

## Political Science Shayan Uddin

Q. Discuss Karl Marx's views on class, state, and religion in detail. (20)

1) Introduction:

Karl Marx was a German philosopher also renowned as the father of modern sociology. Karl Marx devoted his life for advocating against the capitalist society. He was the head of a labour organisation and believed in proletariat (lower class) dictatorship. He mentioned his thoughts in his famous work 'Communist Manifesto'. In his work along with Engels Marx divides class in two forms the proletariat (lower class) and bourgeoisie (upper class). According to Marx and Engels, The capitalists (bourgeoisie) use the means of production to gain surplus, while



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workers (proletariat) are not given product or benefit. Karl Marx believed in a revolutionary ideology. He mentioned this in his book, "Das Kapital", while arguing there to be a revolution which would result in a complete proletariat dictatorship. Later on in his book, "The Gotham Program" (which got published after his death) he defined a class-less society which would be based on state laws. He defines the society as a house structure; stating how the base is the economic foundation consisting of means of production and relations of production, whereas the upper structure (superstructure) consists of laws, moral codes and religion which maintain an authority above the base economic foundation.



2) Karl Marx's views on class in a society:

a) Division of class:

In his initial work with Engels, Karl Marx published his work, "Communist Manifesto". In this book he defines the division of class in a society. He portrays the idea of two classes in a society. Naming the Bourgeoisies as factory owner and the Proletariat as the workers.

b) How Bourgeoisies exploit Proletariat class:

He argues how the factory owners (bourgeoisies/capitalists) exploit the factory workers (proletariats) by gaining surplus from them. The capitalists in his works make sure that the

lower class is not given any surplus gains other than their low pay. With this phenomenon the rich have gotten richer while the poor left for suffering.

### c) The class conflict within the society:

He argues in his work how the classes in a society have been in conflict since the birth of mankind. The revolutionary ideology of society leads to change in long term bases. He chooses Europe as an example. He defends his claim stating there to be higher wages for workers in factories in Europe along with bonuses. He defines how such a revolution is necessary for abolishment of bourgeoisie dictatorship.



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### d) Abolishment of bourgeoisie dictatorship and rise of proletarian dictatorship:

As for the era of industrialization, Marx predicted there to be a time when the proletariat would stand up for their rights and proclaim the common good of the society. In his last work, "The Communist Manifesto", Marx defines the ~~rise~~ rise of proletarian dictatorship which would end the capitalist society and make a class-less state in future.

### 3) Karl Marx's view on state:

Karl Marx views state in a different perspective. Rather discussing the state internal external affairs, he defines

it on the basis of class. Karl Marx  
who complete debate was on the  
exploitation of proletarian class.

### a) Dependency of state on the bourgeoisie class:

Karl Marx defines this concept in  
his work, "The Communist Manifesto".  
He states how the state is economically  
dependant on the upper class of a  
society as they run the means of  
production. In his point of view the  
proletariat class is ignored by the  
state rather are also exploited in  
order to boost more production.

### b) Exploitation of Proletariat using the state as tool:

Karl Marx argues on the concept that  
social classes are made up of



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a social contract is not true. He defines, there a control of upper class suppressing the lower class in order to gain more surplus while ignoring any moral or legal codes. We can see for example the law on slavery in earlier times in America. The capitalists were protected by the states to purchase and exploit slaves in order to boost ~~means~~ production.

#### 4) Marx view on Religion

He defines religion as the upper structure of a society. He defines how the base structure (economy) is dependent on the upper structure (religion and law). The religious exploitation of the proletariat makes the capitalists more strong also making them invincible in lower class eyes.

## a) Religion, a tool of upper class:

Karl Marx argues how the ruling upper class use religion in order to suppress the voice of lower class. Through religious ideologies and brain washing. He gives the example of 'King being the most divine' or 'King the god on Earth' would make people accept the fate of misery and become economically dependant on the upper class.

## b) Wrong use of religion:

The Capitalist class use religion as the source to intoxicate the lower class. They exploit them by brain feeding as how a good life would be promised to you in the hereafter but in order to attain that, you must obey and be loyal to your owner.



## 5) Criticism of Marx theory:

The marxist theory laid by Karl Marx is based on early industrialisation issues. Such theory is baseless in today's modern society. There are still some issues in the work place, but they are mostly linked to gender or other ethnic issues. Karl Marx has over exploited the capitalist system with no proper solution to this. He defines there to be a time of proletarian dictatorship which is not practically possible in our society. Other than this he portrayed a over dependency of lower class on upper class which could not be generalised to the whole world.

## 6) Conclusion:

In conclusion, Marx's theory defined two divisions of classes, the proletariat being the lower and bourgeoisie being the upper, capitalist class. He argues a relation between the two stating exploitation of proletariat by the bourgeoisie. Other than this he defines how the state benefits with the proletariat exploitation through more economic benefits. The religion on the other hand also protects the upper class, making them invincible in light of class division. His theory portrays the issues of 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> century during the early industrial revolution, however this theory has no modern practical implications.