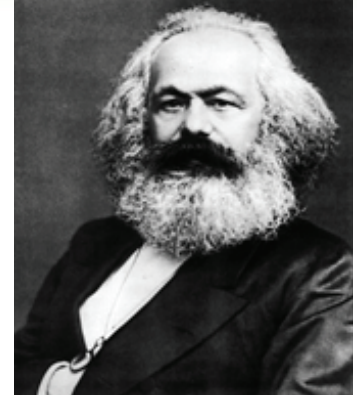


# TABLE TALKS | LEFT WING TERRORISM

## THE LEFT THEORY

- Left wing terrorism is also referred to as Marxist or communist based terrorism whose followers believe in the workers revolting against those in power.
- The basic idea of these groups is that the political system was holding down the people, with hopes of maintaining their interpretations of the status quo (the structure of societal affairs). This sounds rather contradictory of the right wing groups doesn't it?
- These groups all were based on the principles that were taught by Karl Marx (right) or different Russian Revolutionaries. The basic understanding of these teachings was that the political system was holding down those below them and it was the job of the working class (also referred to as "the proletariat") to overthrow those suppressing them.
- Does this mean that acting with the views of Marx makes you a terrorist?
- Answer: Not necessarily. There are cases that this is true, such as the Weather Underground or FARC, however much of what Marx taught was a political idea. Therefore political and economic systems were built on his teachings and writings, not much different from Adam Smith who is credited with creating capitalism.



## UTOPIAN LIFESTYLE

- The end "goal" of a left wing terrorist group is to live in a utopian society.  
*Utopia: a place of ideal perfection especially in laws, government, and social conditions.*
- The idea is that the current regime or government is the only thing holding down people from living in this "perfect society".
- Does this mean that to have a perfect society there needs to be no government? Do you think this is what the left wing terrorist groups think?

## TERRORISM WITH NO GOD

- Even in Right Wing groups, God plays a factor in the ideology, the motivation to act, and the underlying meaning of why those involved are acting.
- Left wing terrorism is quite different in that it does not deal with God in any manner which tends to be a blessing and a curse.
- There is no "us versus them" narrative. In a matter of fact, these groups believe anyone and everyone can join their fight as long as they believe in the ideology.

**A QUESTION FOR YOU:** Why might this be a downfall for these groups? Having no religion or moral backbone? Think back to the religious and right wing terrorism Table Talks.

# TABLE TALKS | LEFT WING TERRORISM

## FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE

- Something that the left wing groups do better than any other is something called “provocation”.
- This is the situation of a terrorist group provoking the police to do an arbitrary act against the group. What then happens is the population becomes enraged and joins the group.
- These types of tactics are what drove the left wing terrorist organizations to grow during the 1900's in the United States and Europe.

## MINISCULE EXTRAVAGANCE

- Left wing terrorist attacks all tend to look the same and as a whole they have specific targets that they aim for.
- No matter where you look in the world, the groups that have left wing ideologies all resemble each other. Attacking similar people and using similar tactics when they commit terrorist attacks.
- These attacks are more symbolic in nature than matter-of-fact. All these attacks are done selectively and with a great goal. The primary targets include government buildings and symbols of authority.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK?** Why do you think left wing terrorist groups choose these targets? Look back to the ideologies and goals of these groups.

## TABLE TALK TAKEAWAY

Left wing terrorism has become more a part of history rather than a current threat to society. These ideologies come from those of Karl Marx and those who followed such as Russian Revolutionaries. Left wing terrorism, like other forms of terrorism, has come and gone (for now at least). It is sometimes considered a “Fad” of the mid to late 1900's and was grounded in society. Much of what these groups did was turn public outcry violent. Social movements are not terrorism, very rarely at least, however the work of groups such as the Weatherman, later and more popularly known as the Weather Underground, combined a social grievance with violent means for a political change.