuine interest in fighting the élite, has the movement been misled in their assault on capitalism and class structure? Some say writer Kalle Lasn is partly to blame for the nature of the demonstrations. Lasn is the co-founder of *Adbusters*, a magazine whose website proudly proclaims, “Eco. Psycho. Noise. Culture. Toxin. Breakdown” (*Adbusters.org*). Lasn, an anti-consumerist who has written books such as *Culture Jam* and *Design Anarchy*, is credited with being responsible for forming OWS. He is a deconstructionist who condemns Western culture. The Adbusters Media Foundation is explicitly Marxist and expresses this through its pro-environment, anti-capitalist agenda. Many claim that the foundation, OWS, and Lasn are neo-Marxist “street warriors”; that they are the Left’s answer to the Tea Party.

It is accurate to state that Occupy Wall Street, and those involved in their affairs, do not hold any sort of Randian views on the concept of rights (the negative concept of rights). Their position is, however, very close to the FDR-LBJ position, which Rand describes in “Man’s Rights”: “The Democratic Party platform of 1960 summarizes the switch boldly and explicitly. It declares that a Democratic Administration ‘will reaffirm the economic bill of rights which Franklin Roosevelt wrote into our national conscience sixteen years ago’” (4). Their position, they would claim, is one stressing *human rights*, which means the right to affordable housing, health-care, education, and adequate food, clothing, and recreation. This sounds good to many people, but one has to ask, at what cost? Who would be required to provide these *rights*?

If some men are entitled *by right* to the products of the work of others, it means that those others are deprived of rights and condemned to slave labor.

Any alleged “right” of one man, which necessitates the violation of the rights of another, is not and cannot be a right.

No man can have a right to impose an unchosen obligation, an unrewarded duty or an involuntary servitude on another man. There can be no such thing as “*the right to enslave*.”

A right does not include the material implementation of that right by other men; it includes only the freedom to earn that implementation by one’s own effort. (Rand “Man’s Rights” 5)

Labor, the worker, and workers’ rights are the most fundamental concerns of OWS, and so it is important that we look at the origins of these beliefs.

## The Socialization of Industry

The democratization of the workplace may appear to be a phenomenon of modern industry, but ever since the nineteenth century, politicians—socialist and moderate—have been interfering in the world of business, under the guise of the slogan “for the benefit of the worker.” Most of this direct attack on the producers and property owners can be found in Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844). In Marx’s work, one discovers the very beginning of the concepts the Left hold today—that the worker is “alienated” because of his work, that the owners of production should share their profits, that there must be a redistribution of wealth:

On the basis of political economy itself, in its own words, we have shown that the worker sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most

wretched of commodities; that the wretchedness of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of his production; that the necessary result of competition is the accumulation of capital in a few hands, and thus the restoration of monopoly in a more terrible form; and that finally the distinction between capitalist and land rentier, like that between the tiller of the soil and the factory worker, disappears and that the whole of society must fall apart into the two classes—*property owners and propertyless workers*. (1)

Marx, like many socialists today—especially those who are part of the Occupy movement—saw capitalists as flawed, misguided zealots of the monetary system; for him, “greed” was the result of the core concept of capitalism: competition. Knowing these facts about the philosophy of Marx, we can understand better the socialist’s desire to “democratize” (to remove any elements of competition, to create and push policies of forced equality) the classroom, the world of entertainment, law enforcement, politics, and the workplace through the elimination of aesthetic standards, established laws, and borders. (Marxism is a trans-national and trans-ethical, doctrine.) Some call this right-wing exaggeration, hysteria or paranoia, a conspiracy theory; however, simply review what Barack Obama himself said in his speech to the Chamber of Commerce in 2011:

We have to renew people’s faith in the promise of this country—that this is a place where you can make it if you try. And we have to do this together: business and government; workers and CEOs; Democrats and Republicans. [ ... ]

But I want to be clear: even as we make America the best place on earth to do business, businesses also have a responsibility to America. [ ... ]

Now, I understand the challenges you face. I understand that you’re under incredible pressure to cut costs and keep your margins up. I understand the significance of your obligations to your shareholders. I get it. But as we work with you to make America a better place to do business, ask yourselves what you can do for America. [ ... ]

Of course, your responsibility goes beyond recognizing the need for certain standards and safeguards. If we’re fighting to reform the tax code and increase exports to help you compete, the benefits can’t just translate into greater profits and bonuses for those at the top. They should be shared by American workers, who need to know that expanding trade and opening markets will lift their standard of living as well as your bottom line. We cannot go back to the kind of economy—and culture—we saw in the years leading up to the recession, where growth and gains in productivity just didn’t translate into rising incomes and opportunity for the middle class. (1-5)

The speech is Marxist rhetoric; it preaches the collectivist and altruistic doctrine of “giving back to the community”; it hints at the liberal-socialist concept of forced responsibility (now called “shared responsibility” by the IRS); it convincingly reminds us of the deconstruction of industry that the Left insists upon. Returning to a look at the Frankfurt School, we find that the “democratization” of the workplace—the forced socialization of industry by neo-Marxists—was fundamental, and we can see just how heavily they preached the philosophy of Marx:

Marx expresses here all essential elements of socialism. First, man produces in an associated, not competitive way; he produces rationally and in an

unalienated way, which means that he brings production under his control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power. [ ... ] It means that the individual participates actively in the planning and in the execution of the plans; it means, in short, the realization of political and industrial democracy. (Fromm 2)

Here, Erich Fromm reasserts the position of the socialists: competition is bad; therefore, capitalism is bad; forced socialization of the workplace (“industrial democracy”) is the only means to the end (a worker’s paradise). Obama, Fromm, and Marx all use “the recognition and realization of man’s true needs” (Fromm 5) as their call to instill the very anti-individualist policy of *collectivism*. There seems to be no bigger contradiction with this line of thought: for socialism is the act of taking man’s work from him, of taking away his individual rights and property. Capitalists will argue that capitalism is the only system that guarantees a man liberty, a right to his work and the property his work gives him.

## The Capitalist Argument

### Ayn Rand’s Capitalist Views

Ayn Rand reminded Americans that the defense of capitalism was the defense of man’s rights: “If one wishes to advocate a free society—that is, capitalism, one must realize that its indispensable foundation is the principle of individual rights. If one wishes to uphold individual rights, one must realize that capitalism is the only system that can uphold and protect them” (“Man’s Rights” 1). Rand’s philosophy, *Objectivism*, was and still is under attack by socialists because of its emphasis on limited government, objective reasoning, and capitalism. Although Rand came from a communist country—Russia—she rejected the theories of the Marxists and was a staunch advocate of the philosophy upon which the United States was founded:

The United States regarded man as an end in himself, and society as a means to the peaceful, orderly, *voluntary* coexistence of individuals. All previous systems had held that man’s life belongs to society, that society can dispose of him in any way it pleases, and that any freedom he enjoys is his only by favor, by the *permission* of society, which may be revoked at any time. The United States held that man’s life is his by *right* (which means: by moral principle and by his nature), that a right is the property of an individual, that society as such has no rights, and that the only moral purpose of a government is the protection of individual rights.

A “right” is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man’s freedom of action in a social context. There is *only* one fundamental right (all the others are its consequences or corollaries): a man’s right to his own life. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action; the right to life means the right to engage in self-sustaining and self-generated action—which means: the freedom to take all the actions required by nature of a rational being for the support, the furtherance, the fulfillment and the enjoyment of his own life. (Such is the meaning of the right to life, the liberty and the pursuit of happiness.) (2)

Rand was one of the intellectuals who predicted that America and other Western countries would slowly slide into tyranny if Marxists and those supporting their ideology continued to erase the traditions of the West, instituted class warfare, and persuaded the people that depending on the government was an absolute necessity. In our day and age, many people believe that laws are set up to protect the individual; what they fail to realize, what Rand knew, and what Frédéric Bastiat told us in 1850, is that “it is not because men have made laws, that personality, liberty, and property exist. On the contrary, it is because personality, liberty, and property exist beforehand, that men make laws” (*The Law* 2). Bastiat was not incorrect when he said that “the delusion of the day is to enrich all classes at the expense of each other; it is to generalize plunder under pretense of organizing it” (14). Sometimes what politicians tell us is pure plunder disguised as “economic equality” (arguably, one of the most evil euphemisms of our era). Even in Bastiat’s day, the language of the Left was distorted in an Orwellian manner to persuade the masses:

As the result of its systems and of its efforts, it would seem that socialism, notwithstanding all its self-complacency, can scarcely help perceiving the monster of legal plunder. But what does it do? It disguises it cleverly from others, and even from itself, under the seductive names of fraternity, solidarity, organization, association. And because we only ask it for justice, it alleges that we reject fraternity, solidarity, organization, and associations; and they brand us with the name of individualists. (22)

The Left often uses emotional appeal to persuade the masses and criticize the individualist. Some may say that the neo-Marxist is good at attacking the individual, the entrepreneur, and those using his or her ambition and ingenuity to earn wealth and prestige—we can look at Obama’s “you didn’t build that” argument, which commits the error of *infinite regress* (“you” eventually means *someone*; Obama’s “you” is general).

The Left may call the inventor, the manufacturer, the capitalist “narcissistic”; the capitalist may suggest that in doing so, in playing the middleman and redistributing wealth and punishing the success of the eager men and women of this country who want to achieve their dreams, the socialist is only displaying his or her inferiority complex. Those with drive—who have high-reaching goals and desire success—if they are moral and rational, value individuality, and therefore understand why they must protect capitalism, which capitalists will claim is the only economic system that supports individualism:

The right to life is the source of all rights—and the right to property is their only implementation. Without property rights, no other rights are possible. Since man has to sustain his life by his own effort, the man who has no right to the products of his effort has no means to sustain his life. The man who produces while others dispose of his product, is a slave” (Rand “Man’s Rights”).

Bastiat reminds us that when others take the work, the product, the property of a man in the attempt to create economic “equality,” they are in fact committing plunder:

Before I proceed, I think I ought to explain myself upon the word plunder.

I do not take it, as it often is taken, in a vague, undefined, relative, or metaphysical sense. I use it in its scientific acceptance, and as expressing the opposite idea to property. When a portion of wealth passes out of the hands of him who has acquired it, without his consent, and without compensation,

to him who has not created it, whether by force or by sacrifice, I say that property is violated, that plunder is perpetuated. I say that is exactly what the law ought to repress always and everywhere. If the law itself performs the action it ought to repress, I say that plunder is still perpetuated, and even, in a social point of view, under aggravated circumstances. (*The Law* 16)

## Milton Friedman and the Free Market

For some capitalists, there is simply no ethical argument for socialism; for giving to those who have less, even if it feels good, is essentially wrong (according to their negative concept of rights, which we will look at later) because, as Milton Friedman (1938-2009) stressed, the state must first take from those who have more: “You can only aim for equality by giving some people the right to take things from others. And what ultimately happens when you aim for equality is that A and B decide what C should do for D. Except that they take a little bit of commission off on the way” (Friedman *Free to Choose*). One must not infringe on the rights of others. Forced equality and collectivism are essentially wrong; the freedom to achieve a sort of equality is the only answer: “A society that aims for equality before liberty will end up with neither equality nor liberty. And a society that aims first for liberty will not end up with equality, but will end up to a closer approach to equality than any other kind of system that has ever been developed” (“The Role of Government in a Free Society”).

Often, in today’s corporate world, the businessman participates in socialistic practices; he has become an instrument of neo-Marxism, perhaps without being aware of it. A show like *Undercover Boss*, a program that propagates the need for businesses to understand that social responsibility transcends the importance of earning profits, is a good example of this. Of course, I realize that many of the CEOs who appear on the show may simply be doing so to advertise their companies; nevertheless, a number of them have in fact unknowingly acquired Marxist beliefs:

The businessmen believe that they are defending free enterprise when they declaim that business is not concerned “merely” with profit but also with promoting desirable “social” ends; that business has a “social conscience” and takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, avoiding pollution and whatever else may be the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers. In fact they are—or would be if they or anyone else took them seriously—preaching pure and unadulterated socialism. Businessmen who talk this way are unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades. (“The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits” 1)

Friedman believed that the social theories of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School had so firmly been planted in the world of industry that the capitalist now shared some of the same sociological assumptions. Of course, the consumer must realize that businesses may care for “the community” for several other reasons, as Friedman tells us:

To illustrate, it may well be in the long run interest of a corporation that is a major employer in a small community to devote resources to providing amenities to that community or to improving its government. That may make it easier to attract desirable employees, it may reduce the wage bill or

lessen losses from pilferage and sabotage or have other worthwhile effects. Or it may be that, given the laws about the deductibility of corporate charitable contributions, the stockholders can contribute more to charities they favor by having the corporation make the gift than by doing it themselves, since they can in that way contribute an amount that would otherwise have been paid as corporate taxes.

In each of these—and many similar—cases, there is a strong temptation to rationalize these actions as an exercise of “social responsibility.” In the present climate of opinion, with its wide spread aversion to “capitalism,” “profits,” the “soulless corporation” and so on, this is one way for a corporation to generate goodwill as a by-product of expenditures that are entirely justified in its own self-interest. [ ... ]

If our institutions, and the attitudes of the public make it in their self-interest to cloak their actions in this way, I cannot summon much indignation to denounce them. At the same time, I can express admiration for those individual proprietors or owners of closely held corporations or stockholders or more broadly held corporations who disdain such tactics as approaching fraud.

Whether blameworthy or not, the use of the cloak of social responsibility, and the nonsense spoken in its name by the influential and prestigious businessmen, does clearly harm the foundations of a free society. (4-5)

Friedman, like Rand, recognized that the capitalist, the businessman, the worker, and the consumer are all individuals, and that

in an ideal free market resting on private property, no individual can coerce any other, all cooperation is voluntary, all parties to such cooperation benefit or they need not participate. There are no values, no “social” responsibilities in any sense other than the shared values and responsibilities of individuals” (5)

According to laissez-faire capitalists, no union, no government, and no president should have the authority to tell a business what its responsibilities are. The neo-Marxist state, with its out-stretched regulatory hand, under the guise of philanthropy, equality, and democracy, should not dictate to industry what it can and cannot do. Man, no matter his class, his status, or position in life, whether he be a blue-collared worker, a wealthy entrepreneur, or a self-proclaimed artist, should be allowed to apply his own skills for profit, to achieve a better life for himself and those he chooses to help, to use what he's learned to make himself a better person; by doing this and only this can he truly contribute to society.

### The Capitalist's Negative Concept of Rights

A “right” is a moral principle defining and sanctioning a man's freedom of action in a social context. There is only *one* fundamental right (all the others are its consequences or corollaries): a man's right to his own life. Life is a process of self-sustaining and self-generated action; the right to life means the right to engage in self-sustaining and self-generated action—which means: the freedom to take all the actions required by the nature of a rational

being for the support, the furtherance, the fulfillment and the enjoyment of his own life. (Such is the meaning of the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.)

The concept of a “right” pertains only to action—specifically, to freedom of action. It means freedom from physical compulsion, coercion or interference by other men.

Thus, for every individual, a right is the moral sanction of a *positive*—of his freedom to act on his own judgment, for his own goals, by his own *voluntary, uncoerced* choice. As to his neighbors, his rights impose no obligations on them except of a *negative* kind: to abstain from violating his rights. (Rand “Man’s Rights”)

Rand attempted to advance a rational moral code of a negative sort—“*thou shalt not steal.*” Others shall not take from me without my consent, and I shall not take from them without theirs; we shall be free individuals; each man is an end in himself. The larger system may benefit from the individual pursuits of each of its members. We can have a high standard of living if, and only if, we remain free.

Socialism embraces a positive concept of rights, which, strangely enough, is pseudo-religious in nature. For example, Fromm’s concept of social responsibility is actually quite theocratic and rests on his premise/first principle that “*thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*” The moral obligations Fromm places on the individual form the major premise of socialism. The need to adjust to be part of the group, the necessity of a moral code of *Otherness*, is at the heart of *secular humanism*; this is how individuals benefit from the system.

## Conclusion: The Constitution, Individual Rights, and Self-Government

I was recently told by a fairly bright student that the Constitution was an outdated document—this, again, is part of the familiar, clichéd talking points many opponents memorize. The fallacy of *appeal to tradition* is taught in critical thinking courses, as are other fallacies. The problem, however, is that good ideas do not have expiration dates; furthermore, simply because something is new does not necessarily mean that it is any good, although most companies would like the consumer to believe otherwise—corporations often change a product to cut down on costs and then attempt to persuade consumers that the newer version has some good changes. We are now seeing how progressives in America are attempting to change our system drastically—capitalism and the ideas of the Founding Fathers are no longer relevant because they are outdated concepts, some claim. US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg explained in an interview on Egyptian television that she is “operating under a rather old constitution,” and that she would “not look to the US Constitution [when] drafting a constitution in the year 2012.” Her words, incidentally, reflect what many others believe.

The universally important ideas are timeless. The wisdom of Socrates, Aristotle, Jesus, Locke, Jefferson, and others is not irrelevant and insignificant because it is old. The need for freedom of debate, the importance of inductive and deductive reasoning, the ability to observe and learn from our experiences and suffering, and the enduring necessity of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are not things restricted to time and place. The basic traits of humans, our

most essential characteristics, our loves and hates and wills, have not changed so much in the thousands of years of our existence. Cities have changed; technology has advanced; however, we still have the same needs, and we require a philosophy and system of logic that is perennial. Truth is not temporal, as postmodern thinkers would claim. Bastiat reminds us in *The Law* that anything worth having, such as justice, is fixed: “Justice is a given quantity, immutable and unchangeable, and which admits of neither increase or [sic] diminution” (50). He warns us of the powerful force of socialism, which attempts to “democratize” every aspect of our lives, and the consequences of the Marxist worldview:

Make the law religious, fraternal, equalizing, industrial, literary, or artistic, and you will be lost in vagueness and uncertainty; you will be upon unknown ground, in a forced Utopia, or, what is worse, in the midst of a multitude of contending Utopias, each striving to gain possession of the law, and to impose it upon you; for fraternity and philanthropy have no fixed limits, as justice has. Where will you stop? (50)

America doesn’t need a new ideology, a new set of values, but it does need to maintain and uphold the philosophy that the individual and reason need to be prominent, placed above the artificially manufactured concerns socialists and corporations use, intentionally or not, for the sake of gaining power and influence. People need to remain free to think rationally, to pursue their own interests, and to understand that a nation does not thrive on unachievable utopian ideals. A country like the United States of America cannot withstand policies that advance undesirable and unjustifiable means in pursuit of unrealistic ends; if success is to come, it can only come about through individual (negative) rights:

If one wishes to advocate a free society—that is, capitalism—one must realize that its indispensable foundation is the principle of individual rights. If one wishes to uphold individual rights, one must realize that capitalism is the only system that can uphold and protect them. And if one wishes to gauge the relationship of freedom to the goals of today’s intellectuals, one may gauge it by the fact that the concept of individual rights is evaded, distorted, perverted and seldom discussed, most conspicuously seldom by the so-called “conservatives.” (Rand “Man’s Rights”)

I advocate *responsible anarchy* based on individual freedom. *Anarchy* is not a chaotic state but one of self-preservation and reliance; it is the refusal to accept conformity, society, and authoritarianism if one chooses. *Anarchy* does not mean civil war but may lead to it, just as any political philosophy may—in a democracy, people may revolt; fascism has leaders who may use military force; socialism is a system that encourages the overthrow of the capitalist system. *Anarchism*, it should be remembered, is simply the absence of controls and does not necessarily mean utter destruction; it is rejection; it is a form of voluntary isolationism. (Fromm might call it *destructiveness*, because being in such a state requires turning away from the type of *humanism* he endorsed.)

I say *anarchy* is purely antiauthoritarian, anti-corporate, and anti-state, a form of good government because it is *self-government*. Although he somewhat preferred the mixed economic system, Aldous Huxley took a similar position against corporatism and socialism:

Capitalism tends to produce a multiplicity of petty dictators, each in command of his own little business kingdom. State socialism tends to produce a single,

centralized, totalitarian dictatorship, wielding absolute authority over all its subjects through a hierarchy of bureaucratic agents. Cooperative and mixed concerns already exist and work extremely well. (“Decentralization and Self-Government” 8)

“Self-government,” Huxley insisted, “all-round is not compatible with military efficiency”; therefore, he concluded that self-government would never be valued by those in positions of power. War is a method to protect corporate interests and the authority of the state. As long as *nationalism*—which should only exist if it first protects individualism—and *socialism*—which should only be voluntary—remain primary principles, laws will continue to be enacted to make corporations and the state necessary evils.