

## At the Origins of *Das Kapital*: Engels's contribution to Marx's critique of political economy

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The article evaluates Friedrich Engels's early contribution to the formation of the Marxian critique of political economy, by reviewing the essential ideas that began to structure the specific Marxian critique of political economy. Article sheds light on the question of what kind of knowledge, and in what ways, Karl Marx and Engels strived to achieve with their critical research project. Engels's 1843 essay *Outlines for the Critique of National Economy (Outlines)* can be considered as the first germ of the Marxian critique of political economy. Marx saw *Outlines* as "a brilliant sketch for a critique of economic categories". In the text, Engels formulates, for the first time, some of the methodological and substantive ideas that are among the distinguishing hallmarks of Marx's critique of capitalism. Examining the theoretical ideas of Marx's *Capital* in the light of the formulations in *Outlines*, shows the visible and invisible importance of Engels for Marx's critique of political economy. The formulations presented by Engels served Marx in some methodological conceptualizations, among them the law of value as a societal law, the development of social forms of capitalism on this basis, the necessary difference between value and exchange-value, and the centrality of the regulating role of unemployment in the capitalist accumulation process. The imprint of Engels as the inspirer of *Capital* also comes out indirectly in Marx's ways of analyzing the special features of capitalist competition and land rent, as well as the relationship between supply and demand and the necessity of crises in capitalism. Although *Outlines* can be regarded mainly as a sketch or draft that contains contradictory formulations in relation to late Marx, it is also possible to highlight some important themes, that have not always been emphasized enough when looking at the content and methodology of Marx's *Capital*.