



MARX, ENGELS, AND MARXISMS

Marxism, Religion, and Emancipatory Politics

Edited by
Graeme Kirkpatrick
Peter McMylor
Simin Fadaee

palgrave
macmillan

Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

Series Editors

Marcello Musto, York University, Toronto, ON, Canada

Terrell Carver, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

The Marx renaissance is underway on a global scale. Wherever the critique of capitalism re-emerges, there is an intellectual and political demand for new, critical engagements with Marxism. The peer-reviewed series *Marx, Engels and Marxisms* (edited by Marcello Musto & Terrell Carver, with Babak Amini, Francesca Antonini, Paula Rauhala & Kohei Saito as Assistant Editors) publishes monographs, edited volumes, critical editions, reprints of old texts, as well as translations of books already published in other languages. Our volumes come from a wide range of political perspectives, subject matters, academic disciplines and geographical areas, producing an eclectic and informative collection that appeals to a diverse and international audience. Our main areas of focus include: the oeuvre of Marx and Engels, Marxist authors and traditions of the 19th and 20th centuries, labour and social movements, Marxist analyses of contemporary issues, and reception of Marxism in the world.

Graeme Kirkpatrick · Peter McMylor ·
Simin Fadaee
Editors

Marxism, Religion, and Emancipatory Politics

palgrave
macmillan

Editors

Graeme Kirkpatrick
Department of Sociology
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

Peter McMylor
Department of Sociology
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

Simin Fadaee
Department of Sociology
University of Manchester
Manchester, UK

ISSN 2524-7123

ISSN 2524-7131 (electronic)

Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

ISBN 978-3-030-91641-1

ISBN 978-3-030-91642-8 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91642-8>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer
Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the
Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights
of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on
microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and
retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology
now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc.
in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such
names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for
general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and informa-
tion in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither
the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with
respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been
made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps
and institutional affiliations.

Cover image: © Simin Fadaee

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature
Switzerland AG

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

TITLES PUBLISHED

1. Terrell Carver & Daniel Blank, *A Political History of the Editions of Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts*, 2014.
2. Terrell Carver & Daniel Blank, *Marx and Engels's "German Ideology" Manuscripts: Presentation and Analysis of the "Feuerbach chapter,"* 2014.
3. Alfonso Maurizio Iacono, *The History and Theory of Fetishism*, 2015.
4. Paresh Chattopadhyay, *Marx's Associated Mode of Production: A Critique of Marxism*, 2016.
5. Domenico Losurdo, *Class Struggle: A Political and Philosophical History*, 2016.
6. Frederick Harry Pitts, *Critiquing Capitalism Today: New Ways to Read Marx*, 2017.
7. Ranabir Samaddar, *Karl Marx and the Postcolonial Age*, 2017.
8. George Comninel, *Alienation and Emancipation in the Work of Karl Marx*, 2018.
9. Jean-Numa Ducange & Razmig Keucheyan (Eds.), *The End of the Democratic State: Nicos Poulantzas, a Marxism for the 21st Century*, 2018.
10. Robert X. Ware, *Marx on Emancipation and Socialist Goals: Retrieving Marx for the Future*, 2018.
11. Xavier LaFrance & Charles Post (Eds.), *Case Studies in the Origins of Capitalism*, 2018.

12. John Gregson, *Marxism, Ethics, and Politics: The Work of Alasdair MacIntyre*, 2018.
13. Vladimir Puzone & Luis Felipe Miguel (Eds.), *The Brazilian Left in the 21st Century: Conflict and Conciliation in Peripheral Capitalism*, 2019.
14. James Muldoon & Gaard Kets (Eds.), *The German Revolution and Political Theory*, 2019.
15. Michael Brie, *Rediscovering Lenin: Dialectics of Revolution and Metaphysics of Domination*, 2019.
16. August H. Nimtz, *Marxism versus Liberalism: Comparative Real-Time Political Analysis*, 2019.
17. Gustavo Moura de Cavalcanti Mello and Mauricio de Souza Sabadini (Eds.), *Financial Speculation and Fictitious Profits: A Marxist Analysis*, 2019.
18. Shaibal Gupta, Marcello Musto & Babak Amini (Eds.), *Karl Marx's Life, Ideas, and Influences: A Critical Examination on the Bicentenary*, 2019.
19. Igor Shoikhedbrod, *Revisiting Marx's Critique of Liberalism: Rethinking Justice, Legality, and Rights*, 2019.
20. Juan Pablo Rodríguez, *Resisting Neoliberal Capitalism in Chile: The Possibility of Social Critique*, 2019.
21. Kaan Kangal, *Friedrich Engels and the Dialectics of Nature*, 2020.
22. Victor Wallis, *Socialist Practice: Histories and Theories*, 2020.
23. Alfonso Maurizio Iacono, *The Bourgeois and the Savage: A Marxian Critique of the Image of the Isolated Individual in Defoe, Turgot and Smith*, 2020.
24. Terrell Carver, *Engels before Marx*, 2020.
25. Jean-Numa Ducange, *Jules Guesde: The Birth of Socialism and Marxism in France*, 2020.
26. Antonio Oliva, Ivan Novara & Angel Oliva (Eds.), *Marx and Contemporary Critical Theory: The Philosophy of Real Abstraction*, 2020.
27. Francesco Biagi, *Henri Lefebvre's Critical Theory of Space*, 2020.
28. Stefano Petrucciani, *The Ideas of Karl Marx: A Critical Introduction*, 2020.
29. Terrell Carver, *The Life and Thought of Friedrich Engels, 30th Anniversary Edition*, 2020.
30. Giuseppe Vacca, *Alternative Modernities: Antonio Gramsci's Twentieth Century*, 2020.

31. Kevin B. Anderson, Kieran Durkin & Heather Brown (Eds.), *Raya Dunayevskaya's Intersectional Marxism: Race, Gender, and the Dialectics of Liberation*, 2020.
32. Marco Di Maggio, *The Rise and Fall of Communist Parties in France and Italy*, 2020.
33. Farhang Rajaei, *Presence and the Political*, 2021.
34. Ryuji Sasaki, *A New Introduction to Karl Marx: New Materialism, Critique of Political Economy, and the Concept of Metabolism*, 2021.
35. Kohei Saito (Ed.), *Reexamining Engels's Legacy in the 21st Century*, 2021.
36. Paresh Chattopadhyay, *Socialism in Marx's Capital: Towards a De-alienated World*, 2021.
37. Marcello Musto, *Karl Marx's Writings on Alienation*, 2021.
38. Michael Brie & Jörn Schüttrumpf, *Rosa Luxemburg: A Revolutionary Marxist at the Limits of Marxism*, 2021.
39. Stefano Petrucciani, *Theodor W. Adorno's Philosophy, Society, and Aesthetics*, 2021.
40. Miguel Vedda, *Siegfried Kracauer, or, The Allegories of Improvisation: Critical Studies*, 2021.
41. Ronaldo Munck, *Rethinking Development: Marxist Perspectives*, 2021.
42. Jean-Numa Ducange & Elisa Marcobelli (Eds.), *Selected Writings of Jean Jaurès: On Socialism, Pacifism and Marxism*, 2021.
43. Elisa Marcobelli, *Internationalism Toward Diplomatic Crisis: The Second International and French, German and Italian Socialists*, 2021.
44. James Steinhoff, *Automation and Autonomy: Labour, Capital and Machines in the Artificial Intelligence Industry*, 2021.
45. Juan Dal Maso, *Hegemony and Class Struggle: Trotsky, Gramsci and Marxism*, 2021.
46. Gianfranco Ragona & Monica Quirico, *Frontier Socialism: Self-organisation and Anti-capitalism*, 2021.
47. Tsuyoshi Yuki, *Socialism, Markets and the Critique of Money: The Theory of "Labour Notes,"* 2021.
48. Gustavo Moura de Cavalcanti Mello & Henrique Pereira Braga (Eds.), *Wealth and Poverty in Contemporary Brazilian Capitalism*, 2021.
49. Paolo Favilli, *Historiography and Marxism: Innovations in Mid-Century Italy*, 2021.

50. Levy del Aguila Marchena, *Communism, Political Power and Personal Freedom in Marx*, 2021.
51. V Geetha, *Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar and the Question of Socialism in India*, 2021.
52. Satoshi Matsui, *Normative Theories of Liberalism and Socialism: Marxist Analysis of Values*, 2022.
53. Kei Ehara (Ed.), *Japanese Discourse on the Marxian Theory of Finance*, 2022.
54. Achim Szepanski, *Financial Capital in the 21st Century*, 2022.
55. Stephen Maher, *Corporate Capitalism and the Integral State: General Electric and a Century of American Power*, 2022.

TITLES FORTHCOMING

- Vesa Oittinen, *Marx's Russian Moment*
- Kolja Lindner, *Marx, Marxism and the Question of Eurocentrism*
- Adriana Petra, *Intellectuals and Communist Culture: Itineraries, Problems and Debates in Post-war Argentina*
- George C. Comninel, *The Feudal Foundations of Modern Europe*
- Spencer A. Leonard, *Marx, the India Question, and the Crisis of Cosmopolitanism*
- Joe Collins, *Applying Marx's Capital to the 21st century*
- Jeong Seongjin, *Korean Capitalism in the 21st Century: Marxist Analysis and Alternatives*
- Marcello Mustè, *Marxism and Philosophy of Praxis: An Italian Perspective from Labriola to Gramsci*
- Shannon Brincat, *Dialectical Dialogues in Contemporary World Politics: A Meeting of Traditions in Global Comparative Philosophy*
- Francesca Antonini, *Reassessing Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire: Dictatorship, State, and Revolution*
- Thomas Kemple, *Capital after Classical Sociology: The Faustian Lives of Social Theory*
- Xavier Vigna, *A Political History of Factories in France: The Workers' Insubordination of 1968*
- Attila Melegh, *Anti-Migrant Populism in Eastern Europe and Hungary: A Marxist Analysis*

- Marie-Cecile Bouju, *A Political History of the Publishing Houses of the French Communist Party*
- Peter McMylor, Graeme Kirkpatrick & Simin Fadaee (Eds.), *Marxism, Religion, and Emancipatory Politics*
- Mauro Buccheri, *Radical Humanism for the Left: The Quest for Meaning in Late Capitalism*
- Rémy Herrera, *Confronting Mainstream Economics to Overcome Capitalism*
- Tamás Krausz, Eszter Bartha (Eds.), *Socialist Experiences in Eastern Europe: A Hungarian Perspective*
- Martin Cortés, *Marxism, Time and Politics: On the Autonomy of the Political*
- João Antonio de Paula, Huga da Gama Cerqueira, Eduardo da Motta e Albuquerque & Leonardo de Deus, *Marxian Economics for the 21st Century: Revaluating Marx's Critique of Political Economy*
- Zhi Li, *The Concept of the Individual in the Thought of Karl Marx*
- Lelio Demichelis, *Marx, Alienation and Techno-capitalism*
- Dong-Min Rieu, *A Mathematical Approach to Marxian Value Theory: Time, Money, and Labor Productivity*
- Salvatore Prinzi, *Representation, Expression, and Institution: The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and Castoriadis*
- Agon Hamza, *Slavoj Žižek and the Reconstruction of Marxism*
- Éric Aunoble, *French Views on the Russian Revolution*
- Terrell Carver, Smail Rasic (Eds.), *Friedrich Engels for the 21st Century: Perspectives and Problems*
- Patrizia Dogliani, *A Political History of the International Union of Socialist Youth*
- Alexandros Chrysis, *The Marx of Communism: Setting Limits in the Realm of Communism*
- Paul Raekstad, *Karl Marx's Realist Critique of Capitalism: Freedom, Alienation, and Socialism*
- Alexis Cukier, *Democratic Work: Radical Democracy and the Future of Labour*
- Christoph Henning, *Theories of Alienation: From Rousseau to the Present*
- Daniel Egan, *Capitalism, War, and Revolution: A Marxist Analysis*
- Genevieve Ritchie, Sara Carpenter & Shahrzad Mojab (Eds.), *Marxism and Migration*

- Emanuela Conversano, *Capital from Afar: Anthropology and Critique of Political Economy in the Late Marx*
- Marcello Musto, *Rethinking Alternatives with Marx*
- Vincenzo Mele, *City and Modernity in George Simmel and Walter Benjamin: Fragments of Metropolis*
- David Norman Smith, *Self-Emancipation: Marx's Unfinished Theory of the Working Class*
- José Ricardo Villanueva Lira, *Marxism and the Origins of International Relations*
- Bertel Nygaard, *Marxism, Labor Movements, and Historiography*
- Marcos Del Roio, *Gramsci and the Emancipation of the Subaltern Classes*
- Marcelo Badaró, *The Working Class from Marx to Our Times*
- Tomonaga Tairako, *A New Perspective on Marx's Philosophy and Political Economy*
- Matthias Bohlender, Anna-Sophie Schönfelder, & Matthias Spekker, *Truth and Revolution in Marx's Critique of Society*
- Mauricio Vieira Martins, *Marx, Spinoza and Darwin on Philosophy: Against Religious Perspectives of Transcendence*
- Jean Vigreux, Roger Martelli, & Serge Wolikow, *One Hundred Years of History of the French Communist Party*
- Aditya Nigam, *Border-Marxisms and Historical Materialism*
- Fred Moseley, *Marx's Theory of Value in Chapter 1 of Capital: A Critique of Heinrich's Value-Form Interpretation*
- Armando Boito, *The State, Politics, and Social Classes: Theory and History*
- Anjan Chakrabarti & Anup Dhar, *World of the Third and Hegemonic Capital: Between Marx and Freud*
- Hira Singh, *Annihilation of Caste in India: Ambedkar, Ghandi, and Marx*
- Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro, *An Introduction to Ecosocialism*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors would like to thank the contributing authors for their essays and for their participation in the symposia that formed the basis for this project. Graeme Kirkpatrick thanks Sarah Carling and Colin Craig; Peter McMylor thanks Maria McMylor, Vassily Vorozhishchev and Huw Beynon, and Simin Fadaee thanks Seth Schindler, for their support.

CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------|
| 1 | Rethinking Marxism and Religion for an Emancipatory Future | 1 |
| | Graeme Kirkpatrick, Peter McMylor, and Simin Fadaee | |
| Part I Theory | | |
| 2 | Marx, Critique, Religion | 19 |
| | Graeme Kirkpatrick | |
| 3 | Theology After Marxism? | 39 |
| | Peter Manley Scott | |
| 4 | Marxism and Socialism: Sacred and Profane | 59 |
| | Peter McMylor | |
| Part II Practice | | |
| 5 | Buddhist Socialism in China, 1900–1930: A History and Appraisal | 81 |
| | James Mark Shields | |
| 6 | Marxism, Islam and the Iranian Revolution | 103 |
| | Simin Fadaee | |
| 7 | Marxism and Confucianism in China | 121 |
| | Wenxing Cui | |

| | | |
|-----------|--|------------|
| 8 | Liberation Theology, Bishop Samuel Ruiz and Zapatismo: The Origins of the Uprising | 137 |
| | Obed Frausto and Jason Powell | |
| 9 | Theologies of Struggle, Marxism, and Grassroots Development in the Philippines | 157 |
| | Kathleen Nadeau | |
| 10 | Marxism and Islamism in Egypt: A Re-Examination of the Muslim Brotherhood—Introduction and Overview of the Muslim Brotherhood | 177 |
| | Nadim Mirshak | |
| 11 | Popular Islam and the Movement of the Rif | 201 |
| | Joe Hayns | |
| 12 | The (Im)possibilities of a Hindu Left in Contemporary India | 221 |
| | James Bradbury | |
| 13 | Marxism and Sikhi: Reciprocal Relationship | 241 |
| | Pritam Singh | |
| | Index | 263 |

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Bradbury James Independent Scholar, Manchester, UK

Cui Wenxing Shanghai University of International Business and Economy, Shanghai, China

Fadaee Simin Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Frausto Obed Ball State University, Muncie, IN, USA

Hayns Joe University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

Kirkpatrick Graeme Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

McMylor Peter Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Mirshak Nadim University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Nadeau Kathleen California State University, San Bernardino, CA, USA

Powell Jason Ball State University, Muncie, IN, USA

Scott Peter Manley University of Manchester, Manchester, UK

Shields James Mark Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA, USA

Singh Pritam Oxford Brookes Business School, Oxford, UK



Rethinking Marxism and Religion for an Emancipatory Future

Graeme Kirkpatrick , *Peter McMylor*, and *Simin Fadaee*

The great river of Marxist analysis that flowed through the academy in the 1960s and 70s seemed for a period to have parted into multiple tributaries and then to have dried up completely in the first decade of this century. Since the crash of 2008, there has been a marked revival of interest outside the academy in ideas that might explain what is happening in contemporary society and economy as the official line that casts the state as the cause of all problems has come to seem more and more absurd. Academia itself was also transformed in the years of decline with the consequence that,

G. Kirkpatrick (✉) · P. McMylor · S. Fadaee
Department of Sociology, University of Manchester, Manchester, UK
e-mail: graeme.kirkpatrick@manchester.ac.uk

P. McMylor
e-mail: peter.mcmylor@manchester.ac.uk

S. Fadaee
e-mail: simin.fadaee@manchester.ac.uk

while the interest in the ideas is strong and growing, much of the work being done in sociology and other disciplines remains focused on narrow questions of identity politics, or worse, to be obsessed with trivial aspects of the codification of contemporary life.

This book addresses the question of the relation between Marxism as a theory of the capitalist social whole and religion as a particular kind of response to life within that system. It is timely in light of Marxism's mini revival in the context of the protracted social consequences of capitalism's crisis (witness the works by Eagleton 2011; Therborn 2008; Harvey 2017; Claeys 2018; Carver 2018). A new generation of radical scholars also appear to be inspired by aspects of the Marxist tradition and are theorising the political and social context of radical politics (e.g. Doerre et al. 2015; Dean 2016). As well as revisiting and in some cases extending Marxist theory, much of this scholarship presents a change of tone, in which theory is brought directly to bear upon matters of pressing concern to wider publics (e.g. Hägglund 2019), breaking with the somewhat mournful character of earlier generations of 'critical theory' (Kohlenback & Geuss 2005). The current volume is a contribution to this emergent and important conversation. In 2018, the editors organised a symposium at the University of Manchester on Marxism and religion which in a curious way echoed a famous weekend seminar held also at Manchester in 1956 on radical politics and millenarian religion which had brought together two Marxists: Eric Hobsbawm, Peter Worsley, and the liberal historian Norman Cohn. Hobsbawm and Worsley saw millenarian movements as respectively proto-revolutionary, or potentially anti-imperialist movements, while Cohn, as a liberal anti-communist, saw medieval European millenarian movements as precursors of later totalitarian regimes.¹ Each of these scholars' work reflected the political pressures and understandings of their time. Our context is, of course, different, but the political pressures in relation to religion are if anything more urgent.

¹ All three published their research shortly afterwards in key works, Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebel* (1959), Worsley's classic study of so-called Cargo Cults, *The Trumpet will Sound* (1957/1962) and Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957/1970). Toscano describes this seminar as 'a moment of profound reflection on the social and political dimensions of millenarianism...this was a discussion that remains vital for anyone wishing to come to grips with questions of time, history and fanaticism' (Toscano 2010, pp. 45–46).

Religion has attained a new prominence during the years when Marxism was running dry. In the so-called post-communist societies, for example, organised faith has re-emerged to become a major force in social life. Elsewhere in the world, we see varied patterns of social change in which religious forces enjoy a new prominence. The disillusionment of the Arab Spring, for example, has revealed societies in which perhaps the most coherent and dynamic social forces are associated with various kinds of religious narrative. A key focus of this volume, then, is the Marxist explanation of this resurgence of religion. The enduring character of religious belief is an anomaly for Marxism, which had postulated its disappearance under thoroughly modernised social conditions involving advanced science and material wealth. Most of the chapters that follow address the question of how it happens that, at the end of modernity, in a world society integrated through advanced technology, and sharing a confidence (not itself unproblematic but profoundly shared by much orthodox Marxism) in science, religion turns out to be such a potent social force. That religious views should be so robust and even play an important role in people's efforts to thematise their social experiences and political aspirations seems to be a significant problem for the theory. Several of the chapters address this question of whether Marxism can still explain religion and reflect on whether a different accommodation might not need to be reached, even if it involves a scaling back of the explanatory aspirations of the theory.

Implicit in this suggestion of a scaling back is perhaps a closing of the distance between Marxist theory and religious discourse, so that the former no longer assumes a position of explanatory condescension often ascribed to critical theory.² In order to avoid this, it is important to ask the question in reverse, so to speak, and explore the 'religious' aspects of Marxism. This includes looking at its relationship to religious social movements during its emergence in the nineteenth century, and at the relationship its partial revival in the twenty-first century may have with contemporary post-secular configurations. In both cases, Marxism shares key structural features with religious movements. Moreover, this should not be seen as surprising given that it has been plausibly argued that socialism as a political form emerges, in part, to occupy a religious space created by the perceived crisis of older forms of Christianity in Europe

² See for example, Latour (2013).

around 1800 (Stedman Jones 2010; Breckman 1999; Heinrich 2019). We hypothesise that this isomorphism speaks to a sociological explanation of Marxism itself. Could it be that something of the optimism of contemporary Marxist theory (if that is what it is) reflects the fact that it draws on some of the same energies as revived religion?

One of the most significant roots of a synthesis of Marxist and Christian ideas lie in the decidedly ambiguous attitude towards capitalism that the Catholic Church expressed in the nineteenth century, which led to the development that became known as Catholic social teaching, expressed most famously in the Papal Encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891) subtitled ‘On the conditions of Labour’. While not friendly to socialism, this was critical of free-market capitalism and defended the rights of trade unions. Initially, this movement was largely a Catholic phenomenon, although it later influenced various Protestant denominations (Rowland 2007) and clearly informs later ‘liberation theology’ popular liberation movements (Gutierrez 1974).

On our understanding of the term, Marxism is a body of discourse that is defined by its orientation to and service of human self-emancipation. As Terrel Carver (2018) argues in his reading of Marx, the most coherent interpretation of Marx’s writings on religion, political economy or the state involves close attention to its performative dimension. The meaning of Marxism, rather than being a matter of its position at the tail end of some developments in German metaphysics, is manifest in political positions taken and in the effects of Marx’s statements, including those ostensibly about ‘the dialectic’, in a context defined by political antagonism. The significance of Marxist discourse lies in how it articulates the position of the oppressed and converges in practice with their efforts to free themselves. In this sense, we share Carver’s emphasis, which is less “on what Marx wrote but rather with what he was doing when he wrote what he wrote” (2019, p. 4). What perhaps distinguishes our approach from his is a concern with the sociological dimension to this performative interpretation.

In keeping with this distinctive rationale, the book has two broad themes, with multiple sub-currents. The first broad concern is about Marxism as a theory or philosophy and its relationship to religious thought and ideas. The key questions here are: can Marxism learn from religion? What is the compatibility of religion and Marxist theory? Are there key concepts from theology that Marxism only thought it could do without? How much is Marxist philosophy, morality, ethics really different

from that of world religions? Is Marxism a kind of humanism? Does it negate God with the image of a fully realised human potential, or is its problematic defined outside of, independently of any engagement with theological themes and ideas? Is there a specifically Marxist conception of transcendence? Chapters in the first part of the book are devoted to answering these questions, with reference to contextual analysis of Marx's writings and an effort to relate the findings of that analysis to other bodies of discourse in which the questions above have been posed. These later include existentialism, axiology, post-structuralism, Frankfurt School critical theory and Gramscian political theory.

The second theme is more sociological: how are we to understand contemporary 'religious' movements, manifestations and articulations of Islam in particular, but also Hinduism and Sikhism as well as Christianity, from a Marxist perspective? Is there, or might there be common cause between Marxist praxis and religious social movements, perhaps especially in the global South? Or should Marxist materialists resist any such alliance with religion as inherently conservative force? Chapters in the second part of the book present case studies that address these questions in a range of social contexts where Marxist discourse and praxis have converged with those of different religions. Each analyses that intersection with reference to a strategic understanding of the dynamics of emancipatory politics.

The first group of our contributors, therefore, address the question of how Marxism thus understood may perform better, that is, if Marxism is the translation of theory into activity aimed at facilitating self-emancipation then what are the reflexive implications for it of a world in which religion plays the role just identified? These chapters consider which of its concepts Marxism needs to develop further and ask what its fundamental orientation should be to contemporary, emancipatory social movements that understand themselves in religious terms. In the second section, our authors ask how religious discourse sits in relation to Marxism thus understood, exploring its contribution to the politics of self-emancipation and the importance of this to the Marxist sociological explanation of religion's persistence.

There is, then, a dialectic between the two parts of the book. If Marxism 'explains' religion, it might be argued that its efforts run up against certain internal limits of the phenomenon, which we could be tempted to call the 'deeper questions'. This goes beyond the failure of 'communist' states to 'solve' the problems for which religion was supposed to provide a mere 'salve': alienation; inequality; domination as

the sources of ‘meaninglessness’, etc. As Sartre and others in the Marxist tradition showed, human beings set free still confront the problem of how to fill that freedom. A Marxism that ignores this issue will, in all likelihood, repeat the failures of the past (although much more than this is involved in explaining the failure of East European communism). The essays in the second section address these questions through a series of investigations of social movements in which the concerns of communal self-emancipation and religious belief are entwined to advance specifically Marxist explanations of their successes and limitations. Our contributors each address these issues with reference to different features of a range of local situations, as well as situating local movements in the wider context of globalising capitalism. These analyses each carry implications for how the theory can respond to the questions raised in part one. It is our hope that the reader will find it meaningful to reflect on whether progressive Christian farmers in the Philippines, for example, have, by instituting a practical critique of capitalist agriculture, addressed the issue of a fundamental re-sort of the world, or better, made the possibility of a more meaningful way of life tangible.

In light of this, it seems pertinent to ask if Marxism as a political force, is strictly secular in its appeal, essentially allied with liberalism, and fundamentally opposed to the communitarian values of religious politics. Perhaps developing an emancipatory politics for our times requires an alliance with religion that draws on the enthusiasm (and other features) of religious discourse. Traditionally, Marxism has been suspicious of these qualities, viewing them as a possible source of ‘irrationality’. It is important to ask what, if anything, is the place of spiritual and religious ideas in the alternative society envisaged by socialists? If religion is more salient than before, this may mean it becomes a marker of social division in ways that were less important in the past. In Marxist perspective, capitalist society fosters divisions when they are functional for social domination (divide and rule). The essays in section two share a concern with how we are to understand the mesh of discrimination against religious groups with other kinds of division along class, race and gender lines.

While the problems and issues highlighted here pertain largely to our globalised social condition, our contributors in part two all focus on local situations in which variables specific to each case play a key role. What also distinguishes them from much of recent sociology is Marxism’s concern to relate local conflicts and contradictions to wider social

problems and historical trajectories. Marxism's status as a kind of meta-theory that connects up the various struggles and renders them intelligible in light of each other is essential to its identity as the theory of human self-emancipation. The chapters in part two each attempt to maintain a balance between detailed examination of cases and principles and the wider goals of Marxist explanation set out in part one, and to explore the issues discussed there in their concrete inter-relatedness.

Marxism first appears as part of a movement within European philosophy, specifically a movement that exists in tension with religion, especially Christianity and Judaism, and, with Marx and his contemporaries, turns aggressively against it in the middle of the nineteenth century. Marx himself was satisfied that religion was a retrograde force, reflecting the continuing hold of ideas from the past on minds in the present—minds which, if freed of it, would seek social change in the future. He reached this view in the course of his early journey through the works of G.W.F. Hegel, for whom religion expressed fundamental truth in terms that made it presentable to society at specific stages of development. Hence, any given religion is both embedded in and specific to its historical context and transcendent of it; it is part of the unfolding of the Hegelian Idea in history.

If religion is true, then this places it ahead of most philosophy, which, according to Hegel, seeks to comprehend the role of transcendent structures in the present but consistently falls into self-contradiction, precisely because it cannot acknowledge the role of thinking, of the Idea, in those very structures. Hence, to use the most obvious example, Spinoza offers an accurate vision of the relationship between reason and the world by presenting a mathematised conception of the structure of being, but cannot account for change because he collapses divine agency into being itself. Both philosophy and religion, then, are waiting for Hegel to present the highest form of thought, one that understands being and God in dynamic relation to each other and views that relationship as the source of rational structure in the real.

Hegel's monumental vision started to unravel when Marx's generation found themselves—their careers, their freedom, their lives—thwarted by outmoded social and political structures. In the terms of Hegel's theory, such impediments ought not to exist, at least not for long, since the unfolding of history ought to be opening up spaces for the brightest young minds to play their collective parts. Instead, the very vision of a rationally structured social whole was deployed against them; they were

at fault since the state was the highest expression of Spirit and, moreover, the authority of the church increasingly merged with that of the state to curb their activities. Marx's generation experienced this primarily as a limitation on what they were allowed to think.

They responded, of course, with devastating criticism of religion and of the philosophy (Hegel's) that seemed both to elevate and undermine it all at once. Breaking the spell of religion was, it seemed, essential to overturn the old ideas that held German society back. Achieving that led the generation of thinkers that included several of Marx's youthful friends—Bruno Bauer, Moses Hess and above all Ludwig Feuerbach—into critical works that targeted religion and Hegel's philosophy alike. In the main, Marx saw himself as inheriting their conclusions while emphasising the principle that changing ideas was not enough; action to bring about concrete social change was necessary. For this reason, we find Marx near the start of his writing career noting that, 'For Germany, the criticism of religion is essentially completed; and the criticism of religion is the prerequisite of all criticism' (1992, p. 243).

Each of our contributors points out, in slightly different ways, that Marx's confidence that in the work of the Young Hegelians philosophy and politics had reached a new starting point by demolishing religion was misplaced. Essentially, this was because eyeing up possible futures in a world free of suffering is much less straightforward than it might appear: what are we to do with freedom and how will we make it meaningful? For most people throughout history, answering these questions has proved daunting, sufficiently so that the reassurances offered by religion seemed necessary. For all that this book foregrounds the intersection of Marxism and religion in a range of contexts, we should not forget that Marx rejected religion for good reasons. In particular, the alliance of church, state and dominant economic forces has served elites well for centuries. The significance of Liberation Theology in the post-World War II period and its connections to changes in Catholic thought that culminated in the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which fundamentally changed the relationship of Catholicism to at least some aspects of modernity has been plausibly understood as the most significant development in the Catholic Church since the Reformation. In regard to theory, what this meant was some openness towards aspects of secular thought in philosophy and social science, which in practice meant that those Catholics active in trade unions or social movements were now emboldened to learn from their secular comrades, including Marxists. The documents of the

Council articulated more fully than ever before a theology based on ‘the dignity of the human person’ and linked this to support for key aspects of what had become known as ‘human rights’; it was this in particular that allowed a strong strand of liberal or progressive Catholicism to develop sometimes, but not always, overlapping with the stronger articulation of Liberation Theology, to critique various forms of authoritarian government, especially the military dictatorships that had begun to dominate much of Latin America, but also later such governments in Africa and Asia.

The chapters in the first section are mainly theoretical and reflect on Marxism in relation to this historical function of religion and, in different ways, assess the viability of Marx’s theory as a kind of substitute for religious belief, understood in these terms. Graeme Kirkpatrick’s essay focuses on the category of critique itself, as this was taken over by Marx from his idealist philosophical predecessors. Adopting a genealogical perspective on critique inspired by Michel Foucault, the chapter argues that Marx attempted to repurpose a disposition and a practice from philosophy as weapons in the class struggle. Although Marx conceives this as a materialist move, Kirkpatrick argues that Marx’s critique retains strong connections with the philosophical tradition in which it was forged and, in particular, that it rests upon a form of subjectivity that was itself formed by the development of Christianity, with its emphasis on faithfulness to a revealed truth, bearing witness and the redemptive value of suffering.

Writing from a standpoint that insists on theoretical parity between theology and Marxist insights, Peter Scott interrogates Marx’s early writings to identify the precise sense in which his critique of Feuerbach’s critique of Hegel takes Marx to a new philosophical position. He finds that this is not, properly speaking, a position that is beyond theology but rather one that is open to further engagement with it. Marx pushes beyond Feuerbach to recommend action in the world, connecting his ideas with social agency aimed at building community out of otherwise ‘meaningless humans’. As Scott points out, this project is in fact the same as that of theology. If Marxism provides clarity for theology on the nature of its social problematic, it is equally true that Marxism requires something like what Scott calls the *preterdeterminism* of religious thought: the structure that we seek to implant in the present is one that, while by definition is not yet present, nonetheless hails us from the future and asks us to believe in it. The alternative is not, Scott points out, inaction, because

failing to work for social change and renouncing belief in a better future is, of course, choosing meaninglessness.

Peter McMylor's contribution to the volume deepens the notion of a structural similarity between Marx's theory and the religious beliefs that informed the fundamental 'sort' of existents from values at the basis of Western civilisation. Drawing on Alastair MacIntyre's characterisation of Marx's theory as confused between its claims to scientificity on one side and its call to action in the name of some kind of ethical imperative on the other, McMylor argues that Marxism has been 'in denial' about its own status as a secular theology. In order to overcome its contradictions and retain its character as a politically progressive movement, it must recognise that, as MacIntyre points out, Marxism's real faith resides in the substance of the world, that is, it converges with utopianism in anticipating a change in the nature of the real. Drawing on axiological sociology, which traces the history of values as they are separated from reality over the historical long-term, McMylor develops this idea into a deep-sociological reading of Marx's apocalypticism, according to which the idea of revolution is an immanent necessity of reality itself.

In his contribution to the volume James Mark Shields notes that while Marx believes he has advanced the cause of critique by accepting its repudiation of religion as given and then applying it to other historical impediments to human emancipation, the real effect of his efforts at breaking down socially efficacious illusions is to restore us to the scene of religion. Destroying the false ideas that keep us apart and make us view one another as competitors or worse leads us to recognise the challenges of building community. This is the problematic of many religions and in his chapter Shields shows that it creates an immediate affinity between Marx's problematic and that of political Buddhism in early twentieth-century China. Within 40 years of Marx's passing thinkers around the world were already identifying points of connection between them, even notwithstanding the overt atheism of Engels and Lenin.

The majority of the studies in the second part of the collection refer to this process of the arrival of Marxist ideas in different parts of the world. Interestingly, as soon as it arrives in a new place, the theory interacts and bonds with a pre-existing stock of ideas, each changing the other reciprocally. The details of this and how it plays out are contingent upon historical, social and political factors specific to each situation. For example, Marxism in its Chinese form wins control of the state apparatus by 1949, while in parts of the Middle East, its fate is bound up

with those of movements that mostly fail to secure power. As the people involved come to occupy different social positions and, above all, attempt to achieve different things with their ideas, so they vary their articulations of Marxist theory, with different themes coming to the fore. In the process, ‘Marxism’ comes to signify very different things in each context, stretching its identity, perhaps even breaking it up.

One reaction to this would be to insist on a pure version of Marxist ideas and political praxis, which refuses association with religious movements. This strategy, however, is itself influenced by the continuing presence of religion and religious beliefs and sentiments in society. It is one thing to proclaim that the religious element in politics is over, quite another to be obliged to keep repeating that observation for a period of years, with consequences for the tenor and character of the Marxist party that does so.

In Simin Fadaee’s chapter, she describes how a faction of the Iranian left repudiated religion in this way, becoming increasingly extreme in their methods. The main focus of her analysis, however, is on the interpenetration of Marxist and religious discourses in Iran. Focusing on the works of Ali Shariati in particular, she shows how he incorporated Marxist insights on the historical process and the fundamental structures of capitalist society into his thinking. At the same time, however, Shariati rounds on Marxism for its neglect of the question of culture, that is, for lacking an account of how humans make meaning. This is important not only with respect to the socialist future but as a dimension of ongoing struggle. In Iran in the 1960s and 70s, *gharbzadegi* or ‘westoxification’, the domination of everyday life and of thinking by the symbols and icons of capitalist consumerism (a semiotic soup made with Western ingredients), had already been targeted by Islamic political actors. The power of this critique and its resonance with large numbers of people in Iran corresponds to a gap or silence in Marxist discourse. Fadaee shows that Shariati stitched the two systems together, combining an economic and social critique of capitalist exploitation with a progressive articulation of Shi’ism against Western cultural domination. Fadaee’s analysis shows how the political articulation of Shi’ism was in turn informed by Marxist ideas concerning the achievement of social class consciousness. The dialectic reverberates a step further when that process is itself described in terms of spiritual progress as understood in Shiism. Ultimately, of course, what happened in Iran was a revolution in which reactionary religious forces benefiting