

MARXISM & CAPITALISM

We begin by noting early Capitalist philosophers, Hobbes, Locke & Adam Smith

Recall

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679)

1. Man in a **state of nature** has the right to do what is necessary to protect himself and to get what he can get however he can get it. Everyman for himself.
2. Property and labor in a state of nature involve a war of the fittest.
3. But this is not a desirable life for most, so men give up their natural right to those who will govern all and contract to bring peace and protection to all.
4. Property rights are determined within this Social Contract. Men agree to refrain from taking property of others within a governed society that promises in turn to protect their property from being misappropriated.

John Locke (1632-1704)

1. Property and value are created by labor.
2. Labor accounts for most of the property value of an object.
3. When we mix our labor with nature we invest a part of ourselves in our product.
4. But we have no ethical right to allow our products to be wasted.
5. But we need not always give up those products. Instead we can exchange what would otherwise go to waste for some more durable goods such as money.
6. Once we begin to work earnestly and ethically accumulate more of these valuable durable goods (money) than our neighbors, then we must have some means of protecting these surplus durable goods so that others won't take them.
7. Government arises as a means to protect the durable goods that you have exchanged for the fruits of your labor. In other words, once money comes into use, government becomes necessary to protect property. Before money and other such valuable durable goods (jewels, precious art, etc.) man kept what he could use and no more.
8. Because government arises to protect property of governed, then **Property precedes government and government cannot dispose of the estates of the subjects arbitrarily.**

Adam Smith-[1723-1790]

Smith gives a utilitarian defense of capitalism.

1. He maintains that with a free market economy everyone would be better off.
2. Supply and demand, if allowed to work undisturbed, will bring the optimal advantage for everyone

But capitalists use any non-capitalist means to further their profit, breeding monopolies. They use government to grant them special licenses and uses not granted to typical workers. They attempt to influence the market through coercion, dishonesty, and theft. Because the wealthiest capitalists have the upper hand in dealings on the market, they can force most supplies to fit their demands, and demands can be manipulated to fit their supplies, making Smith wrong.. The free market economy he envisioned does not exist today.

SOCIALISM

Marx was not the first philosopher to discuss worker rights and theft of labor. Fourier or Proudhon can be more properly credited as founders of socialism/communism.

Francois Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837)

Fourier maintained that the key to a more ethical and civilized world would come from expanding rights of women. Sexual liberation was key to Fourier revolution: along with sexual liberation would come democratic, socialist work environments.

The first right of men is the right to work, and the right to minimum wages. Fourier gives extensive critique of economics and society, and his critiques are a much cited source for Engels.

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865)

Proudhon was a socialist anarchist. Freedom and equality need not be divergent goals. The rights of man are liberty, equality, and security. **Property is theft.** If legal right of property is abolished, equality arises. It is inequality that breeds crime and violence. Government control of who owns property is an outrage to the worker. Marx would later note that the concept of theft presupposes property. Proudhon is asserting that state sanctioned or legal property is the foremost problem. Governments not appointed by you have no ethical right to control you.

The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them.

Karl Marx(1818-1883)

Notice how Marxian theory of labor value resembles that of Locke:

A tree has value. We add value when we cut and shape the wood. Value added is labor value, it is extra value added to the wood--surplus value. Through labor the wood becomes something different than a piece of a tree. It becomes art, or a tool, or furniture, etc.

Human labor in Capitalist society is seen as just another form of raw material (like the wood.)

But human energy and talent invested in that wood is more than just raw material, it is a part of the man himself, an extension of him.

In Capitalism, human labor is stolen. Man works 10 hours and capitalist steals 5 of those hours, it is how capitalist turns a profit.

1. Machine makes labor more productive: where once it took 20 hours to make a shoe, with use of machines it takes 2 hours.
2. Worker is paid just what he needs to get by. He is paid for the 2 hours at best, but usually he is paid even less than that: he receives enough to get by and no more. He receives none of the extra value from productivity of his work. The machine is used to transform the productivity of his labor but that extra productivity is not reflected in his compensation. Instead, since all labor is now on a par with the quickly produced machine-transformed products, his labor in general is cheapened, loses worth.
3. Machinery is used to distance man from his labor. Through assembly line, etc., he no longer can say this is his work instead it is now the work of a team. He cannot pride himself on his handiwork. He cannot see the fine finished product of work all his own.
4. Because the worker does not own the machine or the raw materials, he cannot directly claim the 5 hours extra that the capitalist keeps.

Man is alienated from his labor. Someone else takes his product. He is dehumanized.

1. Whereas work was once skilled labor w/ obvious product, labor is now piecemeal drudgery or capitalist manipulation of humans (personnel services, customer services, marketing, management etc.)
2. Because human labor is exploited, he never gets what his labor is worth. He is forced to work at alienating labor

Capitalist Rationale for theft of labor/surplus value

1. Capitalist takes the risk so he deserves the value of stolen labor.
2. Capitalist owns the factory so any labor he can force out of his workers is his to keep, since the laborer signed a contract. Or otherwise agreed to work for less than the value of the result of his work
3. Laborer has a choice of where he works & who he works for