

Karl Marx

Karl Heinrich Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. He was an intellectual who developed influential political dogmas. He was the first philosopher to bring together the various elements of socialist thought into both a coherent world view and an emotional principle of struggle. Along with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), with whom he shared an unmatched partnership, Marx dissected the 19th century capitalism as scientific socialism or communism. Marxism is not only a critical evaluator of capitalism but also a feasible or credible alternative to it. Marxism is an orientation, programme of action and a working class movement.

Karl Marx is considered as originator of Modern Communism. According to the theory of communism, the only practical thing was to obtain mastery over the governing laws of society. Besides this, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel wanted to know the causes of economic changes in human society. They also wanted to discover what further changes are required. They established that the changes in human society were not the least accidental like changes in external nature. They worked out a scientific theory of society based on the actual experience of men. Karl Marx applied this theory to the society in which he lived mainly Capitalist Britain. He had an opinion that it was quite impossible to separate his economic theories from historical and social theories. Marx criticized the existing capitalist institutions. He did not believe in the essential goodness of man. He considered that a man is more as an economic than as a political animal.

Marx's principles were not new but he greatly enlarged and systematized older ideas, putting them into new and effective combinations. He attempted to demonstrate that a socialist program must be based upon a systematic interpretation of social evaluations and a critical analysis of the existing system of production and exchange. His design was to show how a socialist community is to be built upon capitalist foundations. Marx defined his socialism as scientific.

Marx inherited and combined three legacies in his theoretical groundwork:

- German philosophy
- French political thought
- English economics

From the German intellectual tradition, he borrowed the Hegelian method of dialectics and applied it to the material world. From the French revolutionary tradition, he recognized the idea that change motivated by a messianic idea was not only desirable, but also practicable. He applied his method with a view to bringing about huge change within the industrialized capitalist economy of which England was the classical model in the 19th century. He used the English classical economists to comprehend the dynamics of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution.

Marx has written various issues of Philosophy, Economics, Politics and society. The books, articles, pamphlets of Marx were written during three decades from the early forties to the early seventies. ***The important works of Marx include Critique of Political Economy, The Communist Manifesto, Das Capital.***

The basic ideologies of Socialism as advocated by Marx can be categorised as follows:

- **Dialectical Materialism**
- **Historical Materialism**
- **Theory of Alienation**
- **Theory of Surplus Value**
- **Class Struggle**
- **Dictatorship of the Proletariat**
- **Vision of a Communist Society**

Dialectical Materialism:

Karl Marx is obligated to both Hegel and Hobbes for his theory of Dialectical materialism. Marx took dialectical method from Hegel but reformed it at basic level. While Hegel had applied the dialectics to explain the material conditions of life, Marx applied the dialectics to elucidate the material conditions of life. In the process of doing so, he criticized the Hegelian philosophy of dialectical idealism on one hand and the theory of mechanistic materialism on the other. Marx wrote "My dialectic method" which is not only different from the Hegelian but is its direct opposite.

In the dialectical materialism of Marx, development within environment help or hinder but neither originating the evolutionary process nor capable of preventing it from reaching its unavoidable goal. Matter is active and not passive, and moves by an inner necessity of its nature. We may put it in another way, Dialectical Materialism of Marx is more interested in motion than matter, in the vital energy within matter inevitably driving it towards perfect human society. Engels signified that the dialectical method grasps things and their images, ideas essentially in their sequence, their movement, their birth and death. According to Marx, every state of history which falls short of perfection carries within itself the seeds of its own annihilation. Each stage reached in the march to the classless society.

Marxian Dialectical Materialism developed by Engels has three dimensions.

1. The law of transformation of quantity into quality. It means that qualitative changes lead to qualitative revolutionary situation.
2. The law of unity of opposites.
3. The law of negation.

Historical Materialism:

Historical materialism is the use of the principles of dialectical materialism to the development of society. Marx applied dialectical materialism to the social world consisting of economic production and exchange. In his Socialism: Utopian and Scientific, Engels has defined historical materialism as a theory which maintains that the ultimate cause which determines the whole course of human history is the economic development of society. The whole course of human history is explicated in terms of changes occurring in the mode of production and exchange. Beginning from primitive communism, the mode of production has passed through three stages. Slavery, feudalism and capitalism and the consequent division of society into three distinct classes (Slave- master, self-baron and proletariat-capitalist) and the struggle of these classes against one

another. The most thoughtful statement of Marx's theory of historic materialism is contained in his preamble to a contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.

In this work, Marx marked that: "The economic structure of society, constituted by its relations of production is the real foundation of society. It is the basis on which rises a legal and political super structure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. Along with it, the society's relations of production themselves corresponds to, a definite state of development of its material productive forces. Thus the mode of production of material life determines the social, political and intellectual life process in general."

Marx expounded that the general relations as well as form of state are to be grasped from the material conditions of life. As the society's productive forces develop, they clash with the existing relations of production. This incongruity between forces of production and relations of production divides the society into different classes. As people become conscious of this conflict they fight it out. The conflict is resolved in favour of the productive forces and higher relations of production.

Analogous to his dialectical materialism, Marx created his materialistic conception of history out of the Hegelian system itself which had sought to bridge the gap between the rational and actual concept. Marx borrowed such concepts as civil society and property from the Hegelian system and set them in a revolutionary relationship to the concept of the state. Hegel confronts civil society as a sphere of materialism and counterposes it to the state as sphere of idealism. On the contrary, Marx maintains that relations as well as forms of state are to be grabbed neither from themselves, nor from the general development of human mind but rather they have their roots in the material conditions of life. As a consequence, Hegel stated that the real world is only the external phenomenal form of the idea, while for Marx, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by human mind and interpreted into forms of thought. In other words, while in the Hegelian scheme, human consciousness determines social existence in the Marxian scheme. It is the social existence that determines their consciousness.

Theory of Surplus Value:

The theory of surplus value is conferred by Marx thoroughly in his famous work 'Das Capital' which was considered as the Gospel or Bible of socialism. The dogma of surplus value is the most relevant theoretical contribution of Karl Marx. The theory of surplus value is imbedded in the labour theory of value holds that labour spent by the labourer in the production of the commodity is the sole criterion for determining its value. Marx acknowledges that human labour cannot create value by itself alone. It uses instruments of production which are owned by the capitalists.

The capitalist buys the labour power of the labourer and applies it to the raw material to produce commodities which have an exchange value of the commodity and the wages paid to the worker by the capitalist in producing that commodity is surplus value. Marx explicates the whole process of exploitation with his theory of surplus value. It is a distinct feature of capitalist mode of production. Surplus value ensues because the commodity produced by the worker is sold by the capitalist for more than what the worker receives as wages. In his Das Capital, Marx elaborated it in a simple technical manner. He contended that the worker produces a commodity which belongs to the capitalist and whose value is realized by the capitalist in the form of price. This capital has two parts-constant capital and variable capital. Constant capital relates to means of production like raw material, machinery toolset used for commodity production. The variable capital denotes to the

wages paid to the worker. Surplus value is the difference between the value produced by the worker and what he actually gets in exchange for this value of his labour. In other words, surplus value is unpaid labour of the labourer.

Marx's theory of surplus value is simply an examination of capitalism. According to Marx, capitalism constantly produces the germs of its own destruction. The instruments which the owners use to increase their profits and rents are the instruments, which fall inevitably into the hands of workers to be used by them to overthrow the whole capitalist system. Professor Francis W. Coker has precisely described this process as follows:

First place, the tendency under capitalist production is towards large production and monopoly. Secondly the tendency towards local concentration, large-scale production necessitates the bringing together of thousands of workers into small areas and by these contacts they become more fully conscious of their common hardship and needs. In the third place, the tendency of capitalist production is towards the accomplishment of ever wider fields for markets. This requires huge development of the means of communication among different parts of the industrial world and this, in turn, enables inter communication among the workers distributed throughout the industrial world. Fourthly, the capitalist system produces recurrent economic crises. Lastly, the tendency under capitalism is towards a steady increase in the unhappiness, ignorance and dependency of the workers and this worsens their hostility and dissatisfaction.

Class Struggle:

Class struggle is elucidated as the tension or antagonism which exists in society due to competing socioeconomic interests and desires between people of different classes. It is the main work of Marxian political philosophy. **Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."** Class struggle pressed society from one stage to the next, in a dialectical process. In each stage, an ownership class controls the means of production while a lower class provides labour for production. The two classes come into conflict and that conflict leads to social change.

It is documented in theoretical studies that Marx observed the structure of society in relation to its major classes, and the struggle between them as the device of change in this structure. He has no equilibrium or consensus theory. Conflict was not deviational within society's structure, nor were classes' functional elements maintaining the system. The structure itself was a derivative of and ingredient in the struggle of classes. He has a conflict view of modern (nineteenth century) society.

Class conflict may emerge in various forms that include direct violence, such as wars fought for resources and cheap labour, indirect violence, such as deaths from poverty, starvation, illness or unsafe working conditions, coercion, such as the threat of losing a job or the pulling of an important investment, and ideologically, such as with books and articles promoting capitalism. Furthermore, political forms of class conflict exist; legally or illegally lobbying or bribing government leaders for passage of partisan desirable legislation including labour laws, tax codes, consumer laws, acts of congress or other sanction, injunction or tariff. The conflict can be direct, as with a lockout intended in destroying a labour union, or indirect, as with an informal slowdown in production protesting low wages by workers or unfair labour practices by capital.

In general, there are six elements in Marx's view of class conflict.

1. Classes are authority relationships based on property ownership.
2. A class defines groupings of individuals with shared life situations, thus interests.
3. Classes are naturally antagonistic by virtue of their interests.
4. Imminent within modern society is the growth of two antagonistic classes and their struggle, which eventually absorbs all social relations.
5. Political organization and Power is an instrumentality of class struggle, and reigning ideas are its reflection.
6. Structural change is a consequence of the class struggle.

The exclusive criterion on the basis of which the class of a person is determined is this ownership (or control) of means of production constitute the bourgeoisie (exploiters) and those who own labour power constitute the proletariat (exploited). It is apparent that Marx explained classes on the basis of twin criteria of a person's place with mode of production and his consequent position in terms of relations of production.

Marx stated that class conflict is the real dynamic force of human history. In Communist Manifesto (1848), Marx and Engels wrote that "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". In the capitalist societies, class differentiation is most clear, class consciousness is more developed and class conflict is more acute. Therefore, capitalism is the concluding point in the historical feature of bourgeois period. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly falling for each other – ***Bourgeoisie (the capitalist class) and Proletariat (the worker class) or it can be said the society was divided between the 'haves' & 'haves not.'*** According Marx, Class is rooted in social relations of production, and cannot be mentioned in the first place to relations of distribution and consumption or their ideological reflections. In considering the class consciousness of the proletariat, Marxists are not concerned with the ideas of individual workers about their position in society so much as with the following series of categories: relations of production (sale of labour-power, exploitation); conflict of workers and employers on this basis (economic struggles, trade unions, elementary political battles for economic ends); conflict at the level of class (economic struggles which merge into the conflict between classes, which is organised through the political parties and the struggle for state power); the theoretical and practical struggle to build revolutionary parties of the working class, in conflict with non-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary tendencies in the class and their reflection inside the revolutionary party.

Marx made a distinction between the objective fact of existence of a class and its subjective awareness about its being a class, class consciousness. Division of labour is the main source of historical development of classes and class antagonisms. Through a detailed historical analysis, Marx indicated that no major resentment disappears unless there emerges a new antagonism.

General bitterness between rich and poor is there but in capitalism, it has been severely polarised into antagonism between the capitalist and the proletariat. Thus, in capitalism, the emergence of proletariat has a special consequence. It is not an ancient phenomenon because its suffering, its exploitation and determination is a pattern for the human conduct. The proletariat can abolish all classes and all class antagonisms by eliminating itself as a separate classes. In the class struggle, the majority proletariat is successful. ***Marx and Engels wrote that "The workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose but your chains and have a world to win"***. When evaluating class struggle concept, Marx envisaged the emergence of a classless society, free from exploitation

and suppression. Such class-less society will also be a state less society because with the vanishing of classes, rationale for the existence of state will disappear.

Dictatorships of the Proletariat:

The Marxist socio-political theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat denotes to a state where the proletariat, or the working class, has control of political power. The phrase was devised by Joseph Weydemeyer and then adopted by the originators of Marxism, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, in the 19th century. In Marxist theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the intermediate system between capitalism and communism, when the government is in the process of changing the ownership of the means of production from private to collective ownership. The notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat was major explanation of Marx's theory of the communist society and the role of the proletarian state. Marx did not write clearly and systematically about the dictatorship of the proletariat and about the exact nature and form of post-revolutionary communist society. Marxist theory represented that the existence of any government implies the dictatorship of one social class over another. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is thus used as an antonym of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a transitional phase on the track from capitalism to socialism and communism. In the critique of the Gotha programme, he further illuminated that between capitalism and communist society lies a period of revolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism. In political domain, this change will take the form of dictatorship of the proletariats. It is the first step in the uprising of the working class which will raise the proletariat to the position of a ruling class.

According to Marx, during the dictatorship of the proletariat, there will be a regime in which the proletariat will control the state power. Such a transitional phase of dictatorship of the proletariat is required because the demolition of whole capitalist social and political order cannot be fully accomplished without capturing the state power and without using it as a tool to create condition for the helping a communist social order.

Marx and Engels were convinced that existing states whether as instrument of class domination and oppression, or rule by bureaucratic parasites on the whole of society, would propagate integrally strong and remain minority states representing in the interests of the small powerful possessing class. It was only when the proletarian majority detained the state structure that the state became truly democratic and majoritarian. Whatever might be the form the state assumed, it was controlling machinery which the proletariat had to contend with while making its revolution.

In the later phase of his life, Marx thought that there is the imperative need to destroy the state and to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the preliminary states, bearing in mind the example of the French Revolution of 1789, he predicted a seizure of the existing state machine by the revolutionary proletariat. He believed that political centralization would assist the revolutionary process. In a book review written around 1848-1849, Marx witnessed that the destruction of the state had one implication for the communists, such as the cessation of an organised power of one class for the suppression of another class.

In the year 1850, the term dictatorship of the proletariat swapped rule of the proletariat. Marx and Engels emphasized the notion of extraordinary power during an emergency for a limited

period of time. It was "a social description, a statement of the class character of the political power. It did not designate a statement about the forms of government authority". It is in fact the nature of political power which guarantees its class character. According to Marx and Engels, the dictatorship of the proletariat was by the entire class, for the revolution would be made by the masses themselves. In a series of articles entitled the class struggles in France, Marx debated that the announcement of the permanence of the revolution, the class dictatorship of the proletariat is the necessary transit point to the abolition of class distinctions generally to the abolition of all social relations that correspond to these relations of production, to the revolutionizing of all the ideas that result from these social relations."

There is contradiction among philosophers regarding the nature and character of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx wrote that the first step in the working class revolution is the raising of the proletariat to the position of the ruling class. The victory of democracy the proletarian movement is the mindful movement of the immense majority in the interest of majority. The communists said that this dictatorship means the despotic rule of the communist minority within the proletariat but the socialists hold that this means a socialist government by a proletarian majority. The dictatorship of the proletariat would be established by vicious methods but would not be maintained violence and suppression.

Vision of a Communist Society:

Marx described communism as a form of society which the proletariat will bring into existence through its revolutionary struggle. In Communist Philosophy, Marx and Engels debated that the communists have no interests separate and apart from the interests of the proletariat as a whole. In his Economic and Philosophical Texts, Marx explained communism as the positive abolition of private property. It also entailed the abolition of classes and abolition of division of labour. In economic terms, the communist society will be a society of associated producers'. In political terms, communism will be the first state in the history of mankind to political power for universal interests instead of partisan interests. Therefore, it will be different from the state in capitalism which is no more than the managing committee of the bourgeoisie. According to Marx, the state in capitalism is serving the long-term interests of the bourgeoisie as a whole.

Marx created his vision of communism out of the human and technological potentials already visible in his time, given the priorities that would be accepted by a new socialist society. Marx believed that the programs presented by a triumphant working class to deal with the problems left by the old society and the revolution would uncheck a social dynamic whose general results could be recorded previously. Projecting the communist future from existing patterns and trends is an integral part of Marx's analysis of capitalism, and analysis which links social and economic problems with the objective interests that incline each class to deal with them in distinctive ways; what unfolds are the real possibilities in-built in a socialist transformation of the capitalist mode of production. In this reference, Marx declares, "we do not anticipate the world dogmatically, but rather wish to find the new world through the criticism of the old."

Marx spoke of two stages of communist society. In the first stage, communism will bring about the socialization of means of production. It means that the means of production will not be in the hands of any one class but in the hands of society as a whole. At this stage, labour will continue to exist and the organizing principle of the economy will be "from each according to his capacity to each according to his work". It means that everyone will work according to one's capability and get

according to the amount of work done. At the second and final stage, the communist society will guarantee the end of man's power by objective forces. According to Marx, communism is not only the abolition of private property but also the eradication of state and abolition of classes. It will be a classless and stateless society in which government of men will be replaced by administration of things. Marx visualized communism as the final solution of the conflict between existence and essence, freedom and necessity, individual and the species.

Marx asserted that communism is the solution to the problem of exploitation and oppression. Since communism will ensure the disappearance of social division of labour, it will become possible for man to do one thing today another tomorrow. Furthermore, it will be a state of many people where everyone will work according to ability and get according to need. The creation of new needs will also ensure the creation of means for their satisfaction. According to William Ebenstein, Marx had not devised clear theory as to how the political reformation from capitalist to proletarian rule could come about. Though in the Communist Manifesto, he envisaged in the need for revolution. He was less assertive later, speaking in 1872 at a public meeting in Amsterdam following the Congress of International, Marx professed that the means of attaining power for the working class are not everywhere the same. He wrote that "We know that we must take into consideration the institutions, the habits and customs of different regions, and we do not deny that there are countries like America, England and where the workers can attain their objectives by peaceful means. But such is not the case in all other countries".

Criticism of Political Thoughts of Karl Marx:

Karl Marx is unquestionably an influential philosopher of modern times. His ideas and dogmas have acquired the status of a powerful philosophy and a programme of action. His ideas on Dialectical Materialism, Historical Materialism, Surplus Value, Class Struggle, and Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Alienation, and communism have been widely deliberated, pondered, altered and sometimes even precluded and criticized by his followers and opponents. Marxism has been exposed to severe disapprovals from various angles. Along with Plato and Hegel, Marx was viewed as an opponent of the open society. Marxism appealed to have studied the laws of history on the basis of which it supported total sweeping and radical changes. Not only was it impossible to have first-hand knowledge based on some set of laws that governed society and human individuals, but Karl Popper also prohibited Marx's social engineering as hazardous for it treated individuals as submissive to the interests of the whole. Popper disallowed the historicism, holism and utopian social engineering of Marxism. On the contrary, he supported piecemeal social engineering, where change would be gradual and modest, allowing rectification of lapses and errors for it was not possible to conceive of everything.

Popper demanded that Marx's scientific socialism was wrong not only about society but also about science. He appealed that the capitalism described by Marx never existed. He specified that "Marx misinformed intelligent people by saying that the historic method is the scientific way of approaching social problems" Additionally, Marx made the economy all important, overlooking factors like nationality, friendship, religion, and sex. Society was far more complex than what Marx defined.

As Popper has declared "Marx brought into the social science and historical science the very important idea that economic conditions are of great importance in the life of society. There was nothing like serious economic history before Marx". Marx did not foresee the rise of Fascism,

totalitarianism and the welfare state. His investigation of capitalism was applicable to early 19th century capitalism, though his criticisms of capitalism as being extravagant unequal and exploitative was true. However, his alternative to genuine democracy and communism seemed more official to realize in practice. They did not accommodate a world which was becoming increasingly differentiated, stratified and functionally specialized. Popper's evaluation of Marxism on the basis of falsification was equally true and difficult to disprove, for Marxism constantly adjusted theory in the light of reality.

Marx's vision of a new social order in which there will be neither alienation nor exploitation no classes, no class antagonism, no state is highly interesting. Prof. Sabine spoke that Marxism a 'Utopia but a generous and humane one'. Harrington represented the contemporary radical view of Marx as being an excellent critic of capitalism but unable to provide a thorough alternative to it. A democratic system was totally alien to his temperament in spite of his appeal for democratization of social forces. Marx dismissed liberty as a purely bourgeoisie ideal and was openly contemptuous of democracy as a bourgeoisie invention designed to mislead the people. As a forecaster of revolution, Marx botched to analyse human nature properly. However, it cannot be repudiated that the true and the false together in him constitute one of the most immensely compelling forces that modern history has seen.

The collapse of communism showed the serious inadequacies of Marxism both in theory and practice. It remained a critique rather than providing a serious alternative to liberal democracy. In spite of Marx's utopia being truly generous, it exhibited a potential for being tyrannical despotic and arbitrary. Centralization of power and absence of checks and balances on absolute power were themselves unfriendly to human freedom and liberation.

In Marx's political dogmas, capitalism has been the topic of disapproval from many viewpoints during its history. Disparagements range from people who disagree with the principles of capitalism in its totality, to those who disagree with particular consequences of capitalism. According to Marx, capitalism as a progressive historical stage that would eventually stagnate due to internal contradictions and be followed by socialism. Marxists define capital as "a social, economic relation" between people (rather than between people and things). In this sense they seek to abolish capital. They believe that private ownership of the means of production enriches capitalists (owners of capital) at the expense of workers. In brief, they argue that the owners of the means of production exploit the workforce. In Karl Marx's view, the dynamic of capital would eventually diminish the working class and thereby create the social conditions for a revolution. Private ownership over the means of production and distribution is seen as creating a dependence of non-owning classes on the ruling class, and ultimately as a source of constraint of human liberty.

Karl Marx saw capitalism as a progressive historical stage that would eventually stagnate due to internal contradictions and be followed by socialism. Marxists define capital as "a social, economic relation" between people (rather than between people and things). In this sense they seek to abolish capital. They believe that private ownership of the means of production enriches capitalists (owners of capital) at the expense of workers. In brief, they argue that the owners of the means of production exploit the workforce.

To summarize, Karl Marx has gained mastery over multiple disciplines. He was popular as a philosopher, economist, sociologist, journalist, and revolutionary socialist. Marxism, the philosophical and political school or tradition his work is a diversity of radical or revolutionary Socialism considered as a reaction against the widespread Capitalism and Liberalism of 19th Century Europe, with working class self-emancipation as major goal. Marx is recognized for his analysis of history

(particularly his concept of historical materialism) and the search for a systemic understanding of socioeconomic transformation. Marx's theories about society, economics and politics together assumed as Marxism which hold that human societies develop through class struggle, a conflict between ruling classes that control the means of production and working classes that work on these means by selling their labour for wages. In historical Materialism, Marx attempted to make history scientific, and it motivates much of the rest of his work. It is based on the principle of Dialectical Materialism (a synthesis of Hegel's theory of Dialectics and the idea that social and other phenomena are essential material in nature, rather than ideal or spiritual, hence the link with Materialism) as it relates to history and societies. It holds that class struggle (the developing conflict between classes with opposing interests) is way to bring about changes in a society's mode of production, and that it structures each historical period and drives historical change. Through his theories of alienation, value, commodity fetishism, and surplus value, Marx debated that capitalism facilitated social relations and philosophy through commodification, inequality, and the exploitation of labour. Adopting a critical approach known as historical materialism, Marx propounded the theory of base and superstructure, asserting that the cultural and political conditions of society, as well as its philosophies of human nature, are largely determined by obscured economic foundations.

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