

## **The Philosophical work of Karl Marx in context of Political Economy, Religion and Politics - A Marxist Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

*Marxism is a theory which has been criticized by many but still is relevant to the date. Karl Marx a German Philosopher who changed the way people used to the Capitalist class. Marx was not only a philosopher but also a voice for the working class. Many argue on the Marxian religion and Political system, but Marxism stands different than all. The theory of Karl Marx can be divided into three parts the Economical the Political and the Religious. But theory and practice are different things. The core argument of Karl Marx was to end the class system by making a class less society and eliminating capitalist from all the business. Karl Marx wanted the power and decision to hold in the hands of the working class. To date this debate is alive that was Karl Marx's solution sufficient enough to solve the issues of the working class or was it all useless.*

**Key Words:** Karl Marx, Marxism, Communism, Political Economy

### **Introduction**

Karl Marx was a German Philosopher, Political Economist, and a journalist. Born on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1818, Marx was suppressed like many by the Capitalist class of the world which were later called the Bourgeois whereas the working class as proletarians. Karl Marx wrote revolutionary books like *Das Kapital* and *Communist Manifesto* with Friedrich Engels. The 18<sup>th</sup> century was the Industrial Revolution, and the capitalists were investing tons of money into the Industrial sector such as coal mining. Whereas the working men were surviving in miserable conditions with minimum wage and increased working hours. The Capitalist class had major decision power in their hands while the working class could only protest against the fascist policies and laws. Before Marx the political arena was full with only the rich Capitalist people, after the birth of communism the working class started to appear in the Political Arena.

The idea of Karl Marx was to eliminate capitalism and put all power into the hands of the working class. Karl Marx opposed the current system of Capitalism and wanted to have a sense of alienation among the workers and their products. The elimination of capitalist was only possible when the privatization of business ended. All the businesses in a country will be owned by the state. Karl

Marx's idea in the Communist Manifesto was to change the whole cultural system and replace it with a new one. It opposed many of the preexisting traditions and norms set up by the Capitalist class. Karl Marx started to work on *Das Kapital* after writing the critique on the Gotha Program. Gotha program was a Left democratic party proposal towards the uprising of the labor.

Marx began writing for the liberal democratic newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*. He later became the paper's editor in 1842. The Prussian government banned the paper because it was too radical the following year. By that time, the Prussian government intervened to get Marx expelled from France, and he and Engels had moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Marx renounced his Prussian citizenship. In 1847, the newly founded Communist League in London, England, drafted Marx and Engels to write "the" which was published the following year. (History.com Editors, 2009) The word Communist/Communism comes from the word common which means that everything from wealth to land will be shared among common people.

Karl Marx's famous quote "Religion is the opium of Masses" made a vast majority of people think Karl Marx was against religion. Later in this article I will discuss and give both Marxist and non-Marxist argument on Marx's opinion on religion but for now its important to understand that in 17 and 18 century Religion was used by the powerful or the rich to manipulate and exploit the proletariat class. At that time the Church held most of the land and was exploiting many resources which were for common people. Marx could be seen praising those religions which stood against imperialism because Marx himself was anti-imperialism believed that rich countries not only exploit the poor country resources but also make them mental slaves.

In Communist Manifesto in Chapter 1 Proletarians and Communists it is written that "Butt communism abolishes eternal truth it abolishes all religion and all molarity instead of constituting them on a new basis; it is therefore acts in contradictions to all past historical experience.

The Communist Manifesto also known as the bible of the Marxist is a revolutionary book. It is written in the communist Manifesto that the Bourgeois class will be paying a heavy amount of Tax. It also includes free education for all children in public schools and no children working in factories. Special industrial armies, especially for agriculture. Confiscation of property of all emigrants and rebels. Communists also wanted abolishment of all rights of inheritance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theory of Marxism will be applied in the research paper as the theory of Marxism will answer all the political, economic, and social questions raised on the philosophy of Karl Marx. The theory of Marxism can be divided into Social Marxism theory which will answer all the social and daily life questions like Marx opinion on family and religion, Political Marxism which will answer how capitalism is different from communism and socialism, and Economic Marxism will answer the question on Political Economy and how the economy will work differently in a communist state.

## **Methodology**

Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) has been used to conduct the following research. Descriptive and exploratory research approaches have been used to find out the answer of research questions. As per the nature of research suggests, primary and secondary sources have been used for data collection. For data analysis, the theory testing approach of QCA, Directed Content Analysis (DCA) is used. Furthermore, within DCA, a manifest approach has been used.

## **Research Questions**

- *What was Karl Marx's idea to change the preexisting economic system Capitalism?*
- *What is Labor theory of Value by Karl Marx and why was it needed?*
- *What is the difference between Socialism and Communism?*
- *What are the critiques on Marxism?*
- *What is the concept of Alienation?*

## **Marx and Religion**

Many scholars have worked on Marx some deny the fact that Marx was anti religion while some said he was. Some were of the opinion that the solution given by Marx to topple the capitalistic system was useless and will not work while some argued that it will. While deconstructing the phrase of Marx "Religion is the opium of masses" one perspective argues that it was said by Marx in the 18th century when Opium was not being used as an addictive drug but as a painkiller. In the 19th century when Morphine was discovered opium was considered illegal. However, opium and Morphine come from the same plant, the Poppy plant.

*A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy*, Marx's words on religion are of course in German. He uses the German word "Volk," which usually translates as "the people" rather than "the

masses". On the other hand, the young Marx, in his 1842 article on censorship, should defend the freedom to criticize religion. (Marx, Comments on The Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction, 1842) If we look and study the life of Karl Marx, we can divide Karl Marx life into two parts one is the young age and other is the mature age. Through Marx's writings we can see that when Karl Marx was young, he spoke against religion but as he matured, he got a soft corner towards religion.

According to some letters it is said that in the last period of his life Marx was studying Islam and east. Marx also appreciated the Ottoman Empire for the way they stood against Imperialism. Although Karl Marx was a born Jew but was very less religious. Many Capitalists and scholars who are following the ideas of Capitalism find no Critique on Marxism and instead they blame Marxism for the birth of Atheism. A Marxist reply to this would be that even though Karl Marx was not religious, or he lets suppose he opposed the religion that do not have to do with the functioning of Marxism. Marxism is totally based on up bringing the working class by giving them rights. Some religious countries that oppose Marxism only oppose it due to one argument and that is religion.

### **Social Interpretation of Karl Marx**

Karl Marx was a critical eye person. He saw everything with a critical mind. Sometimes we can see that Marx even criticized family system. In his book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* which was coauthored by Fridreich Engles Marx has criticized the "Capitalist Family System" not general family. (Marx & Engles, The Origion of the Family, Private Property and State) The main argument that comes is that Marx was himself married and had many children. Some say that Marx's children died due to malnutrition but it's wrong four of Jenny and Karl Marx's seven children died in childhood, three lived to adulthood as socialist activists. One was virtually stillborn, two died at about a year old, one lived to eight. This was pretty much par for the course. activists. Infant mortality rates in the mid-19th century London were sky high, approaching 33%, having risen dramatically from the turn of the century for the reasons that Marx himself discussed in his life work, including overcrowding, appalling sanitation, squalor, epidemic disease, and pollution. They continued to rise to the end of the century.

However, Karl Marx was against the Capitalistic Family Relation or in simple words the relation based on the money. Friedrich Engels also didn't have good relations which his father, he hated his father for being a cruel and exploiting Capitalist. But all Friedrich's father focused on was the money he gave to his son. Friedrich later married a worker from his factory that his father fired for raising a

voice for a worker. Later she helped Marx and Friedrich to join League of Just. The whole idea of Marxism is to eliminate materialistic and money-based relations, and purely develop a unconditional relation between two.

### **Labor theory of Value**

Labor Theory of Value was one of the revolutionary works of Karl Marx in his book DAS KAPITAL. The Labor theory of Value stated that the price of a commodity should be decided by the number of hours and workforce required to make a particular commodity. The price of a commodity should also be set by the Labor who has put work in to manufacture the commodity not the Capitalist who has no idea about that commodity.

Commodity A	1 hour / 2 labor force	10 \$
Commodity B	2 hour / 4 labor force	20\$
Commodity C	15 minutes/ 1 labor force	2\$
Commodity D	1 day/ 20 labor force	100\$

The labor theory of value suggested that two commodities will trade for the same price if they embody the same amount of labor time, or else they will exchange at a ratio fixed by the relative differences in the two labor times. For instance, if it takes 10 hours to hunt a deer and 5 hours to trap a beaver, then the exchange ratio would be two beavers for one deer. (Kelly, 2022) Karl Marx was of the opinion that the price of a commodity should be based on two things one its value two its use value. The ultimate focus of Marx was on Alienation.

### **Marx's theory of Alienation**

Marx characterized the condition of industrial workers as one of isolation, dehumanization, and separation from their very human essence and their creation. Marx elaborated this condition as alienation. Marx blamed Capitalism and the Capitalist for this. HE was of the opinion that a worker who has put his time, effort and idea in his creation develops a sense of alienation because the credit the fame the profit goes into the hand of the capitalist and the worker is only given his wage. Marx developed his theory of alienation in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, and *The German Ideology*. Karl Marx gave four types of alienation.

- Alienation from his product.
- Alienation from the act of production.
- Alienation from his *Gattungswesen*, his species-essence.
- Alienation from other workers

Marx was of the opinion that a person, no matter what his profession is has been dehumanize from his product and creation. The capitalist gained all the credit and in return gave the creator his wage. The wage given to the worker puts him on the back foot and create a sense of Alienation among him. This way the psychological connection between the worker and his product is broken and capitalist has gained everything. The workers face too much division of labor that there is no sense of any creator or designer of a product.

### **National Differences of Wages Das Kapital Chap 22**

In chapter 22 of Das Kapital by Karl Marx Volume 1 National differences of wages has been discussed. In every country the wage per hour differs from one to the other. In the 18th century the wages J.W Cowell investigated wages and found that the wages in England were the lowest in the whole Continent of Europe. The working hours were from 5:30 am to 8:00 pm and Saturdays were working days as well in England. However, in counties like Russia the data collected at that time showed that England's was in miserable condition. (Marx, Das Kapital)

### **Average Number of Person Employed to Spindles**

France	One person to 14 spindles
Russia	One person to 28 spindles
Prussia	One person to 37 spindles
Bavaria	One person to 46 spindles
Austria	One person to 49 spindles
Belgium	One person to 50 spindles
Saxony	One person to 50 spindles
Smaller States of Germany	One person to 55 spindles
Great Britain	One person to 74 spindles

Switzerland	One person to 55 spindles
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There tables from Das Kapital show that in different states the Capitalist demanded different outputs from the Labor. Some took extra work from Labors and still gave less wages than compared to those who took less work and gave more wages. (Marx, Das Kapital)

### **Marx and Politics Difference between Socialism and Communism**

Marxism is a philosophical idea while communism and socialism is a political idea. Although Socialist and Communist countries both follow the ideology of Karl Marx and work accordingly to it. However, both Communism and Socialism have similarities and many differences. WE can say that Socialism is lower and initial stage of Communism while Communism is upper and final stage. Countries where Capitalism exist cannot be directly changed into Communist states because it could result into anarchy and economic depression, so those states are first converted into socialist states. In socialist states many positive things from capitalism is kept like bourgeois rights and division of labor. However, no Marxist wants socialism to prevail for long the ultimate goal is to establish Communism.

In communism the power lies in the hands of the working class which were known as the Proletariat class by Karl Marx. The Proletariat will be responsible for policy making as well as the price setters. Thy will be responsible to contain the capital that used to be in hand of the Capitalist previously. In communism the rights to own property are different. One can buy his house to live in and the state will not interfere in it but the right to own land used to build industry or factories is strictly prohibited. Anyone who earns more than a limited amount of money determined by the state has to pay extra taxes, this way no inequality will happen among people. While in the Capitalist system people were free to buy vast number of lands they want, and one can establish his factories or industries they want. In a Capitalist country a state does not intervene in any business.

In a Communist country there will be intervention of state when it comes to businesses. All the major land for factories and industries will be owned by the state and state will be holding the major capital that used to be in the hand of the capitalist.

### **Marx's Critique on Capitalism**

Karl Marx was against Capitalism. He was of the opinion that Capitalism is the root to many social, economic and political problems in the world. He also blamed Capitalism for all the bloodshed in Wars. According to Karl Marx Capitalism exploits the rights of poor people. He believed that Capitalism makes the rich richer and poor poorer. Karl Marx explained the nature of Capitalist like no other. He saw Capitalist like a hungry animal who fed upon the rights and resources of the working class. The capitalist exploit and take advantage of the working class and take all the credit that should be given to the working men. The capitalist just because of his wealth make large industries and factories put hundreds of men in working give them minimum wage and take maximum output from them. The commodity generated by the workers are than sold in the free market and price is suggested by the market ruled by the capitalist. Karl Marx wanted that the capitalist should give wage as well as the profit generated through the surplus value of commodity sold in the market. This way there will be equality in society.

### **Critique on Marxism**

There are a lot of Critiques on Marx and Marxism but the very first and major critique on Marxism is that it blames everything on capitalism. From wars to inequality Marx blamed everything on Capitalism and put the solution in eliminating the capitalist. Second is the elimination of Capitalist is not possible. If there is no capitalism, there will be no competition in the market and when there is no competition in the market there will be no progress or advancement in the market everyone will work only to earn and live a basic lifestyle. Third Marx was against religion he wanted to eliminate all religions he himself became an atheist and everyone who follows the ideology of Karl Marx is an atheist.

Labor Theory of Value is the most criticized work of Karl Marx. Many believe that it is useless and labor itself is not enough to operate everything they require managers and capital in order to get output. Without capital labor is useless, a labor can only give its time and its work force but is unable to buy raw materials set up machinery pays or bear any loss. Another very big critique is that a laborer is only willing to get profit from the Capitalist but is not taking the responsibility to share the burden in case of any loss. Another critique on Marx is that he forgot one of the most important class the Petty Bourgeois or the middle class.

As they say theory and practice are different things. Karl Marx and his theory have come under severe criticism over the years, and the fall of the erstwhile Soviet Union, in the eyes of many, all but

sealed the fate of the two in terms of historical discourse. Having said that, we are too close to the events to sit in judgment on the matter. History tends to take its own sweet time to decide, and the jury, as they say, is still out. (Maqbool, 2021)

## **Conclusion**

To conclude the research paper, we can say that Karl Marx was somehow right about Capitalism, and he was right about the capitalist exploiting the rights and resources of the common people also known as the Proletariat class but on the other hand we can also say that Karl Marx forgot one of the most important classes in a society which was the Petty Bourgeois. When we talk about Marxian religion, we can say that in the initial stage of Karl Marx's life he was surely against religion, and he wanted to eliminate religion from all aspects of social, political and economic life. But as he grew older and matured, he started to endorse religion in many points of his life. Although there are many critics on Karl Marx but there is no critic available in the whole world which says that Karl Marx was wrong about the Capitalist. However, there is no denial that Karl Marx was one of the most revolutionary people in the history of the world and wrote revolutionary books which includes the Das Kapital, Communist Manifesto, Critique on Hegel Philosophy, Critique on Gotha. Many Capitalist countries and Capitalists might say that Marxian ideology is not applicable in today's, but they all are afraid of only one thing which is the Marxist Revolution.

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