There is an image of Karl Marx, with which we are all familiar: the bearded prophet, peering keenly into the future, the man who formulated the doctrines that became the basis for communist regimes. Whether perceiving Marx favorably as the proponent of human emancipation from capitalist bondage or in hostile fashion as the sinister thinker laying the groundwork for totalitarian rule, this familiar Karl Marx is both our contemporary and a twentieth-century icon. Sperber will turn away from this contemporary context and show Marx in the world of his own nineteenth-century lifetime. He will do this by considering four unfamiliar elements of Marx’s life, ideas, and political activities. Two of these elements involve parts of Marx’s life that seem very far from his familiar image: Marx as a journalist and Marx as a Protestant. The other two, Marx as economist and Marx as revolutionary, might be more expected, but when considering their nineteenth-century goals and formulations, will appear rather different from the usual understandings. At the end, Sperber will compare this unfamiliar Karl Marx of the nineteenth-century with the familiar image of Marx prevalent today and in the recent past.

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