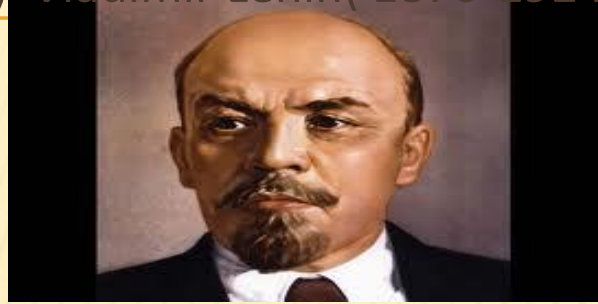
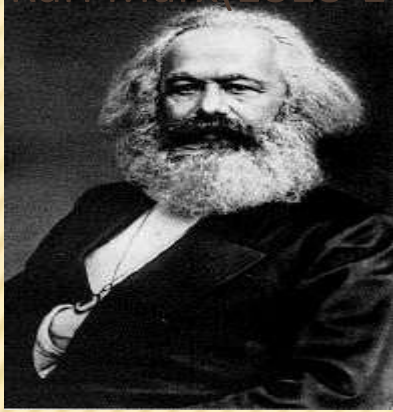


COMMUNISM

- ❖ **Communism** an ideology which seeks to establish a social organization in which all property is vested in the community and each person contributes and receives according to his or her ability and needs. It aims to abolish private ownership and to create a classless and stateless society.
- ❖ Karl Marx the famous German economic, social and political philosopher of the 19th century was the main exponent of communism. Marx and his friend Friedrich Engels formulated the coherent body of socialist ideology. Their main writings are – *Communist manifesto*, *Critique of Political Economy*, three volumes of *Das Kapital(capital)*. In its proper sense it appeared in the middle of 19th century in response to the oppressive conditions created by the capitalist system after the industrial revolution. There was great economic inequality and exploitation of workers.

-
- ? Marx called his ideology **scientific socialism** to distinguish it from the earlier socialist thought (utopian thinkers) like St. Simon, Robert Owen, Charles Fourier who criticized the capitalist system but had no clear conception of remedy.
 - ? According to Marx the progress of History inevitably led to the final proletarian revolution and the establishment of a classless and stateless society. In this society the community will own all resources in common. There will be no private property. Everybody will work according to his ability and everybody will get according to his needs. This stage is called communism. Marx's ideology came to be known as the **Communist** ideology.

Karl Marx(1818-1883) Vladimir Lenin(1870-1924)



Joseph Stalin(1879-1953)



Mao Tse-tung (1893-1976)



Marshal Tito(1892-1980)



PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM

The fundamental Principles of Marxism are as follows –

1. **Dialectical Materialism:** The word dialectics means discussion or logical argument. Marx was inspired by the Hegel's theory of Dialectics which explains the progress of civilisation through the process of thesis, anti thesis and synthesis. At any given point of time there exists one dominant idea in history , termed as thesis, over period of time there emerges a new idea opposing the thesis, termed as antithesis. With the clash of these two emerges a new idea ,termed as synthesis, which brings together the best elements in both.

Thesis × antithesis = Synthesis

Marx applied this theory to explain the changes in the material condition of life. The driving force of social change is the struggle between the economic classes- capital and labour.

2. **Materialistic /Economic Interpretation of History** : It is the economic condition – mode of production, exchange, distribution of things that decides the nature of society and polity. Mode of production in a given society constitutes its base, legal and political institutions, religion and morals, art, literature and culture etc. constitute its superstructure, which are shaped according to the changing character of the base. Marx and Engels have identified four main stages of past historical developments –

- a) **Primitive Communism** in which forms of production are owned by the community.
- b) **Ancient Slave-owning Society** in which means of production are owned by masters and labour for production is done by the slaves.
- c) **Medieval Feudal Society** in which the means of production are owned by the Feudal Lords and labour for production is done by the serfs.
- d) **Modern Capitalist Society** in which means of production are owned by the Capitalist class(Bourgeoisie) and labour for production is done by the workers (Proletariat).

3. **Class War:** The Communist Manifesto starts with the statement, “The history of all existing society is the history of class struggle.” At every stage of social development a particular class got control over the means of production and exploited the rest. Society is divided into two antagonistic classes – **Haves and Have Nots, Exploiter and exploited, Oppressor and Oppressed** . Economically dominant class also controls the State and uses it as an instrument of exploitation. In the present capitalist system there are two classes – **Bourgeoisie(capitalists) and Proletariat (workers)**

Proletariat class is the most revolutionary class. In the present factory system a large number of workers work together. There is a sense of alienation and dehumanization among the workers. It makes them class conscious.

4. **Theory of Surplus Value:** To expose the injustice under capitalist system Marx developed theory of surplus value on the basis of classical labour theory of values given by Ricardo. According to Marx labour is the sole creator of the commodity. Of the four elements of the production – land, labour, capital and organisation, it is only labour that is capable of producing. However the wages which a labour receives is much lower than the price of the commodity in the market. The difference between the price of a commodity and the actual wages paid to the worker is the surplus value. The profit is pocketed by the capitalist class. This is a direct exploitation of workers.
5. **Theory of Revolution:** According to Marx any significant change in the society is a product of Revolution. In the capitalist system the revolutionary class is the proletariat class. They must overthrow the bourgeois class (who are less in numbers) from power through a violent revolution and control the government. It will put an end to the system of exploitation and establish socialism in place of capitalism.

6. **Dictatorship of Proletariat:** The overthrow of capitalist system would be followed by the establishment of the Dictatorship of Proletariat. The institution of private property would be abolished and there would be socialization of means of production (state control of means of production). The culture and ideology of capitalism would also be abolished. In practical terms the Dictatorship of Proletariat means 'Dictatorship of Communist Party.'
7. **Withering Away of the State:** Marx viewed the state as a class institution used by the bourgeoisie for the exploitation of proletariat class. The state would continue under the Dictatorship of Proletariat to crush the resistance of the capitalist class. However as soon as a perfect classless society is established, the state would wither away. It gradually fades away. Its place is taken by an administrative apparatus which controls and regulates all means of production. It will be a free society of voluntary association. It will be based on the principle of 'each according to his needs from each according to his capacity.'

EVALUATION

Marxism is criticised on the following grounds:

- 1. Ignored non-economic factors** – factors like religion, nationalism, racism , leadership and many other social and political factors which shape history have been ignored.
- 2. Labour does not alone create value** – Besides labour other factors like capital, land, administrative organisation , infrastructure etc. also determine the value of commodity.
- 3. Theory of class war is dangerous to mankind.** It preaches hatred and violence. It does not recognise the existence of Middle Class which is the backbone of modern society.
- 4. Wrong conception of State** – It views State as an instrument of exploitation. This is not always true. In contemporary welfare states , state is committed to securing the interests of the public.
- 5. Concept of Withering away of the State is Utopian**

RELEVANCE OF COMMUNISM

1. As an ideological movement communism was one of the most powerful forces of the 20th century. In practice it resulted in the modernisation of many backward nations.
2. It offered hope to the downtrodden and poor.
3. Even capitalist nations adopted labour welfare measures under the influence of communist ideology.
4. In the age of privatisation, liberalisation and free market economy, many of the exploitative practices of capitalism are resurfacing. The communist ideology and anti-capitalist movements are gaining strength and relevance.
5. Contemporary communism differs from the Marxism. It accepts that the state is a necessary institution . It accepts that class war and violent revolution are not the only methods to bring social and economic change. It favours participation in the democratic process. Constitutional methods, political awareness, education are better paths towards this goal.