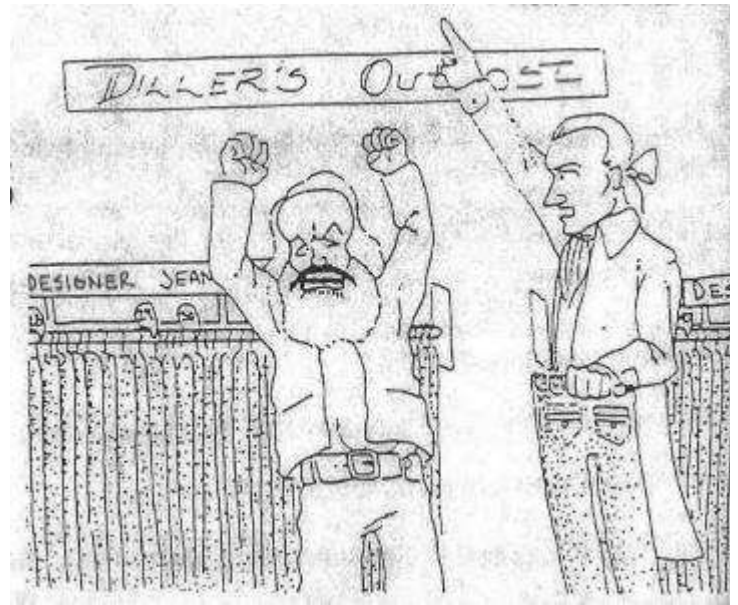


CONVERSATIONS WITH KARL MARX AND ADAM SMITH

*Should An Economy Produce
Designer Jeans?*



SCENE I

MODERATOR: Good evening. Tonight, we will meet two important economic thinkers, Adam Smith, the father of capitalism, and Karl Marx, the spokesman for communism.

Gentlemen, what is your opinion? Should an economy produce designer jeans?

SMITH: If consumers want designer jeans, they should have them. In a capitalist economy, businesses know what people *want* by what they *buy*. When sales rise, many brands and styles are produced to meet demand. I myself am wearing Calvin Klein jeans!

MARX: In a communist economy, we plan to meet the needs of all the people. If jeans are needed, we will produce a pair for everyone. I am wearing such a jean – it is a plain pocket jean.

SMITH: How dull! You would have the government decide what people need? I say people know what they want, and what they like *and* they have a right to choose for themselves!

MARX: you capitalists are so proud of your choices. I see you chose a shirt with a little crocodile on it...

SMITH: It's an alligator.

MARX: I don't care if it's a glockenspiel! What happens to people who can't afford any fancy clothes? Or medical care either! A society should provide for everyone. That's plain-pocket good sense!

SMITH: Sounds like empty-pocket nonsense to me!

SCENE II

MODERATOR: Moving on to the next issue, gentlemen, how will the jeans be produced?

MARX: Communist factories are owned and run by the workers themselves. Our jeans will be cheaper because there is no profit for the capitalist boss.

SMITH: Wrong again! Without the motivation of profit, your workers will waste time and materials. Your workmanship will be poor. Whereas, in my capitalist economy, competition will keep prices down and quality up!

(Ripp! The moderator looks below his podium and cries!)

MODERATOR: My jeans tore!

SMITH: Ha! They probably came from a Marxist factory!

MARX: The point is, you capitalists care more about profits than people! You send jeans to Taiwan to be sewn and leave your workers unemployed. Or worse, replace workers with robots!

SMITH: Absolutely! If the robot is more efficient than a worker, he *should* get the job. Efficiency means more products at lower prices and that means a better standard living for everyone.

(A robot enters – with the name Adam Smith on his chest – approaches Smith aggressively)

SMITH: Back, boy! You can't take *my* place! I am a great economist I'm the father of capitalism! I'm the author of the *Wealth of Nations*, I'm.... (Robot has Smith pinned down).

SCENE III

MODERATOR: Finally, gentlemen. Who gets the jeans that are produced?

SMITH: Whoever wants designer jeans will pay the price for them. I myself freely chose to spend my money on Calvin Klein jeans. I could have bought, say, a designer tie or put my money in the bank.

MARX: In a pure communist society, all those who need jeans will have them. Like my famous quote says, "From each according to their abilities, to each according to his need!"

SMITH: Hogwash! There is no pure communist society!

MARX: There is no pure capitalism, either!

MODERATOR: And there is no more time, gentlemen. Thank you.

(Marx and Smith turn around and their backsides read "The End")