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## UNIT 10      COMMUNISM<sup>28</sup>

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### 10.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objectives of this unit are,

- To discuss communism and Marxism.
- To elaborate upon various concepts used in Marxism

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- To give a critical assessment of Communism, in general and Marxism, in particular.

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## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

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Communism is an amorphous term that encompasses a vast range of imagined utopias. The word itself originated with an eighteenth-century French aristocrat called Victor d' Hupay, who envisioned living in “communes” as an ideal form of social life. In its current usage “communism” refers to a political and economic ideology that is opposed to liberal democracy and capitalism because of an individualism that is integral to both. It offers to us a version of society that has been brought into existence through the struggles of the working class. The two thinkers who conceptualized the theoretical underpinnings of communism, the way it would unfold, and the historical conditions that would be required to bring it to fruition, were Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). In 1847, as members of the Communist League, an organization of German émigré workers, both Marx and Engels were commissioned to write a Communist Manifesto, which they did. The *Communist Manifesto*, a bible on communism, was published in 1848.

The unit begins by discussing briefly, the lives of Marx and Engels and their lifelong intellectual partnership. This would be followed by how Marx perceived philosophy, what were his “debts” or “borrowings” from thought on the Continent, and how did he critique the mainstream philosophical movements. The focus would then shift to the substantial part of this Unit, viz. the principal tenets of communism. The final section of the Unit would engage critically with the communist ideology.

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## 10.2 LIFE

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Marx was born to Jewish parents in Triar, Germany, into a family that was comfortable in its material endowments. He studied Law at the University of Bonn where he was, temporarily, mesmerized by romanticism. The following year saw him at the University of Berlin, debunking romanticism for Hegelianism. Not able to take up a career in the University because of a ban on the same by the Prussian government, Marx moved into journalism and, in 1842, assumed the editorship of *Rheinische Zeitung*. His writings centered on a vigorous critique of Christianity and Prussian autocracy. Such was the provocative nature of his writings, the government closed the

paper, and Marx moved to France, a fertile ground for many sects of socialism. It was here that Marx became a doctrinally convinced communist, he put down his views in a series of writings known as the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*. Inspired by Feuerbach, he discerned the alienated nature of labor in a capitalist society as against a communist society that facilitates a non-hierarchical interaction among human beings in cooperative production. In general, Marx studied the various modes of production, found capitalism the most reprehensible among these, and predicted the eventual triumph of communism. At this juncture Engels came into Marx's life, the two were to remain collaborators over their joint resolve to fight capitalism and bring about communism. Expelled from Paris in 1844, Marx moved to Brussels with Engels. Here he undertook an intensive study of history and elaborated his unique thesis about a materialist conception of history in a manuscript which was published posthumously as *German Ideology*. In 1849, hounded by the political authorities on account of his political writings, Marx sought refuge in London, it proved to be the final terminus for him. He incurred considerable hardship because he had six children, his writings as a foreign correspondent for a newspaper did not suffice. Finally, in 1869, Engels settled a substantial income on his companion, and Marx's situation eased. For the rest of his life, he devoted his energies to writing on political economy, capital, landed property, wage-labor, the State and the world market. He passed away in 1883.

Engels was born to a textile manufacturer in Westphalia in 1820. Though trained for a merchant's profession in Bremen, Engels developed literary ambitions, and like Marx, fell captive to Hegelianism. He moved to England in 1842 to work in his father's firm in Manchester. A couple of years of residing in the textile district sensitized him to the working class, he shed off his Hegelian idealism, and began believing that the potential for a revolutionary transformation lay in the labor class. Thus was born his alliance with Marx. For a time, he left his business to devote himself full time to political work with Marx in Brussels, Paris and Cologne. In 1850 he rejoined the family business and extended continuous financial assistance to the Marx family that was going through straitened circumstances.

As Marx's health declined Engels got more actively involved in the political work that he had been doing with Marx. The credit for expounding and disseminating the Marxist position to the general public goes to Engels. He also authored *Origin of the Family* and *Ludwig Feuerbach*; these publications cemented his reputation as a philosopher in his own right. After Marx's death Engels

devoted himself to the onerous task of editing and publishing the second and third volumes of *Capital*. He died of cancer in 1895.

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### 10.3 MARX AND PHILOSOPHY

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The title of Marx's doctoral thesis was "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature." While he perceived Democritean atomistics as being no more than a physical theory, the Epicurean model excited him. An important aspect of Epicurus's atomic theory was the idea of the atom's random declination. This connoted for Epicurus the atom's negation of all motion and relation by which it is defined as a specific being by another being, thus ensuring its singularity. Marx, though attracted more to Epicurus than to Democritus, found in this view a concept of freedom that was abstract and acquired non dialectically. True freedom, for communism, is procured in an interpersonal context through *praxis*, and not by relinquishing the social. The communist will celebrate an equitable and just society, not *freedom from the world* which is implicit in Epicurean atomistics. Nonetheless, Epicurus had stimulated Marx to think in a certain fashion.

From Aristotle Marx inherited his conviction that the economic aspect of our life has a strong relationship to the political, and, by implication, the ethical. Enlightenment movement in Europe in the eighteenth century, with its attendant privileging of science, and the resultant materialism as a worldview, impacted Marx and Engels too. However, one must remember that there was no straight-forward, uncritical borrowing from philosophical traditions by communism, rather, each of the strands from other philosophical traditions, when it appears in communism, has been reappropriated in a materialist context.

In his young age Marx was attracted to an amorphous group called the Young Hegelians. It comprised some of the celebrated intellectuals in Germany, such as Bruno Bauer, Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Feuerbach. The Young Hegelians drew on Hegel's veneration of Reason and Freedom as the guiding forces of history. These young men believed that change was inevitable, hence they began arguing for political and social reforms. Feuerbach was the unchallenged leader of this group. Later, Marx and Engels left the group because they felt that there was an idealist trend in the thinking of the Young Hegelians. Marx himself perceived philosophy as an endeavor to offer rationalist accounts of the world, and the human experience of it. This remained a primordial

philosophical project from the pre-Socratic Greeks to the key thinker of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant. Kant gave a pivotal place to autonomy in his writings, perceiving it as *the* central philosophical concern. However, there were some serious flaws that a close reading of *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* disclosed. Hegel took over this incomplete task. He affirmed what came to be a famous remark, that the Real is structurally Rational. For Hegel, this structure is dialectical, which means that it evolves by a series of negations. The real, at any given time, can be called a *thesis*. Gradually, because the real is always dynamic, there comes into being an *antithesis* of the thesis. The antithesis can be called a contradiction of the thesis. In this interplay of oppositions, we witness a third movement, called *synthesis*, in which both the thesis and the antithesis are incorporated into a higher unity.

From the vantage point of Marx, the Hegelian dialectics, though certainly a significant concept, however, remains confined to *ideas* at best. If freedom has to be won in the real world then we have to transition to real experience as *materialists*. What the Young Hegelians failed to accomplish is undertaken by Marx, who propounded an explicitly materialist conception of history, and the dialectical movement that characterizes all historical events. In the *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845), Marx himself observed that he developed a theory of action, a goal-directed material activity in which the subject and object of knowledge mutually constitute one another.

In the famous eleventh *Thesis on Feuerbach*, Marx observed, “the philosophers have so far only interpreted the world; the point, however, is to change it.” Feuerbach looked upon religion as offering to humanity an idea of God that is completely immaterial. “God” indicates the myriad ways in which humans have perceived the world. He believed that this meaning can be unraveled only by undertaking a criticism of religion. While criticism does not effect a change in the world, it does help in reorienting one’s perspective to the subject being criticized. Feuerbach’s attempts to construct a philosophical anthropology inspired Marx, who turned from religion to the real world and human suffering. Suffering that, as observed by Marx, makes religion, the “opium of the people,” necessary.

### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Who are the philosophers that influenced Marx, either positively, or negatively?

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## 10.4 DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

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A paramount precept of Marxist philosophy is Dialectical Materialism. It is a synthesis of a scientific materialism and Hegelian dialectics. The net result of this endeavor is a theory according to which reality comprises a unity of two contraries, mind and matter, and in which matter is foremost. The interaction between any contradictories generates a constant movement, and this is lent to history. In other words, history unravels as perpetual movement, it is never stagnant. Unlike Hegel’s dialectic that charted the movement only among ideas, Marx employs dialectic in a materialist context.

At any given time, a society should be seen in terms of its economic organization, the other aspects of its structure are derivative from this highest-ranking factor. To put it simply, the legal and political system of a social body, its culture, prohibitions and injunctions, in other words, its dominant moral perceptions, can be best explicated through its economic organization. This view is called Historical Materialism.

According to Marx, a society is structured by three inter-related elements. These are as follows:

The productive forces of a society, which refer to the productively used material resources available at any given time, including natural resources, the labor that is employed to work on those resources, and the level of technological development that is going to impact on production. The productive forces get enlarged over time due to new discoveries of natural resources and improved technologies.

The relations of production, meaning thereby, the ownership of these resources as formally awarded by the law of the land. Put more simply, the property rights which are legally recognized over these productive forces.

“The Superstructure”—or, the other features of the political, moral, cultural and religious constituents of a society that serve to validate existing social relations. An example will help here. We know that feudalism in Europe produced a markedly hierarchized society in which the landed gentry repressed the serfs. Over a period of time, the serfs began small, individual enterprises of sorts as attempts to overcome their penury. These ventures were forerunners of capitalism. Additionally, the discovery of the “new world,” the sighting of recently developed trade routes to Africa and Asia and the increase in human personnel as potential labor, helped generate a capitalist economy. However, because of the capitalist mentality to manipulate the labor and exploit material resources, there was a perceived need for change, and socialism, followed by communism, transpired. The point is that no economic organization was permanent, variations within it, small or major, resulted in changes all along in the superstructure.

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## 10.5 IDEOLOGY

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Ideology can be described as a set of beliefs that hold currency in a society because they buttress the ruling class. These beliefs may be philosophical, religious, moral or cultural in nature, the point is that they are held by the ruling class, for example, the capitalists here who possess the economic power. The capitalists begin believing that their wealth is a legitimate acquisition, and harbor the hallucination that their proposed self-enrichment and progress is actually beneficial to the class from which its wealth has been taken, namely, the labor. As Marx observes,

Morality, religion, metaphysics and all the rest of ideology as well as the forms of consciousness corresponding to these, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. They have no history, no development; but men, developing their material production and their material intercourse, alter along with their actual world, also their thinking and the product of their thinking.<sup>29</sup>

Here, it must be stressed that there is no straight-forward, mechanical correspondence between base and superstructure. In a letter to Joseph Bloch in 1890, Engels makes this clear:

According to the materialist conception of history, the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. If therefore somebody twists this into a statement that the economic element is the only determining one, he

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<sup>29</sup> Marx, Karl, *The German Ideology*, in David McLellan, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, Oxford University Press, 1977.

transforms it into a meaningless, abstract and absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its consequences...political, legal, and philosophical theories, religious ideas and their further development into systems of dogma—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form.

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## 10.6 CLASS

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The concept of class has a centrality in communist theory though it did not receive a systematic exposition at the hands of either Marx or Engels. At the same time, both of these thinkers were fully aware of the class- character of capitalism, and, by implication, about the class struggles in a capitalist society. An oft-quoted remark in the *Communist Manifesto* is, ‘the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.’ Two primary classes in the capitalist society are the bourgeoisie, or the owners of the capital, and the proletariat, or the workers who are employed in the industry without any capital in their name, they sell their labor power. It is clear that the interests of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are opposed to each other. Thus is generated the famous class- struggle. The strength of the capitalists is their wealth, their control of political power, and their general dominion over key institutions of society, such as the media, schools, churches. Through the latter they propagate their power and engage in indoctrination of the masses. The power of the workers lies in their numerical strength, and a tacit fraternity with their fellow-workers which is the unintended consequence of working in the factories together, and identifying the commonalities in each other’s working conditions.

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## 10.7 ALIENATION

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Workers in a capitalist society do not own the means of production, which means, the raw materials, the machines, and the factories, and yet, the workers are engaged with each of these. These are the possessions of the capitalists, who “lend” them to such workers who sell their labor power in return for a wage. This inherent asymmetry between the two classes leads to alienation among the laboring class. The worker is alienated from his/her productive capacities since these are, in a sense, “pledged” to the capitalist. The conditions for the exercise of these capacities are formulated by the capitalist. Further, the worker is alienated from the product of his labor, he/she is not a part of decision-making regarding *what* is to be produced, or how it is to be distributed

once it has been “produced.” Moreover, alienation is evidenced in the workers in a social sense as a cooperative society of a pre-capitalist era gives way to a competitive one under capitalism. Mutual suspicion replaces trust as workers endeavor to survive to the best of their abilities. Production under a capitalist economy has an overall dehumanizing effect on the workers as their creative potential gets compromised in an organization where “mass manufacture” is the need of the hour.

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## 10.8 EXPLOITATION

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It broadly means that we extract more from an interactive situation than is warranted, simply put, exploitation implies taking advantage. For instance, the capitalist seeks a large profit margin, and profit is income that remains after all costs of production, including the costs of the materials and wages disbursed to the workers, have been settled. According to Marx, labor is the principal source of all value, this value exceeding the investment that the capitalist had made in any venture. Evidently, the profit-motive that drives the capitalist determines to a large extent the subsistent wages that are given to the workers, given the vast “army of the unemployed.” Exploitation is the outcome because of the vast difference in the income between the workers and the capitalists, the latter getting from production a disproportionately larger income than the workers. The singular intention of the capitalist class is to multiply its profits, and this is done by modernizing machines and increasing production, the requirements of the workers for safety at work, higher wages and job security for them, are patently overlooked.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Examine Marx’s views on religion, alienation and exploitation.

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## 10.9 COMMUNISM AND THE *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*

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Marx employed the term “communism” to connote a working-class movement in a capitalist society, as also the instantiation of a society as an outcome of this movement. Together with Engels he asserted in the *Communist Manifesto* that the Communists are not antagonistic to the working-class, but represent the interests of the proletariat as a whole. Socialism and communism appeared on the intellectual scene as synonyms in the second half of the nineteenth century. Marx and Engels tacitly consented to their movement being described as ‘Social Democratic’ at one point. However, Engels did observe that the latter term was inappropriate to apply to a party that explicitly advocated the absence of the entire state, including the state as democratic. To put it in clear perspective, let us say that while communism was a form of prescribed revolutionary action, which aimed at a violent overthrow of capitalism, socialism was, by contrast, a peaceful and constitutional movement of gradual reforms.

It was significant that Marx was cynical of the achievements of the French Revolution. He believed that political emancipation was incomplete without a complete overhaul of the material conditions of humanity at large. According to Marx, comprehensive freedom can be attained only by focusing on the sphere of production, distribution and exchange. He was averse to an understanding of human as a mere being, he opposed Aristotelian understanding of Man as Rational. Marx stressed the potential that was latent in *praxis*, the essential human trait for him lay in productive activity, rather than in mere contemplation. A world where labor was alienated was a world in which autonomy was undermined. The workers were enslaved by capitalism, an arrangement conceived by humans, but that has been transformed into a Frankenstein. Capitalism has become the sovereign that is the primary cause of alienation among the workers. Once the workers become conscious of the causative factors that have impoverished them, they resolve to overthrow this system. This is what is celebrated by communism, this revolutionary *praxis* by the proletariat that will actualize a world from which capitalism has been ejected.

In *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx writes, “Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship

of the proletariat.”<sup>30</sup> The “dictatorship” that Marx talked about does not refer to the non-judicious/violent rule of either one monarch, or a small group of people. It is, rather, about the empowered working class, and their democratic rule. This power is provisional, one that is invoked to oversee the transition in a society from capitalism to communism. Unlike the bourgeoisie, the proletariat forms a numerical majority, and once they gain political power, they have to employ it to eliminate capitalism in its material and human aspects. The dictatorship of the proletariat lasts only till such time that we arrive at a communist society, one in which the state is rendered superfluous.

In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx has listed ten measures that the proletariat, upon its victory over the bourgeoisie, will immediately put into effect. They are as follows:

- 1) Abolition of property in land and application of all rents on land to public purposes: Marx believed that landless peasants must be collectivized on the estates of their former landlords. In other words, the communist society would transition from private property in land to property that is communally owned.
- 2) A heavy progressive or graduated income tax: In an industrialized society there are bound to be inequalities of income because of the unequal skills that prevail in the labor class, and some specialization that exists among those skills. The resultant inequality of incomes is sought to be equalized by this measure.
- 3) Abolition of rights of inheritance: This principle aims to achieve wealth equality after those living have passed away. A level playing field in terms of material advantages and equality of opportunity was the guiding idea for Marx.
- 4) Confiscation of the property of all emigrants and rebels: The victory of the proletariat will often be challenged by some sections of the bourgeoisie, this measure is intended as a punishment for them.
- 5) Centralization of credit in the hands of the state, by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly: Through the control of credit, the state can take an informed decision about which parts of the economy should be strengthened, and which ones wound up because of non-performance.

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<sup>30</sup> Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program, Selected Writings II*, Moscow, 1951, p21.

6) Centralization of communication and transport in the hands of the state: Free transport for the poor is an immediate implication of this principle.

7) Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the state, the bringing in cultivation of waste lands, and the improvement of the soil generally in accordance with a common plan.

8) Equal liability of all to labor: Establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture. The inability to work on account of age or disability apart, the privilege not to work has been abolished by this principle.

9) Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country. Marx observes that, “The abolition of the antagonism between town and country is one of the first conditions of communal life.”<sup>31</sup>

10) Free education for all children in public schools: Abolition of children’s factory labor in its present form. Combination of education with industrial production, etc. Marx was clear that the educational system manifested in schools should be unpenetrated by either the government or the church, people themselves should formulate the guidelines about the running of the schools.

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## **10.10 RETHINKING COMMUNISM**

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The key idea here is that social ownership of productive goods must replace privately owned property. Now, this solution that has been offered to combat the exploitation of the workers, has been criticized on the grounds that collectively owned assets will incapacitate the system because of its inefficiency. Moreover, there is no guarantee that a socially-owned capital will remove inequality since the majority in the aforementioned society may monopolize the greater share of resources for itself, leading to a deprivation of the minority. In a situation of a “level- playing field,” which is the claim of the Communist, disparate levels of wealth will come into existence as people do not exercise their choice in the same manner, and perceptions of risk and consumption-patterns differ among people. The view that the abolition of capitalism will annihilate all competition seems too far-fetched to command conviction.

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<sup>31</sup> Marx and Engels, *German Ideology*, trans. Pascal, London, 1942, p.44.

In 1899, there appeared a criticism of Marx's theory within Marxism, by Eduard Bernstein. His principal contention was that the predicted polarization of the classes was not taking place. This was due to elevated levels of living and the expansion of the middle class. This observation was subscribed to by many Marxists. Crucially, this perception also generated the study of non-class social movements, such as racism and feminism in relation to class conflict. A mention must be made of the post-modern critique of grand foundationalist theories that were an outcome of the Enlightenment, and that assume that our employment of reason enables us to discover universal truths about the world. Jean-Francois Lyotard was one such prominent thinker who cast a suspicion on all "metanarratives," such as Kantianism, Hegelianism and Marxism. These philosophers have been teleological, and post-modernism is suspicious of any endeavor to apply overarching and normative propositions that ostensibly apply to persons regardless of their specificities, such as race, gender or caste.

Last, but most significant, is the post-modernist's dismantling of the traditional, Cartesian subject— rational, coherent and fully transparent. Such a subject is a presupposition of communism. Supported by psychoanalysis, there has been a progressive whittling away of a fully self-conscious subject, and a recognition of the Unconscious that is integral to a self, and that renders it therefore, as opaque. The class-subject of the communist theory, aiming at its self-transformation, becomes a chimera.

*PONDER BOX-I*

Are economic forces the only factors driving historical and social change?

What about racial and gender inequalities? Do the latter receive a satisfactory treatment at the hands of Marx and Engels

**Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss the salient features of communism.

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## 10.11 LET US SUM UP

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We can summarize our discussion with the help of the following points,

- Communism refers to a political and economic ideology that is opposed to liberal democracy and capitalism because of an *individualism* that is integral to both these theories.
- Communism offers us a version of society that has been brought into existence through the struggles of the working class.
- Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, it was a programmatic statement on Communism. These two thinkers had a lifelong intellectual partnership.
- Early Greek philosophers, Kant, and Hegel were closely studied by Marx and Engels. Marx believed that philosophy had got mired in idealism, and, over the millennia had only interpreted the world. The point was, emphasized Marx, to *change* it.
- Communism inherits from Hegel the concept of the *dialectical method*, however, unlike Hegel, applies it to understand the progress in human history. A materialist outlook is fundamental to communism.
- According to communism, society is constituted by three inter-related elements: material and natural resources, worked upon by the laboring class, the ownership over the resources and the machines, and the factories, and, finally, those features of the political, moral, cultural and religious constituents of a society that serve to validate existing social relations.
- The moral, religious and metaphysical beliefs that hold currency in a society are not independent but a direct outcome of the material behavior of humans.
- The principal history of a society has to be understood through *class*. There are two major classes, the bourgeoisie, or the propertied class, and the proletariat, or the wage laborers who offer their services to the bourgeoisie or the capitalists.

- Rampant alienation among the workers, and their blatant exploitation by the owners of the capital are intrinsic to capitalism. The wages given to the labor class are subsistent wages, the major share of the profits being monopolized by the bourgeoisie.
- In a major departure from liberal egalitarianism (with its focus on the *individual*) Marx perceives exploitation and inequality as pertaining to the *group* of workers, being perpetrated by the capitalists as a group.
- The communist solution to these ills is to socialize the means of production. A working-class movement is required in order to abolish private property, bring in a provisional ‘dictatorship of the proletariat,’ and centralize credit in the hands of the state. As the situation all around improves after the demise of capitalism, a time will come when the state will erode. Communism has no need for a state.
- Communism has been perceived as offering too parochial a perspective to look at social ills, namely, through the economic lens. There are many major issues that afflict a society at any given time, such as race, gender, and caste. These require an independent analysis, to view them only through the economic criterion is to do them injustice.

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## 10.12 KEY WORDS

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**Bourgeoisie:** Engels described the bourgeoisie as ‘the class of the great capitalists who, in all developed countries, are now almost exclusively in possession of all the means of consumption, and of the raw materials and instruments necessary for their production.’

**Capitalism:** A term denoting a mode of production in which capital in its various forms is the principal means of production. Capital can take the form of money or credit for the purchase of labor power and materials of production. Whatever the form, it is the private ownership of capital in the hands of a class.

**Communism:** an actual political movement of the working class in capitalist society, and as a form of society which the working class, through its struggle, would bring into existence.

**Proletariat:** Or, the working class. For Marx and Engels, the working class, engaged in a struggle with the bourgeoisie, was the political force which would accomplish the destruction of capitalism and a transition to socialism—‘the class to which the future belongs.’

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## 10.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## 10.14 ANSWERS TO KNOW YOUR PROGRESS

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### *Some Questions and Their Answers in an Outline*

#### **Check Your Progress I**

1.

1. Marx wrote his doctoral thesis on Democritus and Epicurus. He perceived in Epicurus an anticipation of a political theory that celebrated freewill. However, Marx believed that the freedom being talked about was abstract. Freedom, for Marx, presupposes an interpersonal context, freedom can never connote an extrication from human society. It must be realized in this world itself. For some time, Marx was under the sway of Aristotle who, unlike the utilitarians, had stressed on functioning rather than on well-being. This impressed Marx who had a decided preference for *doing* rather than *being*.

2. Marx and Engels believed that philosophers have engaged in varying degrees of idealisms, so they are ineffective in bringing about an actual change in the world. We need *praxis* if we are to alter our oppressive social and political environments. Kant is a case in point.

3. Both Marx and Engels became members of a philosophical group called Young Hegelians who perceived themselves as heirs of the materialist tradition of Hegel, and, therefore, committed to

carrying forward his project of human emancipation. Marx and Engels left this group because they believed that it was leaning towards idealism.

4. Hegel, whom Marx went on to criticize in several of his writings had a substantial influence on Marx. The notion of the dialectical method, which was applied to understand historical movement by Marx, was a direct inheritance from Hegel. Dialectical materialism, a key concept in communism, is a synthesis of scientific materialism and the dialectical method of Hegel. While Hegel employs this method to understand ideas, Marx deploys it to see how history moves forward.

### **Check Your Progress II**

1.

1. Marx was immensely influenced by Feuerbach concerning his views on religion. According to Feuerbach, God is insubstantial and immaterial, it is a human projection of all that is not to be found in the humans. Simply put, God is an alienated image of a perfected human, in which the perfections are not to be found in the human beings themselves. Marx found in Feuerbach's critique of religion the beginnings of a philosophical anthropology.

2. Marx looked upon religion as an opiate of the masses, but he did not discount it. He observed, on the contrary, that "religion is the sigh of the oppressed creatures."

3. Marx remarked about the alienation of the worker from his labor since his employers alone the conditions under which he must work. He is alienated from his fellow-workers since the capitalist creates a competitive environment in which suspicion replaces affection. Capitalism focuses on growth, and growth is generated only through profits. Even though labor is the chief source of all value, it is the most unremunerated section of society. The profits are monopolized by the capitalist, the worker remains underpaid. Alienation and exploitation are intrinsic to capitalism.

### **Check Your Progress III**

1.

1. First envisioned by Marx and Engels. In 1848, they published the *Communist Manifesto*, which is a programmatic statement on what communism is, and how it could to be realized in our society.

2. A communist society emerges from the ruins of a capitalist society.

3. Capitalism is an economic arrangement in a society that produces inequality in wealth and class. The two main classes which are evidenced in a capitalist economy are the bourgeoisie, or the owners of the capital, and the proletariat, comprising the workers who are employed by the capitalists in their factories in exchange for a wage.

4. Capitalism can be described as a political regime in which the political power rests in the hands of the capitalist, the mass of the workers is precluded from participating in the governance. The productive process present in the factories is inhuman, there is complete absence of any pro-worker legislation. Long hours of work, absence of safeguards at work and really low wages for the service rendered, are some of the problems that are present in an industry that is privately owned. Blatant exploitation of the labor class is in evidence.

5. The worker grows alienated from the product of his labor because of the specialization of labor.

6. A consciousness arises in the worker about his abysmal conditions of work and subsistent wages.

7. The task of changing this radically unequal world falls to the proletariat who has “nothing to lose but their chains.” A social revolution will overthrow the capitalist organization of society, and bring in the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

8. Under communism, there is a social ownership of the means of production. There is an amelioration of the working conditions inside the factories along with a shortening of the working-day. A high degree of cooperation and concern for everyone is a feature of communist society.