Introduction

1. The Marx revival

If an author's eternal youth consists in his capacity to keep stimulating new ideas, then it may be said that Karl Marx has without question remained young.

He has even been back in fashion since the outbreak, in 2008, of the latest crisis of capitalism. Contrary to the predictions after the fall of the Berlin wall, when he was consigned to perpetual oblivion, Marx's ideas are once more the object of analysis, development and debate. Many have begun to ask new questions about a thinker who was often falsely identified with 'actually existing socialism' and then curtly brushed aside after 1989.

Prestigious newspapers and journals with a wide audience of readers have described Marx as a highly topical and far-sighted theorist. Almost everywhere, he is now the theme of university courses and international conferences. His writings, reprinted or brought out in new editions, have reappeared on bookshop shelves, and the study of his work, after more than twenty years of neglect, has gathered increasing momentum, sometimes producing important, ground-breaking results.[1] Of particular value for an overall reassessment of Marx's work was the resumed publication in 1998 of the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA²), the historical-critical edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels.

The dissemination of their *oeuvre* is a long and tortuous story. After Marx's death, in 1883, Friedrich Engels [1820–1895] was the first to dedicate himself to the very difficult task – because the material was dispersed, the language obscure and the handwriting illegible – of editing his friend's legacy. His work

[1] For a survey of the main recent additions to the literature, see the section 'Marx's Global Reception Today', in Marcello Musto (ed.), *Marx for Today*. London: Routledge, 2012, pp. 170–234. Cf. also Marcello Musto (ed.), *The Marx Revival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2019.

34434.indb 1 25/01/2018 10:17

concentrated on the reconstruction and selection of original materials, the publication of unpublished or incomplete texts, and the republication or translation of work that had already appeared in print. His priority was the completion of *Capital*, of which Marx had published only Volume I in his lifetime.

Two years after Engels's death, in 1897, the Italian socialist Antonio Labriola [1843–1904] asked: 'Were the writings of Marx and Engels [...] ever read in their entirety by anyone outside of the group of close friends and disciples [...] of the authors themselves?' His conclusions were unequivocal: 'Up to now, it seems to have been a privilege of initiates to read all the writings of the founders of scientific socialism'; the propagation of 'historical materialism' had involved 'endless equivocations, misunderstandings, grotesque alterations, strange disguises and unfounded inventions'.[2] In fact, as historical research later demonstrated, the belief that Marx and Engels had really been read was itself part of a hagiographic myth;[3] many of their texts were rare or difficult to find even in the original language. The proposal of the Italian scholar to publish 'a full critical edition of all the writings of Marx and Engels' was a stark necessity. For Labriola, what was needed were neither anthologies nor a posthumous canon. Rather, 'all the political and scientific activity, all the literary production, even occasional, of the two founders of critical socialism, needs to be placed at the disposal of readers [...] because it speaks directly to anyone who has the desire to read them'.[4] More than 120 years later, this ambition has still not been realized.

After the death of Engels, the natural executor of the complete works of Marx and Engels was the German Social Democratic Party (SPD): it had possession of their literary bequest, and its leaders, Karl Kautsky [1854–1938] and Eduard Bernstein [1850–1932], had the greatest linguistic and theoretical competence. Nevertheless, political conflicts within the party not only impeded publication of the imposing mass of Marx's unpublished works, but also led to a scattering of the manuscripts that undermined any idea of a systematic edition.[5] The SPD

[2] Antonio Labriola, *Socialism and philosophy*. Chicago: C.H. Kerr & Company, 1907, pp. 16–18.

[3] Marx's biographers Boris Nikolaevskij and Otto Maenchen-Helfen correctly state, in the foreword to their book, that 'of the thousands of socialists, maybe only one has read an economic work of Marx; of the thousands of anti-Marxists, not even one has read Marx'. Cf. *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*. Philadelphia/London: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1936, p. v.

[4] Labriola, *Socialism and philosophy*, pp. 22–3.

[5] Cf. Maximilien Rubel, *Bibliographie des oeuvres de Karl Marx*. Paris: Rivière, 1956, p. 27.

did not sponsor one, and indeed it treated the literary legacy of Marx and Engels with the utmost negligence.[6] None of its theoreticians bothered to compile a list of their writings, or even methodically to collect their voluminous correspondence that was such a valuable source of clarification, sometimes even expansion, of their thought.

The first attempt to publish the complete works of Marx and Engels, the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe* (MEGA), was made only in the 1920s, in the Soviet Union, thanks mainly to the tireless initiative of David Ryazanov [1870–1938]. In the early 1930s, however, Stalinist purges struck at the main scholars engaged in the edition, and the advent of Nazism in Germany abruptly curtailed further work.

The project of a 'second' MEGA, designed to reproduce all the writings of the two thinkers together with an extensive critical apparatus, got under way in 1975 in East Germany. Following the fall of the Berlin wall, however, this too was interrupted. A difficult period of reorganization ensued, in which new editorial principles were developed and approved, and the publication of MEGA^2 recommenced only in 1998. Since then twenty-six volumes have appeared in print – others are in the course of preparation – containing new versions of certain of Marx's works; all the preparatory manuscripts of *Capital*; correspondence from important periods of his life including a number of letters received; and approximately two hundred notebooks. The latter contain excerpts from books that Marx read over the years and the reflections to which they gave rise. They constitute his critical theoretical workshop, indicating the complex itinerary he followed in the development of his thought and the sources on which he drew in working out his own ideas.[7]

These priceless materials – many of which are available only in German and therefore intended for small circles of researchers – show us an author very different from the one that numerous critics or self-styled followers presented for such a long time. Indeed, the new textual acquisitions in MEGA^2 make it possible to say that, of the classics of political and philosophical thought, Marx

[6] Cf. David Ryazanov, 'Neueste Mitteilungen über den literarischen Nachlaß von Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Sozialismus und der Arbeiterbewegung*, vol. 11 (1925), see esp. pp. 385–6.

[7] Cf. Marcello Musto, 'The Rediscovery of Karl Marx', *International Review of Social History*, vol. 52 (2007), n. 3, pp. 477–98.

34434.indb 3 25/01/2018 10:17

is the author whose profile has changed the most in recent years. The political landscape following the implosion of the Soviet Union has helped to free Marx from the role of figurehead of the state apparatus that was accorded to him there.

Research advances, together with the changed political conditions, therefore suggest that the renewal in the interpretation of Marx's thought is a phenomenon destined to continue.

2. New research paths

Study of the published and as yet unpublished corpus of MEGA[2] nourished the underlying conviction of the present volume: that many paths remain to be explored, and that, despite frequent claims to the contrary, Marx is not at all an author about whom everything has already been said or written.[8] In fact, Marxism has often distorted his thought.

Marx's name was often used to justify the ideology of 'socialist' regimes and has often been criticized on the basis of their policies. His quintessentially critical theory found itself reduced to a set of biblical verses susceptible to quasi-religious exegesis. This resulted in the most unlikely paradoxes. The thinker most resolutely opposed to 'writing recipes [. . .] for the cook-shops of the future'[9] was converted into the progenitor of a new social system. The most painstaking thinker, never satisfied with the results he had produced, became the source of a dyed-in-the-wool doctrinarism. The steadfast champion of the

[8] The immense literature on Marx includes numerous biographies. Among the most important are: John Spargo, *Karl Marx: His Life and Work*. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1912; Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx. Geschichte seines Lebens*. Leipzig: Leipziger Buchdruckerei AG, 1918; Otto Rühle, *Karl Marx. Leben und Werk*. Hellerau bei Dresden: Avalun-Verlag, 1928; Karl Vorländer, *Karl Marx*. Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1929; Marx-Engels-Lenin-Institut, *Karl Marx. Chronik seines Lebens in Einzeldaten*. Moscow: Marx-Engels-Verlag, 1934; Boris Nikolaevskij and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter*, op. cit. 1936; Isaiah Berlin, *Karl Marx*: *His Life and Environment*. London: Thornton Butterworth, 1939; Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx. Essai de biographie intellectuelle*. Paris: Librairie M. Rivière et Cie, 1957; Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, *Karl Marx. Biographie*. Berlin: Dietz, 1968; David McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and His Thought*. London: Macmillan, 1973; Francis Wheen, *Karl Marx: A life*. New York: Norton, 2000. Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital: Karl and Jenny Marx and the Birth of a Revolution*. New York/Boston/London: Little, Brown and Company, 2011; and most recently Gareth Stedman Jones, *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, London: Allen Lane, 2016. Despite the many contributions made during decades of scholarship, to date a complete intellectual biography of Marx still has to be written.

[9] Karl Marx, 'Afterword to the Second German Edition', in MECW, vol. 35, p. 17.

materialist conception of history was wrenched more than any other author from his historical context. Even his insistence that 'the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves'[10] was locked into an ideology that emphasized the primacy of political vanguards and parties as the forces propelling class consciousness and leading the revolution. The champion of the idea that a shorter working day was the prerequisite for the blossoming of human capacities found himself roped into support for the productivist creed of Stakhanovism. The convinced believer in the abolition of the state was built up into its firmest bulwark. Envisaging like few other thinkers the free development of individuality, he had argued that – whereas bourgeois right masked social disparities beneath a merely legal equality – 'right would have to be unequal rather than equal'.[11] Yet the same Marx was falsely associated with a conception that erased the richness of the collective dimension in a featureless uniformity.

The aim of this book is to help foster discussion of various interpretations of Marx's work. The results presented to the reader are modest and still incomplete: modest, because Marx's gigantic critical *oeuvre* spanning many branches of human knowledge makes it a difficult task for any rigorous reader to synthesize it; and incomplete, because this volume concentrates on only three periods of Marx's life: the early writings, the composition of *Capital*, and the political activity in the International Working Men's Association. Moreover, within each period, certain texts have been singled out for discussion and others inevitably excluded. The obligation not to exceed the number of pages standard in a monograph made it impossible to deal with various chapters in Marx's life: for example, his analysis of the revolutionary events of 1848, the long journalistic labours for the *New-York Tribune*; his political and theoretical reflections of the 1870s, and the research in the last years of his life.[12] These will be the object of works to be published in the future. With an awareness of these limits, the results of research completed so far are presented here to the reader,

[10] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'General Rules of the International Working Men's Association', in Marcello Musto (ed.), *Workers Unite! The International 150 Years Later.* New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 265.

[11] Karl Marx, *Critique of Gotha Programme*, in MECW, vol. 24, p. 87.

[12] For this last topic see Marcello Musto, *The Last Marx (1881–1883): An Intellectual Biography.* London: Oxford University Press, 2018.

but they should also be seen as a point of departure for further, more detailed studies.

Among other themes of analysis, Part One seeks to show that a philologically unfounded counterposition between Marx's early writings and his later critique of political economy was shared by 'revisionist' Marxists – eager to prioritize the former – and by orthodox Communists – focused on the 'mature Marx'. In contrast to positions that either play up a distinctive 'young Marx' or try to force a theoretical break in his work, Marx's articles and manuscripts of 1843–44 should be treated as an interesting, but only initial, stage in his critical trajectory.

Part Two aims to enrich in various ways the existing research into Marx's critique of political economy, most of which has considered only certain periods in its development, often jumping straight from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* to the *Grundrisse* and from there to *Capital*, Volume I. In this book, the study of major recently published manuscripts makes it possible to offer a more exhaustive account of the formation of Marx's thought.

Part Three turns to Marx's political activity in the years between 1864 and 1872. Without denying his indispensable contribution to the life of the International, an attempt is made to show that that organization was much more than a 'creation' of a single individual, as the 'Marxist-Leninist' legend maintained for a long time. Moreover, in directly involving himself in workers' struggles, Marx was stimulated to develop and sometimes revise his ideas, to put old certainties up for discussion and ask himself new questions, and in particular to sharpen his critique of capitalism by drawing the broad outlines of a communist society.

To relegate Marx to the position of an embalmed classic suitable only for academia would be a serious mistake, on a par with his transformation into the doctrinal source of 'actually existing socialism'. For in reality his analyses are more topical today than they have ever been.

Following the spread of market economy to new areas of the planet, capitalism has become a truly worldwide system, invading and shaping all aspects of human existence. It not only determines our lives during work time but is increasingly reconfiguring social relations. Capitalism has overcome its adversaries, broken the mediations of the political sphere, and

remoulded human relations in accordance with its own logic. Yet today more than ever, it produces terrible social injustices and unsustainable environmental destruction.

Of course, the writings that Marx composed a century and a half ago do not contain a precise description of the world today. But despite all the profound transformations that have intervened, Marx still provides a rich array of tools with which to understand both the nature and the development of capitalism.

After the last thirty years of glorification of market society, more and more are arguing once again that the cause of human emancipation should enlist the thought of Marx in its service. His 'spectre' seems likely to haunt the world and to stir humanity for a good while to come.

3. Chronology of Marx's writings

Given the size of Marx's intellectual output, the following chronology can only include his most significant writings; its aim is to highlight the unfinished character of many of Marx's texts and the chequered history of their publication.

In the first column are indicated the years when the respective texts were written, and in the second column their titles. The manuscripts that Marx did not send to press are placed between square brackets, as a way of differentiating them from finished books and articles. The greater weight of the former in comparison with the latter emerges as a result. The third column features the corresponding publication history, particularly in the case of texts that first appeared posthumously, where the year of first publication, the bibliographical reference and, where relevant, the names of their editors are given. Any changes that these made to the originals are also indicated. When a published work or manuscript was not written in German, the original language is specified.

The following abbreviations have been used in the table: MEGA (*Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, 1927–1935); SOC (*K. Marks i F. Engel's Sochineniya*, 1928–1946); MEW (*Marx-Engels-Werke*, 1956–1968); MECW (*Marx-Engels Collected Works*, 1975–2005); MEGA^2 (*Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, 1975– . . .).

Table 1 Chronological table of Karl Marx's writings

Year	Title	Information about editions
1841	*[Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature]*	1902: in *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels und Ferdinand Lassalle*, ed. by Mehring (partial version). 1927: in MEGA I/1.1, ed. by Ryazanov.
1842–43	Articles for the *Rheinische Zeitung* [Rhenish Newspaper]	Daily published in Cologne.
1843	*[Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right]*	1927: in MEGA I/1.1, ed. by Ryazanov.
1844	Essays for the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* [German-French Yearbooks]	Including 'On the Jewish Question' and 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right'. Only one issue, published in Paris. The majority of copies were confiscated by the police.
1844	*[Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844]*	1932: in *Der historische Materialismus*, ed. by Landshut and Mayer, and in MEGA I/3, ed. by Adoratskii (the editions differ in content and order of the parts). The text was omitted from the numbered volumes of MEW and published separately.
1845	*The Holy Family* (with Engels)	Published in Frankfurt-am-Main.
1845	*[Theses on Feuerbach]*	1888: appendix to republication of *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy* by Engels.
1845–46	*[The German Ideology]* (with Engels)	1903–1904: in *Dokumente des Sozialismus*, ed. by Bernstein (partial version with editorial revisions). 1932: in *Der historische Materialismus*, ed. by Landshut and Mayer, and in MEGA I/3, ed. by Adoratskii (the editions differ in content and order of the parts).
1847	*Poverty of Philosophy*	Printed in Brussels and Paris. Text in French.
1848	*Speech on the Question of Free Trade*	Published in Brussels. Text in French.
1848	*Manifesto of the Communist Party* (with Engels)	Printed in London. Began to circulate widely in the 1880s.

1848–49	Articles for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Organ der Demokratie* [New Rhenish Newspaper: Organ of Democracy]	Daily appearing in Cologne. Includes *Wage Labour and Capital.*
1850	Articles for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-ökonomische Revue* [New Rhenish Newspaper: Political-Economic Review]	Monthly printed in Hamburg in small runs. Includes *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*.
1851–62	Articles for the *New-York Tribune*	Many of the articles were written by Engels.
1852	*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*	Published in New York in the first issue of *Die Revolution*. Most of the copies were not collected from the printers for financial reasons. Only a small number reached Europe. The second edition – revised by Marx – appeared only in 1869.
1852	*[Great Men of the Exile]* (with Engels)	1930: in *Arkhiv Marksa i Engel'sa* (Russian edition). The manuscript had previously been hidden by Bernstein.
1853	*Revelations concerning the Communist Trial in Cologne*	Published as an anonymous pamphlet in Basle (nearly all two thousand copies were confiscated by the police) and in Boston. Republished in 1874 in *Volksstaat* (with Marx identified as the author) and in 1875, in book form.
1853–54	*Lord Palmerston*	Text in English. Originally published as articles in the *New-York Tribune* and *The People's Paper*, and subsequently in booklet form.
1854	*The Knight of the Noble Consciousness*	Published in New York in booklet form.
1856–57	*Revelations of the Diplomatic History of the 18th Century*	Text in English. Though already published by Marx, it was subsequently omitted from his works and published in the 'socialist' countries only in 1986, in MECW.
1857	*[Introduction]*	1903: in *Die Neue Zeit*, ed. by Kautsky, with various discrepancies from the original.
1857–58	*[Grundrisse: Outlines of the Critique of Political Economy]*	1939–1941: edition with small print run. 1953: republication allowing wide circulation.

Year	Title	Information about editions
1859	*Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*	Published in Berlin in a thousand copies.
1860	*Herr Vogt*	Published in London with little resonance.
1861–63	*[Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (manuscript of 1861–1863)]*	1905–1910: *Economic Manuscript of 1861–63*, ed. by Kautsky (in revised version). A text conforming to the original appeared only in 1954 (Russian edition) and 1956 (German edition). 1976–1982: manuscript published in full in MEGA² II/3.1–3.6.
1863–64	*[On the Polish Question]*	1961: *Manuskripte über die polnische Frage*, ed. by the IISH.
1863–67	*[Economic manuscripts of 1863–1867]*	1894: *Capital,* Volume III. *The Process of Capitalist Production as a Whole*, ed. by Engels (who also used later manuscripts published in MEGA² II/14 and MEGA² II/4.3). 1933: Volume I. *Unpublished Chapter VI*, in *Arkhiv Marksa i Engel'sa*. 1988: publication of manuscripts of Volume I and Volume II, in MEGA² II/4.1. 1992: publication of manuscripts of Volume III, in MEGA² II/4.2.
1864–72	Addresses, resolutions, circulars, manifestos, programmes, statutes of the International Working Men's Association	Texts mostly in English, including the *Inaugural Address of the International Working Men's Association* and *The Fictitious Splits in the International* (with Engels).
1865	*[Wages, Price and Profit]*	1898: ed. by Eleanor Marx. Text in English.
1867	*Capital,* Volume I. *The Process of Production of Capital*	Published in 1,000 copies in Hamburg. Second edition in 1873 in 3,000 copies. Russian translation in 1872.
1870	*[Manuscript of Volume Two of Capital]*	1885: *Capital,* Volume II. *The Process of Circulation of Capital*, ed. by Engels (who also used the manuscript of 1880–1881 and the shorter ones of 1867–1868 and 1877–1878, published in MEGA² II/11).
1871	*The Civil War in France*	Text in English. Numerous editions and translations in a short space of time.

1872–75	*Capital,* Volume I, *The Process of Production of Capital* (French edition)	Text reworked for the French edition which appeared in instalments. According to Marx, it had a 'scientific value independent of the original'.
1874–75	*[Notes on Bakunin's* Statehood and Anarchy*]*	1928: in *Letopisi marxisma*, with a preface by Ryazanov (Russian edition). Manuscript with excerpts in Russian and comments in German.
1875	*[Critique of the Gotha Programme]*	1891: in *Die Neue Zeit*, ed. by Engels, who altered a few passages from the original.
1875	*[Relationship between Rate of Surplus-Value and Rate of Profit Developed Mathematically]*	2003: in MEGA^2 II/14.
1877	'From *Kritische Geschichte*' (a chapter in *Anti-Dühring* by Engels)	Published in part in *Vorwärts* and then in full in the book edition.
1879–80	*[Notes on Kovalevskii's* Rural Communal Property*]*	1977: in *Karl Marx über Formen vorkapitalistischer Produktion*, ed. by the IISH.
1879–80	*[Marginal Notes on Adolph Wagner's Textbook of Political Economy]*	1932: in *Das Kapital* (partial version). 1933: in SOC XV (Russian edition).
1880–81	*[Excerpts from Morgan's* Ancient Society*]*	1972: in *The Ethnological Notebooks of Karl Marx*, ed. by the IISH. Manuscript with excerpts in English.
1881–82	*[Chronological excerpts 90 BC to approx. 1648]*	1938–1939: in *Arkhiv Marksa i Engel'sa* (partial version, Russian edition). 1953: in Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin *Zur deutschen Geschichte* (partial version).