



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, ABUJA

COURSE GUIDE

COURSE CODE: PHL 202

COURSE TITLE: FUNDAMENTALS OF MARXISM

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COURSE GUIDE FOR THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MARXISM (PHL 202)

GENERAL INTRODUCTON

This course introduces the students to the fundamentals of Marxism. It discusses Karl Marx's view on human nature, society, morality, history, social change and in fact, the entire historical antecedents to Karl Marx's philosophy.

Marx articulated his scientific socialism within the social, political and economic workings of his Era. Scientific socialism discloses that there are special laws which regulate the origin, existence, development and death of a given social organization and its replacement by another higher one (Mills, 1962:45). The best method for this disclosure is what Marx termed "dialectical method." Dialectical method is "nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought" (Engels, 1976: 180). Besides, dialectical method shows that every thesis generates its opposite (antithesis). The conflict between these two mutually exclusive categories - thesis and antithesis - is resolved in a synthesis which preserves what was true of both at a higher level (Ucheagu, 1997:112-113).

Scientific socialism maintains that the working class will struggle for their interest. It further maintains that this struggle will lead to the revolutionary transformation of human society (Marx & Engels, 1984:86)). This transformation, it avers, is a revolutionary movement from a society dominated by the capitalist mode of production (Marx & Engels, 1984: 85) to one which comes to be organized in accordance with the 'communist' mode of production (Marx & Engels, 1984:96) for social needs and communist schemes of distribution in the means of consumption (Marx & Engels, 1984: 101).

As sound as this position may appear, there are some questions begging for answers. For instance one may ask: Are there shortcomings in Marx's conception of scientific socialism? To what extent are the principles of scientific socialism applicable in contemporary times? These questions and every other similar ones will be answered in this course.

Course Objectives

In order to achieve the primary aim of this course, the following objectives have been set:

- To understand the meaning, nature and principles of scientific socialism;
- To examine the historical antecedents to Marx's scientific socialism with special consideration to capitalism, Hegel and Feuerbach;
- To take a philosophical tour through Marx's scientific socialism;
- To critically examine Marx's scientific socialism as well as to show its contemporary relevance.

Working through this Course

For maximum efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in this course, students are required to have a copy of the course guide, main course material, download the videos and podcast, and the necessary materials for this course. These will serve as study guide and preparation before lectures. Additionally, students are required to be actively involved in forum discussion and facilitation.

Study Units

This course has 21 study units which are structured into 4 modules. Each module comprises of 4-6 study units as follows:

Module 1: Understanding Scientific Socialism

Unit 1: Defining socialism

Unit 2: Meaning, nature and principles of scientific socialism

Unit3: Historical antecedents to Karl Marx's scientific socialism I

Unit 4: Historical antecedents to Karl Marx's scientific socialism II

Unit 5: Historical antecedents to Karl Marx's scientific socialism III

Module 2: Karl Marx's Scientific Socialism

Unit 1: A Brief Introduction to Marx's Scientific Socialism

Unit 2: Marx on Human Nature

Unit 3: Theses on Feuerbach

Unit 4: Marx on Religion

Unit 5: Dialectical Materialism

Module 3: Understanding Historical Materialism

Unit 1: The Materialist Conception of History

Unit 2: Labor and Alienation

Unit 3: Commodity Fetishism

Unit 4: Surplus Value

Unit 5: The State

Unit 6: Revolution

Module 4: A Critical Examination of Marx's Scientific Socialism

Unit 1: E.F. Hayek Critical Objections

Unit 2: Karl Popper's Criticism

Unit 3: Friedman Milton Detractions

Unit 4: The Practical Failure of Socialism: Russia

Unit 5: The Contemporary Relevance of Marx's Scientific Socialism

References and Further Reading

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The following links can be used to access materials online:

- www.pdfdrive.net
- www.bookboon.com
- www.sparknotes.com
- <http://ebookey.org>
- <https://scholar.google.com/>
- <https://books.google.com/>

Presentation Schedule

This course has two presentations; one at the middle of the semester and the other towards the end of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, each student undertaking this course will be assigned a topic by the course facilitator, which will be made available in due time, for individual presentations during forum discussions. Each presenter has 15 minutes (10 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for Question and Answer). On the other hand, students will be divided by the course facilitator into different groups. Each group is expected to come up with a topic to work on and to submit same topic to the facilitator via the recommended medium. Both attract 5% of your total marks.

Note: Students are required to submit both papers via the recommended medium for further examination and grading. Both attract 5% of your total marks.

Assessment

In addition to the discussion forum presentations, two other papers are required in this course. The paper should not exceed 6 pages and should not be less than 5 pages (including references), typewritten in 12 fonts, double line spacing, and Times New Roman. The preferred reference is MLA 6th edition (you can download a copy online). The paper topics will be made available in due time. Each carries 10% of the total marks.

To avoid plagiarism, students should use the followings links to test run their papers before submission:

- <http://plagiarism.org/>
- <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Finally, all students taking this course **MUST** take the final exam which attracts 70% of the total marks.

How to Get the Most Out of this Course

For students to get the most out of this course, she/he must:

- Have 75% of attendance through active participations in both forum discussions and facilitation;
- Read each topic in the course materials before it is being treated in the class;
- Submit every assignment as at when due; as failure to do so will attract a penalty;
- Discuss and share ideas among his/her peers; this will help in understanding the course more;
- Download videos, podcasts and summary of group discussions for personal consumption;
- Attempt each self-assessment exercises in the main course material;
- Take the final exam;

- Approach the course facilitator when having any challenge with the course.

Facilitation

This course operates a learner-centered online facilitation. To support the student's learning process, the course facilitator will, one, introduce each topic under discussion; two, open floor for discussion. Each student is expected to read the course materials, as well as other related literatures, and raise critical issues which she/he shall bring forth in the forum discussion for further dissection; three, summarizes forum discussion; four, upload materials, videos and podcasts to the forum; five, disseminate information via email and SMS if need be.

MODULE 1

UNDERSTANDING SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Unit 1: Defining Socialism

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.2. History of Socialism
 - 3.3. Types of socialism
 - 3.3.1. Utopian Socialism
 - 3.3.3. Democratic socialism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

This unit attempts a conceptual clarification of the key term of this module, namely; socialism. In addition to this, it takes a philosophical excursion into the history of socialism. It also presents different types of socialism such utopian socialism, revolutionary socialism, democratic socialism, scientific socialism, amongst others.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

This unit will help students:

- 1. to underpin socialism;
- 2. to understand the historical evolution of socialism;
- 3. to discuss different types of socialism.

3.0. Main Contents

- 3.1. What is Socialism?

The word socialism is very difficult to pin down (Eccleshall et. al., 1984:91, Baradat, 2006:15, Levine, 1984:1). As C.E.M. Joad, in his *Introduction to Modern Political*

Theory (1924:9) significantly observes; “Socialism proves to be a different creed in the hands of its exponents, varying with the temperaments of its advocates and the nature of abuses which have prompted their advocacy... Socialism, in short, is like a hat that has lost its shape because everybody wears it.”

However, a working definition of socialism is necessary in order to understand its various applications. Etymologically speaking, the word socialism is from a Latin word *sociare*, which means to combine or to share (Heywood, 2007:99). Complementing this is the Roman word *societas* which means companionship and fellowship as well as legal contract between men (Vincent, 2010:83). This means that socialism is a vision of human beings as social creatures united by their common humanity. This results from the very nature of human society: men, women, children living together in families, villages, tribes, cities, and nation-states. By this very nature of human existence, individuals living in a society are not isolated from each other, rather they invariably affects the opportunities for self-development of each other (Rodee et al., 1983:82). As John Thornhill (1967) explains; “to say that man is by nature social...is to say what man achieves, he achieves together with other men; that the goals which he sets himself are goals he pursues in common with other men; that any benefit which he seeks, he seeks as a benefit held in common, a common good” (Thornhill, 1967:45).

This highlights the degree to which individual identity is fashioned by social interaction and the membership of social groups and collective bodies. Acknowledging this communal essence of socialism is Joseph A. Schumpeter (1942) who defines socialism as “that organization of society in which the means of production are controlled, and the decisions on how and what to produce and on who is to get what, are made by public authority instead of by privately-owned and privately-managed firms” (cited in Gauba, 2003:38-39). This definition indicates that the chief goal of socialism is ‘common good.’ According to C.C. Rodee et. al. (1983:83), socialism simply means “the subordination of the individual’s welfare to the welfare of the whole society.” This implies that the common good is the good of the members of the society; as J. Maritain (1966: 51) concurs: “the good human life of the multitude, of multitude persons; it is their communion in good living. It is therefore common to both the whole and the parts into which it flows back and which, in turn, must benefit from it.” The common good of every society comprises:

the collection of public commodities and services, the roads, ports, schools, etc., a sound fiscal condition of the state and its military power; the body of just laws, good customs and wise institutions, which provide the nation with its structure; the heritage of its great historical remembrances, its symbols and its glories, its living traditions and cultural treasures. The common good includes all of these and something much more – something more profound, more concrete and more human... It includes the sum or sociological integration of all civil conscience, political virtues and sense of right and

liberty; of all the activity, material prosperity and spiritual riches, of unconsciously operative hereditary wisdom, of moral rectitude, justice, friendship, happiness, virtues and heroism in the individual lives of its members. For these things are, in a certain measure, communicable and so revert to each member, helping him to prefer his life and liberty of persons (Maritain, 1966:51).

In other words, the common good stands for the goal which is regarded by the consciousness of the community as conducive to the welfare of the whole community, transcending the immediate interests of different individuals and groups (Gaub, 2003:407).

3.2. History of Socialism

Some scholars have traced the history of socialism to Plato, others to Christianity, to Thomas Moore *Utopia* in 1516 and many others to radical movements in the English Civil War in the 17th century (Newman, 2005:6). However, socialism arose as a reaction against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of industrial capitalism in 19th century (Heywood, 2007:100). During this period, the workers lived in misery and penury. Bernard Susser (1995) description of this horrible incidence is worthy quoting at length:

A time machine visit to one of Europe's capitals in the mid-nineteenth century would bring a harrowing experience for most moderns, bringing us face to face with a very large class of impoverished laborers who owned nothing but the sweat of their brows—which they sold, when they could, to whoever would pay them a bare subsistence wage. We could not miss the festering slums in which they lived, the crime, prostitution, and sickness that surround them. Their work, which often lasted for 12 to 16 hours a day in dark, suffocating surroundings, was mind numbing body destroying. They had no right against their employers, who could fire them at will, no social security benefits to fall back on, and their political rights, when they had any, consisted in voting periodically for this or that patrician statesman. Their children...were sent to work at early age; working 10 to 12 hours a day (Susser, 1995:11).

Prompted by this painful reality created by industrial capitalism, vision of different and better world began to emerge. As a result, Utopian socialists, a la Robert Owen (1771-1858) in the UK, Charles Fourier (1772-1837) in France and Claude Henri de Saint Simon in Europe, posited a community based on sharing and cooperation. This period also saw the likes of Karl Marx' *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and Friedrich Engel's *The Condition of Working Class in England* (1845), William Morris' *News from Nowhere*

(1890), etc. For example, Henri de Saint-Simon believes that the social system of France before the French Revolution was not appropriate for the new age. Science had taken the place of the Catholic Church in the new era, and industry should take the place of lineage in determining social position. Saint-Simon's followers were among the first who viewed private property and capitalism as incompatible with the new system, and they argued against the hereditary transfer of wealth (Hoffman & Graham, 2009:222). Saint-Simon and his followers were influential on the early writing of Karl Marx.

Charles Fourier advocated the reconstruction of society into cooperative communities where work was distributed on a rotating basis among all members. Fourier advocated a scientific view of society, and his economic ideas are considered to be the forerunners of the ideas of Marx (Hoffman & Graham, 2009:222). He explained his ideas when he published *Theory of Social Organization* in 1820, which inspired utopian communities, including Brook Farm in Massachusetts during the 1840s.

Robert Owen, on his own part, believes that cooperative living could solve the problems of unemployment and poverty. He established New Harmony in 1825 as a utopian community based on the principles of shared work, complete equality, and communal property without a religious basis. New Harmony failed and was disbanded in 1827 (Hoffman & Graham, 2009:222).

Another important figure in the development of socialism is Georg Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel's philosophy of history contends that history records the unfolding of an inner human spirit that undergoes recurrent, progressive transformation as it seeks to comprehend the world as well as itself. This spirit has two aspects: on one hand, this spirit is incarnated in the human drive to venture ever forward in understanding, self-mastery, and self-realization; on the other hand, this spirit is none other than the essential logic of the divine itself (Susser, 1995:122). In venturing forward, humankind progressively reveals the divine presence immanent in the word. Hegel believes that this progressive movement of spirit is engined by *dialectic*—*thesis, antithesis and synthesis*.

More and more, in the 20th century, aside Lenin, Stalin and Bernstein's influences, socialism witnessed the spread of socialist's ideas into Africa, Asia and Latin America with little or no experience of industrial capitalism (Heywood, 2007:101). Socialism in these continents was developed out of the anticolonial struggle, rather than class struggle. The idea of exploitation was replaced by that of colonial oppression, creating a fusion of socialism and communalism. In Africa, for example, scholars like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Abafemi Awolowo and so on, advocated for socialism, although with some degree of differences. Nkwame Nkrumah (1964:70), for instance, argues that "African socialism is more in tune with the original humanist principles underlying African society." Julius Nyerere (1968:12) says that "ujaama...describes our socialism. Our socialism is the recognition of society as an extension of the basic family unit." This entails that African socialism is rooted in the brotherhood long existed in Africa before the European colonialism.

However, the late of 20th century witnessed what some scholars has referred to as ‘the death of socialism.’ the most dramatic negative effect of socialism was the collapse of communism in the Eastern Europe revolution of 1989-91 (Heywood, 2007:101).

Be that has it may, the modern socialist ideas are derived from this utopian socialism. The modern socialism stands oppose to capitalism. Capitalism is a “social system based upon the private ownership of the means of wealth production” (Paul, 1918:n.d). The means of production, while individually owned, are socially operated by the working class. Capitalism is solely a profit making system. Essential to the functioning of capitalism is the commitment by political leaders to protect the institution of the private property through the constitution or other such means. This involves encouraging free enterprise, promoting privatization, and refraining from enacting laws or regulations that can damage the interests of property owners. For capitalism to function it is necessary for the economic activities to be coordinated by the market. Socialism aims to undo this development by abolishing the social power of the bourgeoisie and, hence, by destroying the division between civil society and the state (Keane, 1991:8). As Andrew Levine (1984:7) pointed out; “... socialism radically altered capitalism’s distinct feature: the private ownership of society’s principal means of production. Socialism is post-capitalism; capitalism without private property in means of production.” This abolition of private property in the means of production is at the core of the socialist project.

3.3. Types of socialism

Progressively, there are varieties of socialism, namely; utopian socialism, democratic socialism, scientific socialism, amongst others.

3.3.1. Utopian Socialism: Thomas Moore (1478-1535) was the one who coined the term “utopia.” This term was first introduced in his book titled, ‘Utopia,’ where he envisaged a perfect society that is contrary to the existing societal order he finds himself. There are three basic features of utopian socialism, which are: firstly, in its radical rejection of the status quo, it sees the present socio-political system as fundamentally defective and in need of a “root-and-branch change;” secondly, it espouses the idea that the society should foster human development; thirdly, it overcomes the private-public dichotomy by opining that an ideal society emancipates both the individual and socio-political realm in order to attain perfection (Heywood, 2004:365). Other advocates of this view are Robert Owen (1771–1858), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), Claude-Henri Saint-Simon (1760–1825), and Étienne Cabet (1788–1856).

3.3.2. Democratic socialism: sees democracy as a necessary condition for socialism. Just like Nicos Poulantzas (1978: 265) writes at the end of his book; “One thing is certain: Socialism will be democratic or it will not be at all.” Democratic socialism, however, aroused as opposition to early socialism. This opposition, in its practical terms, rejected the seizure of power by Lenin in October 1917 as the “act of a mad man, a coup d’ état rather than a genuine revolution, a premature act which ignored the ‘unripe’ condition of Russia” (Hoffman & Graham, 2009:228). It evolved as a result of a mass party which developed at the beginning of twentieth century. This party has

socialism as its objective, advocating citizens control of the economic system, public ownership of majority of the social property, increasing citizen participation in political decision making together with economic decision making, government regulation of the economic system, economic security, and so on.

On this ground, democratic socialism lays emphasis on democracy. Socialism, it argues, is concerned with reforms, not revolution and electoral victory, not a seizure of power. Socialism needs not to be tied to the leadership of the working class, rather socialism involves the whole nation. The attainment of socialism, which involves the whole humanity and not just the proletariats, will start with a piecemeal reform—not revolution—and in a manner that works with and respects liberal tradition (Hoffman & Graham, 2009: 229). As the French socialists, Jean Jaures put it; “the great majority of the nation can be won over to our side by propaganda and lawful action and led to socialism” (cited in Berki, 1974:91-92).

This argument comes out clearly in the work of Eduard Bernstein entitled *Evolutionary Socialism* (1961). In this work, Bernstein found that the early notion of socialism, focusing on Marx, involves a contradiction; as he put it, “it is Marx who carries the point against Marx” (Bernstein, 1961:27). Against this tradition, Bernstein observed that small medium-sized enterprises were proving themselves viable. Hence, members of the possessing classes were increasing, not diminishing (Bernstein, 1961:xxv). Also, society was not becoming more simplified, as Marx anticipated, but more graduated and differentiated (Bernstein, 1961:49). In Agriculture, the small and medium landholding was increasing, and the large and very large decreasing (Bernstein, 1961:71). From this contradiction, Bernstein argues that there is a greater need for democracy in socialism. Democracy, for him, is “an absence of class government—it avoids both the tyranny of the majority and tyranny of the minority” (Bernstein, 1961:142). Democracy is the high school of compromise and moderation which makes the idea of socialism democratic; and above all negates the ‘dictatorship of the proletariats.’ Hence, socialism seeks to make the proletariat into a citizen ‘and to thus make citizenship universal’ (Bernstein, 1961:146).

4.0. Conclusion

In this unit, we have considered the meaning, history and types of socialism. On the meaning of socialism, we have seen that the definition of socialism is very difficult to pin down. For instance, Joseph A. Schumpeter (1942) defines socialism as “that organization of society in which the means of production are controlled, and the decisions on how and what to produce and on who is to get what, are made by public authority instead of by privately-owned and privately-managed firms.” Also, C.C. Rodee et. al. (1983) sees socialism as “the subordination of the individual’s welfare to the welfare of the whole society.” The definition a scholar offers depends on the camp he belongs. Thus, there are different types of socialism such as utopia socialism, revolutionary socialism, democratic socialism, scientific socialism, etc. We also observed that socialism aroused as a reaction

against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of industrial capitalism in 19th century

5.0. Summary

- Etymologically, the word socialism is from a Latin word *sociare* (to combine or to share);
- The basic features of socialism are public ownership of property, government ownership of means of production, common good as the driving force, government regulation the market;
- Utopian socialism is fostered by Thomas Moore, amongst others, who aims to correct the ills of the society with an utopian perfect society;
- Democratic socialism sees democracy as central to socialism and advocates for citizen's control of the economic system, public ownership of majority of the social property, increasing citizen participation in political decision making together with economic decision making, government regulation of the economic system, economic security, and so on.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

- What do you understand by the term, “socialism?”
- List and explain different types of socialism
- Write a brief history of socialism

7.0. References/Further Reading

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UNIT 2: MEANING, NATURE AND PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Meaning of science
 - 3.2 Scientific method
 - 3.3 The relationship between science and socialism
 - 3.4 Principles of scientific socialism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Test
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

In the previous unit, we examined the meaning, history and types of socialism. This unit is a continuation of types of socialism with special attention to scientific socialism. Here, we shall undergird the relationship between science and socialism. By so doing, four sections capture the whole exegesis of this unit. In section 4.0, we shall lay the foundation of our discussion by defining science. Section 5.0 furthers the discussion with an overview of different scientific methods. In section 6.0, we shall show what is scientific about socialism. Finally, section, 7.0 underpins the principles of scientific socialism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students should be able to clearly state the relationship between science and socialism together with its main principles and ideas.

3.0. Main Contents

3.1 Meaning of science

A brief understanding of the nature of *Science* will help us in grasping the scope of scientific socialism. Etymologically speaking, science is from a Latin word *scientia* meaning “knowledge” (Godwill, 2014: 18) which has its root in the Latin verb *scire*, meaning to “know” (Akpan, 2012:12). Defining science in its etymological parlance are Henry George Liddell and Scott Robert (1980:4), who see science as “a body of knowledge that can be rationally explained and reliably applied.” This etymological meaning of science shows that science is both an organized body of knowledge and a process of finding out knowledge. Scientists constantly engage in inquiry and finding out. Scientists do that by asking questions about the universe. In fact, science is an observational and investigational exercises whereby man looks and searches for the ultimate truth about reality (Okere, 2005: 146). To use Francis Bacon’s phraseology,

science is “a combination of the comprehension of nature and of the conquest of nature” (cited in Kanu, 2001:372).

3.2 Scientific methods

In order to obtain the kind of impartial, certain modes of investigation are followed. These are known by the name of scientific methods. These methods are of two distinct types (Wolf, 1987:15). Firstly there are the technical methods of manipulating and measuring the phenomenon under investigation and the conditions under which they can be observed fruitfully. The technical methods help the investigator to determine the conditions and circumstances of the occurrence of the phenomena which he is investigating that he can reason about them in a definite and reliable manner instead of merely speculating about them vaguely (Wolf, 1987:15). Secondly, there are the logical methods of reasoning according to the nature of the data obtained. These logical methods are intimately connected with the technical method. Arnold Bretch (1956) explanation of the components of scientific methods, although lengthy, will be of help here:

- (a) Role of the investigator: in order to begin in a scientific work at all as distinct from other activities, the investigator must always begin in his own mind some tentative ideas by forming in his own mind some question some tentative ideas about (i) the objective of his enquiry I.e., the question for which the answer is sought, (ii) the relevance of the question of human knowledge in general, as distinct from merely private interest of the investigator, and (iii) the relevance of the scientific actions the investigator is about to take for his purpose of finding the answer (30-32).
- (b) Observation: An empirical observation may be limited to a single situation or be repeated in essentially similar situations. It may be ‘extrospective’ focusing on the outside or ‘introspective’ focusing on the inner self (32-38).
- (c) Description: is to analyse the meaning of the words actually used in a report by reference to whatever other data are available to clarify their meaning (38-42).
- (d) Measurements and quantification: (43-47)
- (e) Acceptance of facts, truth or reality: A proposition is true when it corresponds to reality. It leads to warranted assertibility or empirical validity (48-54).
- (f) Logical reasoning: It is accepted as a full proof by scientific method when, and only when is strictly analytic. It is analytic when it adds nothing to the meaning of a given term or proposition, but merely makes explicit what is implied in that meaning. When a proposition adds to the meaning of a proposition it is synthetic,; it then cannot be arrived at by deductive reasoning from the given proposition (55-68).
- (g) Excursus on acceptance of proposition: From the standpoint of a logician, it is possible to divide all synthetic propositions into two classes: accepted and non-accepted and then defines scientific method as that method by which propositions are allocated to the one or to the other class according to the presupposed rules of the procedure. It includes all tentative acceptances, or refusals to accept, that are legitimately offered by any scientist (69-72).

- (h) causality: Cause and effect is the conventional name for the interrelation between two successive events where the occurrence of the earlier is regarded as a condition for that of the later (73-93).
- (i) Testing and correcting: Careful tests and or experimentations constitute an essential element in scientific method on two grounds: they fortify the operating scientist's own acceptance of observation and conclusion; and they increase the inter-subjectivity (interpersonal) transmissibility of scientifically acquired knowledge (93-96).
- (j) Prediction: predicting events or conditions to be expected as a consequence of past, present or future events or conditions, in order either (i) to test factual or theoretical hypothesis, this being identical with logical deductive reasoning and testing, and (ii) to supply a scientific contribution to practical process of choosing between several possible alternatives of actions (96-98).

In essence, scientists often recognize these methods of scientific enquiry, namely; Observation of facts, collection of data, Experimentation and Research. With these methods, scientist put forward possible hypothesis to account for their observations. This hypothesis can be tested by experimentations. When a hypothesis has been tested and found to be repeatedly correct, within the twits of available evidence, it becomes a theory. If a theory has been extensively tested and proven to be true, it then becomes a law or a principle.

3.3 The relationship between science and socialism

Having noted the methods of science, it is important, at this point, for us to define scientific socialism in order to see what is scientific about the notion of socialism. Scientific socialism uses scientific methods to predict social, economic and political outcomes and future development of human society. Scientific socialism is both theoretical and empirical investigation of human society. By saying that it is a theoretical investigation, on one hand, we mean that socialism explains and predicts, like natural sciences, events (Popper, 1961:35). But this prediction, unlike the natural science, will itself become a factor in the decisions taken by people, and they will act either to falsify or fulfill this prediction (Webs, 1995:141). That is why scientific socialism lives in the hands of the proletariats their emancipatory fate. Although this emancipation is an inevitable fate of the proletariat, but it now depends on whether the proletariat will accept this fate or fly away from it.

By describing socialism as empirical, on the other hand, we mean that it is backed by experience, that the events it explains and predicts are observable facts, and that the observation is the basis of the acceptance or rejection of any propounded theory (Popper, 1961:35). Scientific socialism sees the world as a material system devoid of any metaphysical properties. It in turn reduces human being to purely material entity, matter. It traces the history of human society on a material ground and finds out that the history of human society exhibits a kind of *social dynamics* (which can be equated to the notion of *dynamics in physics*). With this social dynamic, socialism came to grip that there are

forces which produce social change and create human society. And there is a greater need for us to learn how the interacting forces constitute new forces; by analyzing forces into components, we are able to penetrate into the more fundamental causes of social events, which in turn determine human psychology.

3.4 Principles of scientific socialism

Scientific socialism construes the world as purely material system devoid of any metaphysical elements such as spirits, angels, gods, etc. The thinking here is that since the world is material and not immaterial, its explanation requires something material. Man also is seen purely as matter stripped off any religious or spiritual tendency. Man is reduced to a material entity in a material world system that he understands through the satisfaction of his needs. It sees man has been conditioned by his material needs which their satisfaction prompts him to produce what he eats and enter into social relations with other men. With this thinking, man and his society is reduced to an empirical phenomenon that can be observed, experimented and governed by material laws like that of natural sciences.

Scientific socialism sees the society as passing through a dialectical process. Society moves from a lower phase to a higher one. This movement passes through a natural history that is being governed by economic laws. These economic laws are universal laws that are dynamic in nature; each dialectical phase has its own laws which wither off as soon as a new phase begins.

4.0. Conclusion

Here, we have defined science as the. We have also seen observation of facts, collection of data, Experimentation and Research, as different scientific methods. In addition, in stating what is scientific about socialism, we have shown that socialism is both a theoretical and empirical enterprise. As a theoretical investigation, it explains and predicts, like natural sciences, events and as an empirical enterprise, its observation and prediction are backed up by experience. The principles of materialism, which construes the world as a material system and goes ahead to explain such world on as a pure matter stripped off of religious, supernatural and metaphysical tendencies, and the principle of dialectic, which sees societal movement as passing through a natural history that involves contradictions and synthesis, are the two principles of scientific socialism considered in this unit.

5.0. Summary

- Etymologically, science is from a Latin word *scientia* (knowledge);
- Scientists often recognize these methods of scientific enquiry, namely; Observation of facts, collection of data, Experimentation and Research;
- Scientific socialism is both theoretical and empirical investigation of human society;

- As a theoretical investigation, it explains and predicts, like natural sciences, events and as an empirical enterprise, its observation and prediction are backed up by experience;
- Scientific socialism is characterised by the principle of materialism and dialectic.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

What is scientific socialism?

7.0. References/Further Reading

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UNIT 3: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO KARL MARX'S SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM 1→HEGEL IDEALISM

Content

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 A little biography of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel
 - 3.2 Hegel's idealism
 - 3.3 Hegel's dialectical method
 - 3.4 Hegel's conception of history
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

This unit examines the historical antecedents to Karl Marx's scientific socialism with special attention on the ideas of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. We will first present a brief biography of Hegel. Then we shall consider Hegel's idealism and dialectical method. Finally, we shall discuss Hegel's conception of history.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students ought to have familiarized themselves with Hegel's idealistic conception of history.

3.0. Main contents

3.1. A little biography of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel



Photo courtesy: Amazon.com

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in 1770 at Stuttgart and died in 1831 in Berlin (Prinkard, 2002:217). He attended Protestant Seminary at Tübingen in 1788, where he met and became friends with Friedrich Hölderlin and later Friedrich Schelling. After he completed his studies in 1793, he worked as a private tutor before moving to Jena to continue philosophy. At Jena, he worked as unsalaried tutor to students who pay to attend his lectures. During this period, he published his first book, *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy* (1801). He also worked as a co-editor to Schelling, who founded the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*. But when Schelling left Jena in 1807, the journal went out of existence leaving Hegel to source for other means of earning. He became a newspaper editor at Bamberg which barely lasted for a year. In 1808, he became a high school Gymnasium teacher in Nuremberg. His career took a better turn when he was offered an academic position in Heidelberg in 1816; and finally, in 1818, he became a professor at the Berlin University.

3.2 Hegel's idealism

Idealism is a metaphysical theory that is often contrasted with materialism. Idealism holds that “the most important element in nature of reality is mind or spirit” (Onigbinde, 1999:36). It sees reality as either existing in the mind or reflections of an absolute spirit. Idealism has a long history in philosophy. From Georg Berkeley's subjective idealism as an immaterial reductionism of reality to mental states to Emmanuel Kant's transcendental idealism that draws a line between “things in themselves” (nominal reality), which are unknowable, and material world (phenomenal reality), which are ideas “in the mind;” Friedrich Schelling's objective idealism that construes materiality of the world in terms of spirits, Hegel's absolute idealism that sees reality as fundamentally spiritual which unravels the activity of the Absolute Spirit as it rises to self-consciousness and self-actualization.

Hegel's absolute idealism is objective in nature in the sense that it attempts to break the bipolar wall between the knowing subject and its object by construing both as two sides of the same coin. Both the knowing subject and its object, for Hegel, belong to a single reality. Absolute Spirit is a “self-creating” entity that creates the object of its knowledge, which is the world, in its process of attaining self-knowledge. As an active entity, Absolute Spirit reveals itself in its own actions as it strives for self-consciousness and self-discovery in the world.

3.3 Hegel's dialectical method

This Absolute Spirit self-discovery involves, according to Hegel, a dialectical process. This dialectical process comprises the concept of being (thesis), which passes into its nothingness (antithesis), and the synthesis of both being and nothingness in the becoming (synthesis), which later collapses in its own opposite of nothingness and both synthesizes into a higher level of becoming; and the process continues until it gets to a non-self contradictory concept which Hegel called Absolute Idea. In realizing this Absolute Idea, *Geist* (Spirit), in the process of self-consciousness, creates a world which at first it is not fully conscious of and projects such a world as something external to itself. Later, Spirit

becomes conscious of the fact that the world is its own projection when plurality of human minds becomes conscious of it. Hegel captures this thus; the “rational is real and the real is rational.”

3.4 Hegel’s conception of history

For Hegel, the process of history is dialectical. This dialectical process recounts the Spirit active pass to self-actualization. In giving a full description of this process, Hegel differentiates three different types of history, namely; original history, reflective history and philosophical history. Original history involves events which the historian has immediate acquaintance with just like the works of Thucydides and Herodotus, to use Hegel’s classical examples; reflective history deals past events which a historian reflects on and brings to bear in the present, which is further divided into universal, pragmatic, critical and specialized history; philosophical history approaches history from a speculative, objective and rational grounds. Hegel, however, favors philosophical history higher and above others and argues that philosophy sees history as a rational process through which Spirits come to self-actualization through the conscious of plurality of finite minds. What philosophy brings to history, according to Hegel, is Reason and it, which is the “sovereign of the world” (Hegel, 2001: 22), is what rules history. He sees Reason as the “*True, the Eternal, the absolutely powerful* essence; that it reveals itself in the World, and that in that world nothing else is revealed but this and its honor” (Hegel, 2001: 22).

In other words, Reason is self-sufficient and self-existing, it does not depend on anything outside itself for existence and it does not come in or go out of existence; it always exists! It sets its own purpose that it must attain and realize. It is Reason that governs the world and directs history (Hegel, 1953). This Reason manifests itself in relation to the Spirit, which rules and directs its course in history. As Hegel avers;

World history goes on within the realm of Spirit. The term ‘world’ includes both physical and psychical nature. Physical nature does play a part in world history. . . . But Spirit, and the course of its development, is the substance of history. We must not contemplate nature as a rational system in itself, in its own particular domain, but only in its relation to spirit (Hegel, 2001: 30).

Spirit is then the “unmoved mover” that sets history into motion in its quest to actualize its purpose. Spirit is in the process of self-consciousness and self-actualization. As such, Spirit projects a world in which it sets to realize and actualize its purpose. The world becomes its contradiction and opposite as it is not aware that the world is a part of itself; it merely considers the world as an external entity standing bipolar to itself. The progress of the Spirit towards the actualization of its purpose in this world involves different phases which Hegel categorizes as Oriental, Greek, Roman and German. He regards the Oriental world as the least phase of the historical progress because it is far from the Spirit actualization of its purpose. He further states that history proper starts from the Greek and

Roman world, where freedom was only reserved for the masters. However, Spirit fully actualizes its purpose in the German world, where all men are absolutely free. Hegel idolizes the German world and attributes them with a special quality, *Gemuth* (heart).

This ultimate purpose which the Spirit sets to achieve, according to Hegel, is absolute freedom. It achieves this absolute freedom through the Will. The Will consists of the activities of the plurality of minds. He differentiates between an arbitrary will ruled by impulses and appetites and a rational will ruled by morality. Hegel lays primacy on the later over the former because the rational will deals with the moral decision of man which does not contain the kind of inherent contradiction embedded in the arbitrary will that sacrifices the satisfaction of impulse for the satisfaction of appetite and vice-versa. It is only a rational will that can be said to be a free will since it aims to live up to some moral standard which it has freely chosen through its reason. Hegel also speaks of Universal Will which negates man's rational will even though it manifests itself in that Will. This contradiction is synthesized when man's rational will internalizes the Universal Will as a moral will. He cites the example of World Historical Individuals like Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexander the Great, Augustus Caesar, amongst others (Hegel, 1984) which have internalized the general will and have contributed to the progress of the spirit. These individuals had their own passions and had set their own ends but only to be used by Spirit, without their knowledge, to fulfill its own purpose. This is what Hegel refers to as the "cunning of reason," which uses the passions of these men to actualize its purpose while they "pay the penalty and suffer the loss" (Hegel, 1953).

Finally, Hegel believes that Spirit attains ultimate freedom in a community of minds; or as John Plamenatz (1963:172-173) comments; "in the Hegelian idiom, Spirit is satisfied when it is manifest in a community of selves who conscientiously desire what the community requires of them... Spirit is satisfied when it knows the process which it is, which it can do only in the knowledge of finite minds." What constitutes this community of minds is the State in which Spirit fully attains freedom. For Hegel, the State embodies rational freedom; it realizes and recognizes itself in an objective form. The state possesses a common morality in which each member can conscientiously accept and by so doing actualizes himself.

3.5 A little note on Hegel's conception of Religion

Hegel believes that Spirit is also revealed in religion. He sees religion as a means with which Spirit manifests itself, but such a manifestation is *vorstellung* (figuratively). Hegel regards religion as a communion of souls through which Spirit anticipates Self-knowledge. For Hegel, there are three types of religion associated with different kinds of community. The first one is what Hegel called natural religion, which is evident in Oriental World where men are still "submerged" in nature. In this community, men worship the sun, moon, stars, tree, animals, rocks, etc. as gods. They attribute qualities, which unknown to them, are spiritual to such entities and see themselves as one with these entities. The second is aesthetic religion which is practiced in ancient Greece where men have mastery over nature and uses it for their own ends. In this community, religion

deals with a mythical belief in immortal heroes and mortal gods. Here, Hegel also speaks of art as a self-expression that deals with a sensuous and symbolic representation of the Spirit. Finally, revealed religion is a doctrinal religion as revealed in the Judeo-Christian tradition where god is construed as a being distinct from his creatures and reconciles back with his creatures through his son, Jesus Christ. Hegel claims that the trinity (God the father, son and Holy Ghost) is the true manifestation of the essences of the Spirit in man. In commenting on this, Plamenatz writes; “God the Father represents the spirit which is in man, though man does not know it, the Spirit to which man aspires and which he feels is out of reach; God the Son represents man’s sense that what he aspires to be is nevertheless within his reach and must be realized in him; God the Holy Ghost represents man’s sense that spirit is revealed in a plurality of finite selves” (Plamenatz, 1963:177). For Hegel, it is in Christianity that Spirit fully reveals itself and attains self-knowledge.

4.0. Conclusion

In this unit, we have articulated Hegel’s idealistic conception of history. We have shown that Hegel sees world history as the self-progress of the Spirit from a lower phase to a higher phase following a dialectical process. This Spirit actualizes its ultimate purpose of absolute freedom with self-consciousness of individuals in a community of minds.

5.0 Summary

In a nutshell, Hegel’s idealistic conception of history entails on the following:

- Idealism is a school of thought that gives primacy to mind or spirit over matter;
- Hegel is an idealist because he construes reality as manifestation of Spirit;
- His idealistic conception of history sees history as a dialectical progression of Spirit from thesis to antithesis and synthesis, the movement continues until it gets to the Absolute idea, which is self-sufficient;
- The ultimate aim of Spirit is freedom which it seeks through self-knowledge and self-actualization;
- Spirit projects the world as an external entity in an attempt to have a self-knowledge of itself;
- Spirit seeks to realize itself through man’s actions as expressed in the community of minds;
- Spirit uses world historical individuals to actualize its purpose without the knowledge of these individuals who had failed to realize their passions and suffer the consequences-what Hegel referred to as the cunning of Spirit;
- Spirit finally finds satisfaction in the state which embodies the community of finite minds realizing themselves in a common morality.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Summarize Hegel's idealistic conception of history.

7.0. References/Further Reading

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UNIT 4: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO KARL MARX'S SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM 2→LUDWIG FEUERBACH

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 An brief introduction the life and works of Ludwig Feuerbach
 - 3.2 An overview of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

In this unit, we shall present Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's conception of religion as self-expression of Absolute Spirit. Two sections define this project: section 4.0 is a brief introduction to the life and works of Feuerbach and section 5.0 is an overview of his critique of religion as marshaled out in his *Essence of Christianity* (1841; this study uses the 1855 publication).

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to learn:

- The life and works of Ludwig Feuerbach;
- The anthropological analysis of religion,
- Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's conception of religion.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 An overview of the life and works of Ludwig Feuerbach

Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach was born in 1804 to a protestant and religiously devout jurist, Paul Johann Anselm Ritter von Feuerbach, at Landshut in Germany and died in 1872 at Nuremberg, Germany. In 1823, Feuerbach got admitted at the University of Heidelberg to study theology, where he was greatly influenced by Karl Daub, a speculative theologian and right wing Hegelian.



Photo courtesy: Ludwig Feuerbach/Wikipedia

This influence aroused his desire to study philosophy and in 1825, Feuerbach transferred to University of Berlin to be tutored by Friedrich Hegel, who was a professor of philosophy at the institute. At Berlin, he associated himself with the Young Hegelians (also called the Left wing Hegelians), who see Hegel's dialectic as a viable tool for re-interpreting the society. In 1828, Feuerbach went to Erlangen to study natural science. After his graduation, Feuerbach remained as an independent researcher. He married Bertha Low and had no child of which are recorded of.

3.2 Feuerbach on the Essence of Christianity

In 1841, Feuerbach published his book titled; *Essence of Christianity*. Contrary to its title, this work carries concrete criticisms of the Christian doctrines. In marshaling out these criticisms, Feuerbach aims to show that, firstly, "the essence of theology is anthropology..." and secondly, that "the distinction which is made between the theological and anthropological predicates resolves itself into an absurdity" (Feuerbach, 1855:7, 8). Feuerbach then proceeds to offer an anthropological conception of religion as against Hegel's Absolute religion. Hegel had argued that religion is a means by which Absolute Spirit seeks self-knowledge of itself. For Hegel, Absolute Spirit objectifies itself and seeks freedom through human consciousness.

Feuerbach sees human consciousness, which includes thinking, willing and feeling, as what distinguishes man from animal and also makes man a viable tool for religion. He opines that human consciousness is directed towards an object, for "man is nothing without an object" (Feuerbach, 1855:23). This object is nothing but man's projected consciousness; for in being conscious of the object, man becomes conscious of himself. Man also becomes conscious of his finiteness and limitedness through his perception of the infinitude of this object. For instance, through the feeling of the infinity, man feels the divine. And since man feels the infinite, man is divine. The infinite, according to Feuerbach, is nothing more than human nature. As he succinctly explains:

The object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively such as man's thought and dispositions and such as his God. Consciousness of God is self-consciousness, knowledge of God is self-knowledge. By his God then knowest man, and by a man his God; the two are identical (Feuerbach, 1855:32-33).

God, in Feuerbach's view, is an imaginary entity that man projects as an object of worship and glorification. Man views this object, which actually is his nature, as something outside and external to himself. He has not had the consciousness that God is "human nature purified, freed from the limit of the individual man..." (Feuerbach, 1855:35). Man worships, contemplates and reverences the God he has created in his own image. He alienates his best qualities and attributes them to God; God then becomes all-knowing, wholly good, all-powerful, all-merciful, all-loving, etc. He goes ahead to construe his God as true and real. For Feuerbach, however, it is these human qualities that really make God real of which without them God is defective.

As long as man keeps projecting his "specie essence" into an objectified God, Feuerbach says that he remains unfree. He maintains that man's freedom lies in reclaiming his specie essence from his imaginary God. Such reclaiming involves man being conscious of the fact that God is his extended self. In fact, that the "beginning, middle and end of religion is man" (Feuerbach, 1855:239).

4.0. Conclusion

Feuerbach approaches religion from a materialist and anthropologist standpoint contra to Hegel's idealistic standpoint. He re-interpreted Hegel's idea that Spirit strives to realise itself in religion to that of man striving to reclaim himself.

5.0 Summary

- Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach was born in 1804 at Landshut in Germany and died in 1872 at Nuremberg, Germany;
- God is an imaginary entity that man projects as an object of worship and glorification;
- Man alienates his best qualities and attributes them to God; God then becomes all-knowing, wholly good, all-powerful, all-merciful, all-loving, etc;
- Man's freedom lies in reclaiming his specie essence from his imaginary God;
- The beginning, middle and end of religion is man.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

What are the differences and similarities in both Hegel's and Feuerbach's concept of religion.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Feuerbach, L.A. (1855). *Essence of Christianity*. Trans. M. Evans. New York: Calvin Blanchard.

UNIT 5: HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS TO KARL MARX'S SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM 3→ THE CAPITALIST WORLD SYSTEM

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 The capitalist world system
 - 3.2 History of capitalism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Exercise
- 6.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

The aim of this unit is to discuss the meaning, scope and history of capitalism within the capitalist world system. In section 4.0, we shall discuss the meaning and scope of capitalism; and in section 5.0, we shall articulate the history of capitalism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

Here, the students will learn the meaning, scope and history of capitalism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The capitalist world system



Photo courtesy: marketbusinessnews.com

Etymologically, capitalism is derived from an English word called ‘capital’ which in turn is from a Latin word, *capital* meaning “head.” Capitalism, as an economic theory, is based on private ownership of the means of production and profit accumulation. Profit and labor are fused together as the driving force of capitalist economy. The essence of labor is to maximize profit. And with labor, individuals become increasingly specialized

in their fields for maximum productivity and greater output. The specialization of labor birthed professionalism of labor where individuals become professionals in their field of work such as doctor, lawyer, carpenter, bricklayer, engineer, lecturer, etc.

Within the capitalist economy, individuals are free agents. Not only are they free agents, they are embodiment of rights. These rights are assumed to be a sort of natural right that transcends societal formation which all men are born with. One of the most important natural rights of individuals is the right to own property. Private property, under capitalism, engenders in its owner the moral discipline and natural tolerance by which a just society is sustained. A well ordered society depends on the virtue associated with acquisition of private property (Eccleshall, 1994:39). For example, a person that builds a house through hard work has every right to the house. For it belongs to his sweat. Such a right cannot be taken away from him, unless he willingly transfers it to another person or in some cases becomes an outlaw. As long as an individual remains a good citizen of the state, he is entitled to this right which is inseparable from him without his consent.

Complementing the personal right to property is equal opportunity to the means of acquisition such private property. With equal opportunity, all individuals demonstrate their particular capabilities in appropriating nature for their own use. Equal opportunity should not be confused with redistribution of wealth. By equal opportunity, capitalists mean that “everyone should enjoy as much as freedom as possible” (Eccleshall, 1994:37). In the market sphere, for instance, individuals are left to determine what to produce and how to distribute it. Adam Smith (1723–1790) believes that when individuals are allowed to direct their course in the market sphere, there will be maximization of profit and rapid growth of the market economy. Individuals’ decisions on production and distribution are regulated by demand and supply. Economists explain that the law of demand states that the lower the price, the higher the quantity of commodity demanded and the law of supply states that the higher the price the lower the quantity supplied. J.R. Hick (1995) observes that a “fall in the price of a commodity does actually affect demand for the commodity in two different ways. On the one hand, it makes the consumer better off, it raises his ‘real income’, and an effect along this channel is similar to that of an increase income. On the other hand, it changes relative prices; and therefore, apart from the change in real income, there will be a tendency to substitute the commodity whose price has fallen for other commodities” (Hick, 1995:23-24).

The ideal form of state, although capitalists (laissez-faire/free market capitalism, welfare capitalism and state capitalism) differ on this, is that which allows for the greatest possibility of accumulation of property without interference with the market system; for such interference would destroy individualism and liberty. The role of the state is to “secure investments, provide social and physical infrastructures, control and regulate conflicts between capitalists and other classes, and protect the interests of capitalists and other classes against competition from abroad” (Newton & van Deth, 2005:15).

3.2 History of capitalism

Modern capitalism has a long history which can be traced back to the feudal agricultural system (or the manorial system) in 8th-16th century Europe. This system involves the ownership of land or other valuable properties (known as fiefs) by feudal Lords who rent those valuable assets out to local peasants (known as vassals) on a fee (known as fealty). The vassals cultivate and till the land for agricultural purposes and pays fealty to the feudal Lords. While the vassals have right of use to the assets, the feudal lords have right to the assets. The kind of capitalism that arises from this is called “agrarian capitalism” (see Brenner, 1982).

When feudal agricultural system faded out because of Europe’s voyage to the New World and it’s increasingly interest in the New Discovery, another form of capitalism emerged known as mercantilism within the 16th-18th centuries. Mercantilism is an economic policy based on bullionism. Bullionism is the idea that wealth depends on the amount of precious metal such as gold and silver owned by a state. Mercantilism holds that the amount of precious metal owned by a state is what solidifies its economy and arguments its state power at the expense of other states. It strongly upholds protectionism which prohibits all exports of gold and silver and maintains that they should be kept as national reserves. It discourages import of foreign goods through domestic investment in agriculture, local manufacturing and circulation of domestic money. It believes in national reserve through a balance of trade that involves finished goods (see McCusker, 2001).

With the industrial revolution in Europe, mercantilism faded out and industrial capitalism sufficed. Industrial capitalism concentrated more on profit and division of labor. It also mechanized the manufacturing process for easy and faster production. With the advent of globalization in the 19th century, capitalism took a new turn in the modern era till date (see James & Grills, 2007). The world has become so interwoven that barriers are broken through the internet. Within a tickle of an eye, someone in Nigeria can order for a billion dollar goods from America through the internet and receives it within a short time. This is the reality of modern capitalism.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, we have looked at the meaning, scope and history of capitalism. We have seen that central to the capitalist world system are individual autonomy, equal opportunity, division of labor, private ownership of property, free market economy, no state regulation/diminished state regulation of free market economy and profit determines the effectiveness and efficiency of the free market economy.

5.0 Summary

In brief, the capitalist economy is characterized by the following:

- Etymologically, capitalism is derived an English word called ‘capital’ which in turn is from a Latin word, *capital* meaning “head;”
- Capitalism, as an economic theory, is based on private owners of the means of production and profit accumulation;

- Capitalism believes in individual autonomy, private ownership of property; free market economy; no/diminished state regulation of free market economy; and profit determines the effectiveness and efficiency of the free market;
- Different types of capitalism are laissez-faire/free market capitalism, welfare capitalism and state capitalism;
- History of modern capitalism dates back to the feudal agricultural system (or the manorial system) in 8th-16th century Europe, mercantilism. Industrial capitalism and globalization.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

List and explain the advantages and disadvantages of the capitalist economy.

7.0. References/Further Reading

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MODULE 2

KARL MARX'S SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

UNIT 1: A brief introduction to Marx's Scientific Socialism

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 A brief biography of Karl Marx
 - 3.2 Brief introduction to Marx's scientific socialism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

The central question that undergirds this unit is; “what is scientific about Karl Marx’s socialism?” In the rest of this study, a plausible answer will be given to this question. Accordingly, two sections define the aim of this study, namely; section 4.0 which presents a biography of Marx and section 5.0 which underpins the “science” in Marx’s scientific socialism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students must have familiarise themselves with the scientific nation of Marx’s scientific socialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 A brief biography of Karl Marx

Karl Marx was born into a Middle-class family in Trier in Germany in 1818. Marx had his high school education at Trier. His ancestors had been Jews but his parents became Christian when he was a child. He married a gentle aristocrat, to whom he remained devoted throughout his life. After his graduation, he obtained an admission to study law in the University of Bonn, in 1835. One year after his admission in the university, Marx abandoned the study of to study philosophy at the University of Berlin. At the University of Berlin, he became under the influence of the radical Hegelian movement. He was impressed by Hegel’s dialectical view of history (Stumpf, 1983: 402).

Marx left Berlin to Paris in 1843 where he made contact with German workers and French socialists and became a communist. Here, Marx confronted the ideas of such men as fourier, Proudhon, Saint Simon and Bakunin; and addressed practical and social

actions with his journalism. He also met Friedrich Engels, the son of a German textile manufacturer, with whom he had a long lasting relationship.

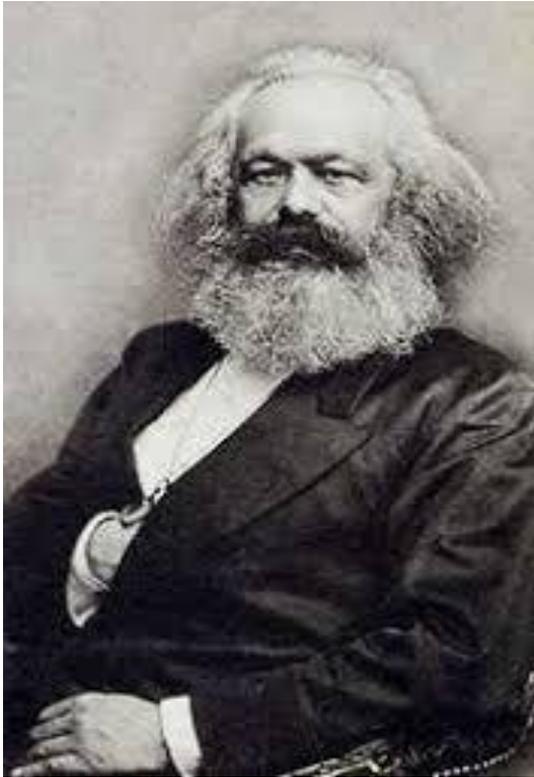


Photo courtesy: Karl Marx/Britannica

Expelled from Paris at the end of 1844, he stayed in Brussels with his family. While in Brussel, he helped German Workers to form a union in 1847 which Engels became its first secretary. He took part in both the French and German revolutions of 1848, but the reaction compelled him to seek refuge in England in 1849. In the same year, Marx went to London where he lived in abject poverty until his death in March 1883 (Urmson & Ree, 1989:80). Among Marx published works are *Capital* (1867), *Communist Manifesto* (1848), *The Civil War in France* (1871), *The Poverty of Philosophy* (1847), and *Contribution to Critique of political Economy* (1859).

3.2 Brief introduction to Marx's scientific socialism

To understand the scientific socialism of Karl Marx, it is pertinent to pose this question: What is scientific about Marx socialism? An understanding of this question will help to delineate Marx's socialism in order to broaden our intellectual horizon on this issue. A starting point with this question is to bring to our table Charles Darwin theory of Evolution. In his magus opus, *Origin of Species*, Darwin argued that man evolved from some lowly pre-existing form of animals, which are ape-like (Kieth, 1929:163). This chain of evolution has two major principles: natural selection or the survival of the fittest and sexual selection (Crawell, 1972:96).

With the feature of natural selection, Darwin observed that parents differ in a greater degree from their offspring or species. He also observed that these offspring's struggle to survive. For example, not all eggs of a hen that grows into a hen or cock. With this, Darwin established that the "fittest survive, that by accumulation, through the ages and ages, of minute modifications, new organs appeared and new kinds came into being. Those that were not advantage were rigidly rejected, deemed unfit to survive; only those survived that were the strongest and fittest; the rest perished (Crawell, 1972: 96)." This aspect of struggle is also seen in the natural selection where men struggle to win the hearts of women. For this reason, men evolved a mind superior to that of women.

What becomes evident from Darwin theory is the mutual inclusiveness of struggle and survival. Struggle and survival *per se* is probably an ineradicable feature of human life. The mere existence of desire and the non-conformity of desires would seem to indicate the persistence of struggle in a situation where resources and potential outcome are in limited supply (Keith, 1995:16).

From this Darwin scientific analysis of human life evolution, Marx took important points: struggle and survival. With these, Marx notes that the history of human society is that of struggle and survival (Marx, 1984:84). Marx, trading the part of Darwin, understands that; "those group with of a more pacific nature would lose out to the more aggressive social units with the result that a selective pressure existed for the breeding of aggression" (Webs, 1995:12). That is to say, for Marx, more strong and aggressive society survives and the weak society dies off. Hence, every society is an embodiment of *inherent conflict*. Using this inherent conflict, Marx posits that there is the potentiality of conflict in every society which can only be obstructed but as society evolves its actualization will become inevitable.

Again, the systematic development of species in Darwin was inculcated by Marx scientific socialism. Darwin analyzed the development of man from minute microscopic organism, like amoeba, to higher organism, like ape and each stage involved conflict. Similarly, Marx employed these scientific methods of observation and systematic analysis of specimen to arrive at his conclusion. Marx systematically studied man and his environment from its minute historical origin.

4.0 Conclusion

Here, we have considered what is scientific about Marx's scientific socialism. We have seen that Marx's scientific socialism borrows a lot from Charles Darwin's theory of evolution which starts the analysis of man from minute organisms and ends with man as a social organism that struggles for survival. Following this lead, Marx systematically studied man and his environment as passing through a historical process that involves struggles and conflicts.

5.0 Summary

- From Darwin scientific analysis of human life evolution, Marx took important points: struggle and survival;

- Marx notes that the history of human society is that of struggle and survival.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss Marx's scientific socialism.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Crawell, W. A. (1972). *Did Man Just Happen? A Pointed Answer for Evolutionists*.

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Stumpf, E. (1983). *Philosophy History & Problems*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Urmson, J. O. & Ree, J. (eds.) (1996). *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*. New York: Routledge.

Webs, K. (1995). *An Introduction to problems in the Philosophy of Social sciences*.

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UNIT 2: MARX ON HUMAN NATURE

- 1.0. introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Marx on human nature
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

The aim of this unit is to discuss Marx's idea of human nature as a further development of his scientific socialism. We have seen in the previous unit that Marx's scientific socialism is the systematic study of man and his environment. In section 4.0, we shall see how Marx construes man as pure matter and reduced him to a social organism in quest of survival.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

Here, students shall learn Marx's conception of human nature.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Marx on human nature

Marx defines human nature from both biological and historical perspectives. From the biological standpoint, he differentiates man from animals on the basis of consciousness, rationality and reflective ability. As a consequence, man becomes the only entity which can create and anticipate his future. Man is a 'specie-being', who makes himself his object of self realization. Marx also adds that man consciously and feely produce his means of subsistence. He disagrees with Adam Smith that holds that man prefers rest to work. For Marx, work is one of the environmental conditions of man. Productive life, he says, is the life of man in his social environment which he cannot be abstracted or isolated from. Man nature, as Marx underpins it, is the totality of his needs and drives. Man is driven by what to eat and in eating, man must work: "They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence, men are indirectly producing their material life" (Marx, 1984:18).

On the historical standpoint, Marx also disagrees with Jeremy Bentham's idea of 'normal man' deduced form the 'principle of utility.' Marx argues that "he that would criticize all human acts, movements, relations, etc., by the principle of utility, must first deal with human nature as modified in each historical epoch" (Marx, 1959: 571). In this vein, Marx maintains that man is a historical being and man nature cannot be abstracted from this

truth. He also considers Feuerbach as making a similar mistake when he abstracts man from his historical process and defines his religious sentiment by itself. Man, for Marx, must be situated within a historical force that embodies man's social life, relation and activities.

4.0. Conclusion

Marx conceives man as a social organism driven by his needs and desires. These needs and desires are what shape man's relationship with his fellow men as he enters into social relations. As man struggles to satisfy his needs, he enters into production and social activities. In addition to this, we have seen that Marx sees man as a historical being passing from one historical epoch to another which in turn defines his nature.

5.0. Summary

- Marx offers two perspectives of human nature, namely, biological and historical;
- The biological nature differentiates man from brute on basis of consciousness, rationality and reflective ability;
- The historical perspective sees man as a historical being.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

In a nutshell, engage Marx's idea of human nature.

7.0. References/Further Reading

Marx, K. (1984). "The German Ideology." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin on Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

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UNIT 3: THESES ON FEUERBACH

- 1.0. introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 These on Feuerbach
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

The primary aim of this unit is to articulate Marx's critique of Feuerbach's anthropological conception of religion. Such a critique serves the goal of drawing the thin line between Marx's idea and that of Feuerbach.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students should be able to draw the thin line on the influence of Feuerbach on Marx's idea.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 These on Feuerbach

In *Thesis on Feuerbach*, Marx critically engages Feuerbach's anthropological conception of religion. In retrospect, in *Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach sees religion as an instrument of alienation with which man uses to project his specie-essence into an object of worship and adoration. Man projects all the best qualities he aspires to attain but cannot yet attain to this object. Thus, God becomes all-power, all-merciful, all-loving, all-good, etc. Man ultimately creates God in his own image out of his immaturity and ignorance. Feuerbach believes that as man's consciousness is awakened by enlightenment and education, man will reclaim his specie-essence and gives up his fantasized God. Man will take full control of his humanity. Consequently, God will become man and religion will be converted to anthropology.

Marx was greatly excited by this view. He says; "Feuerbach...was the first to complete the criticism of religion by sketching in a grand and masterly manner the basic features of the criticism of Hegel's speculation and hence of all metaphysics" (Marx, 1975, 139). Marx couldn't agree less with Feuerbach that religion is self-alienation and estrangement of man's specie-being. This psycho-religious tendency of man makes in to live a world of fantasy where romances and adores his own being as an object of worship.

However, Marx contends that there is more to religious belief than merely its psychological essence. In concentrating his full energy on the psychological aspect of religion, according to Marx, Feuerbach committed the grave mistake of "abstracting" and "isolating" man from his social relations and activities. As Marx argues; "the chief defect

of all hitherto existing materialism-that of Feuerbach included-is that the thing, reality, sensuous, is conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation, but not as human sensuous activity, practice..." (Marx, 1984:11). He insists that religion need to be further considered within human social relations and activities. For Marx, man is a social organism that belongs to a human society where he enters into relations with other men as he struggles for survival. There is a need, as Marx maintains, to approach religion from this standpoint of "socialized humanity" in a human society. On this ground, Marx concludes that; "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it" (Marx, 1984:13).

4.0. Conclusion

In reconsidering Feuerbach's anthropological religion, Marx adds the social dimension. He extends religious belief from the psychological essence to social essence, where man is seen as a social man in a human society.

5.0. Summary

- Marx agrees with Feuerbach that religion is self-alienation and estrangement of man's specie-being;
- While acknowledging the psychological essence of religion as postulated by Feuerbach, Marx argues that committed the grave mistake of "abstracting" and "isolating" man from his social relations and activities;
- Man's social activities and relations are necessary, according to Marx, in understanding religion.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Attempt a defense of Feuerbach's anthropological conception of religion against Marx's objections.

7.0. References/Further Reading

Marx, K. (1975). "The Holy Family." In K. Marx & F. Engels (eds.), *Collected Works*. Vol. III. Lawrence & Wishhart.

Marx, K. (1984). "Thesis on Feuerbach." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin on Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

UNIT 4: MARX ON RELIGION

- 1.0. introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Marx on religion
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

In the previous unit, we considered Marx's critique of Feuerbach's anthropological approach to religion. In this unit, we shall consider Marx's idea on religion as a sociological approach to religion.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to understand Marx's theory of religion at the end of this unit.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Marx on religion

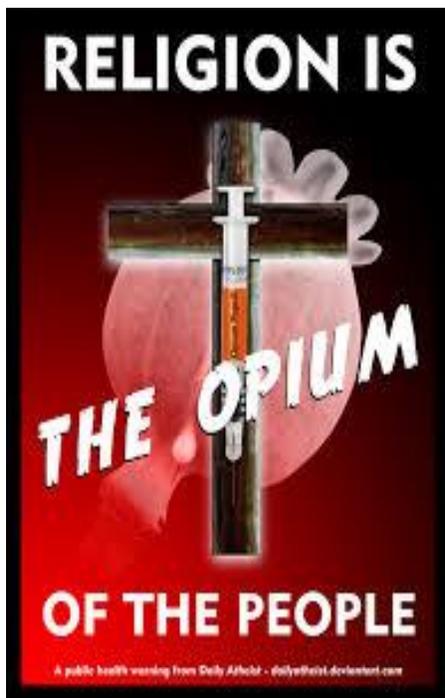


Photo courtesy: deviantart.com

Marx sees religion as a social construction aimed at the alienation of man: “man is the world of man, the state and the society. This state, this society produces religion, an inverted world... its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence because the human essence has no true reality” (Marx & Engels, 1975:38). Religion, for Marx, is the fantastic realization of the human essence in an alienated society. The alienation and dehumanization of man encountered in the socio-economic order of the capitalist society is what makes man to fantasize and realize his essence in religion. In religion, man invents a God in whom he projects all his essence as an object of worship and reverence. Religion acts as a consoler to the proletariat whose material misery within the capitalist economy has left in a perpetual suffering. Religion becomes, to the proletariat an object of justice in the afterlife; for ‘it is easier for a camel to pass through an eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.’ In a way, religion ‘tells the story of man’s injustice to man, but tells it in such a way that it legitimates the present order’ of the capitalist society.

That is why Marx construes religion as a tool of oppression in the hands of the capitalist or bourgeoisie within the capitalist system. For Marx, the bourgeoisie uses religion as a “means of blinding and curbing the popular masses” (Marx & Engels, 1975:39) who out of ignorance subjects themselves to the capitalist whims and caprice. The capitalists invoke God to maintain and sustain their subjection of the poor masses for their selfish gains. God has ordained, from the capitalists perspective, from the beginning that society should be stratified between the rich and the poor as shown in this Victorian Hymn, ‘All Things Bright and Beautiful:’

The rich man in his castle,

The poor man in his gate,

God made them high and lowly,

And ordered their estate (Haralambos & Heald, 1985:461).

With this kind of reasoning, religion keeps the proletariat perpetually in his illusion religious state and justifies the capitalist existing social structure. Through this justification, religion discourages any attempt to alter the capitalist social order; it protects the capitalist system from ideas and activities that will overhaul the system. Also, religion distorts reality by creating a false consciousness in the minds of the poor masses which blinds them off from the real source of their oppression and offers them unrealistic life. In this light, Marx concludes that “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is, the spirit of spiritless condition. It is the opium of the people” (Marx & Engels, 1975:39). As such religion is a temporal relief from suffering which “merely stupefies its adherents rather than bringing them true happiness and fulfillment” (Haralambos & Heald, 1985:460).

4.0. Conclusion

In conclusion, M. Haralambos and R.M. Heald (1985:461) summarizes Marx’s theory of religion thus: firstly, religion promises a paradise of eternal bliss in life after death; secondly, religion makes a virtue of the suffering produced by oppression; thirdly,

religion can offer the hope of supernatural intervention to solve problems on earth; finally, religion justifies the social order and a person's position within it.

5.0. Summary

Marx sees religion as:

- Social alienation
- Tool of oppression
- Opium of the people

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Attempt a defense of religious beliefs against Marx's dictum of "religion as the opium of the people."

7.0. References/Further Reading

Haralambos, M. & Heald, R.M. (1985). *Sociology Themes and Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. London: Unwin Hyman Limited.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1975). *On Religion*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

UNIT 5: DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 The dialectical method
 - 3.2 Understanding dialectical materialism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

This unit focuses on Marx's dialectical materialism. It will discuss Marx's dialectical method and afterwards presents his dialectical materialism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

In this unit, the students will understand Marx's dialectical method and his dialectical materialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The dialectical method

Marx used the notion of *Dialectics* to bring to limelight the epochal movements of society. That is why Friedrich Engels (1978) defined dialectics as “nothing more than the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought” (Engels, 1978:210). This means that dialectics is the universal law of nature that guides the relations men in the society. It is important to note that the term dialectics has a long history in philosophy. Etymologically speaking, dialectics is from a Greek verb that means to “converse.” This was first applied by Socrates in Ancient Greek as a method of philosophizing. Socrates used dialectical method to refute his opponents' arguments by getting them to accept as an ultimate consequence of it a statement contradicting it and leading them to a generalization by getting them to accept its truth in a series of instances (Urmson & Ree, 1989:80). However, dialectics was given a new face in philosophy with the work of Hegel, who argued that history consists of a necessary movements of ideas from thesis to antithesis to synthesis (Ucheaga,1997:109).

It was this Hegelian dialectics that had a profound effect on Marx. Friedrich Engels, summarises these three laws of dialectic or laws of *thought* as follows:

1. The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and *vice versa*;
2. The law of the interpenetration of opposites;

3. The law of the negation of the negation.

With these laws, the dialectical process posited a concept as a standing point. It is offered as a potential description of reality. It found out that, from the standpoint of logic, this concept must bring its own negation with it: to the concept, its negative is offered automatically, and a struggle ensues between the two. The struggle is resolved by an ascent to the highest plane from which it can be comprehended and reconciled: the ascent is the process of 'diremption', which generates a new concept out of the ruins of the last. This new concept generates its own negation, and so the process continues, until, by successive application of the dialectic, the whole of reality has been laid bare (Scruton, 1995:164).

3.2 Understanding dialectical materialism

Marx's dialectical materialism understands man and his society as involved in a dialectical or dynamic process of development. It recognizes such dynamism as involving clash of opposites which later collapses into synthesis. For instance, Marx argues that in the slave society which collapses into two opposites: masters and slaves. The contradictions and struggles underpinning this slave society gave birth to its synthesis, feudal society which in turn disintegrates into the feudal lords and vassals (or serfs). The contradiction between the feudal lords and vassals dissolved into capitalism. Capitalism also contains its own contradictions, namely, bourgeoisie and proletariat. The clash within the capitalist system gave birth to socialism which in turn evolved into communism, the highest level of synthesis (Marx, 1984).

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, we have seen that Marx used the notion of *Dialectics* to bring to limelight the epochal movements of society. Dialectics involves the thesis, antithesis and synthesis. The thesis involves its negation (antithesis), and a struggle ensues between the two. The struggle is resolved by an ascent to the highest plane from which it can be comprehended and reconciled (synthesis). These epochal movements involve slave society, feudal society, capitalist society, socialist society, communist society.

5.0 Summary

- Etymologically speaking, dialectics is from a Greek verb that means to "converse;"
- Dialectics is defined as the science of the general laws of motion and development of nature, human society and thought;
- Dialectics involves thesis, antithesis and synthesis;
- three laws of dialectic or laws of *thought* as follows: The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and *vice versa*; The law of the interpenetration of opposites; The law of the negation of the negation;
- Marx's dialectical materialism understands man and his society as involved in a dialectical or dynamic process of development;

- This dialectical process involves slave society, feudal society, capitalist society, socialist society, communist society.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Discuss the main ideas of dialectical materialism.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Engels, F. (1978). *The Origin of the Family, Private property and the State*. Peking: Foreign Language Press.

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MODULE 3

UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

UNIT 1: THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0 Main contents
 - 3.1 The materialist conception of History
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0. Introduction

The main aim of this unit is to examine Marx's historical materialism. Historical materialism involves the scientific explanation of man and his society as passing through a historical dialectical process. This historical process is governed by the natural law of economic. This law states that the economic substructure, i.e. the economic mode of production, determines the changes in the superstructure, i.e. the law, ideologies, religion, morality, etc, of the society.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit, students must have been equipped with the knowledge of Karl Marx's historical materialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The materialist conception of History

Marx started out his analysis of history from the lowest society to the highest using his dialectical method. In this light, Marx observed six epochal movements of human society since history. He noted that human society grew from Asiatic, Slave, Feudalism, Capitalism, socialism and Communism. The Asiatic society is characterized with communalistic living whereby members of the community live together as brothers from one family. Properties are held in common in this society. Thus the "I" is subsumed in the "We" and the "We" is in turn merged in the "I" (Mbiti, 1967, 141). But the problem of this society surfaced with the individual ownership of property. It got to a point, according to Marx, when a man will appropriate a plot of land, build a shelter and call it his. This acquisition of private property led to its fall and in turn gave birth to Ancient society.

At this stage, men are fully aware of the fact that they can acquire properties. So the search for acquisition of property began. This led men out of their society to nearby

societies in search of properties. Wherever large properties are found war is wage by the invaded community against the villagers. The winner of the war becomes the ruler and the loser becomes the slave. This continued for awhile, according to Marx, until the slave became conscious that they are larger in number and for that reason they can overthrow the invaders. This resulted in the revolt of the slaves and their freedom, and above all, the fall of slave society.

The dearth of slave society gave rise to feudal society. Marx opined that feudal society borrowed from the slave society the notions of slave and master and refined into feudal lords and serfs. The feudal lords are the owners of property while the serfs are the workers that till the soil and produce food for the feudal lords. This society also failed because the increase in human population resulted in increase in demand of goods and services. The feudal society failed in the fulfillment of economic human wants. That is why it was kicked off by capitalism.

Capitalism retained social stratification in feudal society. It exchanged the feudal lords with bourgeois and the serfs with proletariats. In Marx's words:

The modern bourgeois society has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonism. It has but established new forms classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. The feudal system of industry...now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild masters were pushed on side by the manufacturing middle men; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in single workshop (Marx, 1984:85).

What is more, the capitalist society, Marx says, has two foundational bases: economic basis and ideological basis. The "economic base is referred to the mode of production, the substructure, and the ideological base consists of the religious, political, the legal and the superstructure" (Mill, 1962:82). He included the forces of production and the relations of productions in the economic base. The forces of production involves natural resources, working equipments, science and technology etc. and relation of production marks the human relationship existing among workers. Marx observed that there is a conflict between relation of production and forces of production.

On this ground, Marx posited that the class struggle between the bourgeois (owners of means of production) and proletariat (workers) are as a result of the dichotomy in the economic base. This is because every society is ruled and governed by its economic base; it is those who control the means of production that controls the entire society. Capitalist society exists in order to protect the properties of the bourgeoisie. Class domination and the protection of private property are virtually synonymous expressions in a capitalist economy (Sweezy, 1942). Hence when we say with Marx that the highest purpose of the

state is the protection of private property, we are also saying that the state is an instrument of class domination.

Marx believes that this class struggle is an inevitable condition of the capitalist society (Russell, 1945:789). In capitalist society conflicts of desires and interest are inherent. For capitalism cannot fulfill every one's interest. For Marx, this inherent conflict comes from the capitalist demarcation of property and non-property which is defined by the relation of each to the forces of production. The property are the bourgeoisies and non-property are the proletariats. The proletariats work for the bourgeoisies in order to their material needs. The bourgeoisies exploit the proletariats by paying them peanuts compared to what they produce

The exploitation of the workers will intensify in the capitalist society. Since what the bourgeoisie seeks after is profit, they will keep on pressurizing the proletariats in order to make *surplus value*. For the proletariat needs to spend more time at work, more than what he bargained with the employer, in order to retain his work. This surplus labour is being appropriated by bourgeoisie without pay.

Also, as the class structure becomes more polarized, there will be more chances of revolution. For the composition of capitalists society will undergo some changes:

- (a) the bourgeoisie will decrease in number due to increase in competition and polarization of available resources;
- (b) the wage workers will increase in numbers;
- (c) all other intermediary classes-petty bourgeoisie- will die out as the society is polarized between bourgeoisie and proletariats (Mills, 1962:89).

At this stage, the workers will be fully aware of their predicaments and the revolutionary fate that awaits them. They will be transformed from a *class-in-itself* to *class-for-itself* because they have been conscious of their exploitation and the only means to overcome such exploitation.

On this juncture, Marx predicts that the proletariats will win the war by crushing the wings of capitalism and radically turning both the substructure and superstructure into their favor. The aftermaths of the war will witness the institution of a socialist society (transitional society) that is characterized by *dictatorship of the proletariats*. This will operate with the general principle of 'from each according to his abilities and to each according to his contributions.' The essence of this dictatorship is to protect the polis against its enemies. The dictatorship of the proletariat involves, according to Wright Mills (1962:89):

the appropriating class will itself be expropriated, the owners of state will be broken down, and the productive facilities transferred to society in order to permit a rational placing of the economy.

From this socialist society, *communism* will evolve. The measures to take in order to institute a communism, as enumerated by Marx (1984:101-111), are:

1. abolition of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes
2. A heavy progressive or graduated income tax
3. abolition of all rights of inheritance
4. Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels
5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly
6. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State
7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State...
8. Equal liability of all the labor
9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries...
10. Free education for all children in primary school.

When these measures are put in place, class antagonism will totally disappear; the interest of every one will be equally weighed and cared for. Then will the guiding principle be 'from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs.'

4.0. Conclusion

In this unit, we have examined Marx's Historical materialism. We have seen that it is a scientific attempt to explain human society. He observes that human society has been through a historical dialectical process governed by the natural law of economic which states that the economic substructure, i.e. the economic mode of production, determines the changes in the superstructure, i.e. the law, ideologies, religion, morality, etc, of the society.

5.0. Summary

- Marx observes that the economic basis of a society determines the social structure and the psychology of men within it;
- History is a universal process involving contradictions and their resolutions;
- human society has been passing through historical process since time immemorial, which are: Asiatic, Slave, Feudalism, socialism, Capitalism and Communism;
- Asiatic society is the primitive communal society which collapsed into master and slave society which gave rise to feudal and serfs or vassals society that passes its antagonistic nature to the capitalist society;

- Conflict between forces of production, i.e., natural resources, science and technology, division of labor, and relations of production is the underlining contradiction of the capitalist society;
- The capitalist society is divided between the bourgeoisie (or propertied) and proletariat (non-propertied);
- The exploitation and dehumanization of the proletariat is the fate of the worker within the capitalist economy;
- As this exploitation intensifies, middlemen-capitalists will collapse and the proletariats will increase in number thereby creating large room for revolution;
- The consciousness of their revolutionary fate, will transform the proletariat from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself;
- The revolution of the proletariats will overthrow the capitalist society and institute the socialist society which will later give way to the communists' society-the classless society.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

What do you understand by Marx's historical materialism?

7.0 References/Further Reading

- Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1984). "From Manifesto of the Communist Party." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin: On Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K. (1976). *Capital*. Trans. Ben Fowkes. Harmondsworth: Marx Library.
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- Mills, W. (1962). *The Marxists*. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.
- Russell, B. (1945). *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Sweezy, P. M. (1942). *The Theory of Capitalism Development*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

UNIT 2: LABOR AND ALIENATION

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Labor and alienation
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

In the previous unit, we saw Marx's opprobrium for capitalist society. Such opprobrium is as results of exploitation and material misery of the proletariats within the capitalist society. A consequence of these is alienated labor in which the labor of man is considered as an external entity beyond his control. This unit, therefore, is a consideration of Marx's alienated labor.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

It is believed that by the end of this class, students must have understood Marx's conception of alienated labor.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The alienated labor



Photo courtesy: woman factory 1940s/Wikipedia

Marx conceives labor as a means of self-actualization. Labor, for him, must be man's 'own spontaneous activity.' Man externalizes himself through the means of production; i.e. man reproduces himself through his labor. However, within the capitalist system, Marx notes that man's labor is being alienated from him. The non-propertyed, the proletariat, without means of production, has to sell their labor in order to survive. But instead of the proletariat actualizing themselves through their labor, they are alienated from it. The capitalist society makes the worker to stand contrary opposite to his labor. This is what Marx referred to as *alienated labor*. By alienation, Marx meant that a "separation through surrender." The proletariat is alienated immediately he willfully sells the labor of his hands to the bourgeoisie on a certain wage. In selling his labor, man sells himself. By doing so, the product of his hands begins to "exist independently, outside, of his control and stands alien to him and...to him as an autonomous power" (cited in Sahacht, 1971:58). This is because the product of his labor, which suppose be under his control, stands higher and above him. At the end, alienated labor estranges man from his 'specie-being.' It is consequent upon the fact that man merely labors without self-fulfillment and self-actualization (Honderich, 2005:166-167).

4.0. Conclusion

In conclusion, Marx uses alienated labor to underscore the exploitation and material misery of the proletariat within the capitalist society. In such a society, man's labor which is the objectification of his specie-being is unjustly taken away from him and placed far from his reach. His labor becomes something existing independently of him because in selling his labor for a certain wage, he sells his entire being. Instead of realizing himself through his labor, man finds misery and unhappiness.

5.0. Summary

- Labor is man's own spontaneous activity;
- Man externalizes himself through the means of production; i.e. man reproduces himself through his labor;
- Man arrives at self-realization and self-actualization through his labor;
- The capitalist economy estranges man from his labor immediately he willfully sells his labor to the bourgeoisie on a certain wage-alienated labor.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Do you think Marx's alienated labor is plausible?

7.0. References/Further reading

Honderich, T. (2005). *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schacht, R. (1971). *Alienation*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

UNIT 3: COMMODITY FETISHISM

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Commodity fetishism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

In the previous unit, we considered Marx's idea of alienated labor as the estrangement of the work from his work. Here, we shall consider commodity fetishism as a consequence of such alienation.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcome

By the end of this unit, the students will be able to explain what Marx meant by commodity fetishism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Commodity fetishism

A grave effect of alienated labor is that it has turned human relations into commodity relations. Marx referred to this as *fetishism of commodities* (Thomas, 2009:482). The fetish-character of commodity is derived from the "peculiar social character of the labor that produces them" (Marx, 1976:165). This means that the producers of commodity relate with one another only through the exchange of commodity their produce. The reason being that commodity, an object, is being treated as a "sensuous things that are at the same time supersensible or social" (Marx, 1976:165). In this sense, man's relation with his fellow men then reverts to relationship between commodities.

4.0. Conclusion

We have seen here that commodity fetishism reduces human relationships to material relations and social relationships to relation of things. The relationship between the bourgeoisies and proletariats assumes the role of commodity fetishism since the former assumes the role of capital and the later the role of labor; both relates on the level of capital and labor power. This relation is in turn reflects in their social relation where exchange of commodities or things produced replaces social relations. Instead of relating with the producer, the coupler, we relate with what he has produced, the pairs of shoes.

5.0 Summary

- Marx maintains that commodity fetishism reduces human relationships to material relations and social relationships to relation of things.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Outline Marx's commodity fetishism.

7.0. References/Further reading

Marx, K. (1976). *Capital*. Trans. Ben Fowkes Harmondsworth: Marx Library.

Thomas, P. (2009). "Marx and Engels." In D. Boucher & P. Kelly (eds.), *Political Thinkers: From Socrates to Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

UNIT 4: SURPLUS VALUE

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Surplus value
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

This unit examines another consequence of alienated labor within the capitalist system, namely; surplus value.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the student would be able to explain Marx's idea of surplus value.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Surplus value

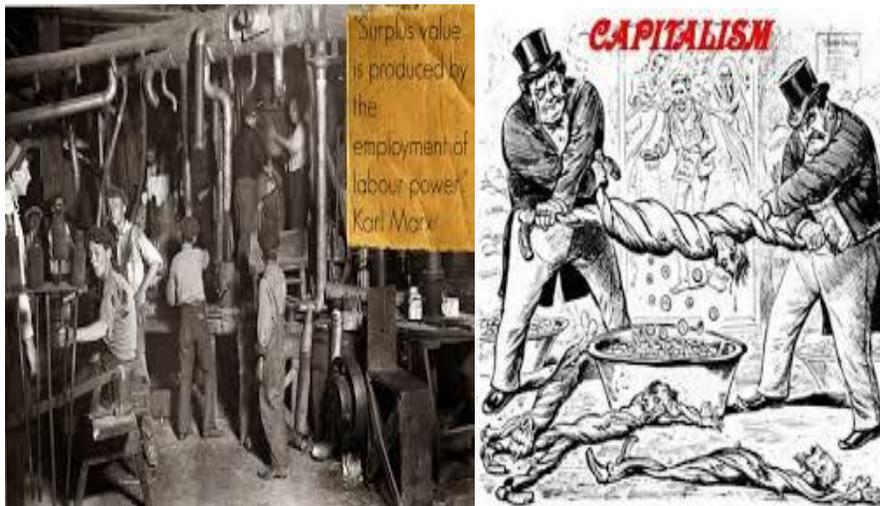


Photo courtesy: akmcleanservices.com (left) and johnkeeley.com (right).

Marx's conception of surplus value is another consequence of capitalist exploitation and dehumanization. Marx takes some culling insights from David Ricardo's *iron law of wages* which states that the primary aim of the capitalists' is to increase profit as result of which the work will be paid nothing more than subsistence wage. He uses surplus value to show the unfair relationship between labor and capital within the capitalist economic system. The proletariat sell their labor power to the bourgeoisies, who pay them peanuts as wages which is incomparable to their labor power. The bourgeoisies appropriate the labor power spent at extra hour by the proletariat, in order to create value for their

wages, as surplus value and internalize as a profit without necessary compensating the proletariats for those hours. As such, the capitalist system destroys man's essence and makes him a slave of his labor power through its high demand for profit at the expense of man's genuine satisfaction of his needs.

4.0. Conclusion

We have seen that what the bourgeoisie seeks is to increase profit and as a result pressurizes the proletariats to spend more time at work, more than what he bargained, in order to retain his work. The labor power put by the proletariat into this extra time is not paid for by the bourgeoisie rather he appropriates it as a surplus value and calls it profit.

5.0. Summary

- The bourgeoisies appropriate the labor power spent at extra hour by the proletariats, in order to create value for their wages, as surplus value and internalize as a profit without necessary compensating the proletariats for those hours.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

What do you understand by alienated labor?

7.0. References/Further reading

Marx, K. (1970). *Preface to a Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*. Moscow: Progress.

UNIT 5: THE STATE

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 The state
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

The aim of this unit is to articulate the idea of the state within Marx's scientific socialism. Marx and Engels analysis of the state is based on three assumptions: firstly, "that the state arises when society divides into classes;" secondly, "that the state is an instrument of class rule;" and finally, "that when society becomes classless, there will be no need for a state" (Plamenatz, 1963:351). We shall see how they further develop these ideas in the rest of this unit.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students should be able to explain:

- the rise of the state;
- state as instrument of the ruling class;
- the disappearance of the state.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The state

Marx and Engels analysis of the state is based on three assumptions: firstly, "that the state arises when society divides into classes;" secondly, "that the state is an instrument of class rule;" and finally, "that when society becomes classless, there will be no need for a state" (Plamenatz, 1963:351). According to Engels (1978), state arises out off the collapse of the tribal community as a result of increase in population size and massive division of labor. As individuals become highly specialized, there arise divergent irreconcilable interests among them. Also arising from these divergent interests are different classes within the society. The state then arises to settle these irreconcilable interests and classes which the tribal society cannot handle because the authority and customary rules that exist in such a society merely guide social relations without declaration and enforcement of those rules. But with the inception of the state, the declaration and enforcement of laws became a political function of the government.

There is also a special organized structure of the ruler and ruled to maintain and sustain such functions. It constitutes coercive and stringent measures of punishing offenders known as capital punishment. As Engels (1978) elaborates:

It (the state) is the product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that is, has split into irreconcilable opposites which it is powerless to exercise. But in order that these opposites, classes with conflicting economic interest, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power seemingly standing above society that would moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of “order;” and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it and alienating itself more and more from it is the state (parenthesis added, Engels, 1978:205-206).

The state monopolizes political power and uses it as an instrument of property acquisition. Marx and Engels categorize the state as belonging to the exploiting class together with the propertied individuals who pay allegiance to it. Another type of class is the exploited class comprising the non-propertied.

Marx and Engels see the state as the instrument of class rule. According to Marx, “political power...is merely the organized power one class oppressing another” (Marx, 1984). State uses coercion to maintain social conditions of the exploiting class and their superiority at the expense of the exploited class. The exploiting class uses the state to maintain their ideas, foster their own goals and sustain the exploitation of the exploited class. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1984) express the view that “the ideas of the ruling class are, in every epoch, the ruling ideas... The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that... the ideas of those who lack means of production are, in general, subject to it” (Marx, & Engels, 1984:44). Both express a similar view in the *Communist Manifesto* thus; “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie” (Marx & Engels, 1984). Accordingly, the state exists as an instrument of the ruling class who uses the state to oppress and exploit the non-ruling class.

They predict that the revolution of the proletariat, which will overthrow the capitalist society, will appropriate the state as an instrument of dictatorship against the enemies of

socialism. At this transitional state, the power of the state will be minimal which gradually vanishes away as the socialist society collapses into a classless society-communist society. In this classless society, there will be no more irreconcilable classes/interests and exploitation needing an organized force to maintain and therefore there is no need for the state: “The society that will reorganize production on the basis of free association of producers will put the whole machinery of the state where it will belong-into the museum of antiquities, by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe” (Engels, 1978:210).

4.0. Conclusion

In this unit, we have seen that Marx and Engels construe the state to arise out of the incapacity of the tribal society to control the rising in human population and increasingly division of labor that resulted to divergent irreconcilable interests and classes. The state then emerged to maintain peace and order. Gradually, the state was overpowered by the ruling class who uses it to subdue and oppress the ruled. The revolution of ruled will sweep away the state and institute a classless society.

5.0. Summary

- State arises out of over population and overarching division of labour together with divergent interests and classes;
- government aims to maintain peace among the divergent conflicting interests and classes in the State;
- the ruling class was able to overtake the government and use it as an instrument of exploitation and oppression of non-propertied class;
- the revolution by the non-propertied class will overturn the weapon of the propertied class against them as dictator of the proletariat in a transitional society known as socialist society;
- the socialist society will collapse alongside the existence of the state and the classless society will emerge.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Carefully situate Marx’s and Engel’s conception of the state within the Nigerian nation.

7.0. References/Further reading

- Engels, F. (1978). *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Peking: Foreign Language Press.
- Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1984). "From Manifesto of the Communist Party." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin: On Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1984). "The German Ideology." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin: On Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Miller, W. (2002). "Marx's Legacy." In Simon, R.L. (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social and Political Philosophy*. Malden: Blackwell Publishers Limited.

UNIT 6: REVOLUTION

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Revolution
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

Revolution is one of the central ideas in Marx's scientific socialism. He sees revolution as an emancipatory tool needed by the proletariat to aggressively overhaul the capitalist system and change their material misery. In fact, he considers revolution as the inescapable fate of the proletariats within the capitalist system if ever they want to be freed from oppression and exploitation. This unit attempts a discussion of the role of revolution in Marx's scientific socialism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

Students are expected to learn the role of revolution in Marx's scientific socialism

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Revolution

Revolution is one of the central ideas in Marx's scientific socialism. He sees revolution as an emancipatory tool needed by the proletariat to aggressively overhaul the capitalist system and change their material misery. In fact, he considers revolution as the inescapable fate of the proletariats within the capitalist system if ever they want to be freed from oppression and exploitation. It is the revolutionary struggle of the non-propertied against the propertied and of the exploited against their exploiters. Marx believes that this revolution will be a conscious and deliberative massive attack on capitalism. As the revolutionary fate of the proletariats becomes more apparent to them through their association of trade unions and labour parties, who fight for the betterment of their working conditions, they will be transformed to a class-for-itself. Gradually, they will begin to understand that they must themselves take control of the means of production together with all the superstructures. They will then consciously aim at revolutionalising the system but not as fractioned groups rather as a world-wide class united under the consciousness of self-emancipation and freedom. Marx surmises that this revolutionary class will not aim to replace the bourgeoisie by claiming political power as individual compensation for their revolutionary role after the revolution; for

they understand the historical importance of their actions and the need for a classless society.

4.0. Conclusion

We have seen that revolution, for Marx, is one of the destinies of the proletariat which is inescapable. And the fulfillment of which will set them free from the capitalist oppression and end their material misery.

5.0. Summary

- Revolution is one of the central ideas in Marx's scientific socialism;
- It is the revolutionary struggle of the non-propertied against the propertied and of the exploited against their exploiters;
- It is a conscious and deliberate struggle to take charge of the means of production together with other social structure;
- The proletariat cannot escape their revolutionary fate.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Do you think revolution is a necessary tool for freedom? Justify your answer.

7.0. References/Further reading

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1984). "From Manifesto of the Communist Party." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin: On Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Marx, K. & Engels, F. (1984). "The German Ideology." In T. Borodulina (ed.), *Marx, Engels, Lenin: On Historical Materialism*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

Module 4

A Critical Examination of Marx's Scientific Socialism

Unit 1: E.F. Hayek critical objections

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1E.F. Hayek critical objections
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

UP till this moment, we have been considering the nature, principles and ideas of Karl Marx's scientific socialism. The aim of this unit is to critically engage with the various criticisms leveled against Marx's scientific socialism. One of the most fervent opponents of scientific socialism was Friedrich August von Hayek, who was an Anglo-Austrian economist born in Vienna on May 8, 1899 and died 23 March 1992 in Germany. This unit focuses on Hayek's critique of Marx's scientific socialism.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students would be able to critically assess the main crux of Hayek's critique of Marx's scientific socialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 E.F. Hayek critical objections



Photo courtesy: E.F. Hayek/Britannica.com

The bogeyman of Friedrich Hayek's objections against Marx's scientific socialism is state economic monopoly. His objections culled insights from the work of Ludwig von Mises, who argued that state monopoly of means of production stifles market economy and leaves us with grave consequences because "no production-good will ever become the object of exchange, it will be impossible to determine its monetary value. Money could never fill in a socialist state the role it fills in a competitive society in determining the value of production-goods. Calculation in terms of money will here be impossible" (Mises, 1935:92). He further argued that state monopoly of means of production annihilates price mechanism needed for "rational calculation" within a social economy which results to huge ignorance concerning the roles scarcity of goods plays in demand and supply during economic planning. He then concludes that; "Where there is no free market, there is no pricing mechanism; without a pricing mechanism, there is no economic calculation" (Mises, 1935:111).

Mises argument on the impossibility of rational planning within a socialist system was greatly challenged by Oskar Lange, who considers his objections as no threat to socialism in his work, *On the Economic Theory of Socialism* (1938). In this book, Lange explicates on the economic theory of socialism and attempts to show that rational calculation is possible within the socialist economy. He argues that free market should not be the only decisive factor in price formation and maintains that careful planning of market within market socialism can account for prices. This careful planning, for him, is the responsibility of the "Central Planning Board" which involves socialist planners that use

the method of “trial and error” to provide “given prices” for all production-goods (Lange, 1938:60-62; 89).

Hayek, following Mises argument, was suspicious of socialist central planning and trial and error approach: “it is difficult to suppress the suspicion that this particular proposal has been born out of an excessive preoccupation with problems of the pure theory of stationary equilibrium” (Hayek, 1948:188). Stationary equilibrium, he says, works towards achieving a “final” end of accounting prices on a single time adjustment based solely on the planners knowledge of market economy which is at odd with the rule of “constant change” and “dispersed knowledge” in the real world. In the real world, individuals have access to different bits of knowledge that form their various subjective beliefs. And this, according to him, plays a crucial role in social production of goods and services that involves exchange of commodities. It is through this exchange of commodities, he maintains, that the information needed to run the market economy is being conveyed. Prices, Hayek believes, are driven by the instantaneous consumers’ behaviours signal the interplay between demand and supply. It controls market information about individuals’ subjective preferences and producers’ manufacturing process. In Hayek’s way of thinking, socialism centralizes human knowledge on the hands of Central planners, who periodically set prices for production goods within market economy when it would have happened spontaneously. On this ground, he explicitly states that the “socialist aims and programs are factually impossible to achieve or execute; and they also happen, into the bargain as it were, to be logically impossible” (Hayek, 1988:7).

The challenge Hayek sees is that leaving market economy solely in the hands of planners will inevitably lead to totalitarianism where the state is the chief owner of means of production and organizer of economic life. Hayek considers this as one of the dangers of “hot socialism” which would probably produce more consequences other than what the socialists anticipated. Such a state, he argues, smothers individual freedom, democracy and free market economy. He concludes that individual freedom can only be attained in a democratic society where capitalism is defining economic system: “If “capitalism” means here a competitive system based on free disposal over private property, it is far more important to realize that only within this system is democracy possible. When it becomes dominated by a collectivist creed, democracy will inevitably destroy itself” (Hayek, 1976: 69-70).

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

Video link: Hayek on Socialism, <https://youtube.be/CNbYdbf3EEc>

6.0 Self Assessment

Explain Hayek's objections to Marx's scientific socialism

7.0 References/Further reading

- Hayek, F. (1988). "The Fatal Conceits: The Errors of Socialism." In W.W. Bartley II (ed.), *The Collected Works of Friedrich August Hayek*, Vol. 1. London: Routledge.
- Hayek, F. (1976). *Road to Serfdom*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hayek, F. (1948). "Socialist Calculation: the Competitive 'Solution'." In F.G. Hayek (ed.), *Individualism and Economic Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lange, O. (1938). *On the economic theory of socialism*. B.E. Lippincott (ed.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mises, L. (1935). "Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth." In F. Hayek (ed.), *Collectivist Economic Planning: Critical Studies on the Possibilities of Socialism*. London: Routledge.

Unit 2: Karl Popper's Criticism

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Karl Popper's criticism of Marx's scientific socialism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

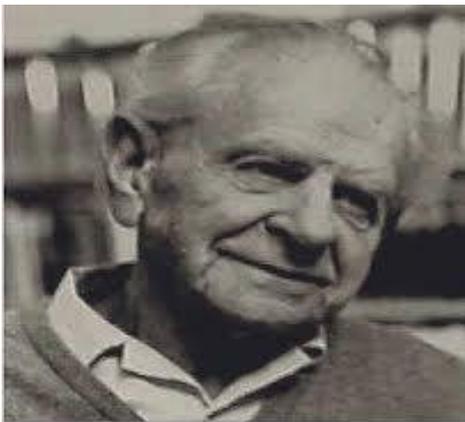
In this unit, we shall consider Karl Popper's criticisms against scientific socialism. Popper, an Austrian-born British philosopher born on 28 July 1902 in Vienna and died on 17 September 1994 in Kenley, UK, sees Marx's scientific socialism as methodologically misconstrued and unscientifically grounded which crumbled the whole idea of scientific socialism into "historicism" and "holism."

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, students a good understanding of the criticisms Popper leveled against Marx's scientific socialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Karl Popper's criticism of Marx's scientific socialism



Sir Karl Popper (1902-1994)

Photo courtesy: Karl Popper-*Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Karl Popper's critique of Marx's scientific socialism appears primarily in his books *The Poverty of Historicism* (originally published in 1944). In this book, Popper critically

separates the synergy between socialism and science as evident in Marx's philosophy on the basis that there is nothing scientific about his socialism. With so much ado, Popper critically detracts the ideas and principles of Marx's scientific socialism. He argues that Marx's scientific socialism, as well as the works of Plato, Friedrich Hegel, J.S. Mill, Sigmund Freud, Karl Mannheim etc., is based on a methodological misconception of the workings of natural sciences. This misconception, says Popper, arises from Marx's assumption that "if it is possible for astronomy to predict eclipses, why should it not be possible for sociology to predict revolution?" (Popper, 1960:36). Just like we have the laws of Newtonian mechanics and the planetary prediction of physics, Popper's Marx claims to have discovered the historical laws of human society and, in turn, makes prediction about its future course. These historical laws are considered by Marx to be universal laws that govern human society at all times and periods. These laws are said to be deterministic, unalterable and unchanging which govern specific historical epoch and culture. This methodological misconception is what Popper referred to as "historicism" (Popper, 1960: vii).

By historicism, Popper meant "an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principle aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the "rhythms" or the "patterns," the "laws" or the "trends" that underlie the evolution of history" (Popper, 1960: 3, 105-106). This implies that historicism posits human society passes through a kind of social evolutionary process governed by the deterministic and unalterable historical laws; and on basis of this makes prediction about its future outcome. Thus, as Popper notes, "the only universally valid laws of society must be the laws which link up the successive periods. They must be laws of historical development which determine the transition from one period to another" (Popper, 1960:41).

Popper says that the problem with historicism, as represented by Marx and his cohorts, is the failure to acknowledge the fact that human society cannot be predictable as obtainable in natural sciences. For him, social sciences, which deals with the systematic study of the human society, cannot have universal historical laws applicable at all times and periods. This is because, as Popper tells us, social sciences deal with a "qualitatively changing" human society whereas natural sciences deal with a "quantitatively unchanging" natural phenomenon which can be governed by universal laws like the Newtonian law of energy. Popper argues that the failure to take note of this has committed Marx to erroneously attribute the isolated, stationary and repetitive character of natural phenomena obtainable in the social sciences to human society and its history, which is in a certain kind of change, growth and development.

This error, in Popper's view, also led Marx to make the supposed scientific predictions about the human society. From the discoverable historical laws of the human society, Popper's Marx gives unconditional predictions about the future large-scale event of the human society, what Popper himself referred to as "predictions on a large-scale or large-scale forecasts" (Popper, 1960:37). For instance, Marx claims that revolution is the inevitable fate of the proletariat within the capitalist system which will inevitably lead to

the collapse of capitalist society and institution of socialism and eventually the coming of communism. A resultant devastating effect of this, says Popper, is that Marx merely conjures social “prophecies” rather than scientific predictions. For Popper, prophecies are distinguished from predictions because there are unconditional whereas predictions are conditional. And also, prophecies depend on predictions whereas predictions do not depend on prophecies. The difference between predictions and prophecies can be illustrated thus:

In Newtonian mechanics we can predict the position of a planet at a given time in the future *if* we are given some antecedent conditions such as the positions of the planets now and the assumption that the solar system will remain isolated from outside influence between now and the future time (for example, no wandering celestial body will crash through our system upsetting the movement of the planets). A conditional prediction is then formed: *if* we are given these antecedent conditions, *then* the planet will be in such-and-such a position at the future time. When we are assured that the antecedent conditions do hold (for example, we do know the positions of the planets now and know that the solar system is a regular isolated system) then we can turn our conditional prediction into an unconditional prediction and simply assert: the planet will be in such-and-such a position at the specified future time (Nola, n.d:127).

On a lighter note, scientific predictions involve determinate predictions about well-isolated and stationary system like the solar system; but not sufficiently isolated social system and irregularities of human behaviour makes long term predictions very impossible and render prophecies unconditional. In addition, he construes prophecies as “...events which we can do nothing to prevent” (Popper, 1960:43). The history of human society has, according to Prophet Marx, a teleological end (communism) in which human beings play the role (revolution) of actualizing such an end (see Popper, 1962:338). Popper disproving this insists, firstly, that, “there are not any historicist laws on the basis of which such predictions can be made; secondly, even if there were, historicists never specify the antecedent conditions which must hold for genuine prediction rather than prophecy; thirdly, social systems are not sufficiently isolated from influences which upset their regular behavior” (Nola, n.d.128; see also Popper, 1960: v-vi).

To further unravel the unscientific nature of Marx’s scientific socialism, Popper shows that it cannot be falsified because it immunizes itself from refutations and criticisms. Popper believes that “falsification,” which is “...the theoretical conjecture and refutation based purely on deductive reasoning” (Popper, 1968:42-46), is the scientific method with which scientific enquiry should be based. Falsification deals with falsifying scientific theories rather than affirming them. It looks out for instance (s) that disproves a scientific

theory rather than instances that validates it. Falsification deals with “verisimilitude” (nearer to truth) rather than truth itself. What makes a theory scientific then is the ability of such a theory to withhold refutation; any theory that is falsified ceases to be a scientific theory and Popper advises that it should be replaced by a stronger theory. Unfortunately, Marx’s scientific socialism is not found within this empirical scientific category because of its dogmatic nature and closed-mindedness which closes it against falsification and in turn renders it “pseudo-scientific” in nature.

Having separated Marx’s scientific socialism from what we can call ‘science proper,’ Popper goes ahead to engage his theory as a social theory. Popper posits Marx as “a false prophet” who “misled scores of intelligent people into believing that historical prophecy is the scientific way of approaching social problems” (Popper, 1947:78). And he claims that Marx’s scientific socialism is form of utopian social engineering based on large-scale forecast that attempts a holistic prediction of the future of human society on the basis of deterministic historical laws acclaimed to be universal and unalterable. Such utopian social engineering smothers liberty, intellectualism, democracy and open-mindedness in favour of close mindedness, totalitarianism and revolution, says Popper. And as such cannot afford us the kind of luxury Marx has envisaged. What is the needed, Popper argues, is a kind of piece-meal social engineering that breeds democracy, individual freedom, critical rationalism, liberalism, open mindedness, amongst others (see Popper, 1945).

4.0. Conclusion

In this unit, we have presented Popper’s critique of Marx’s scientific socialism. We have seen that Popper categorized Marx’s scientific socialism as a pseudo scientific theory which has immune itself from refutation even when experience as proven it to be falsifiable. On this ground, Popper christened it prophecy and Marx a prophet. Also, we have seen that, for Popper, Marx’s scientific theory cannot afford us the paradise it promises because it is based on utopian social engineering that uses deterministic historical laws to holistically predict the future course of human society even when experience has shown that human actions are unpredictable and certain knowledge about its whole course is unattainable.

5.0 Summary

Popper’s refutation of the scientific nature of Marx’s scientific socialism is based on, firstly, that it is a pseudo-scientific theory paraded as science; secondly, it is based on prophecy rather than prediction; thirdly, it is based on historicism and holism; fourthly, its principles and ideas cannot be falsified; finally, it might lead to totalitarian state.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

In not more than a page explain in your own words Popper’s critique of Marx’s scientific socialism.

7.0. References/Further reading

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Popper, K.R. (1945). *The Open Society and Its Enemies: The High Tide of Prophecy: Hegel, Marx, and the Aftermath*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Unit 3: Friedman Milton's Detractions

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. Main contents
 - 3.1 Friedman detractions
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

In this unit, we shall take a look at another opponent of Marx's scientific socialism, namely; Milton Friedman. Friedman was an American economist born on 31 July 1912 in Brooklyn, New York and died in 16 November 2006 in San Francisco, California, who attempts to demonstrate that contrary to Marx perceptions of capitalist world system that capitalism does not flourish in a coercive environment and that also competitive capitalism is necessary for political freedom.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

In this unit, students would articulate Milton Friedman's detractions of scientific socialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 Friedman detractions

Milton Friedman takes up Marx's scientific socialism in his book, *Capitalism and Freedom* (originally published in 1962). In this book, he attempts to demonstrate, contrary to Marx's position, that economic freedom is a necessary condition for political freedom. Friedman considers economic freedom as an "extremely important part of total freedom" which "acts as a means to the end of political freedom" (Friedman, 1975:339). He leans on history to argue that societies that have enjoyed large amount of political freedom have used free market to organize the bulk of their economic activities. He cites the 19th and early 20th centuries in the Western world as a typical example of this. The lesson to be learnt from history, he admonishes, is that capitalism is a necessary, although not a sufficient, condition political freedom. This is because there were, he says, societies which enjoys economic freedom, as in the cases of Fascist Italy, Fascist Spain, Tzarist Russia etc., without having a corresponding political freedom. He, however, holds that such societies enjoy more freedom than societies, such as Soviet Russia or Nazi

Germany, where “economic totalitarianism is combined with political totalitarianism” (Friedman, 1975:340).



Photo courtesy: Friedman Milton-Wikipedia/ en.wikipedia.org

He further expatiates on this by establishing a logical connection between economic freedom and political freedom. This logical link is visible in “the kind of economic organisation that provides economic freedom directly, namely, competitive capitalism, also promotes political freedom because it separates economic power from political power and in the way enables the one to offset the other” (Friedman, 1975:339). Competitive capitalism separates and decentralizes economic power which in turn eliminates coercive power of totalitarianism. With this kind of reasoning, Friedman disagrees with Marx’s idea of state economic monopoly which he claimed leads to coercion and marginalization of individual freedom. For him, competitive capitalism does not flourish in such a coercive atmosphere. It flourishes where there is a separation between the economic power and political power so that economic strength will be a check and a counter to political power rather than reinforcement (Friedman, 1975:342).

4.0. Conclusion

5.0. Summary

6.0 Self Assessment Exercise

Write a summary of Milton Friedman's objections to Marx's scientific socialism

7.0 References/Further reading

Friedman, M. (1975). "Capitalism and Freedom." In J.E. Elliott & J. Cownie (eds.), *Competing Philosophies in American Political Economics: Selected Readings with Essays and Editorial Commentaries*. Pacific Palisades: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc.

Macpherson, C.B. (1975). "A Note on Friedman's Freedom." In J.E. Elliott & J. Cownie (eds.), *Competing Philosophies in American Political Economics: Selected Readings with Essays and Editorial Commentaries*. Pacific Palisades: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc.

Unit 4: The Practical Failure of Socialism: Russia

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

3.0 Main contents

3.1 The Practical Failure of Socialism: Russia

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Self Assessment Exercise

7.0 References/Further reading

1.0. Introduction

In the previous units, we have given special consideration to the criticisms of Popper, Hayek, Bernstein, against Marx's scientific socialism. This unit takes a look at the practical instance that corroborates some of their worries. Accordingly, we shall pay special attention to Russia Revolution of 1917 and the role Marx's scientific socialism assumed in such a struggle.

2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this study, students would be able to answer the question of whether there is a gap between theory and practice in Marx's scientific socialism.

3.0. Main contents

3.1 The Practical Failure of Socialism: Russia

The 20th century was not a good period for Marx. In that century, Marx's scientific socialism, and its principles and contents, was held responsible for the 1917 Russia Revolution which, in a way, confirms the worries of Marx's critics. Erik Van Ree (2010) had noted that "chain reaction" of revolution was a popular doctrine of 1917 Russia. The doctrine that Russia is the foundation from which socialist revolution will sprout in other countries was widely held by the pioneers of the revolution. Dmitri Volkogonov concluded, after close scrutiny of Russia Revolution that "Trotsky and the other leaders genuinely believed that they possessed the "revolutionary right" to determine the lives of millions of people" (Volkogonov, 1997:213). Michael Reiman said that "the conditions of civil war gave the rulers a taste for the unchallenged use of power and violence and instilled in them an indifference towards human life," (Reiman, 1987:1), a statement that reveals the kind of revolution with which the Russia revolution bathed itself. The chief archetype of this revolution, V.I. Lenin, made Marx an angel of the revolution and proclaimed that revolution and communism were the bases of all freedom in Russia.



Photo courtesy: the Russian

Revolution, Wikipedia.com

With the successful overthrow of the weak Provisional Government which came to replace the Tsarist Imperial administration, the revolution instituted Bolshevik-led Republic in 1917. This Republic quickly did economic, political and social overhauling of Russia. It quickly instituted a one-party system, making Bolshevik the only legitimate political party in Russia; a totalitarian government and protectionism, etc. Economically, it initially introduced “war communism,” (see Roberts, 1970) which involves the forceful takeover of the peasantry grain and the confiscation of private industries, factories, in fact all means of production. War communism posed a great challenge to the economic growth of the “Soviet Russia” and to the socio-economic well being of the masses. This, however, resulted in a revolt against, for instance “Kronstadt sailors’ revolt;” (Pipes, 1994:389) for, rather than fostering Marx’s “dictatorship of the proletariat,” it espouses party dictatorship (Schapiro, 1955:355).

To remedy this, the Bolshevik regime introduced another economic policy known as *New Economic Policy (NEP)*. As “it is certainly worth mentioning that when almost complete socialization was first put into effect in immediate post-World War I Russia, this experience cost literally millions of lives, and it required a marked change in policy, the New Economic Policy (NEP), merely a few years later in 1921, reintroducing elements of private ownership, to moderate these disastrous effects to levels that would prove tolerable” (Hope, 2010: 47). This policy was lunched with the “Tax in Kind” that replaced the “surplus acquisition of war communism, opened up doors for a minimal private ownership of means of production and restriction of government ownership ‘commanding heights’ of large industry, transportation, and communications.

However, communism in Russia encountered so many problems ranging from economic, political, to social. There were evidences of mass hunger, refuge crisis, economic meltdown, poor agricultural output, heavy industrial lag and conflicts within the Bolshevik party. Leon Trotsky later referred to these problems as the *scissor's crisis of 1923-1924*. Even the years after the period of 1923-1924 were deeper meshed into these problems despite various economic theories (like the High NEP, Ural-Siberian method, Five Years Plan, Glasnost, Perestroika) put in place to tackle these issues. These problems might be said to be beyond what Lenin and his cohorts envisaged prior to Russia Revolution when Lenin wrote to Trotsky that the “success of socialism” in Russia will take a short term to be achieved. These problems lingered on until the collapse of Soviet Russia.

4.0. Conclusion

Marx was treated with particular severity in Europe after the practical fall of socialism in Russia. The problem here was that Marx was held responsible of engineering Russia Revolution owing to his faith in revolution and the importance he placed on socialist dictatorship and communism. Lester DeKoster wrote that Russia is not a market deviation but a Marxist necessity where man has to save himself by destroying his neighbor in the attempt. He adds that Soviet Russia was a time when Marx’s change have been wrought and that the result is so far from what he hoped is the measure of his own misapprehension of what he believed and taught” (DeKoster, 1962: 145-146). This disparity in theory and practice makes Marx’s theory very complicated and conflicted because it paints a good and better picture in theory which might be practically unachievable. This virtually sent Marx’s scientific socialism into intellectual oblivion.

5.0. Summary

- The chief archetype of the 1917 Russian revolution, V.I. Lenin, made Marx an angel of the revolution and proclaimed that revolution and communism were the bases of all freedom in Russia;
- With the successful overthrow of the weak Provisional Government which came to replace the Tsarist Imperial administration, the revolution instituted Bolshevik-led Republic in 1917;
- Politically, it instituted a one-party system, making Bolshevik the only legitimate political party in Russia; a totalitarian government and protectionism, etc.;
- Economically, it initially introduced war communism and New Economic Policy, etc.;
- Despite the successes recorded, there were evidences of mass hunger, refuge crisis, economic meltdown, poor agricultural output, heavy industrial lag and conflicts within the Bolshevik party.

Video link: The Russian Revolution-BBC Full Documentary:
https://youtube.be/zXHybEb4b_o

6.0 Self Assessment

With the practical failure of socialism in Soviet Russia, discuss the synergy between theory and practice in Marxist scientific socialism

7.0 References/Further Reading

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- Volkogonov, D. (1997). *Trotsky: Eternal Revolutionary*. London, Harper Collins Publishers.

Unit 5: The contemporary relevance of Marx’s scientific socialism

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Intended Learning Outcomes
- 3.0. The contemporary relevance of Marx’s scientific socialism
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Self Assessment Exercise
- 7.0. References/Further reading

1.0 Introduction

This unit seeks to investigate the contemporary relevance of Marx’s scientific socialism. The discourse will then interrogate the bearing it has in this epoch.

2.0 Intended Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit it is expected that students would have acquainted themselves with the contemporary significance of Marxism concept of scientific socialism, whether the theory achieved its goal as proposed by Marx and if/how relevant it is in this present era.

3.0 The Contemporary Relevance of Marx’s Scientific Socialism

As previously alluded to, the term “scientific socialism” had its birth in Joseph Proudhon’s *What is Property?* (1840) to depict a society ruled by a scientific government, i.e. one whose sovereignty rests upon reason, rather than sheer will (1994). It was later in 1880 that Friedrich Engels used the term to describe Karl Marx's social-political-economic theory. Thus, in contrast to utopian socialism and classical liberal notions of natural law, scientific socialism refers to a method for understanding and predicting social, economic and material phenomena by examining their historical trends through the use of the scientific method in order to derive probable outcomes and probable future developments (Enrico, 1912).

Though tagged queerly as a prophet when he predicted the inevitable downfall of capitalism and the coming dawn of communism, the expected collapse of the capitalist system and its replacement with a socialist one has not happened, at least not as envisaged. The collapse of the old Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War has made not quite a few to conclude that the conflict between capitalism and Marxist ideas have been resolved in favor of the former. It has been said that Marx’s utopian prediction failed due to his oversight that capitalist growth was based on the primitive accumulation of value extracted from the working class and that scientific and technical progress was not brought about by free competition but was an automatic result of material conditions (Schwartz, 2018). This reinforces the earlier view of Karl Popper that scientific socialism

is a pseudoscience since history cannot be tested or otherwise disproven to warrant the derivation of universal laws from them (1974).

Despite the seeming failure of Marx's prediction however, it cannot be said that it is no longer relevant to contemporary society. In spite of the global penetration of capitalism today we find many of the conditions that Karl Marx addressed in his critique of capitalist political economy. Global inequality is today at the highest level possible, with less than 1 percent of the global population controlling close to 90 percent of global wealth. Technological advancement has not been able to address some of the challenges of the capitalist system and its endless quest for profits, such wars, industrial pollution, climate change and rising emissions, among others.

Psychologically, the value of Marxism lies in the hope it instills in the present day downtrodden and a fruitful method of studying some characteristics about the nature, configuration and polemics of the present society. More so is the healthy revival of class consciousness geared towards advocacy against social inequality and the understanding of inner workings of the capitalist configurations of the world today. In cases where all available amiable means of seeking social justice have been exhausted and nothing seems to budge, his theory can be a veritable tool towards a revolution capable of tipping the scales to a favorable end for the

4.0 Conclusion

While some scholars may be quick to jettison the position of Marx altogether judging from its failure to adequately incarnate itself in the drama of history, further probing would reveal that if not for Marx, something may be lacking in a proper understanding of the capitalist situation in our world of today and the need for justice in cases of social inequality.

5.0 Summary

In brief, Marx's scientific socialism marries the elements of German philosophy, French politics, and British economics to interpret the forces shaping what he regarded as the unfolding of history of class struggles based on the clash of economic interests, with the anticipated overthrow of the capitalist system in favor of socialism and communism. This has not materialized. Yet, the inequalities, exploitation and destruction that capitalism breeds and the crises arising from resource conflicts, among other challenges, point to the continued relevance of Marxist analysis of class struggle, the internal workings of the capitalist world, an aversion for social inequality as well as the place of revolution in social restructuring.

6.0 References/Further Reading

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