

Introduction to Western Political Thought
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Lecture 27

Marx– II: State and Class

Hello and welcome everyone. This is the second lecture on Karl Marx. Today, we are going to focus on his views on the class as a category for social and political analysis. And his views on the state. Before doing that we will focus briefly on his theory of alienation and exploitation. How these two led Marx to consider capitalism as something inherently contradictory and necessarily created condition of unfreedom for the majority of the population? How it would eventually create the conditions for the next stage of human history that according to Marx was the final phase of human progress or human history that could be achieved in communism.

We already had a lecture on Marx, where we discussed his personal life and theory of historical materialism that how different stages of history were a kind of Hegelian movement of progress and capitalism was not the final stage of history. It must pave the way for the next stage of history which according to Marx was communism, where there would be no private property, and society would be a classless society. There would prevail in the conditions of freedom for everyone.

In historical materialism, he discussed different stages of history from primitive communism to feudalism, to capitalism and how it should lead to communism. This we have discussed in the previous lecture. In the concluding lecture that we will have on Marx, we will particularly discuss his views on politics and communism. We will also assess the criticisms against Marx and the relevance of some of his writings or ideas in the 21st century. It is to understand the periodic cycle of boom and burst in capitalism and how that can be addressed or resolved.

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- Marx was one of the most influential thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth century. His ideas and theories influenced many social-political and historical events such as the Russian and the Chinese revolutions. He is often misunderstood as the philosopher of the revolution. It has led to a wide gulf between those who follow his doctrines and those who see them as a threat to their existing status and influence. This then also led to the adoration of Marx on the one hand and contempt on the other.
- However, Marx was a humanist philosopher who wanted to eradicate the structure of exploitations and alienation that exist in the social and political spheres of our life. He identified them as rooted in the economic inequalities. Economic inequalities, then become the basis for social and political inequalities in the modern state. Modern state and laws, according to Marx, legitimize these inequalities and worked in the interest of few against many. Therefore, he wanted to create a rational order that would abolish private property and create the conditions of freedom for all.
- The major preoccupation of Marx was to understand the economic structure of the capitalist society. And therefore, there is no consistent theory of state or politics in his writings. It is spread across his treatises- more specifically in the *Communist Manifesto* and the *German Ideology*. His views on state and politics are further developed by later Marxist scholars who have also questioned the economic determinism or the centrality of the class analysis in Marx's writings.

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So, that we will discuss this in the third and concluding lecture on Marx. As we have discussed in the previous lecture that Marx's writing or philosophy influenced a great many historical and political events in the 19th and 20th centuries. In that sense, Marx was one of the most influential thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries. His ideas and theories had influenced many social, political as well as historical events such as the Russian and Chinese revolutions. These were the two major historical and political events in the 20th century. But there were many in other countries such as Latin America or other countries. Marxist ideas shaped the actual practical and historical events in history.

He was often misunderstood as the philosopher of the revolution or transformative change through violence or a revolution. So, it led to a wide gulf between those who follow his doctrines and those who saw in his doctrines or philosophy a kind of threat to their existing status and influence. Marx's philosophy was laid to this kind of division of the world, where those who followed Marx and his writings saw a kind of redemption, and inspiration for making the society more emancipator, free for everyone and not just for few. Whereas for the others, it was a threat to their existence or status.

This led to the adoration of Marx, on the one hand, and contempt on the other. Most of Marx's writing was not objectively understood. Besides, the historical and political events derived inspiration from Marx's writing. So, there was a kind of distinction between

Marx and the Marxist or certainly, the historical and political events that derived inspiration from Marx.

One has to be clear about that distinction as well and as I have discussed in the previous lecture, Marx was a humanist philosopher and he belonged to that tradition of enlightenment which believed in human freedom. He was thus a humanist philosopher who wanted to eradicate the structure of exploitation and alienation that existed in the social and political spheres of life in the 18th or 19th century.

Marx in that sense was a product of enlightenment. He regarded the bourgeois revolution or capitalism as the necessary stage in human history. But he also explained or examined the inherent contradictions or antagonisms that persisted in capitalism. It must pave the way for the next stage of history which would be more emancipator, free for the majority of the people. So, he identified alienation or exploitation as something rooted in economic inequalities. Thus, economic inequalities became the basis for social and political inequalities in the modern state.

Let us try to understand this historically modern bourgeois or liberal revolution that rose on the ruins of feudal aristocratic society, where the focus was on productivity, innovation, and technological development. That was necessary for coming out of the condition of scarcity. It also increased human productivity and the bourgeois revolution led to a legislative state, where it was regarded through rights or constitutions and rule of law that the rights and freedom of every individual would be protected.

Marx developed a critique to that kind of promise of the bourgeois revolution, where through laws and legislation the rights could be protected in the sphere of politics and law. But in the social and economic conditions, it could not address the economic inequality and without addressing them, it would be impossible to create the condition for the majority of the population.

So, modern state and laws, according to Marx, legitimized these inequalities which existed in the economic sphere and work in the interest of few against many. Therefore, few are those who own the property or means of production and state, and institution in

modern times, protect those who own the property against those who do not own and these are in the majority. He wanted to create a rational order that would abolish private property and create the conditions of freedom for all. In that sense, Marx and his writings were not necessarily for the violent revolution.

He wanted the structure of the economy or its modes of production should be overthrown as it was based on economic inequalities, exploitation, and alienation. But the goal was to achieve larger or greater freedom and emancipation for the majority of the population. We will discuss this when we well discuss his views on alienation and exploitation.

The major preoccupation of Marx was to understand the economic structure of the capitalist society. Therefore, there is no consistent theory of state or politics in his writings. His views on state and politics were spread across his treatises more specifically in the *Communist Manifesto* and the *German Ideology* which he wrote in collaboration with Engels. His views on state and politics were further developed by later Marxist scholars who also questioned the economic determinism or base-superstructure model in Marx and the centrality of class category in Marx's writings or his class analysis.

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Theory of Alienation

- Alienation could be equated with the conditions of life characterized by the absence of human freedom. According to Marx, the modern industrial society, its technology, and scientific knowledge has reduced men's dependence on nature for their sustenance. However, it also created the conditions of widespread economic disparities, exploitation, and alienation for the vast majority.
- Marx developed the theory of alienation in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. It is derived from the Hegelian idea of 'self and other' and 'master and slave'. Hegel argued that to develop self-consciousness individual must see their own image in others. He further argued that in master-slave relations, though the slave is deprived of in many ways, and yet while working on an external object using his labor the slave develops the self-consciousness which master is deprived of. Thus, there is a value attached to labor. Similarly, Marx considered labor as the 'essence of human species'. It is this capacity to labor that distinguishes human beings from other species. He has a very distinct description of human labor – which is the combination of both mental and physical strength to shape or bend nature according to one's needs. Proper physical labor such as agriculture or craftsmanship involved both intelligence and creativity.
- Human beings see in the product of their own labor an extension of their own image. However, in capitalism, everything, even human labor, is turned into a commodity that can be sold and purchased in the market. The vast majority of the population is left to sell their labor. In the mechanical modes of production in the large factories, they are also alienated from the object of their labor. Thus they are alienated from the product of their labor; from the process of laboring; from their fellow human beings; and finally from their own 'species being'.

If you look at his theory of alienation and alienation is something that is to be understood as the condition of unfreedom. That is the absence of human freedom. So, according to

Marx, the modern industrial society, its technology, and scientific knowledge had reduced men's dependence on nature for their sustenance. In that sense, the capitalist revolution had empowered mankind, whereas they were no longer dependent on nature for their sustenance as they used to do during feudalism and the earlier modes of production.

However, this technological industrial or scientific revolution also created the condition of widespread economic disparities, exploitation, and alienation in the society for the vast majority. So, what is happening with the modern capitalist industrial revolution is where production is mechanized and productivity has increased that led to kind of condition of life, where man is no longer dependent on nature as they used to be in earlier modes of production. In that sense from the scarcity, there is abundance. However, what characterized the industrial and technological revolution is also the condition of unfreedom, economic disparities, exploitation, and alienation for many.

Marx developed this theory of alienation in his *Economic and Philosophical Manuscript*, also referred to as the *Paris Manuscript*. It was derived from the Hegelian idea of 'self and other', 'master and a slave', and the Hegelian idea of that spirit or absolute idea. It is only when it manifests in the real historical conditions of life, not in the thought or consciousness.

Marx developed his theory of alienation through his engagement with Hegelian ideas particularly his text, *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel argued that to develop self-consciousness and individuals must see their image in others. That is why the presence of others is necessary for individuals to develop their self-image or self-consciousness. He further argued that in master and slave relations, though the slave was deprived of in many ways. Yet while working on an external object by using his labor, the slave developed self-consciousness which the master was deprived of.

So, in that sense, in Hegel, the human labor was necessary for the development of self-consciousness and this actualization of self or subjective will was through association, and acting upon one's will in different sphere of life, starting in the family, property that one owns, in the civil society, and ultimately in the state. In Hegel, you have this

acknowledgment of human labor as something necessary for self-actualization or the development of self-consciousness.

There is a kind of similar argument or value attached to labor in Marx who considered human labor as the essence of the human species. Human beings have to realize their humanness or develop their human faculty or self-consciousness. It is necessary to work and it is while working, they actualize their self, and realize their faculties or worth. So, they can labor that distinguishes human beings from other species.

We have discussed many other thinkers, where we have seen that human beings are rational or moral. This rationality and morality distinguish human beings from other species. In contrast to that kind of understanding of human beings in Marx, there was a kind of understanding that the labor distinguished human beings from other species and it was through labor that human beings, not only developed their self-consciousness or faculties. But also controlled nature or achieve self-mastery.

So, in Marx, you have a very distinct description of human labor which was the combination of both mental and physical strength. Labor for Marx was not about the physical strength of man. It combined both of his physical and mental faculties. By combining both, men shapes or bend nature, according to one's needs. That is very characteristic of human labor as the sensuous human act, one wants to do certain things according to one's will or need. One does not want to do it under the yoke or control of others and for the sake of others.

Human labor in that sense is the necessary action to realize one's self-worth, to bend nature, to save nature, according to one's need. So, proper physical labor such as agriculture and craftsmanship, according to Marx, involved both intelligence and creativity. Human being developed their faculties and strength while working in nature, when they labor to satisfy their needs or to act according to their needs and not for the profit of others or under the direction of others.

So, human beings see in the product of their labor done in this manner that they act according to their will and needs from nature. While the labor is performed in that

manner, human beings see in the product of the labor extension of their image. However, in capitalism, what happens is everything including human labor is turned into a commodity that can be sold and purchased in the market.

Let us understand it this way. So, human labor in Marx was something, essentially a sensuous human act. While acting upon nature, human beings used to express themselves and fulfill their needs. But what happens in capitalism, is that everything will be reduced to a commodity. And commodity is something which one can sell and purchase in the market. There are use and exchange value of the commodity that disconnect the labor or those who perform while producing certain acts from the product of their labor.

So, there is a kind of alienation that takes place even let us say, how economic production is organized in the market economy. One is paid a wage by the capitalist or by one's employer. In return, one performs certain labor hours for their industries or factories. Then the labor power is not a sensuous human activity. But it is a kind of commodity and in capitalism, everything is reduced to a commodity that can be exchanged or sold and purchased in the market.

The vast majority of the population is left to sell their labor and in the mechanical modes of production in large factories, they are also alienated from the object of their labor. In earlier modes of production, while they are working in the field or working on a certain craft, they know the final product or outcome of their labor. While they work in the large big factories producing one cog here and another cog there, they do not see their fruits of labor in the product they produce. This is a kind of alienation that separates the labor from the product of their labor.

Thus, they are alienated from the product of their labor and the process of laboring. So, while performing human labor, human beings realize themselves and actualize their freedom. But in the large factories, they become an extension of machines or tools in the factories and it is not necessarily a human sensuous act. It is done mechanically, a kind of disconnect from the laborers and the labor that is performed, they are also alienated from their fellow human beings and finally from their species-being, so that is the kind of alienation that Marx talked about which characterized modern capitalist production.

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- Labor in the capitalist system is an 'unfree activity, as activity in the service, under the rule, coercion, and yoke of another man'. Even the capitalist is not free from this alienation. They too must subject themselves to the existing market rule for survival. Thus labor is no longer the 'sensuous human activity', but a commodity.

Theory of Exploitation

- Marx argued that the capitalist system of production and growth is not only based on alienation but also exploitations. The workers produce all the wealth, but themselves receive a pittance in the form of wages – just enough for survival. Whereas those who own the means of production exploit their labor to be ahead in the competition from the rivals.
- In the capitalist mode of economy, workers do not own anything except their labor power, which they must sell for their survival. The exploitation, in this mode, is hidden. It is based on the extraction of *surplus-value*. It is the difference between the value of the product that labor produces and the wage he receives. This surplus value goes to the capitalist as profit. The logic of the capitalist economy is such that even the capitalist must compete with their rivals and constantly expand and innovate to remain successful. It inevitably leads to the flourishing of strong capitalists while the weak go out of business. Thus, eventually 'the capitalist class grows smaller and richer, while the proletariat grows larger and more wretched'.

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Labor in the capitalist system is an unfree activity, as activity in the service under the rule, coercion, and yoke of another man. So, this is not the intimate sensuous activity when labor is working in the factory, not necessarily, according to their will or according to their need. But in return for a certain wage. And in return of certain wage, they perform that labor under the rule of coercion and yoke of another man that is the condition of labor which he called strange labor or alienated labor.

So, in these modes of production, even the capitalist is not free from alienation, they too must subject themselves to the existing market rule for survival, and the rules that govern economic production are not necessarily the human need. But private property and this accumulation of private property and its maximization is something that drives the capitalist.

The capitalist is in that sense, not free to produce according to their needs or will. They are not free to give more wages to the laborers, they must pay them wages, according to the market rule, exchange, or use-value in the market. So, they are also not free in these modes of production. Labor for Marx is not a kind of sensuous human activity. But a commodity that leads to the alienation and alienation from the product of their labor, from the process of laboring, from their fellow beings, and also from their self. So, this is a kind of estrangement that happens in the capitalist market economy.

Let us move on to his theory of exploitation and like alienation, there was a kind of distinct explanation of exploitation in Marx which Engels called the scientific theory of Marx. Marx argued that the capitalist system of production and growth is not only based on alienation but also exploitation and the workers used to produce all the wealth in the capitalist system. But they receive a pittance in the form of wages enough for their survival. So, most of them lived in sub-human conditions.

So, you think, about the large cities and conditions of the working class in that city, mostly in the slums living on the bare minimum human life with minimal rights and means of sustenance. And the conditions of the workers without the protection of the labor are the result of liberal democracy or the rule of law. The condition of the working class in the 18th and 19th century was even worse.

The workers who produced the wealth in the society do receive a pittance and live almost a wretched or sub-human life, whereas those who own what is called the means of production, that is the machines and tools or capital for the production in the capitalist economy. They exploit their labor to be ahead in the competition or the rival. So, the logic of capitalism is something based on private property that drives both the capitalists and the laborers.

In the capitalist mode of economy, workers do not own anything except their labor power which they must sell for their survival. This exploitation in the capitalist economy is hidden. It is not a kind of direct exploitation as seen in feudalism or the slave or master relationship in earlier modes of production. Here, the exploitation is something hidden and not obvious. That is, it is based on the extraction of surplus value and surplus value is the difference between the value of the product that labor produces and the ways he receives. So, the value of the product that labor productivity is always higher than the wage that he gets in return and the difference. It is the surplus value that goes to the capitalist as profit.

The logic of the capitalist system is that even the capitalists must compete with their rivals and constantly, expand, and innovate to remain successful. It inevitably leads to the flourishing of a strong capitalist while the weak go out of business. Thus, eventually, the

capitalist class grows smaller and richer while the proletariat grows larger and more wretched.

That is the kind of capitalist mode of exploitation that drives a smaller or weaker capitalist out of business that does not innovate or compete with their rivals. In other words, one can think of the monopoly. So, the capitalist economy based on this idea of free contract or freedom, to act according to one's own will create a condition or economic condition, where those who own the means of production controls the labor and those who have the larger ownership, outperform and drive the weaker and stagnant petty bourgeoisie out of the business.

In capitalism, exploitation is something hidden. So, there is the promise of freedom and the idea of a free contract. So, labor is not forced like in feudalism and earlier modes to perform. One is free to do the work or not to do the work, do the work with this company or that company. In that sense, formally, or legally, labor is free.

But their economic conditions are such that they must sell their labor and those who own the means of production, and constantly, innovate and expand to remain in the business, if they do not do, the other capitalists who are more innovative and stronger, may drive them out of business.

So, the logic of capitalism is such that both the capitalist or labor is somewhat alienated from the product of their labor. There is a mechanical overtaking of the understanding of production or human labor as the intimate sensuous act performed, according to their will based on the needs drive in the capitalist economy even for the capitalist is the private property and not necessarily the human need.

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Communist Manifesto and the Social Classes

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf... in a word, oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight.

Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

- There is a centrality to the class category in Marx's analysis of society and polity. According to him, human progress is achieved historically through class struggles. However, this recognition of classes, in the Marxist analysis is not based on income or education but in terms of individuals relationship to the means of production. Those who own or control the means of production are the ruling class. They are always in a minority. They are opposed by the vast majority who own nothing or very little except their labor.
- These two are the fundamental classes in any society where the minority exploits the majority. Unlike previous modes of production, Capitalism, according to Marx, hides these class realities and exploitations in the name of 'freedom' or 'free-contract'. Workers are considered 'free' but they must sell their labor for self-sustenance.
- Marx saw the workers or the proletariat as the agent of emancipatory change and transformation. This is possible when workers as a class in itself become the class for itself. This is possible when they develop the right consciousness based on their own actual material conditions undistorted by the prevailing bourgeois ideology. In the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engel regarded ideology as 'false consciousness' and instrument of class oppression.

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Now, we move on to his views on classes based and articulated famously in the *Communist Manifesto* or *the Manifesto of the Communist Party* which begins with this famous assertion that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle'. So, it is not the technology or innovation that drives history. But the class struggle.

So, free men and slave, patrician and the plebeians or nobles or commoners, lord, and the serf in a word, the oppressor and the oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden and open fight. For Marx and Engels, human history is the result of this class struggle between those who oppress and those who are oppressed.

This is between those who were free and slaves those who were the patricians or plebeians, those who are the lord and serf. In other words, those who own the property and those who do not own the property. So, human history is the fundamental history of this class struggle between the oppressor and oppressed. There is a centrality to the class category in Marx's analysis of society and polity.

For Marx, to understand society or polity, it is necessary to understand class formation. For him, the fundamental division of society in the classes is the two classes of oppressor and the oppressed. However, one could question such a straightforward categorization of

society into the two classes, particularly, if you look at the rise of middle classes or the petty bourgeoisie or small shopkeepers.

There was no clear division of society into these two net classes of oppressors and oppressed. However, Marx's analysis gave primacy to the class category in his explanation or understanding of human society, history, and polity. According to him, human progress was achieved historically through class struggles and not through technological or scientific innovation as many bourgeoisie liberal thinkers claimed.

However, this recognition of classes in the Marxist analysis was not based on income or education, or skills. But in terms of an individual's relationships to the means of production. So, this relationship to the means of production is something that determines the class position of individuals in society. Those who owned or controlled the means of production are what he called the ruling class. They were always there in other modes of production, also.

During feudalism, those who owned or controlled the land were the ruling class and those who worked on the land were the oppressed class or those who did not exercise control over the land. That is the basis of production in feudalism. Similarly, in the modern capitalist economy, factories, tools, machines, and capitals are the means of production.

So, the class which owns these means of production is the ruling class, who is always in a minority and they are opposed by the vast majority who own nothing or very little except their labor. The vast majority of the population in the capitalist economy, according to Marx own nothing or very little except their labor which they must sell in the market for their survival.

These two classes were the fundamental classes in any society, where the minority exploits the majority based on their ownership of means of production. Unlike, the previous modes of production in capitalism, according to Marx, had these class realities and exploitations in the name of freedom or free contract.

So, as I have argued that the central theme in a modern capitalist free market economy is the idea of free-market or freedom or free contract. The individual is free in a legal,

political sense to work or not to work, to work with some company, or not to work with some companies. But their economic and social conditions are such that they must sell their labor and do not possess anything for their sustenance. Their very sustenance is dependent while working for others and in the factory.

The worst condition in the capitalist economy for the workers is not to become the workers. When they become workers by selling their labor power, they are exploited because the surplus-value is extracted by the capitalist. But worse for those workers who do not get the opportunity to sell their labor. So, the large army of unemployment is something that helps the capitalist or industrialist to exploit the labor further.

In that sense in the name of freedom or free contract capitalism hides the real exploitation of the people. So, workers are considered free. But they must sell their labor for self-sustenance, so they are free to sell their labor and capitalism has reduced the whole question of freedom in the sense of capacity to purchase or not to purchase, it is no longer the condition or rights which helps human to achieve the higher stage of living or develop his personality or develop his skills. It is reduced to a market economy where you are free to sell or purchase one's freedom is reduced to choosing the objects in the market. Similarly, for the laborers, they are not tied to one lord or one land in that sense they are free. But they must sell themselves, nonetheless for their self-sustenance.

Marx saw the workers or proletariat as the agent of emancipatory change because they were the oppressor. So, the history of class struggle was moved by those who were oppressed. Thereby have stuck in overthrowing the regime or structure of the society which benefitted the oppressor. Marx regarded the workers or proletariat as the agent of emancipatory change or transformation. This is possible when workers as a class in themselves became the class for themselves and this is a kind of development of consciousness among the workers. Thus, the class in itself is something, determined by the individual relationship with the means of production.

The capitalist and the proletariat are classes in itself is determined by the fact whether they own the means of production or not. To become the class for itself, they must necessarily develop the correct consciousness. This is possible when they develop the

right consciousness based on their actual material conditions and this you can recall in the previous lecture, where we discussed Marx's difference with Hegel.

In Hegelian dialectics, it is the human consciousness that determines the actual real material living of the individual. Whereas in Marx, it is the real material condition of existence that determines human consciousness. He wanted the workers to develop correct or right consciousness based on their material condition, not because of the promises of the bourgeois ideology such as freedom.

So, when they develop this right consciousness based on their actual material condition which is undistorted by the prevailing bourgeois ideology and in the 'German Ideology', Marx and Engels regarded ideology as false consciousness that does not allow the workers to develop the correct consciousness about their existence and aspires or struggle to overthrow them, to create the condition of emancipation for themselves or their class as such.

Thus, ideology according to Marx is the false consciousness an instrument of class or prison. The few control the masses through the ideology that is the dominant paradigm in which one decides about what is correct and incorrect, what is right and wrong, what should be done and not be done, who should be punished or rewarded.

Marx argued that workers as a class in themselves must become the class for themselves and that requires training, a kind of development of self-consciousness based on their material condition. It should be undistorted by the prevailing bourgeois ideology and that will allow the workers to become the agent of change and revolution.

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- To understand Marx's views on class we must consider that he was writing in a context when western societies were deeply divided into two fundamental classes – *Bourgeoisie* and *Proletariat*. This division of classes was the inevitable outcome of the industrial growth in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe. It made the small section of society all-powerful while the vast majority became industrial workers.
- These industrial workers had no other possession except for their labor power. They were compelled to sell their labor for mere survival. They had no ownership over the product of their labor. It was the capitalists who paid them wages for their 'labor hours' and exploited the fruits of their labor. The workers, in the capitalist system thus live a wretched life. For the capitalists or the bourgeoisie to remain successful they must constantly innovate, compete, and expand. Thus, rather than need, profit becomes the real driving force of the economy which in turn leads to further oppressions, exploitations, and disparities.
- Unlike liberals, Marx believed that capitalism could not be reformed and therefore revolution is inevitable. He considered the proletariat as the agent of revolution. They will then abolish the private property and that would eventually lead to 'withering away' of classes. He wanted them to transcend the nationalist boundaries to forge international solidarity among the oppressed against the capitalists. However, Marx fails to understand the grip of nationalism on human imagination and also ignored the role of the middle class – stabilizing force for modern liberal democracy. Many scholars also question the centralism of class and primacy of the working class in Marx's analysis.

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So, to understand Marx's views on class, we must consider that he was writing in a context when western societies were deeply divided into two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. This division of classes was the inevitable outcome of the industrial growth in 18th and 19th century Europe. This one can connect with another kind of debate taking place in Europe during those days. Suppose between the romantics and the enlightenment thinkers. So, the enlightenment thinkers were arguing about the role of rationality, science, and technology in creating the conditions of freedom and prosperity for humankind. The romantics were arguing about going back to nature.

Thus, including Rousseau and many other thinkers regarded industrialism as some kind of alienation, moral, political corruption in the society that is not conducive for human emancipation. They should go back to the earlier age or pre-industrial age, where Marx was critical of such kind of romantic understanding of going back to nature where feudalism was the worst kind of exploitation for Marx.

So, his understanding of a class or two fundamental classes in the society is based on this historical material condition of the 18th and 19th century Europe which led to a kind of society, where the small section of society was all-powerful, while the vast majority becomes the industrial workers. They must sell their labor for survival.

These industrial workers had no other position except their labor power, they were compelled to sell it for their survival. They had no ownership over the product of their labor. So, it was the capitalist who paid their wages for their labor power. Suppose like other means of production such as tools, machines, or another kind of technology, the labor power becomes a kind of commodity which a capitalist or industrialist can purchase in the labor market by paying what they call the wages. So, for working 8 hours, one will be paid this much or that much. This now becomes a kind of commodity, not something that is intimate, sensuous human action performed to realize and develop oneself.

Here, the labor becomes a kind of commodity that can be sold and purchased on certain wages and the capitalists then exploit the fruits of their labor. So, the workers in the capitalist system do live a wretched life for the capitalist or bourgeoisie to remain successful. They must constantly innovate, expand, and compete. Thus, rather than need profit becomes the real driving force of the economy which in turn leads to further oppressions, exploitations, and economic disparities.

Unlike liberals who believed that through legislation, laws, and constitution, there would be a gradual creation of human conditions or freedom and emancipation. Marx believed that capitalism is inherently contradictory. So, it could not be reformed and must be overthrown through a revolution and he considered the proletariat as the agent of that revolution. These proletariats would first abolish the private property that would eventually lead to the withering away of the classes.

So, he imagined or envisioned a society that would be a classless society, which would be free of classes where human being work, according to their capacity for satisfying their need and they would develop their creativity or human intelligence in their way without the coercion from others, conditions of unfreedom, alienation, and exploitation of man by men.

He wanted these workers or proletariats to transcend the nationalist boundaries to forge international solidarity. In Marxist writings and philosophy, internationalism is something which workers would aspire for and not remain fragmented in the boundaries or nationalist imagination. This was necessary for them to forge international solidarity

among the oppressed against the capitalist. However, Marx failed to understand the grip of nationalism on human imagination and ignored the role of the middle class that was the stabilizing force of modern liberal democracy.

So, if you look at the actual historical development in the 19th and 20th centuries, nationalism becomes the organizing principle of national or international politics and Marx failed to understand that. He also failed to understand the growing middle class and this you can connect with the Aristotelian idea and his emphasis on the role of the middle class for the stabilization of the polity.

For Marx, the fundamental classes in the society are the owner and those who do not own, have or have not, bourgeois and the proletariat, and he does not give due acknowledgment to this middle class who played a very significant role historically and politically to stabilize the modern, liberal, political order. So, many scholars also questioned the centrality of class and primacy of the working-class in Marx's analysis.

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- Views on state**
- Bob Jessop in his review of *Marxist theories of State* concluded that Marx and Engels did not develop a single, consistent, and comprehensive theory of the state. Since then it has become a kind of established cliché that Marx and Marxism lack a proper theory of State. But we could see a clear evolution of the theory of the state in Marx's own writings, as Colin Hay argues.
 - As early as 1842, Marx studied the basic contradiction of Modern State. In *The Critique of Hegel's Doctrine of the State* (1843), Marx was quite clear that Hegel's idealization of the state as representative of universal will was a mere mystification. Hegel had created a distinction between state and civil society. He considered civil society as the realm of egoistic, selfish individuals where they are engaged in the trade and business to fulfil their particular interests. But Hegel considered the realm of the state as an absolute universal will where individuals will act according to the general or universal interest.
 - Marx was very critical of this mystical conclusion of the Hegelian state. Although, Marx accepted Hegel's distinction of civil society and state and agreed that civil society was the realm of economic life in which individual relations with others are governed by an individual's selfish and particular interests. He rejects Hegel's proposition that State functions in the interest of all. Marx argued that the state perpetuates the realm of civil society. For Marx, state and politics in a capitalist society can never work in the interest of the whole community. So, the only way to emancipate the workers was by overthrowing the bourgeois capitalist state. He saw them as the instrument of class oppression in a class-divided society.

Now, let us move on to Marx's views on the state and there are these primary and secondary views on the state in Marx. As we have discussed, there is no systematic or consistent theory of state and politics in Marx, precisely, because he devoted himself to

understand the economic structure of capitalist society and through them, he reflected on the politics, state, laws.

So, Bob Jessop in his review of Marxist theories of the state, concluded that Marx and Engels did not provide a single consistent and comprehensive theory of the state. Since then it has become a kind of established cliché that Marx and Marxism lacks a proper theory of the state. But we could see a clear evolution of the theory of the state in Marx's writing as Colin Hay argues.

As early as 1842, Marx studied the basic contradictions of the modern state and in the critique of Hegel's doctrine of the state, Marx was quite clear that Hegel's idealization of state was something which he called the universal will or representation of universal will. According to Marx, it is a mere mystification. There is a kind of acknowledgment of Hegelian dialectics. But he is a strong critique of Hegelian understanding of his state as the embodiment of universal and absolute will.

Hegel created a distinction between the state and civil society. He considered the civil society as the realm of egoistic selfish individuals, where they are engaged in the trade and business to fulfill their particular interest. But Hegel would consider the realm of the state as an absolute universal will, where the individual will act according to the general or universal interest. This is a kind of Hegelian understanding of civil society and state which plays a significant role in Marx's understanding of civil society and state, and the relationship between men and men in the capitalist bourgeois society.

Marx was very critical of this mystical conclusion of the Hegelian state that is the real conflict and the classes that existed in civil society would be overcome in the state, where everyone who was guided by their particular selfish interest in the civil society would eventually turn to become someone guided by the universal or absolute interest, thereby having an unconditional obligation towards the state and protection of the collective common interest.

Although, this idea of the Hegelian state is reflected when Marx talked about communism and lived in communism. We will discuss in the next class his views on politics. Marx

was critical of this mystical conclusion of the Hegelian state. Although Marx accepted Hegel's distinction of civil society and state and agreed that civil society was the realm of economic life in which individual relations with others were governed by an individual's selfish and particular interest, he rejected however Hegel's proposition that state functions in the interest of all.

According to Marx, the state perpetuates the realm of civil society, the realm of conflicts and the classes that exist in the civil society is perpetuated by the state rather than overcome by the state as Hegel argues. For Marx, the state and politics in a capitalist society can never work in the interest of the whole community. So, the only way to emancipate the workers, according to Marx was by overthrowing the bourgeois capitalist state. He saw them as the instrument of class oppression in a class-divided society.

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- A systematic theory of state could be traced in Marx and Engels' *German Ideology* and particularly in the *Communist Manifesto*. In the *German Ideology* Marx and Engels prominently asserted that the state is 'nothing more than the form of organization which the bourgeoisie necessarily adopt both for internal and external purposes, for the mutual guarantee of their property and interest'. This instrumentalist view of the state also echoed in the *Communist Manifesto* where 'the executive of the modern state is' considered as nothing 'but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'. Many scholars consider this as Marx's 'primary view' of state.
- However, this does not remain the only explanation of the state by Marx and Engels. They modified their stand on the state in *The Class Struggle in France* (1850) and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852). In these works, Marx developed a more complex and nuanced view of the state.
- Here, the state is granted some autonomy; nonetheless, it remains in the control of the ruling class. This relative autonomy of the state view in Marx is considered as 'secondary view' of the state. This conception of the relative autonomy of state-led Marx to reject the relevance of State. Marx considered it as the biggest obstruction in realizing genuine human emancipation or freedom. Marx called for the total overthrowing of this institution. In his analysis of stages of history, Marx believed that the first capitalist state must be captured and the dictatorship of the proletariat should be established. Marx considered this as a transitory phase of history which must pave the way to a fully developed final stage of human history – communism. According to Marx, in such a society there will be no need for politics and the state will 'wither away'.

Thus, a systematic theory of state could be traced in Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, and particularly in the *Communist Manifesto*. In the *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels prominently asserted that the state is nothing more than the form of organization that the bourgeoisie necessarily adopted both for internal and external purposes for the mutual guarantee of their property and interest.

So, a state in that sense, in a capitalist class-divided society is the instrument for the protection of bourgeois interest or their property. This understanding of state which is there in *German Ideology* is also considered as the instrumentalist view of the state and it echoed in their *Communist Manifesto* as well, where they argued that the executive of the modern state is nothing but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeois.

So, here is a kind of an instrumentalist understanding of the state. It is not representative of universal will, it does not protect and work for the common interest of society. According to Marx and Engels, the executive of the modern estate is nothing, but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. They work as an instrument for the protection or maximization of interest of the bourgeoisie, not every section in the society, not the interest of the common people.

This view on the state is the dominant view and Marx's view is called by many scholars as Marx's primary view of the state. However, this does not remain the only explanation of the state by Marx and Engels. They modified their stand on the state in the class struggle in France and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. In these works, Marx developed a more complex and nuanced view of a state where they give some kind of autonomy to the state.

So, in the primary view on the state, there is a kind of instrumentalist understanding where the state is seen as a kind of agent that protects and maximizes the interest of the bourgeoisie or the capitalist class. Whereas in the later writings, there is a kind of complex and nuanced understanding of the state, nonetheless state remains something that protects the interest of the property class.

The state is granted some autonomy from the direct control of the bourgeoisie or the capitalist class. Nonetheless, it remains in the control of the ruling class and this relative autonomy of the state view in Marx is considered as the secondary view of the state. So, the primary view states that the committee manages the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie. That is the primary view, the second review is the state that has little

autonomy. But this little autonomy of the state is beneficial for the legitimization and the protection of the whole bourgeoisie class.

This conception of the relative autonomy of the state led Marx to reject the relevance of the state and Marx considered it as the biggest obstruction in realizing genuine human emancipation or freedom. Marx, therefore, called for the total overthrowing of this institution of the modern state that is the instrument of class oppression or exploitation in his analysis of stages of history. Marx believed that the first capitalist state must be captured by the proletariat through what he called the dictatorship of the proletariat. It could create the conditions of freedom and emancipation for the people.

Marx considered this dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitory phase of history that must pave the way to a fully developed final stage of human history which he called communism and according to Marx in such a society, there will be no need for politics and the state will wither away.

So, what you have in Marx is a kind of negative understanding of state which he has not seen as representative of common interest or working for the protection of the common interest as many liberals and other thinkers have argued. In the Marxist analysis, the state is seen merely as a kind of instrument of coercion. There is a debate and we will come back to it when we will discuss in the next lecture criticism against Marx.

Unlike many other political thinkers, he has not given primacy to the state or politics while explaining society and politics. For him, the basis of politics and state is the economy, and that primacy or determinism in Marx has not led him to understand the state and its role in modern societies in an educated manner. We will come to that in the next lecture. But primarily, here one has to understand that for Marx, unlike Hegel and many other thinkers that we have covered in this course, the state is not representative of the common will. It cannot protect the interest of everyone in society. It exploits the majority on behalf of the few property class. That is his views on state, class, alienation, and exploitation.

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You can refer to some of these texts like Shlomo Avineri's, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* and Tom Bottomore's, *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, David Boucher and Paul Kelly's, *Political Thinkers from Socrates to the Present*, you should also read Colin Hay's, *Marxism and the State*. In Andrew Gamble, David Marsh, and Tony Tan's edited, *Marxism and Social Science*, you should also refer to Shefali Jha's, *Western Political Thought from the Ancient Greeks to Modern Times*.

You may also read these two works by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *German Ideology* and *the Communist Manifesto*. You should read James Alan, *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present* and Peter Singer's, *Marx A Very Short Introduction*.

These are some of the texts which you can refer to, to understand Marxist analysis of class and why he gave primacy in his explanation of society and primacy to class as a category in his explanation or analysis of the modern state and society. Also, to know, why has he regarded the state as the instrument of class oppression in modern capitalist society and economy? That is all in this lecture, today. Thanks for listening. Thank you all.