



KARL HEINRICH MARX: Birth: May 5, 1818 Trier, Prussia. Death: March 14, 1883 (aged 64) London, United Kingdom. 19th-century philosopher, political economist, sociologist, humanist, political theorist and revolutionary. Often called the father of communism, Marx was both a scholar and a political activist. Works: *The Communist Manifesto*, *Das Kapital*, Materialist conception of history.

The messages carved on Marx's tombstone are:

“WORKERS OF ALL LANDS UNITE” the final line of *The Communist Manifesto*, and

“THE PHILOSOPHERS HAVE ONLY INTERPRETED THE WORLD IN VARIOUS WAYS - THE POINT HOWEVER IS TO CHANGE IT”

Major Ideas: Dialectical Materialism-Historical Materialism-Origin of the State and Property-Theory of Surplus Value-Class Struggle-Dictatorship of the Proletariat-withering away of the state.

The Communist Manifesto:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. It is the conflict between the freeman and the slave and the capitalist and the slave. The book also deals with the role of the proletariat and the action to be taken.

Theory of Surplus Value:

It is a fundamental theory of Marxism. The value of a commodity depends solely on the amount of labour put in it. Labour is the only legitimate source of value. The Capitalist sells the product for a higher value. However, the Capitalists do not pay the labour class their due. The capitalist takes the surplus profit. To make more profit, the Capitalist reduces the wages. The labourer gets the minimum, just enough for his subsistence. This subsistence-minimum is only a fraction of what he produces. The simple equation is as follows:

Value of a commodity = value of the labour

Price of a commodity = subsistence wages + capitalist's profit.

The capitalists can control the wages more successfully in large scale enterprises. That means, large scale industries makes large scale profits. The more profit he makes, the larger he becomes. When the number and size of Capitalists increase, the number and poverty of the labour classes also increase. This means concentration of more capital in fewer hands. The rich become richer and the poor become poorer.

Dialectic Materialism:

Dialectic Materialism is the corner-stone of Marxist Philosophy. The world by its very nature is material. It develops in accordance with the laws of movement of matter. This evolution is not according to certain universal spirit as Hegel said. But, the development of matter is according to material forces. This is because; matter generates sensations, perceptions and consciousness. Thought is the product of matter. Matter, therefore, is the primary idea and consciousness is only secondary. Human brain is material and is the generator of thought. It is the material that determines the spiritual and not vice versa.

Marx's materialism is called Dialectical Materialism because its approach to nature, its method of study and the method of understanding is dialectical; whereas, its interpretation of the phenomena of nature is materialistic.

Historical Materialism is the application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life and its history.

The progress of **concepts** must confirm to the (objective) social **reality**.

Concepts (generated by mind) = Reality outside. = Economic reality.

History of man is the history of struggle between economic classes. This struggle is in the form of a dialectics. The thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis of this dialectics are nothing but economic classes. The dialectics will result in a classless society. The dialectics will stop there because, there will be no more classes and no conflict in the society.

The Materialistic Interpretation of History:

It is the economic conditions which determine the social and political institutions. It is based on the idea that 'man must eat to live'. All his activities are to meet his material needs. Ideas, conceptions, consciousness flow from their material needs. Politics, law, morality, religion etc are all product of his material activity. Marx saw evolutionary change in the ethical, religious, social economic and political ideas and institutions of mankind.

Economic activity means economic production. It depends on the productive forces. There are animate and inanimate productive forces. Labourers, inventors and engineers are the animate productive forces. Soil, raw material and tools are the inanimate productive forces. The manual and mental labourers are the most important. Next important forces of productions are the 'conditions of production'. It includes the state, the classes and the laws. The forces of production are the gift of nature. The conditions of production are created by man. The disharmony between the forces of production and conditions of production creates conflict in the society. It promotes class struggle.

Class Struggle:

The history of the hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Ever since the break up of the tribal society, there were classes. There were slaves and slave owners, feudal lords and serfs, and bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In every society, the class which is able to control the means of production and distribution will govern the society. It is called the ruling class. The ruling class satisfies its own needs. At the same time it prevents other classes from access to the means of production. It is an oppressing and exploiting class. The ruling class takes larger proportion of social production. It also controls the social political and economic institutions in the society. It is against change and wants to keep the existing order according to their wishes. However, the exploited classes want changes in the social order. This situation leads to class struggle.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat:

Marx realised that there is a deep rooted economic antagonism between the capitalist and the proletariat, i.e. the workers. The workers would organise their resources. Through a revolution, they will take charge of the political and economic control of the world. It is a political and economic domination of the workers. This is not a peaceful evolution. The capture of political power was necessary for the abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a communist society. The dictatorship of the proletariat is only a step towards the establishment of a classless society. The proletariat would ultimately abolish its supremacy as a class. The proletariat will abolish all classes and then disappear as a class. Thus dictatorship of the proletariat is not an end. It is a means to the establishment of a classless society. It is transitory in nature. Once the socialist society is established, the dictatorship will not remain. The basic principle of such a society is "each according to his capacity and to each according to his needs". The state will 'wither away'. Things will administer themselves. Administration of things will be a matter of technical and scientific knowledge. Life will be associational and not political. The state will be only a community.

Marx on State:

The State is an instrument in the hands of economic dominant class. Its objective is not the welfare of the masses. It meets only the welfare of a class. The executive of the modern state is only a committee of the bourgeoisie class to manage its affairs. With the disappearance of the classes, the need of the state also will disappear. The state will wither away.



Critical Evaluation: Marx has termed all struggles as class struggles. This is an oversimplification. There are conflicts between all classes including religious, ethnic and cultural conflicts. The religious conflicts were the characteristic features of the Middle Ages.

- The capitalists also have modified their behaviour and attitude towards working classes. This has led to the abolition of antagonism. The workers today are in a better position. The picture is different today.

Marx's Tomb In London

Vladimir Lenin:



Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov Lenin: April 22 [O.S. April 10] 1870 – January 21, 1924),

was a Russian revolutionary, a communist politician, lived a number of years in exile. The main leader of the October Revolution, the first head of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic and from 1922, the first *de facto* leader of the Soviet Union. He was named by Time Magazine as one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century. His contributions to Marxist theory are commonly referred to as Leninism. Held the post of School Inspector. Strong connection with the Tsarist bureaucracy. Very religious minded. Elder brother Alexander a member of Narodnaya Volya that was involved in the assassination of Tsar. Lenin decides to take up revenge. Comes in contact with terrorist and secret organisations. Comes in close contacts with the works of Marx and Plekhanov.

Lenin introduced a number of changes to Marxism. This was necessary to suit Marxism to the conditions of Russia. Leninism is Marxism in the era of Imperialism. It is an extension of Marxism. It is

more interested in the revolutionary part of Marxism. Party strength and party dictatorship was the main subject of Leninism. Dictatorship of the proletariat and withering away of the state were the main theme of Leninism.

Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism. As capitalism develops, production grows bigger and bigger. It leads to monopoly capitalism. It happens in the financial world also. Banks become masters of capital and industrialists. It is also called finance capitalism or monopoly finance capitalism. The characteristic of monopoly capitalism is expansion. This situation leads to three consequences. Firstly, exploitation of colonial peoples, then, promotion of international wars and finally, collapse of Capitalism itself. Thus, Capitalism leads to Imperialism which leads to Socialism. Imperialism is moribund Capitalism.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat means dictatorship over the proletariat of the Communist Party which is the only revolutionary party capable of crushing capitalism, establishment of socialism and maintaining it. Dictatorship of the communist party over the proletariat is true democracy in the interest of the workers. The objective of this dictatorship is to overthrow capitalism, crush the resistance of the overthrown capitalists, consolidate the proletarian revolution and complete it to the goal of socialism. Revolution can overthrow the capitalist but cannot consolidate its gain and achieve socialism without the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is violent and peaceful, bloody and bloodless, military and economic, educational and administrative. It is not a complete democracy of all. It is a democracy for the proletariat. It works through Soviets.

The State

The state is the product and the manifestation of the class antagonisms. It is a situation of domination of the majority by the minority. There is no justice in it. The state represents force and this force must be opposed by the force of the workers and must be overpowered. The government is only

the ruling instrument of the state. As soon as the communism is established, there is no need of the state because there is no one to be suppressed. Then the state will wither away.

For the communist society, there are two stages. In the lower stage, the means of production are nationalized and that there is no private property. Each person performs a socially useful function. The formula is 'from each according to his ability and to each according to his work'. In the second or the higher stage, the society becomes classless and the formula is 'each according his ability and to each according to his need. There is no difference between workers and managers, hand and brain workers.

The Communist Party

A major contribution of Lenin to Marxism is his idea of the organisation of communist party on the basis of democratic centralism. In the lower stage of communism, the communist party will lead the proletariat. It is group of reliable, experienced, and hardened workers.

Another important contribution of Lenin to Marxism is his doctrine of the professional revolutionary. Lenin puts emphasis on the revolutionary aspect rather than evolutionary aspect of Marxism. Lenin applied Marxism to the conditions of Russia where there is little organized working class consciousness. The consciousness can be brought about by the professional revolutionaries. This is a small minority. They are necessary to win power for the proletariat.

The communists may not be able to win power by open methods. So they should form cells within industrial political, military, co-operative, educational and athletic associations. These cells may be open or secret. They should make use of legal and illegal methods for the establishment of a communist society.

Mao: Syllabus: On Contradictions in Society.



(26 December 1893 – 9 September 1976) was the leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976. Mao was a great revolutionary leader whose thought is the highest expression of Marxism. Many of his detractors however accuse him of having been a mass-murderer, holding his leadership accountable for the deaths of tens of millions of innocent Chinese.

Maoism, variably and officially known as Mao Zedong Thought, is a variant of Marxism. Mao Zedong Thought is defined in the CPC's Constitution as "Marxism-Leninism applied in a Chinese context".

Theory of Revolution

If there are unbridgeable gap between the rich and the poor, the poor is will revolt against the rich. Revolution is the only weapon to solve the opposites. But the problem is how to make the revolution a reality. It is not like a dinner party or an essay or a painting. It is not a refined affair. Appeal or compromise or appeasement has no place in Mao's theory of revolution. It is violent. Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun. Gun is the symbol of violence. Revolution, violence and arms are closely linked.

Revolutionary guerilla war is another technique of revolution. This is also called "**People's War**". Mao did not want to remain idle after winning the revolution. He wanted to spread it to other countries as well.

Class struggle is another technique of revolution in China, class struggle meant struggle launched by the peasants. The lumpen proletariat also can be part of the struggling classes. The petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie also can take part in the struggle. The revolutionaries should wait for the most opportunistic moment to strike.

In Mao's opinion, in a society there are five classes like the big bourgeoisie, middle bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, semi proletariat and proletariat.

Great Leap Forward

In January 1958, Mao launched the second Five-Year Plan known as the *Great Leap Forward*, a plan intended as an alternative model for economic growth to the Soviet model focusing on heavy industry. Under this economic program, the relatively small agricultural collectives were rapidly merged into larger people's communes. All private food production was banned; livestock and farm implements were brought under collective ownership. The Great Leap Forward was a disaster for China.

Cultural Revolution 1966

Failed Great Leap Forward made Mao to think that his colleagues lacked commitment to the revolution. Mao organized China's urban youths into groups called the **Red Guards**, shut down China's schools, and encouraged the Red Guards to attack all traditional values and “bourgeois things.” Opponents and moderates were purged, were verbally attacked, were physically abused, and subsequently killed. The Revolution led to the destruction of much of China's cultural heritage and the imprisonment of a huge number of Chinese citizens.

