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Citizen Marx

Republicanism and the Formation of Karl Marx's Social and Political Thought

Bruno Leipold

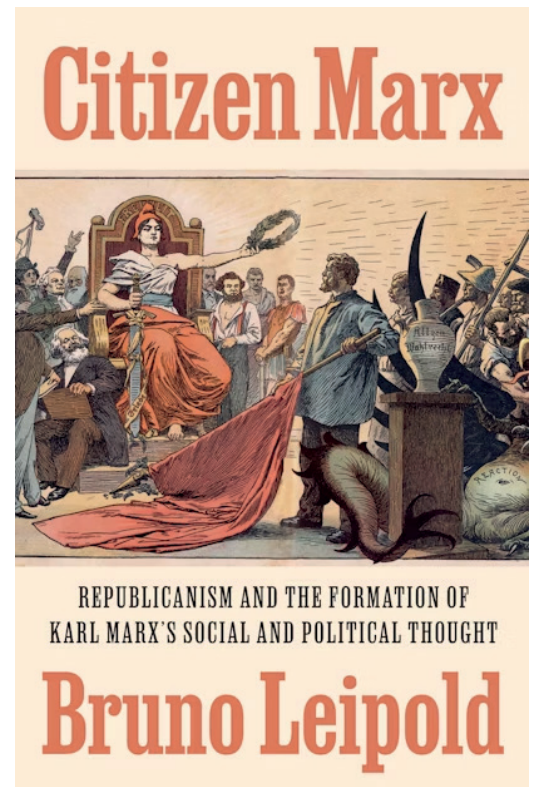
The first book to offer a comprehensive exploration of Marx's relationship to republicanism, arguing that it is essential to understanding his thought

In *Citizen Marx*, Bruno Leipold argues that, contrary to certain interpretive commonplaces, Karl Marx's thinking was deeply informed by republicanism. Marx's relation to republicanism changed over the course of his life, but its complex influence on his thought cannot be reduced to wholesale adoption or rejection. Challenging common depictions of Marx that downplay or ignore his commitment to politics, democracy, and freedom, Leipold shows that Marx viewed democratic political institutions as crucial to overcoming the social unfreedom and domination of capitalism. One of Marx's principal political values, Leipold contends, was a republican conception of freedom, according to which one is unfree when subjected to arbitrary power.

Placing Marx's republican communism in its historical context—but not consigning him to that context—Leipold traces Marx's shifting relationship to republicanism across three broad periods. First, Marx began his political life as a republican committed to a democratic republic in which citizens held active popular sovereignty. Second, he transitioned to communism, criticizing republicanism but incorporating the republican opposition to arbitrary power into his social critiques. He argued that although a democratic republic was not sufficient for emancipation, it was necessary for it. Third, spurred by the events of the Paris Commune of 1871, he came to view popular control in representation and public administration as essential to the realization of communism. Leipold shows how Marx positioned his republican communism to displace both antipolitical socialism and anticommunist republicanism. One of Marx's great contributions, Leipold suggests, was to place politics (and especially democratic politics) at the heart of socialism.

About the Author:

Bruno Leipold is a fellow in political theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is the coeditor of *Radical Republicanism: Recovering the Tradition's Popular Heritage*.



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“This book is a genuine game-changer for Marx and Engels studies. It does quite a number of highly significant things in a tightly constructed and beautifully written volume. What it does is both methodological and substantive, and in that way it reorients the whole field.”—Terrell Carver, author of *Marx*

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