

Inconsistencies And Tensions Of Marxism And Communism

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Introduction

Communism can be viewed through two lenses: as a body of economic theory and philosophy and as a political ideology or movement with the goal of transforming a political system into a communist state. Although Marx and Engels provided the intellectual foundations of modern communism, Lenin adapted this intellectual blueprint into a revolutionary movement in the Soviet Union that resulted in the formation of the first communist state and inspired revolutionary movements in China and the colonial world. This paper draws on the knowledge about Marxism and the development of communism in Russia and China. The paper seeks to present a discussion on the inconsistencies and tensions between Marxism as a philosophy and communism as a political system in the development of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China for consideration. Then, it explores ways in which communist leaders in these two countries reconciled these inconsistencies and tensions and the effect this had on the stability of the communist party in these states.

Marxism and Class Inequality

The age-old question in societies is why are certain members impoverished, and in most cases, a smaller number rich? Karl Marx's and Friedrich Engel's theory of Marxism tries to explore this situation through an in-depth exploration of how the capitalist society, which arose from feudalism, operates and who it favours in the community. Marxism is an exhaustive analysis of the social and economic relations through which people earn their living. In detail, it explores the inherent struggle and complex connections between two social classes: the capitalists who own the means of production and the workers who must toil for survival (Krieger, Joel, Margaret & Crahan, 572). Notably, class struggle is central to the social change experienced throughout humanity's history. Marx and Engel's analysis bore the antithesis to capitalism, which is the individual ownership of production resources and distribution of goods in open competitive markets driven by profits. On the contrary, they developed Marxist socialist ideologies, which represent the untapped potential of capitalism, which would allow public proprietorship of the means of production, distribution, and exchange (Krieger et al., 575). Marx believed that exploitation of the immense natural resources under advanced capitalist forms of organization promotes justice and democratic societies in which people are free to develop their distinct human qualities.

Marxist philosophy is founded on three general paradigms- the alienation theory, the labour theory of

value, and the materialist conception of history (Macridis, Roy, 15). The three-pronged analysis breeds dialectical materialism, which borrows from Hegel's dialectic view of the world as a system existing in complex fluidity, as well as the materialistic nature of humankind (16). According to dialectics, changes and interactions are highlighted by considering them to be the components of the whole system that changes. Thus, when studying the broader context, like capitalism, the contradicting past and present occurrences must be considered to comprehend the continuous process of social functioning and development. Additionally, the consideration of materialism bears dialectical materialism, in which capitalism is imagined as a lived ideology instead of a thought. Notably, such thinking is driven by the consciousness that dialectic ideas are the culmination of observing the persistent remodelling of the world through day-to-day human activities in production (Krieger et al., 580). Therefore, the prevailing social conditions and behaviours have a more significant impact on ideas than ideas can influence the terms.

The theory of alienation is based on the differences between owners of production means and the workers who sell labour or the ability to work for wages ((Macridis, Roy, 20). Thus, the poor are alienated from their productivity, as it is regulated by the capitalist. These owners set the speed, conditions, and availability of the work. Moreover, the workers are alienated from the product of their labour, as they have no influence whatsoever over what happens to it. However, they reenter the workers' lives in the form of daily utilities that they need to pay for. The competitive and indifferences buoyed by limited markets serve to alienate humans from others in a bid to survive. The restrictive workplace restrictions divide workers from their inherent right to the community. Consequently, alienation denies humans the ability to innovativeness and advancement of more exceptional qualities. This alienation culminates in the pricing systems, which seek to accord value to products by the cost of production. Valuation, in the form of pricing, caps the cycle, as it determines profitability, which is the motivation for the creation and thus tying the worker to a sequence of alienation (21).

Communism is a political and economic ideology which positions itself in opposition to liberalism and capitalism. To achieve this, communists advocate for stateless, collective ownership of the factors of production: labour, entrepreneurship, capital and natural resources (Macridis & Roy, 2). In his 'manifesto of Communism,' [Karl Marx](#) highlights the need for the adoption of the mantra, "from each according to ability and to each according to need." Such a situation propagated the distribution of profitability to all workers by eliminating the siphoning off of all profits by capitalists (Macridis & Roy, 5). People were expected to work on what interested them as it facilitated performance, with the output being distributed in accordance with the need to help cater for those who could not work.

Proposed Transition from Private Ownership

In realization of the challenges to transitioning from private ownership, Marx proposed various approaches. Firstly, there was a call to abolish property in land and redirect all land rates to the development of public amenities (Moore & Barrington, 455). The institution of progressively graduated income tax and eradication of all right to inheritance would serve as an equalizer. The

administration was tasked with the seizure of property belonging to rebels and emigrants. The establishment of industrial armies in different sectors and amalgamation of manufacturing and agriculture would serve to maintain equal liability to labour and equitable distribution of the population (456). Integration of education with the production and provision of free education for all children was meant to facilitate generational continuity in the defined ways. The government was supposed to establish a centralized credit facility and control communication, transportation and state factories.

Phases of Communist Transformation

Thus, transformation to communism was to occur in phases. The first phase involved state control, whereby the government was democratically made up of the proletariat, which paid people by their ability to socialism. Such a government emanates from the consciousness of the desire for socialism among the workers. Elimination of further barriers like wages would encourage authentic human growth, and the complete transformation of the nature of work would generate full communism, upon which the states of Russia and China were formed (Miliband & Ralph, np.). In full communism, people understood their collective and individual need for work, thus resulting in less alienation and work times due to increased labour as a means of production. This way, work served to stimulate rather than stunt development. Finally, there would be a replacement of the principal capitalistic transaction of equivalents with a new principal that emphasizes equitable distribution according to their needs (Miliband & Ralph, np.). However, based on these tenets, there were glaring inconsistencies between Marxism and communism.

Russia was backward, devastated economy after the toppling Czarist rule, which was founded on feudalism and minority industrial proletariat (Retish, Aaron, np.). Therefore, the quick completion of the socialist Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 was contrary to Marxist beliefs that change was a gradual process involving the interplay between ideologies and the prevailing value systems. Moreover, Leninism propagated the doctrine that communism was not on offer, and neither was it to be achieved as a peaceful transition that Marx idealized (Miliband & Ralph, np.). Instead, the socialist revolution was a process that required a band of determined revolutionaries to lead dissatisfied, non-socialist-conscious workers with the promise of quick material gain. Additionally, there is a wide berth between the views proposed by Lenin and Marx on the role of administration. While Marx viewed the government as a tool for achieving full capitalism, the communist parties maintained that full capitalism was unattainable, and the state had the responsibility of overseeing the attainment of socialism, which was the highest ideology attainable (Kubalkova, Vendulka & Albert, np.).

To establish their rule, the communist parties adopted various strategies that favoured the perpetuation of their brand of communism. Firstly, they all created a highly centralized form of governance, which was under the control of a dictator. According to Huskey & Eugene (np.), Lenin's perception of the state was that it was an essential component of socialism, which had to be strengthened. Such strengthening required the leadership of one person, who was deemed to

understand the plight of the classes and to possess the ability to accomplish more single-handedly. For instance, the ascendancy of Stalin in Russia and Mao Zedong in China was due to this support for dictatorial rule.

Centralization, Coercion, and Political Tensions

Moreover, such centralization resulted in increased coercion and brutality in a bid to force the party's will on the people. Their definition of socialism as a state-capitalistic monopoly, which is meant to centralize service delivery to people, was crucial to their continued stay in power (Kubalkova, Vendulka & Albert, np.). This sustenance was a result of their monopoly and nationalization of all means of production and communication, which forced dissidents to toe the line. Moreover, the media and communist party propaganda were critical elements in the pursuit of the permanency of communist party rule in these nations. Propaganda was useful for quelling disgruntled citizens, who were made to believe that the government was acting to benefit the people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the regulatory approaches of communist parties contrasted significantly with Marxist ideologies. While Marxism advocated for the complete abolition of the state in full communism, these parties called for the establishment of robust, centralized governments with state monopolies. These governments adopted coercive tactics and brutality to help them remain in power. Moreover, their control over communication channels was key to the spread of propaganda, which was meant to paint a good picture of the parties and generate support in the process.

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