

Wollstonecraft, Marx, and the Illusions of Liberalism

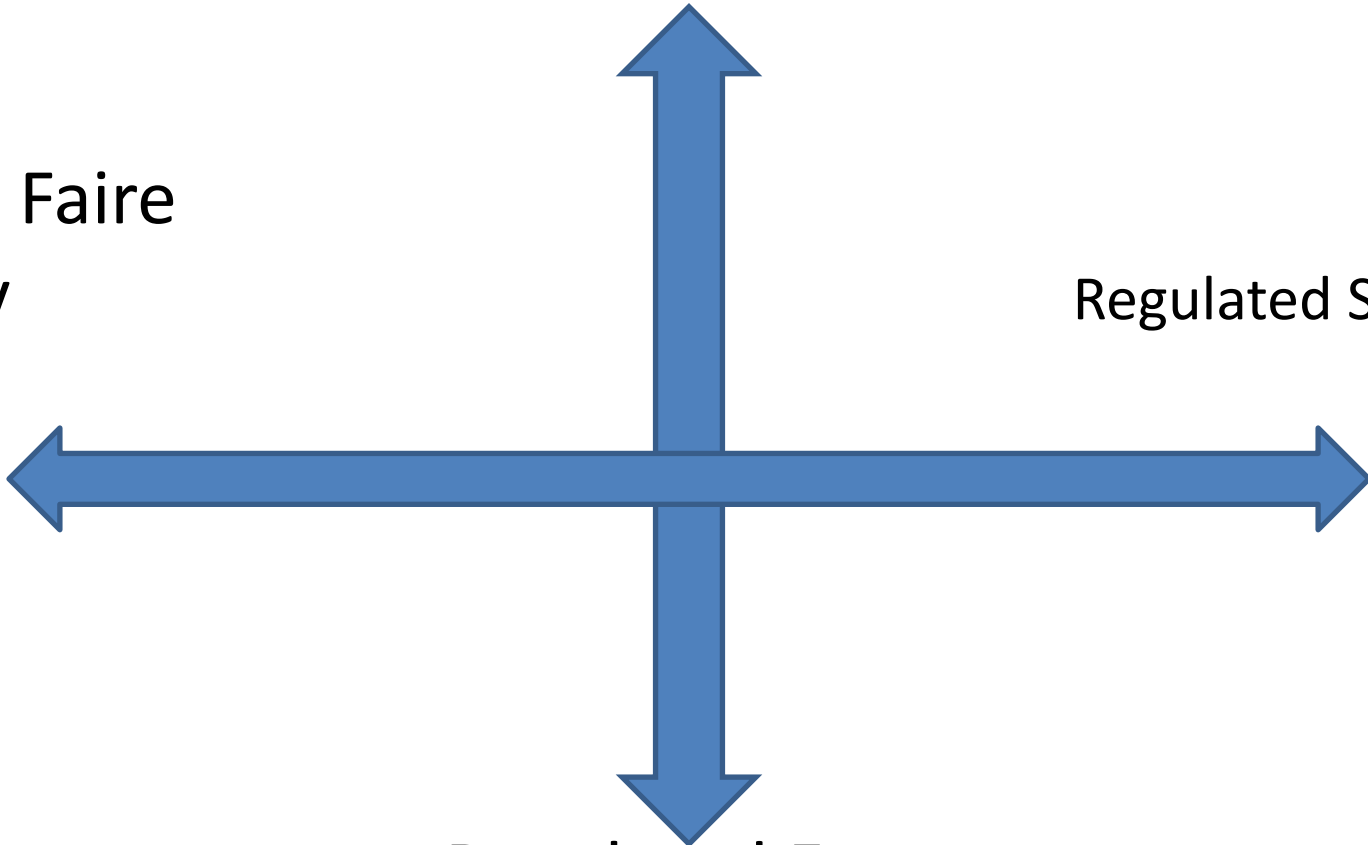


Laissez Faire Economy

Laissez Faire
Society

Regulated Society

Regulated Economy



What is your position on political economy?

- A. I tend towards egalitarian/communitarian liberalism—a more regulated economy and a freer, more equal society
- B. I tend towards classical economic liberalism (a less regulated economy) and a freer society
- C. I am drawn toward the philosophy of the Libertarians—unregulated economy and free society.
- D. I feel more comfortable with the philosophy of classical economic liberalism—a less regulated economy and social conservatism—a more strictly regulated society to preserve community values.

Do you believe that women in America have achieved the liberal dream of full freedom and equality?

- A. Yes, women have the same opportunities as men under the law, and this is a country in which the rule of law counts!
- B. No, women may have legal equality but society has created many barriers to women's equality, i.e. glass ceilings, less pay for the same work, etc.
- C. The liberal Dream is flawed: women are different than men biologically, and it does not make sense to talk about equality

Who was the Real Mary Wollstonecraft?



Quotes of the Day

- "What but habitual idleness can hereditary wealth and titles produce?" --Mary Wollstonecraft
- "It is vain to expect virtue from women till they are, in some degree, independent of men" --Mary Wollstonecraft
- "There must be more equality established in society, or morality will never gain ground, and this virtuous equality will not rest firmly even when founded on a rock, if one half of mankind are chained to its bottom by fate, for they will be continually undermining it through ignorance or pride."
--Mary Wollstonecraft

Wollstonecraft is in the Community school!

- She believes that we are born with a “group” identity; a natural station in life that we do not choose
 - Men and women have different stations in life
 - women have a theological “role” to play as women—should not try to be like men
 - she emphasized women’s “duty” which resulted from her role in the community: woman, mother, wife.
 - the role was a virtuous one....”discharging the duties of her station”
- She opposed private property and wealth (especially hereditary wealth)
 - Private property ruined men’s character—(Socrates and Rousseau felt the same)
 - “wealth....blights the tender blossoms of affection and virtue—distribution must be in the public interest
- Like Polanyi, she believes that community has been lost
 - She was opposed to the commodification of land---
 - She was opposed to market encroachment on life: “Love is not to be bought”
- She emphasized moral sentiments: benevolence and compassion....heroism

But does she really? she also believes in Freedom

- Reason: She put "**reason**" at the center of human identity and as the justification for rights.
 - Women had the same reasoning capability as men
 - Therefore women should have the same rights as men.
- Women's dependence on men restricted their freedom— even enslaved them-- and ruined their character.
- Education would free women from that dependence and develop women's rational powers and moral virtues
 - She is an "egalitarian liberal"---wants to create a level playing field.....
- Conflict with her communitarian side.....



In 2010, the typical woman who worked full-time was paid only **77 cents** for **every dollar** paid to a man.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

Wage Gap by Education

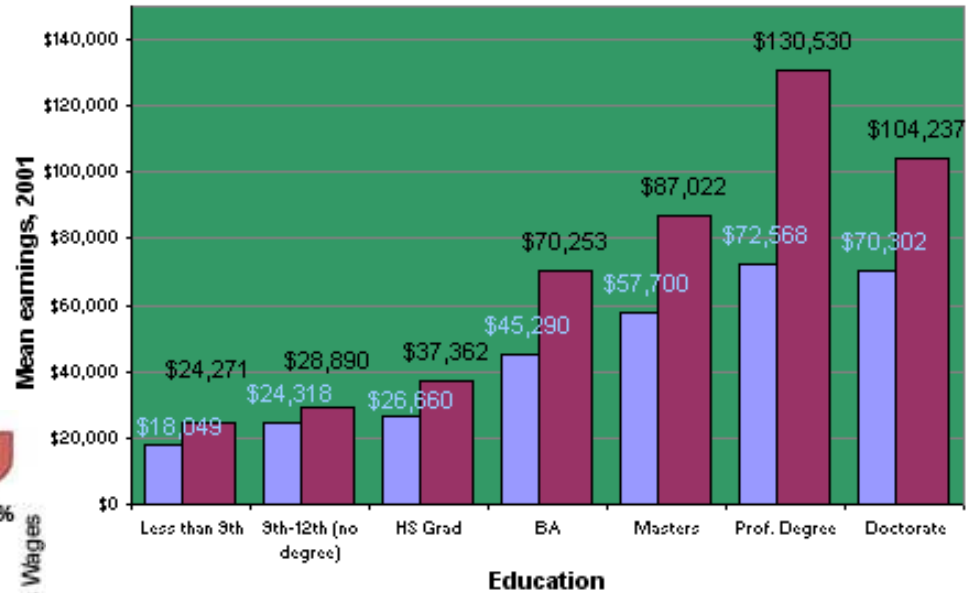
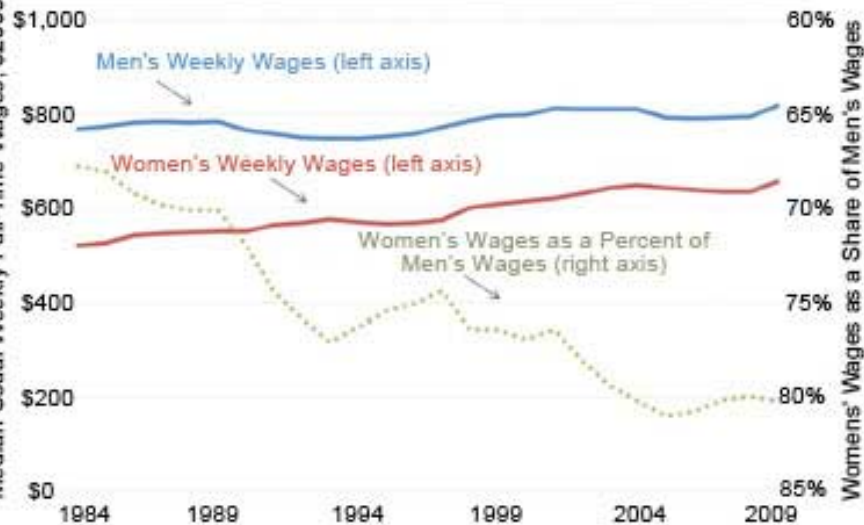


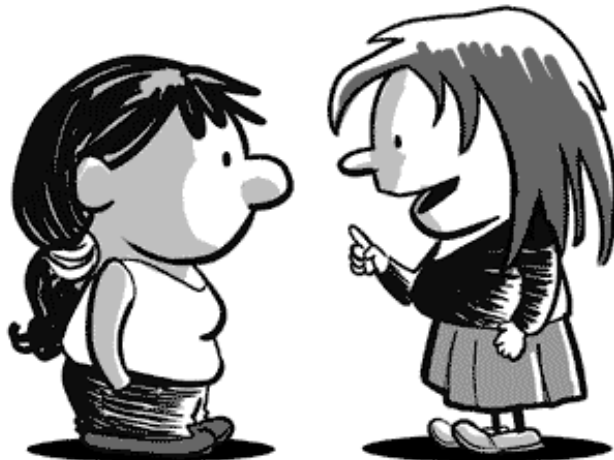
Figure 8. The Earnings Gap, 1984-2009



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics.

**EQUAL WORK
DESERVES
EQUAL PAY!**

THE WAGE GAP HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH SEXISM! WOMEN ARE PAID LESS BECAUSE THEY MAKE DIFFERENT CHOICES.



HAVING A FAMILY, FOR EXAMPLE. MANY WOMEN TAKE TIME OFF FROM WORK TO TAKE CARE OF CHILDREN OR ELDERLY RELATIVES...



SO WOMEN WORK LESS, OR WORK PART-TIME, OR NEED MORE FLEXIBLE JOBS, AND AS A RESULT, THEY GET PAID LESS. BUT WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH SEXISM?



COULDN'T MEN DO HALF OF THAT UNPAID WORK?

THAT'S CRAZY TALK!



OKAY, I'LL LET SOMEONE ELSE RAISE MY KIDS. WHAT KIND OF LOUSY MOTHER DOES THAT?



Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Liberal or a Conservative?

Freedom

Community

Liberalism

Libertarianism

State's role is to preserve negative freedom, permit individuals to define for themselves "the good life"

Political Liberalism

P
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Conservatism

Classical economic liberalism

State's role is to preserve competitive markets

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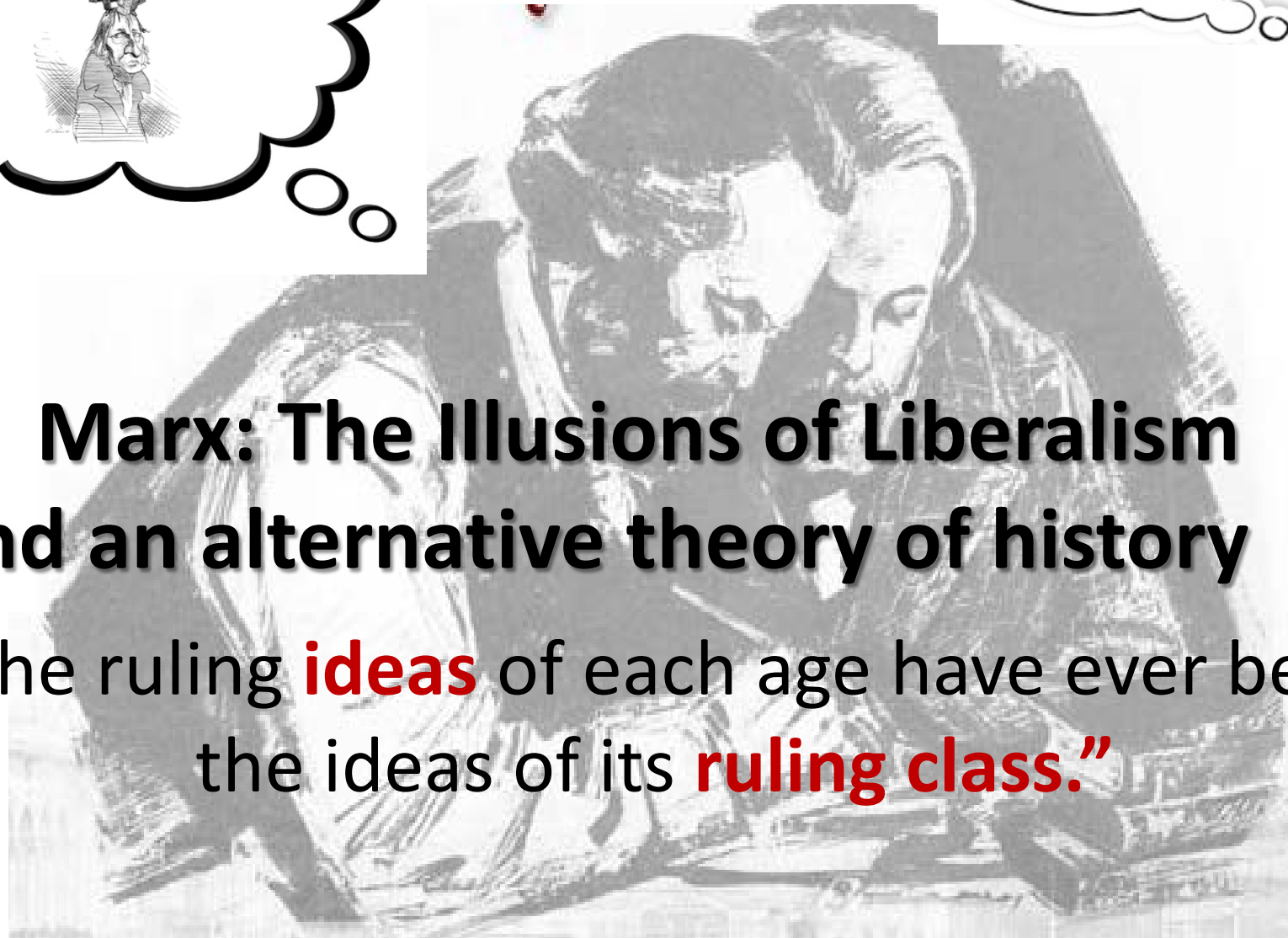
Do Corporations and Banks have too much influence on the US government

- A. No, not compared to other large countries
- B. They have about the same influence as labor unions and other interest groups in US democratic politics
- C. Yes their influence is disproportionate to that of other groups because they possess critical resources to pressure and lobby public officials
- D. Too much influence? Ha! The U.S government is CONTROLLED by big corporations!



Marx: The Illusions of Liberalism and an alternative theory of history

“The ruling **ideas** of each age have ever been
the ideas of its **ruling class.**”



Why Study Marx?

Is Marx Relevant
Today?



- His work has been discredited
 - Communism has fallen
 - Working class has not fared so badly
 - Globalization proceeds apace
- Insight into modern problems

Quotes of the Day

- "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." --Karl Marx, *Preface to A Contribution to the critique of Political Economy*
- "the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it" --Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach* (11)

Today's Menu

I. Marx turns classical political economy on its head

- A. It's view of order in the universe as "god given"
- B. It's view of the "good life as given and unchanging"

II. Marx turns Liberal Political Economy on its head

- A. Political Liberalism and its view of "natural rights"
- B. Economic Liberalism and its view of the "natural" tendency to "truck, barter, and exchange"
- C. Marx was a Materialist

III. Methodology: Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism (Critique of Political Economy and German Ideology)

- A. Individuals don't make history
- B. Mode of Production= forces of production + relations of production (Expropriation of the Surplus and Class Relations)
- C. Base and Superstructure: Class Ideas (Ideology) to defend Class Rule
- D. "Law of Change": Class contradictions and transformation in Modes of Production

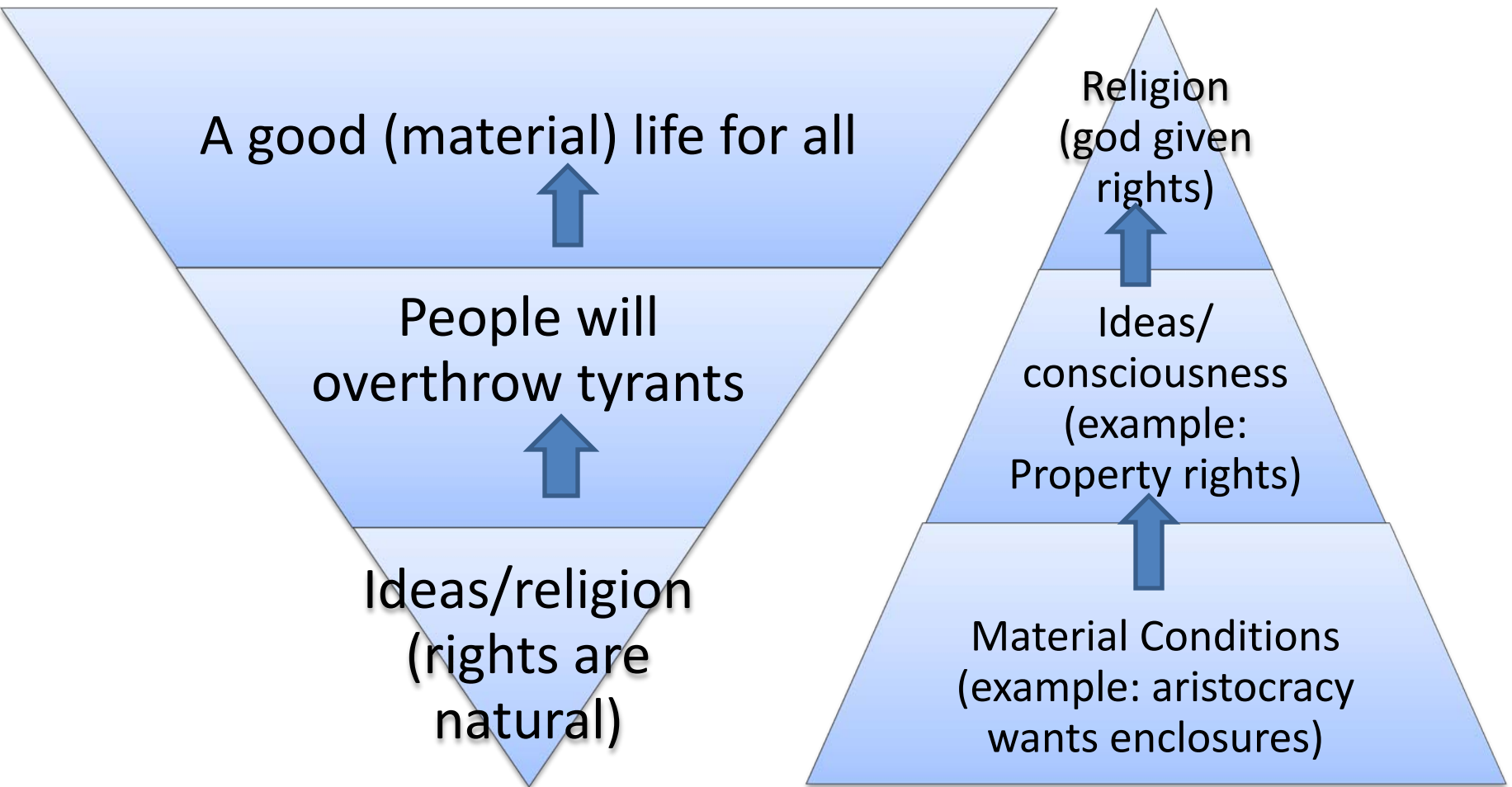
IV. Marx and Engels' Interpretation of history (Communist Manifesto)

- A. Primitive Communism
- B. Private Property (agriculture, feudalism)
- C. Small Industry (commercial capitalism)
- D. Industrial Revolution (capitalism)
- E. Workers' Revolution (Socialism, Communism)

I. Marx Turns **Classical** Political Economy on its Head

- A. Views of human nature as “god given” –social and communal roles
- B. Views of “the good life” as given and unchanging-
 - 1. The role of “virtue in the good life. (compassion, generosity, altruism, honor)
 - 2. Hegel followed the classical theorists
- C. For Marx, neither explained the march of “history”
 - 1. The role of the Division of Labor in human history
- D. History as “Progress”

II. Marx turns **Liberal** Political Economy on its head



Liberal Theorists

Marx

III. Methodology: Historical Materialism

A. Mode of Production=Means (or forces) of production + relations of production

1. Means (Forces) of Production (land, machinery, technology)
2. Relations of Production: Property Ownership →

Class Structure

3. Expropriation of the Surplus and
Class Relations

a.. Exploitation of the working
class by the owning class

4. History progresses through changes in technology and machinery

new classes emerge, exploitation

Continues, history progresses

B. Examples of Slavery and Feudalism



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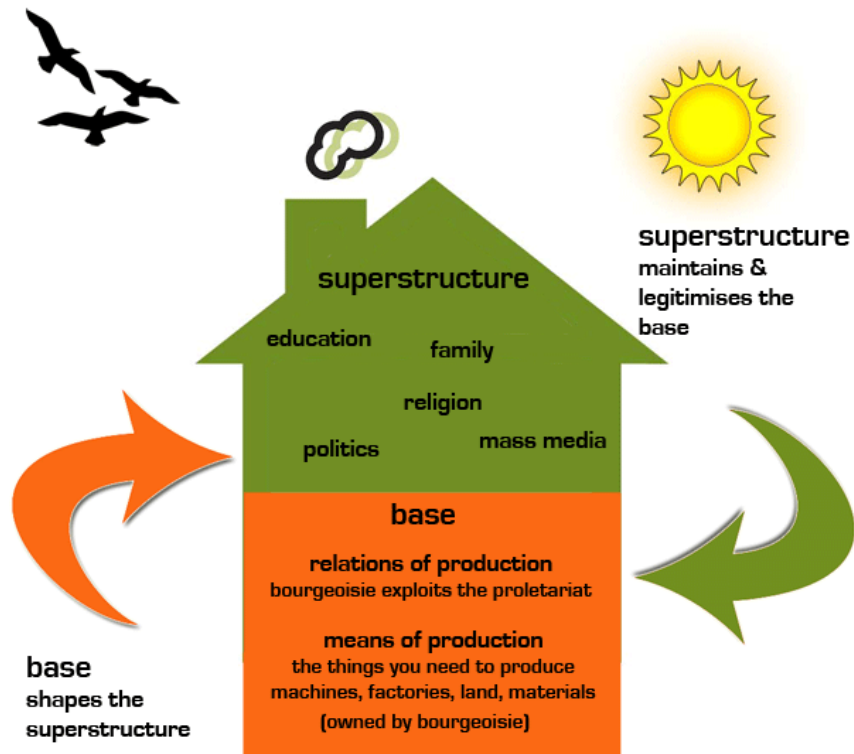


Marx and Polanyi agree on this.....but Marx saw exploitation in all traditional historical economic relations



Market Economy

C. Base and Superstructure: Class Ideas (Ideology) to defend Class Rule



1. Base (Mode of Production) gives rise to superstructure (ideology and religion)
2. Superstructure supports the base
3. Examples.....

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CAPITALISM

WE RULE YOU

WE FOOL YOU

WE SHOOT AT YOU

WE EAT FOR YOU

WE WORK FOR ALL

WE FEED ALL

PYRAMID OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM

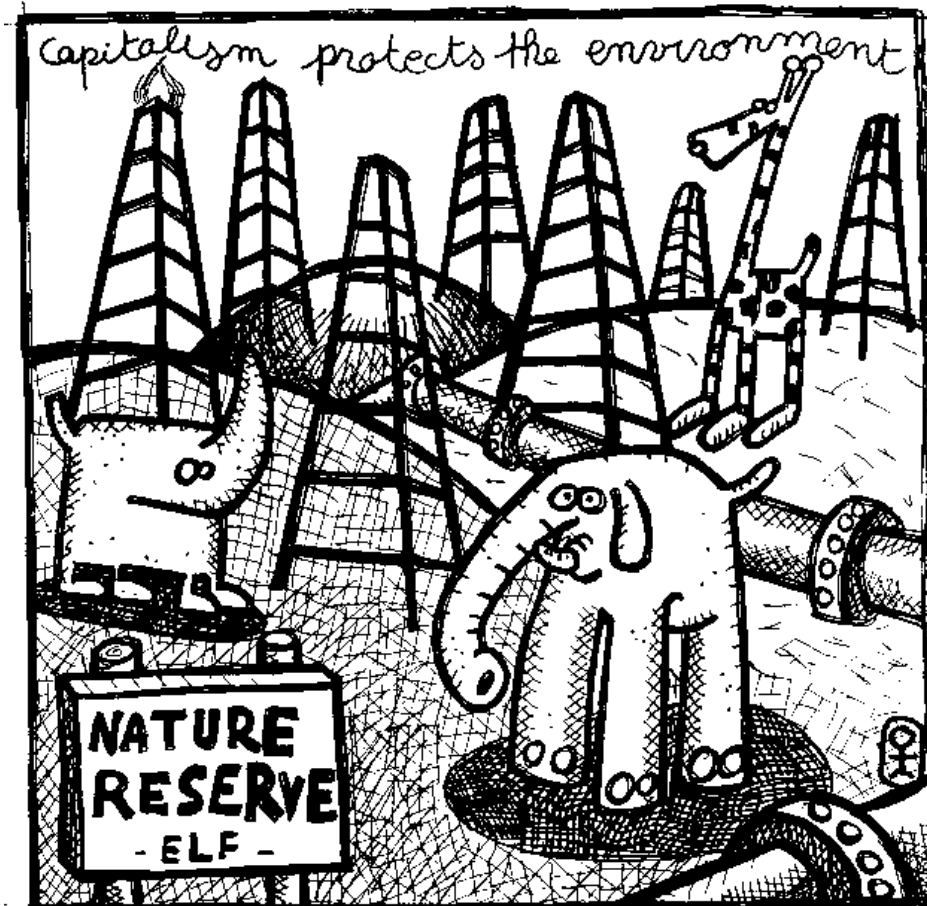
This is why Marx said, that religion is
the opiate of the people



Illusion of freedom....reality of the sweatshop



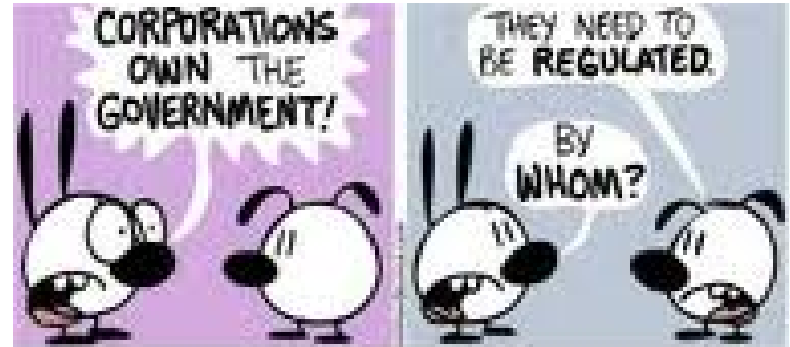
example: Bourgeois Economics:” an Ideology to Defend Capitalism



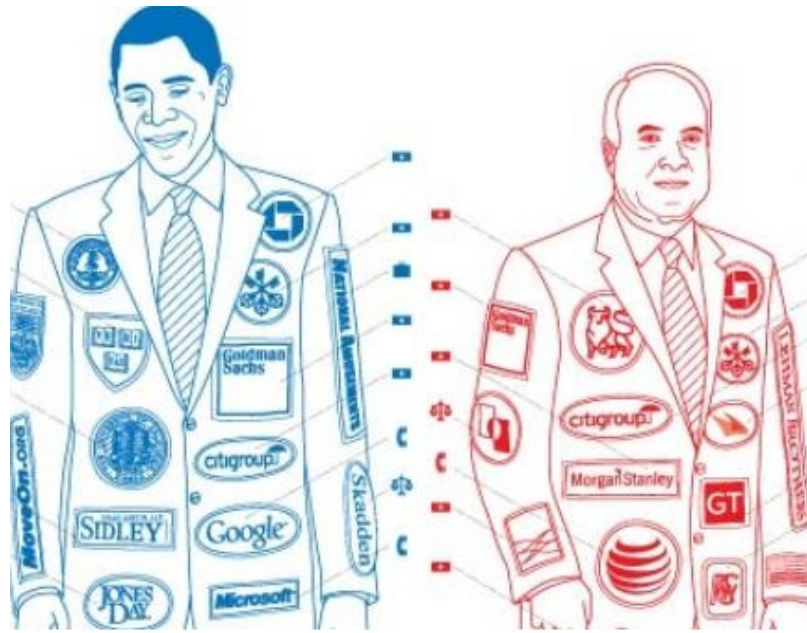
Another view of Base and Superstructure:



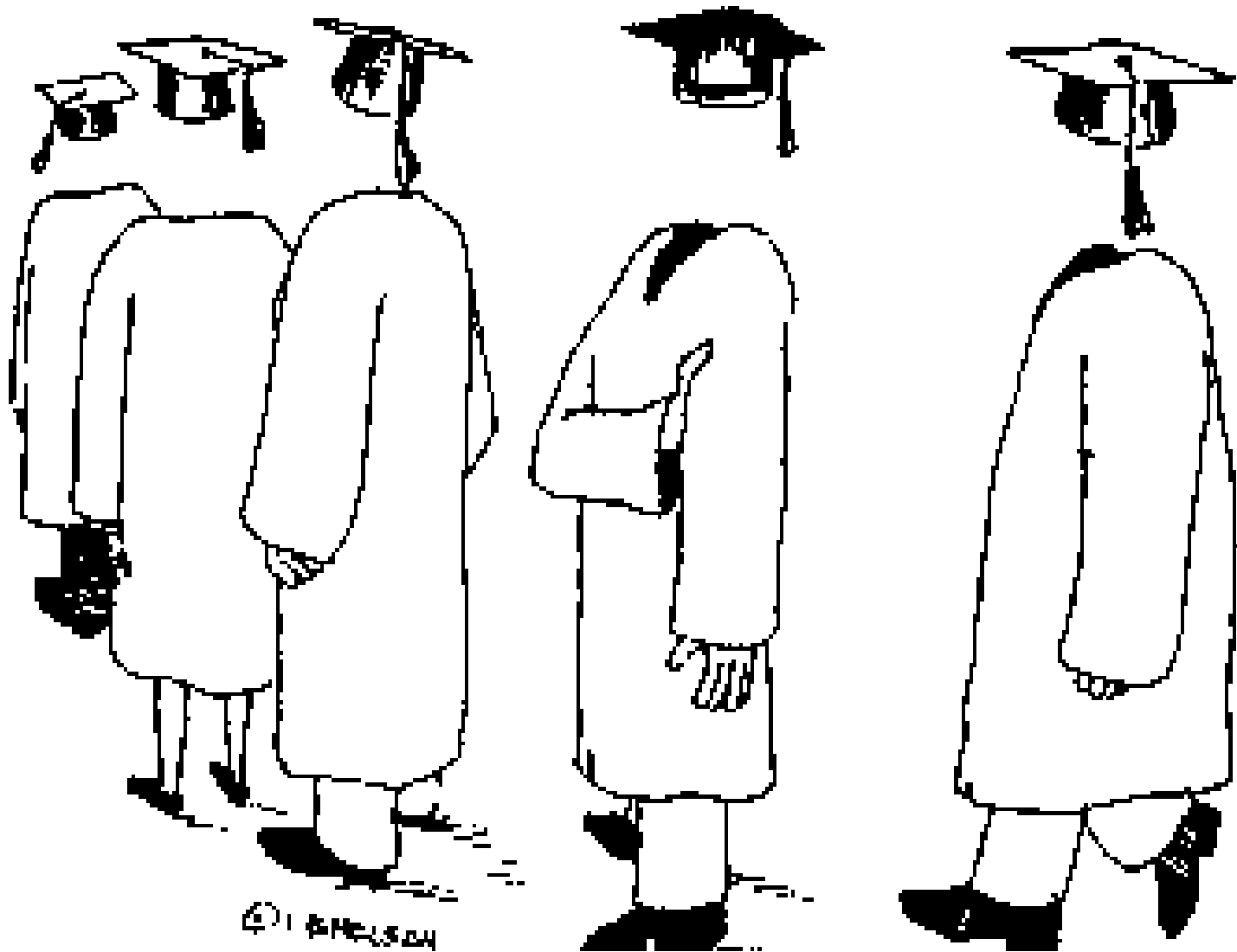
Theories of the “state” and Theory of the “neutral” state



Marx believed that American politicians are “subordinated” to capitalism



Example: Ideology of Education

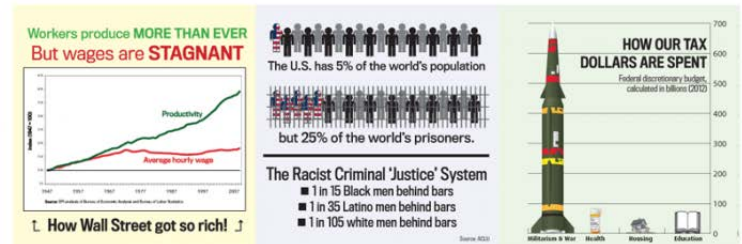
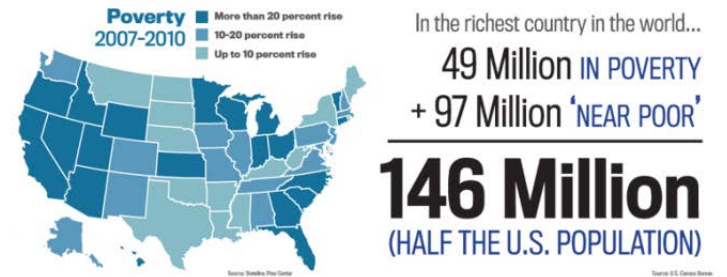
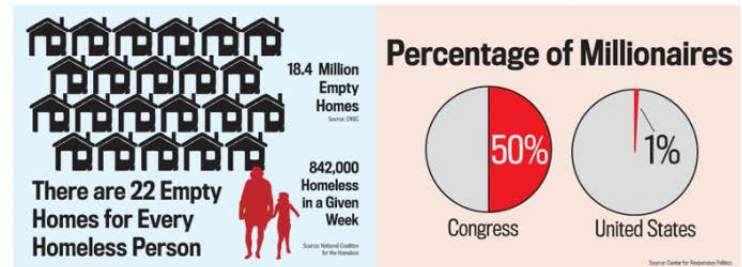


III. Method of Historical Materialism (cont.)

D. "Law of Change": Class contradictions and transformation in Modes of Production

THE ABSURD CONTRADICTIONS OF **CAPITALISM**

by LiberationNews.org



IV. Marx and Engels Interpretation of History

A. Primitive Communism

B. Private Property → agriculture
(empire→feudalism)→

C. small industry (commercial capitalism)→industrial
revolution (capitalism)

D. Capitalism→workers revolution→

Communism

