

What Is Marxism?

- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFEeHPYp7sg>
- Classic Marxism developed by Karl Marx and collaborator Frederick Engels.
- Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts was the Marx's first major piece of writing about economic theories (1844).
- What is the term **private property**? John Locke meant that private property is product of our labour. We naturally feel a sense of ownership over that property, because we put work to it and there is an essence of ourselves in it. Locke thought government should protect the rights of its citizens to own private property.
- Marx was critical about a new era of capitalism. People are moving away from artisanal approach to work where one person would work on one thing and instead we are moving towards an assembly line approach to work where many people would work on one thing. This causing the loss of meaning in the lives of industrial workers. Industrial workers have their labour dictated by management and making them into machines. Then don't own a product of their work. Marx called this type of work **alienated labour**.
- **Bourgeoisie** (business owners) is keeping the products of people's labour and **proletariat** (industrial workers) are exploitative. Bourgeoisie being allowed to accumulate all these private properties give them power over these property-less workers. A few people end up owning a lot of property and many go property-less.
- Business owners wouldn't hire proletariat if they couldn't make a profit. Industrial workers are only being paid a certain amount, but there is an extra value that industrial workers are creating that they are not being paid for. This value is called **surplus value** and Marx believed that it is theft and exploitation.
- Working condition that time was very rough. There were no any regulations. Children was working long hours for low pay and in dangerous conditions.
- Proletariat couldn't vote. Only people with education could have vote and the education at that time was a privilege. So only bourgeoisie could shape society however they wanted. So the situation is going to get worse and worse and inevitably at some point the society would have to rearrange itself and abolish the right to own private property (= to make a communist society).
- The theory of communism may be summed up in the single sentence: **abolition the private property**. They believe that private property was creating class inequality and class oppression and by abolition of the private property they can fight class inequality and class oppression.
- Marx wanted his theory to be scientific. He was inspired by what Darwin had done for biology and he wanted to do something similar to for the social sciences by grounding his argument in logic and empirical evidence.
- Their method combined two concepts:
 - **1) Historicism**
 - The belief that you need to explain social phenomena historically and to see the history in terms of evolution. Wikipedia: Historicism is an approach to explaining the existence of phenomena, especially social and cultural practices (including ideas and beliefs), by studying their history, that is, by studying the process by which they came about.
 - **2) Materialism**
 - The belief that the people are the products of their environment. Marx was specifically interested in tools and machinery. He thought that certain tools and certain machinery would make us economically organized in the way that would resemble feudalism. For example to use steam mill requires a lot of money to start up and it requires the division of labour to run, so once we invented the steam mill than industrial capitalism is bound to follow. Conditions around us dictate that capitalism makes the most sense and then we will do it.
 - Marx believed that people influenced society through conflict. So we should study the way how people are coming into conflict with each other and we can learn how they're influencing society. He thought that we should have studied **class conflict**, because it has predominant influence on society.

- He use the method of dialectics. This means trying to understand something by identifying what you think is in conflict with and then symplifying that conflict down to a binary. So it is one side vs. another side. And then you study how these sides conflict and how they resolve. So this means you cannot understand burgeoisie by studying only burgeoisie. In order to understand burgeoisie, you have to name who they were in conflict with which Marx said is proletariat.
- So Marx combined these two concepts and invented **historical materialism**. It tries to explain where society came from, why it is the way it is and where it is heading. The era before Marx was feudalism and monarchy and the era of Marx's life was capitalism and democracy and the next era will be the first class free era that is communism.
- Engles' vision of **communism** includes abolition of competition and replace it with association and communal ownership of goods. There will be two stages in the transformation from capitalist society to communist society. In the the first stage, there will be still class inequality, because some people have higher needs then others (for example if they have children) and some people are more productive then others. In the second stage the society will be rich and prosperous. Everybody works as much as they're able to contributing in the best ways they are able to but no one privately owns the products of what they created. So everything belongs to public and you can take whatever you need regardless of how much you work and also presuming you don't take it away that creates class inequality.
- Marx and Engles wanted to speed up the fall of capitalism. This is why they wrote the manifesto of capitalism.
- The state must be totalitarian. All media will be owned by a state. All education will be owned by a state. And there will not be any opposition political party.
- So there is Marx and Marxists, people who are inspirated by him. And Marxism is what comes out from both Marx and Marxists. So Marxest don't need to be 100% alignment what Marx advocated. They are allowed to adapt his ideas to their times.