

## KARL MARX

**Team:** Raging Proletariat

**Position:** Long on

**Status:** Infectious Nosferatu



THINKER  
IN  
BOXES

Karl Marx (1818–eternity) is not the monster under the bed. However, he may very well be a vampire. Even though he supposedly died in 1883, mobs with torches, credit cards, and wooden stakes are still running around the countryside chasing after him and the people he's bitten with his evil theories. Seems a bit extreme to me, but I don't read those vampire books that teenage girls really like, so what do I really know about vampires?

In addition to the very scary beard, there were plenty of reasons Marx raised the hackles of his contemporaries. The most important of those reasons, however, was probably embodied in the idea of *praxis*, which can be roughly thought of as a commitment not just to pursuing knowledge but to putting that knowledge into committed action. Thus, Marx wasn't just a theorist who criticized capitalism and argued that the contradictions inherent in its dynamics would cause a revolt against it and the governments that were dependent on it. He was a radical who was trying to change the world by putting those theories into action. In fact, it would be fair to say that he was hell-bent on changing the world.

Marx was active in socialist meetings. He published articles and essays critical of the very existence of governments. He edited several publications and managed to get pretty much all of the papers and journals he worked for banned or shut down because of what he printed. He set up the Communist Correspondence Committee to help link socialist leaders across Europe, and then he followed that up with the Communist League. The league's stated purpose was to overthrow pretty much everything capitalistic and create a society without private property. That was not real popular with the people who had stuff and liked having stuff. Marx was so unpopular with people who liked their stuff that he was chased out of Prussia, France, Belgium, and then France again. Seriously, what do you have to do to get chased out of Belgium?