

Book Review

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BOOK - MARXIASTTHEORY OF THE STATE
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The book under review is an exhaustive attempt to explain the practical aspect of the Marxian theory.

The author of the book under review is a witness to the Chinese Revolution and the communist uproar in China. The political upheaval encouraged him to study communism and its practical relevance in depth. This study revealed him the fact that the Marxian theory commonly known as the Labour Theory of Value is in itself a complete theory of the state. The purpose of writing this book is threefold. Firstly, he wants to introduce the still neglected Marxian theory of the state to the world at large. Secondly, the theory compels social philosophers and men, concerned with public affairs to re-evaluate the present social order. Thirdly, the theory is specially studied with reference to China where the chief problem is of communism Vs non communism.

The author has also included Soviet Russia and the application of this theory in Soviet Russia in his discussion.

At the outset, in the very first chapter, the author attacks the economists for minimizing the importance of the state. Even in sociology and Political Science, it has not found its due place. Hence, state which is in itself an economic, social and political organisation; has been ignored by all. He then compares Marxism with Bolshevism i.e. modern communism and concludes that the latter is nothing but refinement of the former. After that, he compares Marxism with revisionism at length, and finds that glaring differences exist in the very underlying notions of the two theories and henceforth he excludes revisionism from the further discussions.

In the second chapter, the author deals with historical materialism which is the base of the Marxian theory of the state. He explains that how changes in the methods of production of production give way to changes in social relations. In the words of Marx: "The windmill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill society with the industrial capitalist." Next, he compares and contrasts materialism

with dialectics and shows how Marx combines dialectics with materialism to give his own ‘laws of evolution in Human history ‘ where he replaces ideas with mode of production and regards thesis as individual private property, antthesis as capitalist private property and synthesis as the private property based on common ownership.

According to Marx, it is this thesis –antthesis synthesis that give rise to political revolutions since these arise on the basis of class relations and every class struggle is a political struggle. Marx says that every social or political devolution ceases after the establishment of communism and the only thing that continues is the social evolution and man plays an active part in bringing a revolution. Therefore the purpose of Marxian philosophy is not just to tale the world as it is but also to change it. As the Marx says “Circumstances may be altered by men and revolutions are the locomotives of History.”

Again it is the dialetic formula that contains the idea of the struggle between two opposite elements. This class struggle forms the basis for progress and only communism end this era of class struggle. He concludes materialism is totally different from economic interpretation of history as the latter is a theory of what has been while the former assumes communism as the ultimate goal.

In the third chapter, the author discusses the class domination theory of the state. He explains that state and its four features viz. the organization of inhabitants by territories, the creation of a public power of coercion, the right of the officials is explained well. Then he gives the various functions of the state and after much discussion concludes that all the functions culminate into one chief function namely political or repressive. Finally he says that the state, which is a parasite, is destined to be abolished. This will happen by overthrowing the bourgeois state by revolution of the proletarian class; thereby a transitional state will be established which will naturally wither away.

Methods of overthrowing of bourgeois state by revolution are discussed in the fourth chapter. Revolution is brought about by the conflict between forces of production and the relations of production. According to Engels and Marx, peaceful methods are desirable but if the circumstances demand revolution becomes necessary. Other measures of overthrowing the bourgeois state as started by Marx are organization of the proletariats into a political party, international union of the proletariats, different notes by proletariats of different countries and lastly, rejection of all abstract conceptions like culture, morality, freedom, equality, etc. as all these are referred by bourgeoisie. These all are briefly dealt with in this chapter of the book.

The fifth chapter tells us that Marx stressed that proletariats should not just

overthrow bourgeois and take on the readymade machinery of the state but destroy it also. After that he discusses Marx's much admired Paris Commune of 1871 that gives the solutions to the problem of proletarian dictatorship and he also says that the proletarian dictatorship is the form of communes or councils is the political form best suited for the economic upliftment of the labour.

The sixth chapter probes the possibility of proletarian dictatorship to be a proletarian democracy. According to Marx, a proletarian state is a proletarian dictatorship for bourgeois class and a proletarian democracy for the proletariats. Conversely, the bourgeois democracy implies a bourgeois dictatorship since a bourgeois dictates all governmental policies without having the involvement of the proletariats. The necessary aspect of proletarian dictatorship is the forcible suppression of the exploiters as a class. Next the comparison of the proletarian and bourgeois state is given. Lenin says that a proletarian dictatorship is just a state and not a government like bourgeois state but even then the fundamental differences exist. First the bourgeois state is a suppression of the majority by the minority while the reverse is the case with proletarian state. Secondly, bourgeois state must be destroyed by revolution while the proletarian state automatically withers away. Then he discusses democratic centralism – "A voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes in the business of destroying capitalist supremacy and the capitalist machinery of government." After that the political and economic functions of the proletarian state are given in detail.

The withering away of the proletarian state is discussed in the seventh chapter. Theory of Marx and Lenin says that over the period of time, the need for force and subjection of one man over another will die out. People will become accustomed to observing the rules of life and this will make the state wither away. This withering away will result into a stateless communist society; the function of which has been elaborated the last of this chapter.

Eight chapter is devoted to the study of applicability of Marxism in Soviet Russia. One wonders if the Bolshevik Revolution is a proletarian revolution and if so why it took place in a rather less advanced country like Russia where capitalism was not so developed. Lenin gives some specific reasons for it. Firstly according to Marx, capitalism is only general condition and Russia was not also a country without capitalism that she was backward in comparison to U.S. and England is another case. This capitalism gradually converted into imperialism and according to Marxists, a proletarian begins 'where the chain of imperialism is the weakest.' The presence of capitalism and military oppression in tsarist Russia and other factors justify Russia as the weakest part of imperialism chain. Thereafter, he

discusses the soviet form of the state. It is identical to thr Paris Commune. It is an international form of the proletariat struggle and hence rightly called 'Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' (USSR). As far as the role of the communist party in proletariat dictatorship is concerned, the author stresses that the former plays a guiding roe in gthe class struggle. The economic system of the proletariat state is socialism. But the economic policy of soviet Russia is capitalism plus socialism. The primary aim of the function nof Soviet Russia was of maintaining economic protection. The functions include operative, regulatory and promotional functions.

The author now recounts the extentof Marxism in Soviet Russia. However, some new principles were seen with regard to the practical consideration but these are just the extension and not the violation of Marx's Theory of the state.

In the estimate of demand, the author has divided Marxiasm into two kinds- intellectual and material environment. According to eminent critics, Marx combined French materialism with Hegelian dialectics in historical materialism. Intellectually Marx was influenced by French materialism and Hegelian School of phiolosophy while studying historical materialism and following various examples. The author concludes that the material environment of Marx played more important role than his intellectual environment.

Engels and Lenin were important in spreading and popularizing Marxism. However during 1890-1914 Marxiasm suffered a decline, mainly due to industrial revolution in Germany and since the followers of Marx got inclined towards revisionism.

Marxism had a dual effect- one upon the trend of thought and the other in the trend of events. Though the effects of Marxism on the trend of thought is worth-noticing but what is more important is the effect upon the trend of events and it is in this connection that people consider Marx not only as a theoretician but also a practical organizer of the working class. The author gives several facts in support of it. Firstly one can see everywhere left wing Marxists party commonly known as Communist and the right wing Marxist bearing different names in different countries. Secondly, the example of proletariat dictatorship stans live in the form of Soviet Russia. Thirdly, the influence of Marxism reached in countries like China where Marx was never heard of and lastly the possibility of communist revolution in various countries of the world.

At the last, the author discusses the merits and the limitations of Marxism, Marx was the first to question the inadequacy of the present social organization i.e. capitalism. It also gave a coherent socialist system with a definite purpose and line of action. It does not consider abstract notions like equality, justice, etc. it aims

primarily at the welfare of the proletariat by stressing equitable distribution.

Such are the chief merits of Marxism but the author says that it is not free from difficulties also. Firstly, the mode of production is not clearly defined and it is on this basis that Marx receives Common's criticism. Secondly the aspect of the cost involved in the revolution is almost involved. Thirdly, it pays over-attention to the economic conflict and thereby others problem are ignored. Fourthly, the ultimate problem of scarcity of resources is not dealt with.

. Despite all the criticism that Marx receives, Marxism will remain one of the most important systems ever offered and it will continue to hold its place in social movement.

It can be said without doubt that the book is serious attempt to deal with Marxian Theory of the state. The book is full of references and contains a rich bibliography which indicates the massive research work done by the author. All over the book, the author uses a simple and lucid language. Wherever necessary, the author has quoted original texts of Lenin and Marx. Needless to say, this work is a valuable tool for understanding Marxism Theory of the State.