
7.12 KEY WORDS

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.’

7.13 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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7.14 ANSWERS TO KNOW YOUR PROGRESS

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.



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