THE EVOLUTION OF COMMUNISM

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INFLUENCES ON MARX - G.W.F. HEGEL/HEGELIANISM

- “...history is the unfolding of reality itself, the ideas or mind of the universe; what happens in history is in effect the writing of a book of which God is the ultimate author, but in which humans participate...” (nothing is accidental/arbitrary in history)

- Ger./ Hegelian philosophy sought an ideal UNITY of things \(\rightarrow\) expressed in an endless DIALECTIC

- Hegel points out that the ABSOLUTE is in all of us, seeking to complete itself in the evolution of the GEIST

- (Marx will critique Hegel here: he saw Hegel as too idealistic – he had the right METHOD but was enveloped in MYSTICISM – Marx felt people realized themselves in work, not thought)
• Hegel’s historical analysis moved through three main phases:
  • ASIATIC – absolute monarchy
  • GRECO-ROMAN – individual freedom
  • GERMANIC-EUROPEAN – synthesis of freedom w/ a strong state

• Hegel’s preoccupation there can be traced to 18th c. Ger. disunity – therefore Hegel is connected to burgeoning Ger. nat’lism

• and since this historical process is the “March of God through the world”, God can be seen to be on your side if you’re successful
• THE YOUNG HEGELIANS (post 1830) inherited this ideal

• they wanted to re-invent Hegel & to abandon his idealism: to them, reality is material & ideas a projection of physical being. Therefore God was invented as a symbol & can now be abandoned…

• fundamentally, Hegel had taken philosophy as far as it could go: ACTION was now needed

• among the young Hegelians was LUDWIG FEUERBACH

• a materialist (reality = the sensuously perceptible world) & an ardent atheist

• He believed that since science and tech solved our subsistence needs, we could focus on the QUALITY OF LIFE OF HUMANITY to achieve fulfillment

• therefore, POLITICS MUST BECOME OUR RELIGION
• **AUGUSTE COMTE’S** system emphasized modes of thought over this ideal of humanity but still envisioned a world that would be changed by science/tech.

• he identified 3 stages of history:
  
  • **THEOLOGICAL** – fetishism, polytheism, monotheism ➔ universe is governed by a divine order
  
  • **METAPHYSICAL** – phenomena acc’ted for thru natural abstraction
  
  • **POSITIVE** – primacy of sci. law – which leads to a stage of **(Positivism)** self-fulfillment as human relations uncover a sci. basis
• **Marx** breaks w/ both as they defend capitalist reality: to Marx, fulfillment can come only through the erasure of false and ultimately class consciousness.

• Marx sees love/human relations as meaningless as long as a class struggle exists; therefore Feuerbach was irrelevant, and science/tech. created alienation, so Comte was irrelevant too.

• **Marx saw life as essentially practical: the cure for alienation is the engagement in the process of social transformation → self-fulfillment and truth.**
COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

• comm. is a modern ideology, but comm. ideas have existed for 1000’s of years
• as long as people have existed in communities, ideas of communal holdings have been around
• ideas of egalitarianism were also around prior to the 19\textsuperscript{th} c.; they can be found in lib. and soc. too
• modern comm. got its start in the latter half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} c. w/ KARL MARX
• his ideology was a response to conditions of the day just like con. & lib. – namely conditions created by IR, but Marx viewed lib. as a failure and wanted more extreme measures
• Marxism now viewed as a failure, but profound int’l impact over last 150 years
• MARXISM – refers to Marx’s ideas; adaptations & variations came later
• Marxism was the dominant form of the 19th c. socialism
• Marx collaborated w/ FRIEDRICH ENGELS – Both were German but lived and wrote in England, esp. in the industrial city of Birmingham
• 1848 – Communist Manifesto is published for the Communist League
• Marx chose the term “communist” since it sounded radical: it implied the abolition of private property & the reorg. of society based on a workers’ revolution
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CONTEXT...
Marx thought history was cyclical and that the time for comm. had arrived – he advocated achieving comm. in a violent rev. where the workers (PROLETARIAT) would overthrow the capitalist/owners (BOURGEOISIE)

• **MARXISM’S GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**
  
• (1). Begins with his **MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY** (a.k.a. ECONOMIC DETERMINISM)
  
• means simply that, to Marx, changes in the economy & eco. rels. determine historical changes
• To Marx, what is “materialism”?
• states that human history is based on wealth & ownership of goods & modes of production (who produces what for whom)
• idea of “modes of production” determines the rest of society’s structure
• this is because the economy dictates social/political institutions & ideology
• therefore changes in material conditions will change the whole nature of society
• further, this change follows a regular scientific pattern:
  • FEUDALISM ➔
  • CAPITALISM ➔
  • COMMUNISM...
• acc. to this pattern communism is inevitable
(2). So 2nd doctrine HISTORICAL INEVITABILITY OF COMM.

- How does Marx reach this conclusion?
- he applies a theory of his own creation – DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

- this theory tries to explain why one mode of production will yield to another (ie: Feud → cap → comm.)
- “MATERIALISM” – reflects his emphasis on the material basis of society’s devel. (who’s got wealth) & modes of production
- “DIALECTICAL” – comes from an 18c. German philosopher HEGEL Hegel’s dialectic is simply a way of studying things as they move through 3 stages of:

  THESIS → ANTITHESIS → SYNTHESIS

- Marx used his own dialectic as a scientific basis for studying history, where comm. is the synthesis of all previously existent eco. systems.
- Dialectical Materialism is therefore a science of history based on changing eco. rels. that culminate in comm.
• (3). **ALIENATION** – not part of the natural human condition
• Marx viewed this as a signif. problem assoc. w/ capitalism
• alienation occurs when people believe they don’t control their world
• so to end/minimise alienation, people must be fulfilled/individuated
• under capitalism, Marx thought the source of alienation was work
• where workers are divided & specialized and not given a say in means of production, an assembly – line mentality is created, where workers are not whole
→ this makes work an unpleasant activity & maximizes alienation for the individual
• creates a **FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS** (w/ religion) & oppression
• in a comm. society, he thought sharing of work (variety) and owning means of production would eliminate the problem
(4). LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE

- states simply that the true value of any commodity or product is the result of the labour put into it
- since owners don’t produce labour, they don’t produce value
- capitalists add SURPLUS VALUE (amt. charged over cost to produce) which they then withhold from workers
- leads to a concentration of wealth
- capitalists continue to accumulate wealth and eventually cause their own downfall → workers have no $ to keep economy functioning
(5). all of these preceding principles find their expression in the CLASS STRUGGLE........BOURGEOISE v. PROLETARIAT

due to the work of revolutionaries, false consciousness among the workers will yield to CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

increasingly, bourgeoisie will use coercive power of state against them

ultimately, VIOLENT REVOLUTION – where the dialectic is fulfilled & inevitability of communism is recognized

...all theoretical: Marx never lived to see it
• (6) a revolution would establish a **DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT**
• to defend the gains of the revolution
• temporary, a transitional period on the way to communism
• a practical measure until *classless* society can be established
• “*To each according to need, from each according to ability...*”
• not fully explained by Marx – controversy of the term “dictatorship”
• has become an excuse to be abused – Lenin
That’s Not All, Folks!
COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY

• Marxism itself was never practically applied on a national scale, but various examples of communes can be found in history.

• Nationally, so called Marxist ideology takes on a whole new character.

• First applied in 1917 in Russia after the successful Bolshevik Revolution (then USSR).

• Most prominent leader = VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN – first to apply Marxist ideology to a nat’l gov’t.
LENINISM – significant differences from doctrinaire Marxism

(1). Lenin argued for the existence of a VANGUARD - an elite group of strong leaders (“professional revolutionaries”)

decidedly non-Marxist idea; Lenin does not agree w/ “Rev. from Below”

Lenin thought a Marxist Revolution in Russia required special organization, that Marx’s idea of a mass proletarian party was doomed b/c not enough people had developed appropriate class consciousness among the Russian working classes

Lenin is therefore impatient & wants to lead the disorganized masses;

Marx waited for history, Lenin made it

Lenin is therefore the 1st MARXIST REVISIONIST
(2). Lenin’s belief was that tight organization could effect socialism even in a pre-industrial society, therefore **REVOLUTION CAN OCCUR IN NON-INDUSTRIALIZED SOCIETIES**

→ this skips stage 2 of Marx’s Dialectic Materialism (Feudalism → Communism)

• but the vanguard is required to direct the peasant masses who replace Marx’s industrial proletariat (therefore hammer & sickle)

• Lenin is pragmatic where Marx was dogmatic
• (3). Also following in Marx’s footsteps – “Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism” (published in 1916)
• like Marx, Lenin argued that capitalism caused wealth to concentrate, leading to monopolies, robber barons...
• Lenin – this results in less available wealth for consumers, so cos. must expand into foreign markets; in 19th c., this took form of imperialism
• these markets contributed cheap raw materials & absorbed overproduction staving off the capitalist collapse
• colonialism is therefore linked to capitalism
• b/c of this, exploited colonies, even if they’re non-industrial, can go directly to socialist revolution
(4). **DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM** – deals w/ post-revolution party/gov’t organization (Lenin’s vanguard becomes **CPSU**, so Soviet communism has a gov’t unlike Marx)

- Dem. Cent. combines two contradictory tendencies:
  - (A) democracy, free debate are key to formulation of party policy
  - (B) but once a policy decision is made, debate stops = centralism
- this is adapted by future Soviet dictators & used to reinforce central gov’t control
- **PARTINOST** – the Party proclaims ideological truth/ “follow the Party line” (**Pravda**)
- (Lenin dies 1924 – creates an ideological/power vacuum)
• **TROTSKYISM** – Leon Trotsky
  
  • was Lenin’s ideological colleague, his likely successor & co-leader of the revolution, founder of Red Army
  
  • his main ideological contribution: 
    **WORLD/PERMANENT REV.**
  
  → belief that socialism couldn’t survive if surrounded by class enemies on all borders, he therefore wants to export revolution

• disappointment of WW1: 
  Socialism v. Nationalism
  
  – for him, WW1 was a capitalist war and proletarian brothers lost their chance to unite

• Trotsky’s fate: Lenin’s death in 1924 led to a power struggle w/ Stalin

• (exile, Mexico City death in 1940)
• **STALINISM** – Josef Stalin (Man of Steel)

• an opponent of Trotsky, ideologically opposite to Marx

• “**Socialism in One Country**”

• wants to modernize & industrialize the USSR & to lead by example, not to export revolution

• to achieve this, firm state control is required (**REV. FROM ABOVE**)  

• 5 yr. Plans, Kulaks, Collectivization, Socialist Realism, Great Purges, Vozhd
TITOISM – brand of comm. associated w/ MARSHAL JOSIP TITO, Yugoslavian Dictator from 1945-80

- important because he pursued soc. principles unlike those of Stalin

- Yugoslavia was not part of Iron Curtain – they secured their own liberation from Nazis in guerrilla war, w/o Red Army

- therefore, Tito did not feel obligated to Soviets... also, he hated Stalin...

- Tito’s ideology:
  - that socialism need not be Soviet-directed
  - pursue a neutralist foreign policy, independent of Soviet directives
  - internally, less coercion than Stalin – state terrorism existed on a smaller scale
• style of gov’t less dictatorial - a humanistic socialism?

• Practical applications (not found in USSR)
  – workers right to strike
  – INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY – not controlled by dictator
  – Free exchange of ideas – less state propaganda & censorship, criticism permitted

• held fragile Yugo. confed. together

• when he died, divisions boiled over into civil war
• **KHRUSHCHEVISM** – Nikita (1953-64)
  • was the 1\textsuperscript{st} enduring successor to Stalin
  • up to him to address the excesses & failures of Stalinism – such as neglect of consumer industries (still a problem), of peasants...
  • Khrushchevism is a movement away from Stalinism
    • inaugurated policy of **DESTALINIZATION** - denounced Stalin in a 6hr. speech before *Politburo*
  • somewhat of a cultural/intellectual thaw
  • appearance of more freedom, less repression
  • internationally adopts policy of **PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**
  • stated that war is not the best way to bring about a comm. world
    – mvmt. away from Leninist/Trotskyist principles
    – the real world did pre-empt many of his ideals (Cuba, etc.)
  • he does keep the Leninist idea of the Vanguard, that the Comm. Party should remain supreme (PARTINOST)
MAOISM

- version of Marxism attributed to Mao Zedong, comm. leader of China 1949-76
- like Tito, Mao disliked Soviet/Stalinist version
- Mao thought he was the true Marxist
- Wanted complete equality – Mao tunic, all carried Mao’s Book of Quotations
- Wanted to eliminate all social distinctions
- Esp. true in 1960’s Cultural Revolution – attempt to restore ideological purity
- But like Lenin, he adopted the idea of a vanguard - that Party held all power
- MAO’S APPROACH TO REVOLUTION:
  - advocated GUERRILLA WARS in AGRARIAN societies to aid in world wide spread of comm. (like Trotsky)
  - such wars had to be violent, well planned & executed
  - revolutions to proceed in 3 stages:
    - Organizational – objectives set
    - Guerrilla war
    - Conventional War
- Pursued this himself and supported others: Korea, Vietnam – Ho Chi Minh
Deng Xiaoping (1977-97)

• Gang of 4 Trials
• New Democratic Revolution
• Tiananmen Square
• **GORBACHEV, MIKHAIL (1985 -91)**
• very much a revision of Marxist ideals, even an abandonment
• his policy hinged on **GLASNOST** (openness), much of which involved exposing previous errors & admitting past mistakes, both political & economic
• as for eco. failures, Gorbachev inaugurated a new policy of economic reform – **PERESTROIKA**
• admit faults of the economy, such as inefficient production, wasteful labour...
• adopted a FREE MARKET stance – not Marxist, but pragmatic
• in USSR, this transition proved very difficult – very poor economy
• more protests also permitted
• **DEMOKRATIZATSIYA** is another element of Glasnost – Political (Democratic) Reform
• this was tested by Yeltsin and some rebellious republics
• was not intended to be an abandonment of Marxism, just an admission that eco. restructuring was necessary...