



## Marxist Thought and the City

By Henri Lefebvre



**Marxist Thought and the City** By Henri Lefebvre

One of the most influential Marxist theorists of the twentieth century, Henri Lefebvre first published *Marxist Thought and the City* in French in 1972, marking a pivotal point in his evolution as a thinker and an important precursor to his groundbreaking work of urban sociology, *The Production of Space*. *Marxist Thought and the City*—in which he reviews the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels for commentary and analysis on the life and growth of the city—now appears in English for the first time.

Rooted in orthodox Marxism's analyses of capitalism and the capitalist mode of production, with extensive quotations from the works of Marx and Engels, this book describes the city's transition from life under feudalism to modern industrial capitalism. In doing so it highlights the various forces that sought to maintain power in the struggles between the medieval aristocracy and the urban guilds, amid the growth of banking and capital.

Providing vital background and supplementary material to Lefebvre's other books, including *The Urban Revolution* and *Right to the City*, *Marxist Thought and the City* is indispensable for students and scholars of urbanism, Marxism, social geography, early modern history, and the history of economic thought.

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#### Review

"This pithy, provocative little book brings Marxist humanism to bear on urban problems as pressing today as they were nearly half-a-century ago. Upsizing cities spell downsizing work, the coming of urban society announces the financialization of space, a crisis of industrial production begets a politics of urban reproduction—all with daunting threats as well as immanent possibilities. Dead for twenty-five years, old man Lefebvre lives on as our most visionary twenty-first-century urban thinker."—Andy Merrifield, author of *Metromarxism*, *Magical Marxism*, and *The New Urban Question*

"Lefebvre's work remains of enduring importance."—Stuart Elden, from the Foreword

"Stimulating and resonant, suggesting new ways of attending to some classics of urban theory... My high praise goes to Elden and, especially, Bononno for producing this lovely book, which I am glad to have read."—*Antipode*

"The text reads like a well-crafted set of research notes, constituting a preliminary step toward the concrete elaboration of 'the urban' as a historical mode of production. This volume would be useful both to those who labor in the Marxist tradition as well as to those generally interested in what Edward Soja calls the 'spatial turn' in critical social theory."—*Marx & Philosophy*

#### About the Author

Henri Lefebvre (1901–1991) was a leading French philosopher, sociologist, and urban theorist. Many of his more than sixty books have appeared in English translation, including *The Critique of Everyday Life*, *The Production of Space*, and (all Minnesota) *Dialectical Materialism; State, Space, World; and The Urban Revolution*.

Robert Bononno has been a translator from French for more than twenty years. His recent nonfiction translations include *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment*, by Henri Lefebvre (Minnesota, 2014), *Speech Begins after Death*, by Michel Foucault and Claude Bonnefoy (Minnesota, 2013), and *Language, Madness, and Desire* by Michel Foucault (Minnesota, 2015).

Stuart Elden is Professor of Political Theory and Geography at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom.

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