

MARX

RELOADED

WHICH PILL WILL YOU TAKE?

A FILM BY JASON BARKER

ŽIŽEK • RANCIÈRE
TOSCANO • POWER
NEGRI • HARDT
SLOTERDIJK
TROTSKY • GRAU



Synopsis

Marx Reloaded is a culture documentary that considers the ideas of 19th century German socialist and philosopher Karl Marx in order to make sense of the global economic and financial crisis which began in 2007. The crisis prompted the US government to spend more than 1 trillion dollars in order to rescue its banking system from financial meltdown. But can the largest financial losses in history really be put down to the natural risks and uncertainties of the free market? And what are the ongoing implications of the crisis for the future of our society, our economy and our liberal way of life?

Written and directed by the British philosopher Jason Barker, *Marx Reloaded* comprises interviews with those at the forefront of a popular revival in Marxist and communist ideas. Could it be that communism today provides a realistic political alternative to the modern crises of capitalism? The film also includes amusing animation sequences which follow Marx's adventures through the matrix of his own ideas.

Interviews include: Norbert Bolz, Micha Brumlik, John Gray, Michael Hardt, Herfried Münkler, Antonio Negri, Nina Power, Jacques Rancière, Peter Sloterdijk, Alberto Toscano, Slavoj Žižek.

Interview with Director Jason Barker

By Nemanja Korsic*

WHY MARX RELOADED? Originally my idea was to make a fully animated feature film based loosely on Marx's letters. That will now be my next film. But when the global financial and economic crisis happened I felt there was a need for a factual and contemporary account of what was going on, and how Marx's ideas might help explain it. We often hear people say "Marx was right". But I never hear them explain why.

DID YOU ENCOUNTER RESISTANCE WHEN MAKING THE FILM? Arte/ZDF and the German producers were both immensely supportive of my script. Understandably I think some nervousness existed at the start about what they were letting themselves in for, since Marx's ideas still have radical political implications. But of course you can't start a revolution in TV since the content is far too tightly regulated. The aim of the film was quite modest in trying to place Marx's thinking in some kind of modern context.

FOR ALL MARX'S INFLUENCE WE RARELY SEE TV PROGRAMMES ABOUT HIM. WHY? In my experience it seems people don't want to make such films because they're too expensive. I may be wrong, but I don't get the impression that people in TV shy away from Marx because he's politically controversial.



It's a question of commercial priorities. And Marx isn't known for his commercial appeal. He's rarely in fashion.

MARX RELOADED IS ONLY 52 MINUTES LONG. DOESN'T THAT RISK CARICATURING MARX'S IDEAS? Marx Reloaded is in part a caricature. It has animation. But I absolutely wanted to avoid making some lazy piece of journalism full of the same old Marx clichés, such as: "How can Marxism be taken seriously when it was responsible for the deaths of millions of people?" The film isn't about Marxism; it's about exploring whether Marx's ideas can have any sort of relevance to the world we live in today. There's a difference.

*This is an amended version of the interview published in New Left Project on 26 May 2011

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO USE ANIMATION? *It gave me the chance to have Marx meet Trotsky. And Slavoj Žižek.*

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT COMMUNISM CAN SOLVE THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES WE SEE TODAY? *The destruction of the earth's natural resources doesn't seem to be reaching any kind of irrevocable catastrophe. Capitalism can always invent "solutions" to crises. So-called "green technologies" are no exception. Communism is no magic formula for rescuing the world from disaster. Capitalism learned long ago how to deal with and profit from crisis. Communism's relevance is not immediately obvious. But it still haunts us and continues to generate stimulating questions, many of which the film deals with.*



THE IDEA THAT MARX WAS A PROPHET SEEMS LIKE A COMMON SENSE OPINION THESE DAYS. WAS HE? *Marx's economic theory isn't taken seriously by liberal economists or indeed by many of the Marx-inspired philosophers who appear in the film. But I agree Marx has become the common sense philosopher, mostly for people who haven't read him. He won the BBC Radio 4 top philosophers poll. But for all this alleged "common sense" he still has a lot to say, his thinking can still surprise us. Then again he certainly wasn't Nostradamus. He didn't have a crystal ball.*

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM YOUR NEW FILM, MARX RETURNS? *Something which really rethinks Marx as an historical figure. Humorous, intelligent and witty.*

Marx Reloaded premiered (in French and German) on Arte on 11 April 2011.



JASON BARKER

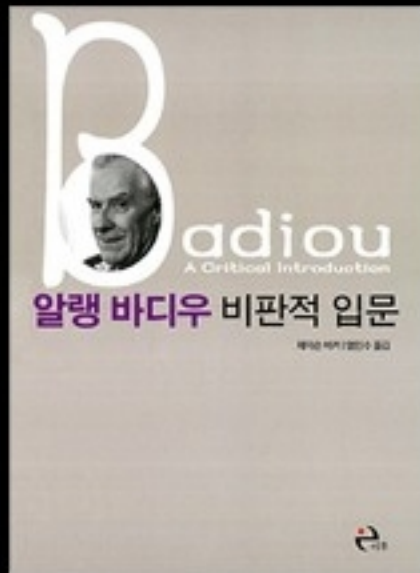
Writer Director

Jason Barker was born and grew up in London and educated at Cardiff University, where he received his PhD in philosophy in 2003. He is an established writer and translator of political theory. His introduction to the work of the French philosopher Alain Badiou was published by Pluto Press in 2002, and has since been translated into Turkish, Korean and Albanian. In 2005 his English translation of Alain Badiou's Metapolitics was published by Verso Books.

As well as having taught Marx for many years in UK and French colleges and universities, Jason has contributed to some of the world's most respected theoretical journals, including the Marxian journal Historical Materialism. He has also presented his research at international conferences and colloquia throughout the world.

Jason began writing and directing Marx Reloaded in late 2009 with the support of the German TV production company Medea Film — Irene Höfer. The film's distinctive animation was produced by Jason's production company Films Noirs in collaboration with some of Serbia's most acclaimed animators and graphic artists. Jason is currently completing the script for a fully animated feature film chronicling the life of Karl Marx, entitled Marx Returns.

www.filmsnoirs.com





DARKO GRKINIC **Art Direction, Animation**

Darko Grkinic is an animator, graphic artist and co-author of the comic book Technotise, which was adapted as the 2009 Serbian animated feature film Edit i Ja, directed by Aleksa Gajić.
www.technotise.com



ALEXANDRA WELTZ **Co-Direction**

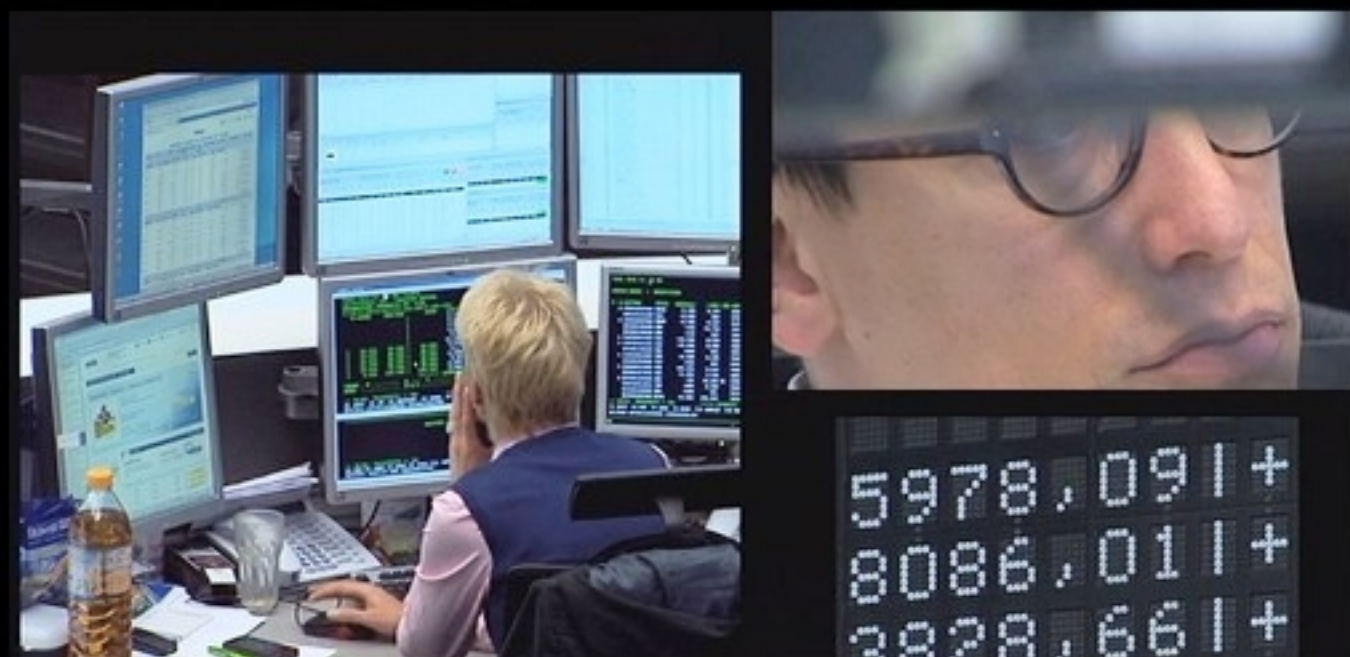
Alexandra Weltz lives and works in Berlin. She received her MA in Cultural Studies, Comparative Literature and History from the HU/FU Berlin. Her directorial credits include the 2009 online series on the Junta trials in Argentina; the 2008 educational documentary Digital Handcraft. Conditions of Labour in Computer Industries; and the 2004 Arte/ZDF portrait film Antonio Negri: A Revolt that Never Ends. She also works as a curator in film and art projects.
www.parkafilm.de



NEBOJSA ANDRIC **Creative Direction, Animation**

Nebojša Andrić is a Founder and Creative Director of Studio1234 in Belgrade, Serbia. Since 1998 he has worked on numerous film and TV projects including the 2009 Serbian animated feature film Edit i Ja.
www.studio1234.com





MARX RELOADED a film by Jason Barker

TECHNICAL DATA 2010 – Germany / UK – HD – Colour – English / French / German (inc. English subtitles) - A Production by Medea Film — Irene Höfer (Germany) - Co-Production Films Noirs (UK) - Commissioned by ZDF - Distribution ARTE

MAIN CREW Director & Writer JASON BARKER - Co-Direction ALEXANDRA WELTZ - Narration BEN POSENER - Dramaturgy IRENE HÖFER - Creative Animation Direction NEBOJSA ANDRIC - Animation Art Direction DARKO GRKINIC - Animators RELJA PAJIC, STEVAN DJORDJEVIC - Editor CARSTEN PIEFKE - Music MEXXTONE, LJUBAVNICI - Producers IRENE HÖFER, ANDREAS SCHROTH - Co-Producer JASON BARKER - Commissioning Editor MARTIN PIEPER

FEATURED VOICES JASON BARKER as Karl Marx , IVAN NIKOLIC as Leon Trotsky

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Rupert Chaucer – Films Noirs Ltd.

www.filmsnoirs.com

filmsnoirs@yahoo.fr

Tel: +447903236933 (UK) / +381656205631 (Serbia)

WORLD SALES

Andreas Schroth – Medea Film — Irene Höfer

www.medeafilm.com

andreas.schroth@medeafilm.de

Erkelenzdammm 59—61

10997 Berlin / Germany

Tel: + 491736090559 / Fax: +493025295332

www.marxreloaded.com



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MEDEA FILM



Irene Höfer

