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From Marx to the Representative Class

The representative class, nomenklatura, and antibourgeoisie as developments of Marx's class theory.

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Key concepts: representative class; nomenklatura; antibourgeoisie; aggregate proletariat; class representation; ownership; function; management; manager; red director; national bourgeoisie; anti-market; anticapitalism

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1. Introduction

The categories of the representative class, nomenklatura, and antibourgeoisie in Polar Marxism continue several distinctions already present in Marx.

In the third volume of *Capital*, the capitalist and the wage worker appear as "personifications of capital and wage labour," as bearers of definite social relations.[1] Class position is determined here by a person's place within a relation of production.

This makes it possible to trace class structure through relations and functions that reproduce themselves regardless of which particular individuals occupy the corresponding positions.

2. Class representation

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx examines the relation between a class and its political representatives.

A democratic representative of the petty bourgeoisie may differ greatly from the petty bourgeois in education, profession, and personal position. What makes him a representative is the correspondence between the limits within which his political thought moves and the limits imposed on the class itself by its material position. In theory, he is driven toward the same tasks and solutions toward which the petty bourgeois is driven in practice by his social position.

Marx concludes the passage with a general formula:

> *"This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary representatives of a class and the class they represent."*[2]

The representative and the represented class already exist here as distinct social positions. Representation connects them through material position and the tasks arising from it.

When this function becomes fixed in the social structure and continuously reproduced, it acquires a stable social bearer. In Polar Marxism, I call this bearer the **representative class**.[3]

3. Ownership and function

A second necessary distinction appears in Volume III of *Capital*.

Ownership of capital and the functioning of capital can belong to different people. The money capitalist retains ownership while remaining outside the immediate process of production. The functioning capitalist, by contrast, can employ capital belonging to someone else.

Marx speaks of the owner who represents "mere ownership of capital" and of the functioning capitalist who may be a "non-owner of capital."[4]

The labour of management can also exist separately.

Once an enterprise reaches a sufficient scale, immediate direction can be carried out by a paid manager. Marx writes that the wage of such a manager separates completely from profit and assumes the form of payment for skilled labour. The capitalist transfers to him the practical work of supervision and direction.[5]

Marx gives an especially clear example in former factory owners who, after losing ownership, continue to direct their former factories as paid managers for the new owners. The owner has changed while the same person continues to perform the managerial work.[6]

Ownership, the function of capital, and immediate management can therefore become attached to different people.

4. Nomenklatura

Under anticapitalism, the aggregate proletariat occupies the basic position in relation to the social structure of production. That structure still requires concrete management.

Collective ownership does not turn every individual proletarian into a person who personally draws up plans, allocates resources, and coordinates the work of the entire economy. These functions exist as a distinct form of social activity and acquire permanent bearers.

Two Marxian distinctions converge here. The representative of a class can exist separately from the class itself. Management can exist separately from ownership.

Nomenklatura arises at the intersection of these relations as the permanent social bearer of political and economic command on behalf of the basic class.

I define it as the **unified political-managerial representative class**.[7]

Its position is reproduced through its place in the general command structure. Through the nomenklatura, class power assumes the form of concrete administration: planning, allocation, appointment, control, and coordination.

The criterion of representation here is the same material principle Marx uses in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. The social position of the representative directs it toward certain tasks, while the material position of the represented class directs the class itself toward the same tasks.

In Polar Marxism, this common direction is development.

For the aggregate proletariat of the periphery, the development of the productive forces means the expansion of its own material base and the overcoming of backwardness. The nomenklatura reproduces its position through the preservation and development of the system it manages. Its own material interest therefore directs it toward the development of the same productive whole.[8]

Class representation here already exists as a continuously reproduced part of the social structure.

5. Antibourgeoisie

The same separation of ownership and function allows the antibourgeoisie to be derived.

Within a capitalist enterprise, immediate management can be delegated to a manager. He organizes production, directs workers, and makes current economic decisions. The capitalist nevertheless remains the ultimate bearer of the economic function itself.

The capitalist possesses local economic power as part of his social position. He may delegate part of the practical work to a director or manager, but the function itself does not thereby pass to the manager as an independent class bearer. The manager performs a function whose ultimate private bearer remains the capitalist.

The immediate executor of management and the social bearer of the function can therefore be different people.

Under anticapitalism, the systemic power of capital disappears while the local economic function remains. The enterprise still requires an owner in the functional sense: someone to whom the organization of production, economic decision-making, control over the resources of the given node, and responsibility for its operation are attached.

When there is no longer an individual capitalist standing behind this function, it becomes attached to a new social bearer.

This bearer constitutes the **antibourgeoisie**.[9]

The antibourgeoisie preserves the function of the local owner within a system in which capital no longer possesses systemic power.

In the Soviet Union, this position was occupied by the **red director**. Behind the capitalist manager stands the capitalist as the ultimate bearer of the economic function. Behind the red director there is no individual private owner of the enterprise. Above him stands the general command structure, but within the enterprise itself the local economic function is attached to the director.[10]

In the Chinese **anti-market form**, the same position exists differently. Its bearer may be the **national, or red, bourgeois**. He may own an enterprise, receive profit, and directly command his productive node. His local power is incorporated into a higher command structure and subordinated to it.[11]

The red director and the national bourgeois differ in the form of ownership but occupy a related position in relation to the system.

In the gross economy, the local owner is reproduced administratively in the figure of the director. In the anti-market, he may be reproduced as a private owner through a market mechanism subordinated to the system.

For the definition of the antibourgeoisie, what matters is the ultimate bearer of the local economic function. The red director does not privately own the enterprise. The national bourgeois may own it. In both cases, local economic power is separated from the systemic power of capital.

Marx's analysis of the manager reveals the first stage of this separation: immediate managerial labour is separated from the capitalist and transferred to a representative. Polar Marxism continues this analysis by tracing the function of the local owner itself and identifying the social position to which it becomes attached after the elimination of the systemic power of capital.

In the gross form, this bearer becomes the red director. In the anti-market form, it may be the national bourgeois. Both belong to the category of the **antibourgeoisie**.

6. General conclusion

The initial elements of this analysis appear in different places in Marx. The capitalist and the worker appear as bearers of relations of production. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, the class is separated from its representative. In Volume III of *Capital*, ownership, the functioning of capital, and the immediate labour of management no longer have to coincide in one person.

Polar Marxism combines these distinctions in the analysis of anticapitalist class structure.

The **representative class** is the stable social bearer of class representation.

The **nomenklatura** is such a class at the level of systemic political and economic command.

The **antibourgeoisie** is the ultimate social bearer of the local economic function under conditions in which that function is separated from the systemic power of capital. In the gross form, its bearer is the red director; in the anti-market form, it may be the national bourgeois.

Footnotes

1. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Dritter Band*, in: *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Bd. 25, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1964, p. 887. Marx defines the capitalist and the wage worker as "Verkörperungen, Personifizierungen von Kapital und Lohnarbeit." ↩
2. Karl Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, in: *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Bd. 8, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1960, p. 142. Passage on the political and literary representatives of a class. ↩
3. Vilen Isteni, "Economic Democracy and the Law of Anticapital," *Polar Marxism*, May 12, 2026. The work develops the category of the nomenklatura as a representative class and connects representation to the material interest of the aggregate proletariat. ↩
4. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. Dritter Band*, in: *Marx-Engels-Werke*, Bd. 25, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1964, pp. 387–388. Passage on the money capitalist as owner of capital and the "bloß fungierenden Kapitalisten," who may be a "Nichteigentümer des Kapitals." ↩
5. Ibid., pp. 399–400. Passage on the labour of supervision and direction and the wage of the "Epitropos ou régisseur," or manager, which separates from profit. ↩
6. Ibid., pp. 400–401. Marx gives the example of former factory owners who, after a crisis, continue to direct their former factories as "Dirigenten" for the new owners. ↩
7. Vilen Isteni, "Economic Democracy and the Law of Anticapital," *Polar Marxism*, May 12, 2026. The nomenklatura is defined as the representative class of the Anticenter through which the aggregate proletariat exercises systemic command. ↩
8. Ibid. The aggregate proletariat expresses its material class interest through catch-up development, while the reproduction of the nomenklatura depends on the expansion of the material power of the Anticenter. The convergence of these directions forms the material basis of representation. ↩
9. Vilen Isteni, "Antibourgeoisie and Capitalist Restoration," *Polar Marxism*, August 14, 2026. The antibourgeoisie is defined as the independent social bearer of the function of local economic command within an anticapitalist system, without possessing the systemic power of capital. ↩
0. Ibid. The Soviet red director is treated as a historical form of the antibourgeoisie in the gross economy: there is no individual private owner of the productive node behind him, and the local economic function becomes attached directly to the director. ↩
1. Ibid. In the Chinese anti-market form, the local bearer of this function may be the national, or red, bourgeoisie. Private ownership of an individual productive node is therefore not identical with the systemic power of capital. ↩

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

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