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Prof. Erik Olin Wright: Marxist In Pursuit of Useless Knowledge

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Prof. Erik O. Wright (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/#Courses>) is a leading Marxist on the campus of the University of Wisconsin Madison. A professor of sociology, Wright has dedicated himself and his work – including the four classes he teaches (http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/soc/faculty/show-person.php?person_id=54) – to his version of the Wisconsin Idea: promoting Marxism and the eradication of capitalism.

According to his biographical entry on the American Sociological Association website (http://www.asanet.org/about/presidents/Erik_Olin_Wright.cfm), Wright is the intellectual force behind the radically left-wing Havens Center at the University of Wisconsin. “For 28 years he has headed the Havens Center (<http://www.havenscenter.org/>) at the University of Wisconsin,” the entry reads. The MacIver Institute has previously (<http://www.maciverinstitute.com/2013/06/fighting-forward-conference-unites-professors-community-organizers-against-capitalism/>) documented (<http://www.maciverinstitute.com/2013/07/fighting-forward-cosponsors-and-speakers-not-approved-at-departmental-level/>) the Havens Center’s efforts to promote political action and facilitate the political organization of labor unions and far-left groups in Wisconsin.

During the 2011 protests over Gov. Scott Walker’s (R) collective bargaining reforms, Wright was among the throngs who gathered at the state Capitol in Madison to – unsuccessfully – oppose the reforms. “A few months ago he could be found among the thousands of Madison citizens in their 17-day occupation of the capitol building, protesting Governor Walker’s offensive against public sector unions and state spending,” his ASA biography notes (http://www.asanet.org/about/presidents/Erik_Olin_Wright.cfm).

Wright subsequently took his story of the Madison protests – and effusive praise of the event – international, traveling to Germany in 2011 to tout the uprising (video of his talk here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOtRxg7ucm8>)) as a great moment in American political history.

In a 2012 interview

(http://www.newleftproject.org/index.php/site/article_comments/occupy_wall_street_and_transformational_strategy) with the *New Left Project*, Wright declared, “Capitalism is a central part of the problem, so of course ultimately it is necessary to be anti-capitalist.” And anti-capitalist Wright is. In a 2014 interview (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

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v=kFS1r6Df73s) while visiting the University of Queensland Australia, Wright said the fall of the USSR in the early 1990s was a major argument for pro-Marx sociologists because it liberated them from having to defend the regime.

As graduation approached in 1968 I faced a problem confronted by most healthy American males of the time: how to cope with the prospect of being drafted. It was impossible to get a conscientious objector deferment from my draft board in Kansas since I could not prove that I was a long-standing member of a pacifist religious group. I knew people who became expatriates, and others who were prepared to go to jail rather than be drafted. I was unwilling to make either of these sacrifices. Instead, I decided to enroll in a Unitarian seminary — the Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley — and thus get a ministerial deferment. I enrolled in the seminary not out of a deep and abiding commitment to the ministry as a possible vocation — that never occurred to me as something I would actually do — but because it was the only way I could think of at the time to keep out of the army in the context of the Viet Nam War. The enrollments at seminaries, especially in Unitarian seminaries, increased dramatically in the late sixties. When I received a scholarship to study history at Balliol College, Oxford, I therefore organized a way to be formally enrolled in the seminary while taking courses at Oxford. I made a point of specializing in the English Puritan Revolution under the tutelage of Christopher Hill so that if the draft board ever questioned this arrangement I could show that I was studying something connected to religion.

(<http://mediatrackers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Screen-Shot-2015-08-18-at-11.4.21-PM.png>) In the book *The Disobedient Generation: Social Theorists in the Sixties*, Wright explains his eventual embrace of Marxism and how he avoided being drafted to fight in the Vietnam War when he graduated from Harvard in 1968. “I knew people who became expatriates, and others who were prepared to go to jail rather than be drafted,” he explains. “I was unwilling to make either of these sacrifices.” He chose instead to enroll in seminary. “I enrolled in the seminary not out of a deep and abiding commitment to the ministry...but because it was the only way I could think of at the time to keep out of the army [sic] in the context of the Viet Nam War.”

Not only did Wright found the Havens Center when he moved to the University of Wisconsin, but before that while pursuing graduate studies in California, he helped found the Union of Marxist Social Scientists. “Since the early 1970s, my intellectual life has been firmly rooted in the Marxist tradition,” he has written. “My scholarship has been primarily devoted to reconstructing Marxism as a theoretical framework and research tradition.”

For his graduate-level class “Class, State and Ideology: An Introduction to Social Science In the Marxist Tradition,” Wright requires students to use as a textbook a book he wrote titled *Envisioning Real Utopias* (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~wright/ERU.htm>). The 2013 version of the class syllabus encourages students to attend a Havens Center-sponsored retreat held near Wisconsin Dells. According to the syllabus (<http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/soc/courses/syllabi/621Wright1314F.pdf>), the entire class is a warmed-over version of an ideology fancied by some academics in the mid-part of the 20th Century, but since widely discredited by reality.

Wright’s undergraduate Marxist catechism is titled simply, “Contemporary American Society.” The textbook for the course is one that Wright wrote (*American Society: how it really works*) with his good friend, Prof. Joel Rogers (<http://mediatrackers.org/tag/joel-rogers>), a UW professor who earned a drunk driving citation (<http://mediatrackers.org/assets/uploads/2013/07/ProfessorJoelRogersBookingPhoto1.jpg>) and has been consulted frequently by the Obama Administration.

In addition to textbook readings, Wright makes students watch a series of documentary propaganda films throughout the semester-long course. Among the required films is *Inconvenient Truth*, a documentary (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0497116/>) that follows former Vice President Al Gore as he traipses across the globe preaching his gospel of global warming alarmism.

September 20 & 21
An Inconvenient truth
<http://www.climatecrisis.net/>

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Suggenheim (HBO's "Deadwood") captures former Vice President Al Gore in the midst of a... sign -- not for the White House, but for the environment -- in this Oscar-winning documentary. Laying out the... without getting political. Gore makes a sobering impression on the audiences who hear his message, urging them to act "boldly, quickly and wisely" ... before it's too late.

(<http://mediatrackers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Screen-Shot-2015-08-18-at-1.44.33-PM.png>) According to the *Wisconsin State Journal's* database (http://host.madison.com/data/uw_salaries/details/?Name=WRIGHT,%20ERIK%20O) of UW employee salaries, Wright makes \$170,000 a year as a tenured professor.

Support Documents:

621Wright1314F (<http://mediatrackers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/621Wright1314F.pdf>)

FallingIntoMarxismChoosingToStay (<http://mediatrackers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/FallingIntoMarxismChoosingToStay.pdf>)

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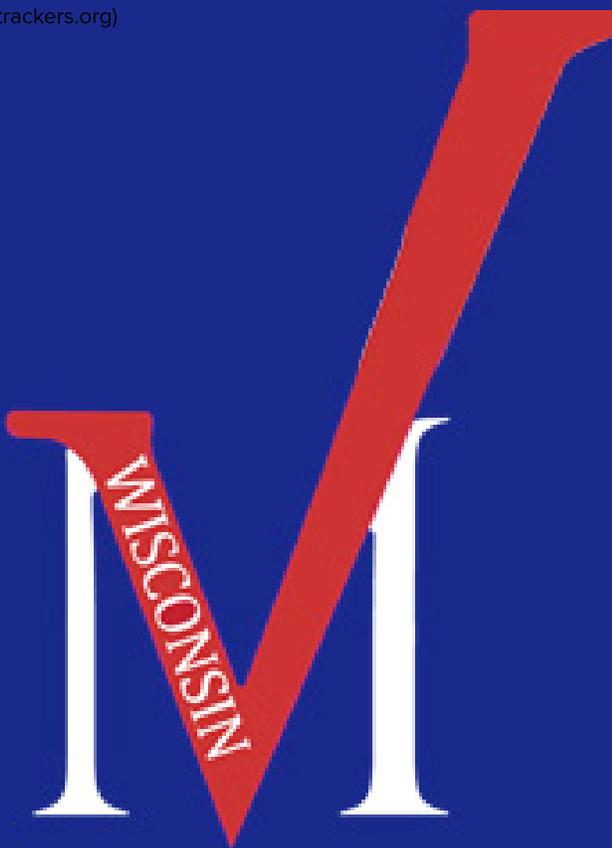
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