

# **MARXISM AND ITS MODERN INTERPRETATIONS**

**NIKITA MININ**

**KMVES FSS MUNI**



# ORIGINS

- **KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS**
- **1848 - THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO**
- **3 VOLUMES OF “CAPITAL” (1867-1883)**

# BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

**Ontology**

• **Foundationalism**

**Epistemology**

• **Realism**

# KEY FEATURES

## Economism

- **Economic relations are the cornerstone**

## Determinism

- **Political sphere and state are determined by class relations and mode of production**

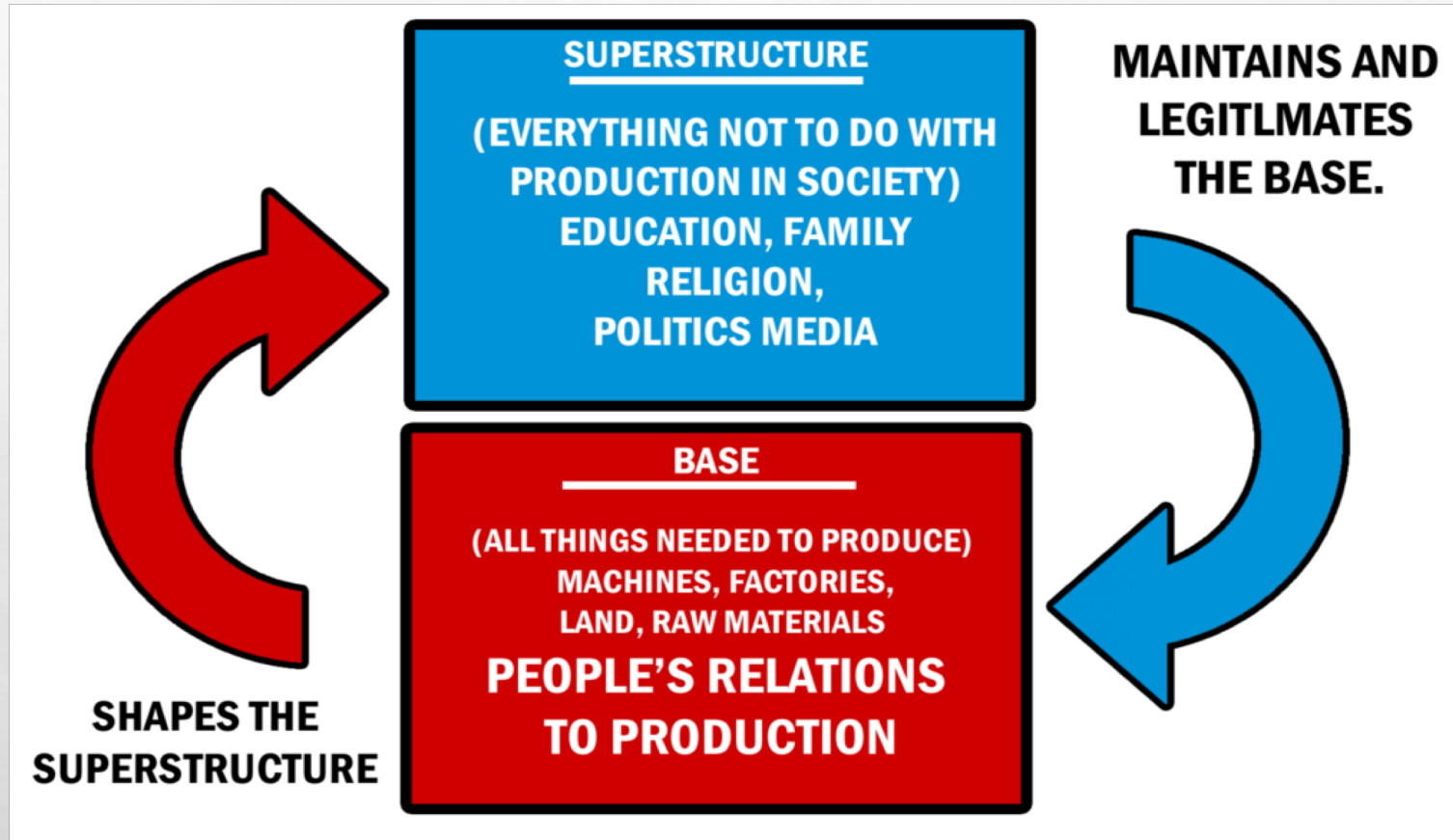
## Materialism

- **Material relations shape ideas**
- **Dominant ideas promote interests of the ruling class**

## Structuralism

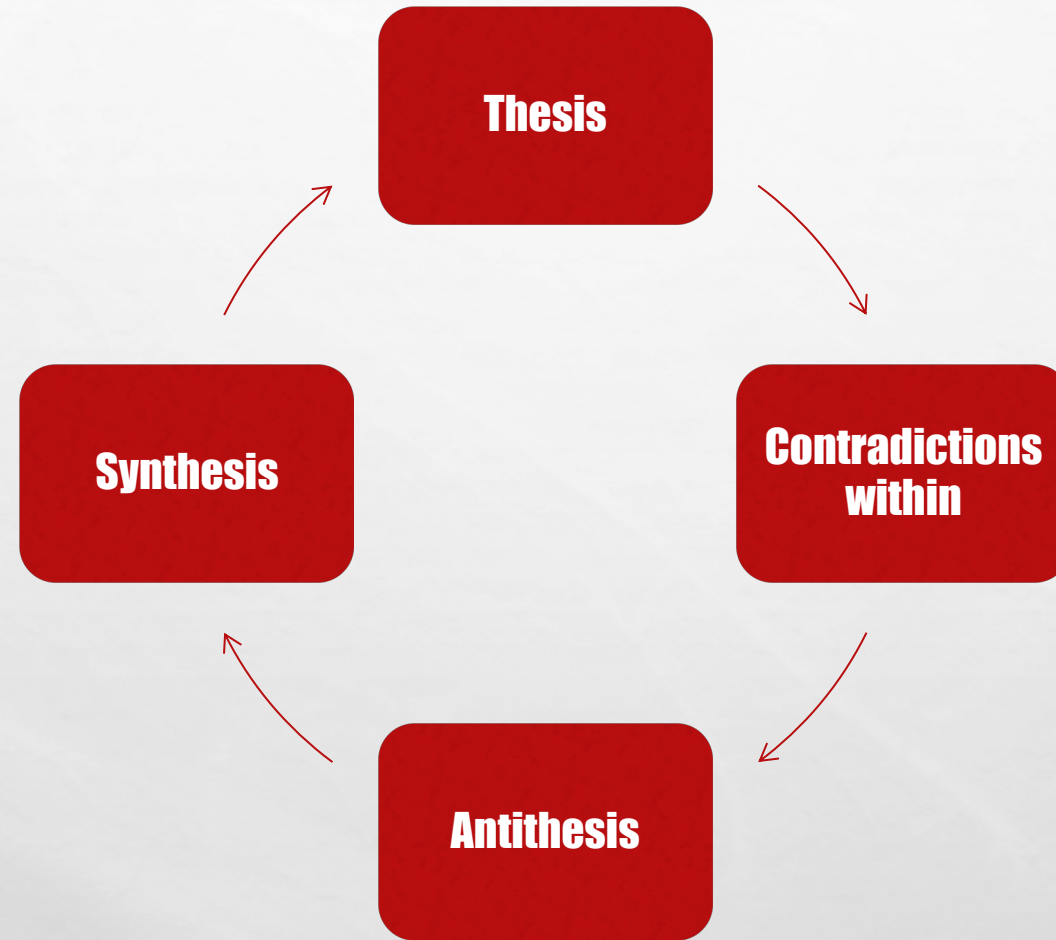
- **Economic structures determine the actions of agents**

# STRUCTURE OF HUMAN SOCIETY



Source: Deviant Art

# DIALECTISM



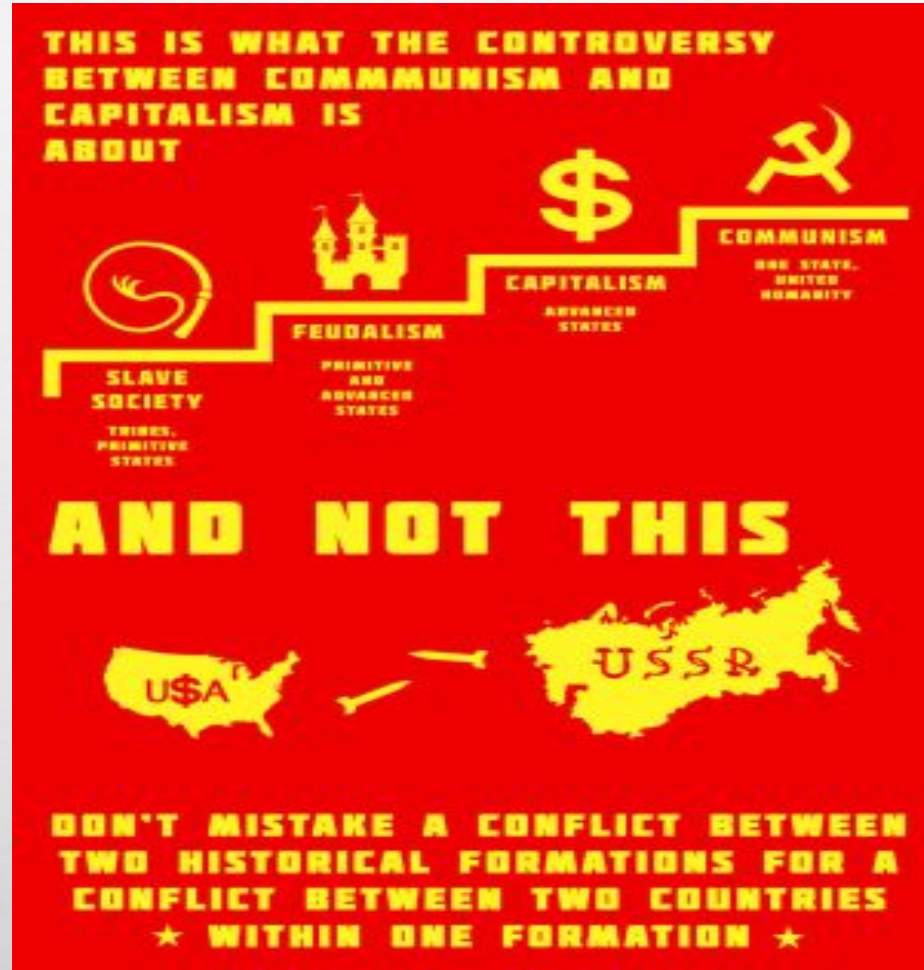
# HISTORICAL/DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

## Dialectical Materialism: Marx's Theory of History



- **Progress**
- **Emancipatory potential – critical theory**

# THEORY VS. REALITY



- **Evolutionary (Kautsky) vs. Revolutionary (Lenin) strains**
- **Scandinavia/Northern Europe vs. USSR and China**
- **Global system vs. Particular Country**
- **Socialism vs. Communism**

Source: Deviant Art



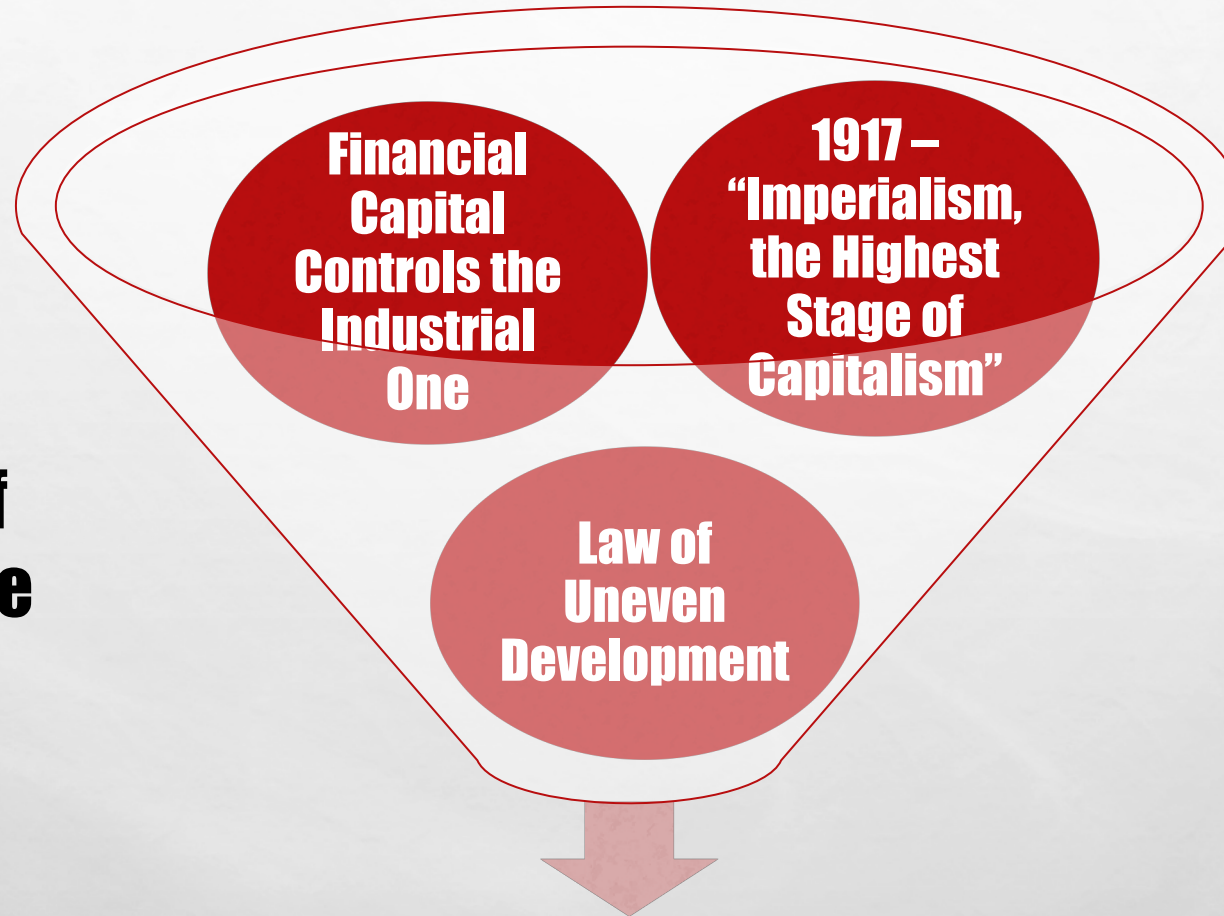
# 3 LAWS OF CAPITALISM (MARX)

**Law of Disproportionality**

**Law of Accumulation**

**Law of the Falling Rate of Return**

# LENIN'S 4<sup>TH</sup> LAW



**Political reasons of capitalism's demise**

**Trotsky:  
World  
Revolution**

**Theory of International  
Relations**

# TOWARDS NEOMARXISM

## Ontology

- More Idealist
- Ideas Are Independent; Actors Are Reflexive

## Epistemology

- More Interpretative
- Interpretation Affects Outcomes

## THE MAJORITY OF THE AUTHORS:

- **REJECTS RIGID ECONOMISM, DETERMINISM, STRUCTURALISM, MATERIALISM**
- **ACKNOWLEDGES VARIOUS FACTORS OF STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY OTHER THAN CLASS (E.G. GENDER, RACE, ETC.)**

# SOME VARIANTS

## **Marxist Feminism**

**Gender as a factor of structural inequality**

**Men's politics are aggressive**

**Obsolete distinction between public and private spheres (productive vs. reproductive labor)**

## **Cultural Hegemony of Gramsci**

**Hegemony is control/leadership/authority**

**Hegemony is complex: cultural component is crucial**

**Key role of ideology and institutions**

# NEOMARXISM OF I. WALLERSTEIN: WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

**Economic factors dominate global politics**

**Capital/labor dichotomy**

**Rejects dialectical materialism**

# **WORLD-SYSTEMS THEORY: THRESHOLD CONCEPTS**

**Historical systems: mini-systems, World-Empires, World-Economy**

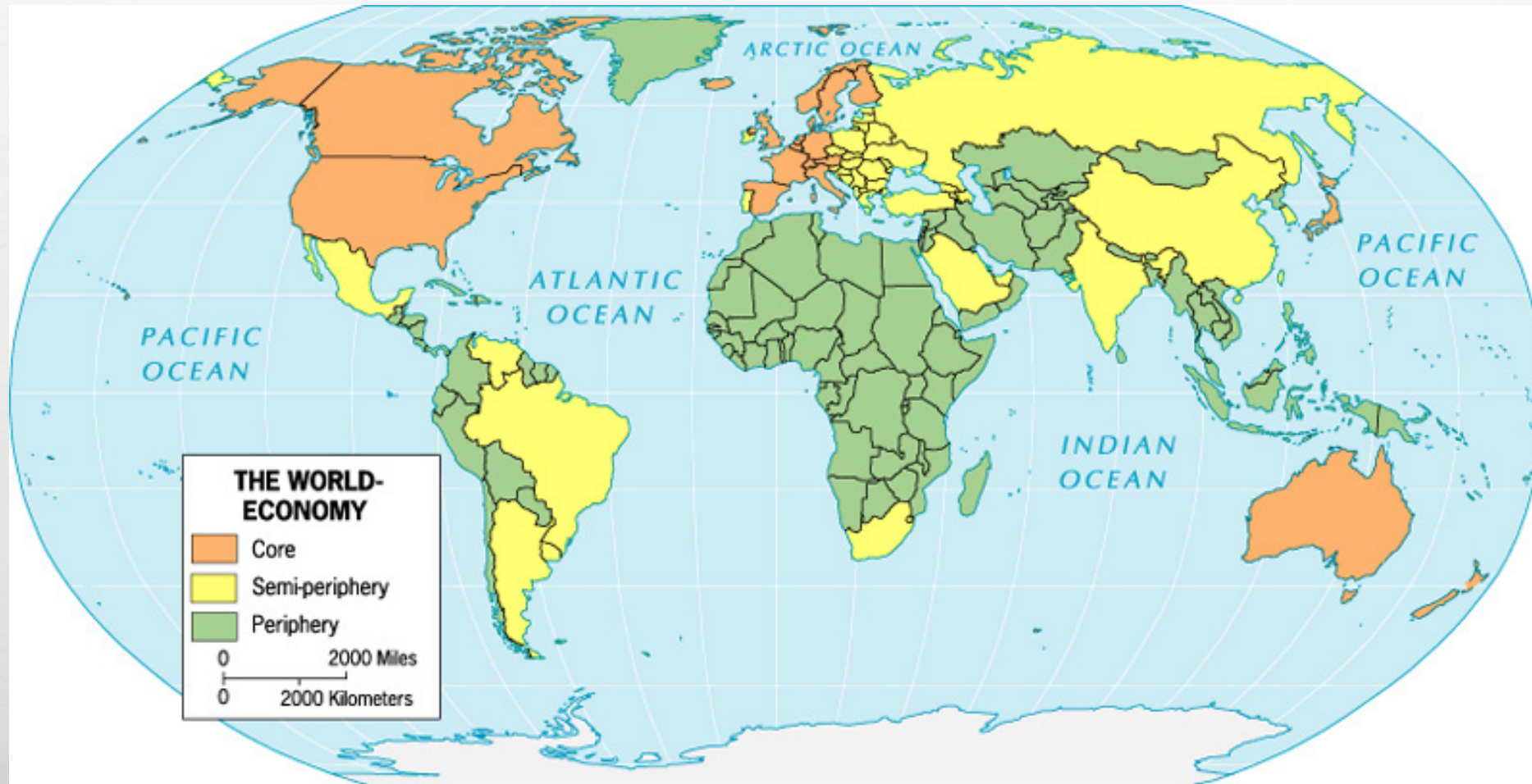
**Nowadays – Capitalist World-System or World-Economy**

**Core, semi-periphery, and periphery**

**Complex network of economic exchange relationships**

**Absence of the unified political center or system**

# WORLD-SYSTEMS MAP



Source: Elwell, F. W.

# **WORLD-SYSTEMS THEORY: PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**



**North/South Divide**

**“End of liberalism”: Crisis**

**New System to Resolve the Issues**



# **AFTERWARD: (F)UTILITY?**

- **CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN CAPITALISM PERSIST**
- **CAPITALISM IS EXPLOITATIVE**
- **MASSIVE INEQUALITIES DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY  
VS. DIVISION OF LABOR**