

Marxism

Dr. Barnali Chetia

Marxism

- **Marxism** is a body of doctrine developed by **Karl Marx** and, to a lesser extent, by **Friedrich Engels** in the mid-19th century.
- It originally consisted of **three** related ideas: a philosophical anthropology, a theory of history, and an economic and political program.
- There is also Marxism as it has been understood and practiced by the various socialist movements, particularly before 1914.

- Further, there is Soviet Marxism as worked out by **Vladimir Illich Lenin** and modified by **Joseph Stalin**, which under the name of Marxism-Leninism became the doctrine of the communist parties set up after the Russian Revolution (1917).
- Offshoots of this included Marxism as interpreted by the **anti-Stalinist Leon Trotsky and his followers, Mao Zedong's Chinese variant of Marxism-Leninism**, and various Marxisms in the developing world.

- There were also the post-World War II nondogmatic Marxisms that have modified Marx's thought with borrowings from modern philosophies
 - principally from those of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger
 - and also from Sigmund Freud and others.

Karl Marx -Biography

- Karl Heinrich Marx was one of nine children born to Heinrich and Henrietta Marx in Trier, Prussia.
- His father was a successful lawyer who revered Kant and Voltaire, and was a passionate activist for Prussian reform.
- Although both parents were Jewish with rabbinical ancestry, Karl's father converted to Christianity in 1816 at the age of 35.
- This was likely a professional concession in response to an 1815 law banning Jews from high society.

- He was baptized a Lutheran, rather than a Catholic, which was the predominant faith in Trier, because he “equated Protestantism with intellectual freedom.”
- When he was 6, Karl was baptized along with the other children, but his mother waited until 1825, after her father died.
- Marx was educated at home until he was 12 and spent five years, from 1830 to 1835, at the Jesuit high school in Trier, at that time known as the Friedrich-Wilhelm Gymnasium.

- The school's principal, a friend of Marx's father, was a liberal and a Kantian
 - was respected by the people of Rhineland but suspect to authorities.
- The school was under surveillance and was raided in 1832.

Education-Karl Marx

- In October of 1835, Marx began studying at the University of Bonn. It had a lively and rebellious culture, and Marx enthusiastically took part in student life.
- In his two semesters there, he was imprisoned for drunkenness and disturbing the peace, incurred debts and participated in a duel.
- At the end of the year, Marx's father insisted he enroll in the more serious University of Berlin.
- In Berlin, he studied law and philosophy and was introduced to the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel, who had been a professor at Berlin until his death in 1831.

- Marx was not initially enamored with Hegel, but he soon became involved with the Young Hegelians, a radical group of students including Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Feuerbach, who criticized the political and religious establishments of the day.
- In 1836, as he was becoming more politically zealous, Marx was secretly engaged to Jenny von West Phalen, a sought-after woman from a respected family in Trier who was four years his senior. This, along with his increasing radicalism, caused his father angst.
- In a series of letters, Marx's father expressed concerns about what he saw as his son's "demons," and admonished him for not taking the responsibilities of marriage seriously enough, particularly when his wife-to-be came from a higher class.

- Marx did not settle down. He received his doctorate from the University of Jena in 1841, but his radical politics prevented him from procuring a teaching position.
- He began to work as a journalist, and in 1842, he became the editor of *Rheinische Zeitung*, a liberal newspaper in Cologne.
- Just one year later, the government ordered the newspaper's suppression, effective April 1, 1843. Marx resigned on March 18th. Three months later, in June, he finally married Jenny von West Phalen, and in October, they moved to Paris.

Paris

- Paris was the political heart of Europe in 1843. There, along with Arnold Ruge, Marx founded a political journal titled *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (German-French Annals).
 - Only a single issue was published before philosophical differences between Marx and Ruge resulted in its demise
- but in August of 1844, the journal brought Marx together with a contributor, Friedrich Engels, who would become his collaborator and lifelong friend.

- Together, the two began writing a criticism of the philosophy of Bruno Bauer, a Young Hegelian and former friend of Marx's.
- The result of Marx and Engels's first collaboration was published in 1845 as *The Holy Family*.
- Later that year, Marx moved to Belgium after being expelled from France while writing for another radical newspaper, *Vorwärts!*, which had strong ties to an organization that would later become the Communist League.

Brussels

- In Brussels, Marx was introduced to socialism by Moses Hess, and finally broke off from the philosophy of the Young Hegelians completely.
- While there, he wrote *The German Ideology*, in which he first developed his theory on historical materialism.
- Marx couldn't find a willing publisher, however, and *The German Ideology* -- along with *Theses on Feuerbach*, which was also written during this time -- were not published until after his death.

- At the beginning of 1846, Marx founded a Communist Correspondence Committee in an attempt to link socialists from around Europe.
- Inspired by his ideas, socialists in England held a conference and formed the Communist League, and in 1847 at a Central Committee meeting in London, the organization asked Marx and Engels to write Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei (Manifesto of the Communist Party).
- The Communist Manifesto, as this work is commonly known, was published in 1848, and shortly after, in 1849, Marx was expelled from Belgium.
- He went to France, anticipating a socialist revolution, but was deported from there as well. Prussia refused to renaturalize him, so Marx moved to London. Although Britain denied him citizenship, he remained in London until his death.

London

- In London, Marx helped found the German Workers' Educational Society, as well as a new headquarters for the Communist League.
- He continued to work as a journalist, including a 10-year stint as a correspondent for the *New York Daily Tribune* from 1852 to 1862, but he never earned a living wage and was largely supported by Engels.

Death

- Marx died of pleurisy in London on March 14, 1883. While his original grave had only a nondescript stone, the Communist Party of Great Britain erected a large tombstone, including a bust of Marx, in 1954.
- The stone is etched with the last line of *The Communist Manifesto* (“Workers of all lands unite”), as well as a quote from the *Theses on Feuerbach*.

* *Pleurisy*-inflammation of the membranes that surround the lungs and line the chest cavity (pleurae)

The Thought Of Karl Marx

- The written work of Marx cannot be reduced to a philosophy, much less to a philosophical system. The whole of his work is a radical critique of philosophy, especially of G.W.F. Hegel's idealist system and of the philosophies of the left and right post-Hegelians.
- It is not, however, a mere denial of those philosophies. Marx declared that philosophy must become reality.
 - One could no longer be content with interpreting the world
 - one must be concerned with transforming it, which meant transforming both the world itself and human consciousness of it.

- This required a critique of experience together with a critique of ideas. In fact, Marx believed that all knowledge involves a critique of ideas.
- Marx was not an **empiricist**. Rather, his work teems with concepts (**appropriation, alienation, praxis, creative labour** and so on) that he had inherited from earlier philosophers and economists, including **Hegel, Johann Fichte, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill.**

* Empiricist-theory that all knowledge is based on experience derived from the senses.

Social Classes

- Marx distinguishes social classes on the basis of two criteria-
-ownership of means of production and control over the labour power of others
- Following this criterion of class based on property relations, Marx identified the social stratification of the capitalist mode of production with the following social groups:
- **Proletariat:** The class of modern wage labourers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labour power in order to live. The capitalist mode of production establishes the conditions that enable the bourgeoisie to **exploit** the proletariat as the worker's labour generates a **surplus value** greater than the worker's **wage**.

- **Lumpenproletariat:** the outcasts of society, such as the criminals, vagabonds, beggars, or prostitutes, without any political or class consciousness. Having no interest in national, let alone international, economic affairs, Marx claimed that this specific sub-division of the proletariat would play no part in the eventual social revolution.
- **Bourgeoisie:** those who "**own the means of production**" and buy labour power from the proletariat, thus exploiting the proletariat. They subdivide as bourgeoisie and the petite bourgeoisie.

- **Petite bourgeoisie:** those who work and can afford to buy little labour power (i.e. small business owners, peasants landlords and trade workers). Marxism predicts that the continual reinvention of the means of production eventually would destroy the petite bourgeoisie, degrading them from the middle class to the proletariat.
- **Landlords:** a historically important social class who retain some wealth and power.

- **Peasantry and farmers:** a scattered class incapable of organizing and effecting socio-economic change, most of whom would enter the proletariat while some would become landlords.
- Class consciousness denotes the awareness of itself and the social world that a social class possesses as well as its capacity to rationally act in their best interests.
- Class consciousness is required before a social class can effect a successful revolution and thus the dictatorship of the proletariat.

- Marx saw work, the effort by humans to transform the environment for their needs, as a fundamental feature of human kind.
- **Capitalism**, in which the product of the worker's labour is taken from them and sold at market rather than being part of the worker's life, is therefore alienating to the worker.
- Additionally, the worker is compelled by various means to work harder, faster and for longer hours.
- While this is happening, the employer is constantly trying to save on labour costs by paying the workers less and figuring out how to use cheaper equipment. This allows the employer to extract the largest amount of work and therefore potential wealth from their workers.

- The fundamental nature of capitalist society is no different from that of slave society, in that one small group of society exploits the larger group.
- Through common ownership of the means of production, the profit motive is eliminated and the motive of furthering human flourishing is introduced.
- Because the surplus produced by the workers is the property of the society as a whole, there are no classes of producers and appropriators.
- Additionally, as the state has its origins in the bands of retainers hired by the first ruling classes to protect their economic privilege, it will wither away as its conditions of existence have disappeared.

Meanings of Marxian Concepts

- Karl Marx's main work on **alienation** is the 1844 manuscript, also known as Paris manuscripts. Alienation is the philosophical term, which was borrowed by Karl Marx from Hegel's philosophy.
- However, Marx took it beyond the level of Hegel philosophy, he adopted it to serve his own aims. He adopted the term from philosophy and transformed it into critical sociological term.
- The term **Alienation** means, **feeling stranger or eliminated**. According to Marx, history of mankind has two aspects; it is the history of **growing control of human beings over nature**, and history of **increasing alienation of mankind**.

Example (Alienation)

- When individuals in a society are alienated, they feel powerless, isolated and they think that, social world is meaningless. They consider social institutions oppressive, and beyond their control. Marx believed that, all the institutions (religion, state and economy) in capitalist society were marked by the condition of alienation. Alienation is hostile towards mankind in every institution of the world, in which it entangles.
- Economics alienation under capitalism means that, man is alienated in workplace on daily basis where he/she earn his/her livelihood.
- Marx has explained **four types of alienation in a workplace** in modern capitalist system. Which are as follows-
 - workers are alienated from, **product, labor process, fellow workers and themselves.**

- **For example, let us compare a clock maker who is specialized in making beautiful clocks, with a man who works in a pin factory, whose work is boring and repetitive who performs all day and every day same task.**
- The man working in pin factory may not even realize that, in what way his task contribute to the final product, he has been alienated from his product. On the other hand, the clock smith loves his job because he recognize his work and the outcome of his work. The man working in factory feel alienated because the whole productive process has been robbed from him, he does not recognize his own creation. He becomes robot, kind of cog in a machine. The division of labor in modern capitalist system has also detached the ties among the workers. They cannot share secret of their work and be proud of their accomplishment because they don't even know the complete process of making the product and do not own the product. As a result workers become alienated from their coworkers, they do not understand that, they are collectively responsible for the finished goods which leave the factory. They don't know one another, they become strangers. They do not have sense of solidarity with one another and loyalty with factory. The worst part is the worker become alienated from himself because before realizing his potential, he is involved in the process of modern capitalist division of labour.

- A Greek term, literally meaning “action”, adopted by Karl Marx to emphasize the importance of action in relation to thinking. **Praxis** is accepted as a model in liberation theology which has considerable impact within Latin America in the late 1960s.
- Marx uses the term "**praxis**" to refer to **the free, universal, creative and self-creative activity through which man creates and changes his historical world and himself.**
- Praxis is an activity unique to man, which distinguishes him from all other beings. The concept appears in two of Marx's early works: **the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 and the Theses on Feuerbach (1845).**
- In the former work, Marx contrasts the free, conscious productive activity of human beings with the unconscious, compulsive production of animals. He also affirms the primacy of praxis over theory, claiming that theoretical contradictions can only be resolved through practical activity.

- **Creative labour is the labour that human beings express that allow them to realize their humanity.** Marx addresses the issue in "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844." **It is meant to be the absence of alienation.**
- Creative labour is often characterized as hard to measure and manage. As 'immaterial labour', it breaches the working day's boundaries and produces uncertain outputs.

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