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## The Marxist Prescription for Women's Liberation

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by Carey Roberts

The shrill feminist denunciations of male patriarchy share a common origin: [the Marxist creed](#).

In the 1840s, Marx concocted this bizarre theory: Since working men were oppressed by capitalist economies, then women were doubly-victimized by the effects of capitalism and patriarchy.

This is how Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explained it in their 1848 Communist Manifesto: "What is the present family based on? On capitalism, the acquisition of private property...The bourgeois sees in his wife nothing but an instrument of production."

In his 1884 book, *The Origin of the Family*, Engels elaborated on the theme of patriarchal oppression:

"The overthrow of mother right was the world historical defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced to servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children."

These claims are preposterous.

If women were more oppressed than men, then women's lifespans would have been shorter. But the reverse was true -- in the second half of the 1800s, men's life expectancy in Russia and Europe was [2-3 years shorter than women's](#), partly due to their responsibilities as primary breadwinners.

And Engels' claim that women had become a "mere instrument for the production of children" is patently absurd. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, female fertility had [already begun to fall](#) in Europe in the mid-1800s.

So Engels' assertion was ridiculous as it was specious.

And 156 years after publication of the Communist Manifesto, what is the verdict of history?

The simple fact is, over 100 million persons have been killed under regimes calling themselves Socialist. Ironically, almost all of the victims were members of the working class. Marx did not care about the proletariat, he only cared about his pipe

dream of achieving a socialist utopia.

Likewise, it is questionable whether Marx really cared about helping women. Always mindful of the fact that women represented half of the population, he and his minions schemed to exploit their largely untapped labor.

Chairman Mao [said it best](#): "Many co-operatives are finding themselves short of labor. It has become necessary to arouse the great mass of women who did not work in the fields before to take their place on the labor front."

Karl Marx also viewed women as effective agitators to overthrow capitalism. As he admitted in a 1868 letter, "major social transformations are impossible without ferment among the women."

But if there are any lingering doubts about Karl Marx's real attitudes towards women, just examine his personal life.

According to Joshua Muravchik's brilliant book, Heaven on Earth, Marx disdained the responsibilities of a husband and father of three girls. He was inept in managing the household finances. He never even tried to get a job. Instead, he lived off of his inheritance and a monthly stipend from Engels.

Nonetheless, Marx did indulge in the bourgeoisie custom of hiring a household maid. Her name was Helene Demuth.

In 1851, Demuth bore an illegitimate son, Henry. Federick Engels soon admitted his paternity.

Lying on his deathbed in 1895, no longer able to speak, Engels took a chalk and slate in hand to reveal a well-guarded secret. The father of the bastard-son was Karl Marx himself.

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