



Bob Black is an American anarchist with a degree in law. He has authored numerous pamphlets and essays and several books. His allies say he lacks social skills, is irritating and will stoop to any level to win an argument. He has been barred and mailbombed by the Church of the Subgenius, beaten by the SFPD and had high-powered rifles pointed at him by his publishers.

# *Theses on* **Groucho Marxism**

by Bob Black

This brief essay places Bob Black's idea of anarchism firmly in a Ludic rather than workerist tradition, more in common with Wilde than Wobblies. This view places Black - seen here at odds with both Capitalism and Communism - as a frontrunner in Post-Left anarchism, separating from the older, worker and working-class orientation of the red-and-black, but similarly steering clear of the trap of post-modern capitulation to Capitalism.

It is Marxists and Marxism he attacks with this sly but exciting satire and his trademark word play, a brief but hilarious assault on the last agents of the Old Left.

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1

Groucho Marxism, the theory of comedic revolution, is much more than a blueprint for crass struggle: like a red light in a window, it illuminates humanity's inevitable destiny, the *declassé* society. G-Marxism is the theory of *permanent revelry*. (Down boy! There, that's a good dogma.)

2

The example of the Marx Brothers themselves shows the unity of Marxist theory and practice (for instance, when Groucho insults somebody while Harpo picks his pocket). Moreover, Marxism is dialectical (isn't Chico the classic dialect comedian?). Comedians who fail to synthesize theory and practice (not to mention those who fail to sin at all) are un-Marxist. Subsequent comedians, failing to grasp that separation is "the discrete charm of the bourgeoisie," have lapsed into mere pratfalls on the one hand, and mere prattle on the other.

3

Because G-Marxism is practical, its achievements can never be reduced to mere humor, entertainment, or "art." (The aesthetes, after all, are less interested in the appreciation of art than in art that appreciates.) After a genuine Marxist sees a Marx Brothers movie, he tells himself: "If you thought that was funny, take a look at your life!"

4

Contemporary G-Marxists must resolutely denounce the imitative, vulgar "Marxism" of the Three Stooges, Monty Python, and Bugs Bunny. Instead of vulgar Marxism, we must return to authentic *Marxist vulgarity*. Rectumfication is likewise in order for those deluded comrades who think "the correct line" is what the cop makes them walk when he pulls them over.

5

Class-conscious Marxists (that is, Marxists who are conscious that they have no class) must spurn the anemic, trendy, narcissistic "comedy" of comedic revisionists like Woody Allen and Jules Feiffer. Already the comedic revolution has superseded mere neurosis--it's ludic but not ludicrous, discriminating but not discriminatory, militant but not military, and adventurous but not adventurist. Marxists realize that today you have to look into a funhouse mirror to see the way you really are.

6

Although not entirely lacking in glimmers of Marxist insight, socialist (sur)realism must be distinguished from G-Marxism. It is true that Salvador Dali once gave Harpo a harp made out of barbed wire; however, there is no evidence that Harpo ever played it.

7

Above all, it is essential to renounce and revile all comedic sectarianism such as that of the equine Trots. As is well-known, Groucho repeatedly proposed sex but opposed sects. For Groucho, there was a difference between being a Trot and being hot to trot. Further, the Trot slogan "Wages for Horsework" smacks of reform, not revelry. Trot efforts to claim *\_A Day at the Races\_* and *\_Horsefeathers\_* for their tendency must be indignantly rejected; in truth, *\_National Velvet\_* is more their speed.

8

The burning issue confronting G-Marxists today is *the party question*, which--naive, reductionist "Marxists" to the contrary--is more than just "Why wasn't I invited?" That never stopped Groucho! Marxists need their own disciplined vanguard party, since they're rarely welcome at anybody else's.

9

Guided by the Marxist leader-dogmas of *misbehaviorism* and *hysterical materialism*, inevitable the masses will embrace, not only G-Marxism, but also each other.

10

Groucho Marxism, then, is the *tour de farce* of comedy. As Harpo is reliably reported to have said:

"

"

In other words, comedy is riotous or it is nothing! So much to do, so many to do it to! On your Marx, get set--go!