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## Book Review: The Communist Manifesto - Communism: A Path to a Classless Society

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### INTRODUCTION

“The Manifesto” is a platform for workingmen association and embodies the biggest phantom of world ‘Communism’. It is feared to be a power against the caste-based society, which is working for proletariats regardless of nationality. The review studies the material conception of history, i.e. man is of no use if he cannot increase capital i.e., man is useful as long as he can produce capital. It also studies how society's class division is connected to the international exploitation of countries with the role of self-interest in this capital-based society and if communism can be a way to a classless society.

### THESIS

In the epochs of history, we find an arrangement of society into various gradation of social rank. Two processes influence how society is ordered: how goods are produced and how their exchange system works. These two processes play a significant role in determining how society is divided into varied classes. Revolutions bring a change in these ways, thus bringing a change

to society as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Revolutions are a base of change, and they have paved the way for overthrowing the monarchy and establishing the bourgeoisie. The revolutions only made human rights superior, which in turn laid down a path for private ownership of property. The bourgeoisie itself is a product of a series of revolutions in the modes of production as well as the discovery and colonising of nations, which created centralised systems. It has not been able to do away with class antagonisms, and rather, it has established new forms of oppression and new forms of struggle in place of old ones.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, evident is the fact that workingmen need to unite & fight against oppression as a whole regardless of nationality and caste.<sup>3</sup>

## ANALYSIS

*“The slave frees himself when, of all the relations of private property, he abolishes only the relation of slavery and thereby becomes a proletarian; the proletarian can free himself only by abolishing private property in general.”<sup>4</sup>*

The Bourgeoisie era is all about the creation of capital-labour relations along with market relations. The capitalist-led ‘Bourgeoisie era’ has torn apart feudalism. In capitalism, self-interest, i.e., profit maximisation, is the main objective, and private gain is the basis of the bourgeoisie family.<sup>5</sup> Individuals are motivated by their own preservation and economic growth. The shift in social structure, i.e., from the division of labour in different social guilds to the division of labour in every single workshop, has paved the way for the development of a capitalist society from a feudal one.<sup>6</sup> Profit maximisation & self-interest create competition in capitalists, which in turn forces them to exploit proletariats because capitalists come under a compulsion to accumulate, which gives them an unquenchable thirst for surplus value extraction. This driving force creates a mandate for them to cut labour wages, which results in the exploitation of the labour class. In the past, exploitation, as suggested in contrast, was hidden behind religious and political illusions, but presently, it has given up all its moral covers. History

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels, *Principles of Communism* (Progress Publishers 1969)

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Rupa Publications India Pvt Ltd 2016)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Engels (n 1)

<sup>5</sup> Marx (n 2)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

suggests the authoritarian rule and all feudal bonds were in the name of God and had religious justification to say, i.e., the Columbus expedition, which resulted in the conquering of Indigenous people as well as enslaved African Americans, was justified using religion, but the exploitation of proletariats is direct without any justification.<sup>7</sup> As Marx says, ‘Teach a man to catch fish, but the fish he catches aren’t his, they belong to a person who pays him for the fish.’ Direct producers are separated from their produce just as labour is the only way to increase accumulated capital, the more accumulated labour, the more the profit,<sup>8</sup> that is, professionals like lawyers and teachers are only paid for labour power and labour. This class-based capitalism has not even spared education as well as women. Women have been neglected for centuries, but condemning is the fact that still, in this so-called ‘most advanced system of human society,’ they have seen women and children just as tools and merely for materialistic interest. As we have also seen in recent wars, how for economic benefits and self-interest, ruthlessly everyone is killed, whether it be old or young.<sup>9</sup>

‘All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned.’<sup>10</sup>

The bourgeoisie cannot survive without constantly revolutionising the modes of production, which puts them under an obligation to constantly expand the market for their products, and in pursuit of expanding their markets, they run under an obligation to run after the world market.<sup>11</sup> The improvement in communication and increase in interdependence because of self-seclusion and sufficiency resulted in the creation of Globalization, privatisation, and Liberalization, which are ways of exploiting the global market. Centralised communication and other similar ways that paved the way for the formation of nations are now helping powers to control nations. A better term, neo-imperialism, contrasts with the creation of the so-called world system theory.

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<sup>7</sup> Robbie Shilliam, ‘Discovery, Conquest and Colonialism’ in Stephen McGlinchey (ed), *Foundations of International Relations* (Bloomsbury Publishing 2022)

<sup>8</sup> Marx (n 2)

<sup>9</sup> Ellen Meiksins Wood, ‘Capitalism’ in Ben Fine et al. (eds), *The Elgar Companion to Marxist Economics* (Edward Elgar Publishing 2011)

<sup>10</sup> Marx (n 2)

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*

The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in international trade. It has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. The increasing relativity in the world, resulting from rapid improvement of modes of production, makes even the nations with innumerable natural resources trapped in poverty by being exploited by the core countries. As said by Marx, 'Ruling ideologies come from the ruling class.' The core has with them the ownership of means of production, which they are using to exploit the periphery countries. They are the ruling class as they have ownership, which is forcing the periphery to be exploited. The ruling class is selfish and thus supports capitalism because it serves their needs and creates their control over periphery countries, which is also a form of neo-imperialism. In the past, there was a struggle for power between churches and the king, i.e., monarch now it is between the bourgeoisie and remnants of absolute monarchy, wherein these wars' proletariats are used as a weapon by capitalists that they are made to fight enemies of their enemies rather their real enemies.<sup>12</sup>

That's why, there is a need to counter the ideology of unity, i.e., an ideology to unite all, regardless of caste, culture, or national identity, which the ruling class is exploiting. To create a classless society, the proletariat needs to understand otherwise, and they will be constantly used as a weapon by the bourgeoisie against the aristocracy. The interests of communists and the proletariats coincide.<sup>13</sup> They support and bring to the front the entire interest of the proletariat regardless of community, gender, and nationality. Communists aim to abolish private ownership of property.<sup>14</sup> This is contested in the same manner as was the establishment of people's rule, i.e., as people's rule was contested using religion, it is contested using human rights, i.e., people's right to liberty and freedom is endangered with the abolishment of private property.

This justification using liberal theory brings many questions to my mind:

a) Are these rights only vested in the bourgeoisie?

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<sup>12</sup> Joanne Barker, *For Whom Sovereignty Matters' in Sovereignty Matters: Locations of Contestation and Possibility in Indigenous Struggles for Self-Determination* (University of Nebraska Press 2005)

<sup>13</sup> Marx (n 2)

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*

- b) How can a few exploit money out of self-interest if these rights are real?
- c) Would there be the existence of class if these rights had existed in the first place?
- d) Do they only apply to individuals and not to sovereign individual nations?

Historically, as seen in several revolutions, the monarchs were overthrown by people when they understood their homogeneity and shared history, the same is the need of the hour. Capital is not a personal but a social power, also, to bring to existence 'Capitalism,' united action was required, and the same is the requirement to overcome. When the exploitation of one individual by the other is put to an end, the exploitation of one nation by the other will also be put to an end, as proletariats have nothing to lose but their chains.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Marx urged in the book for workingmen to unite.

Can communism create a classless society, or is it a myth because if proletariats outweigh the bourgeoisie, would not the proletariats, out of their self-interest, be willing to create a society in their favour, as human nature is eternal? It poses a significant question 'Who will define who needs what? Is there a scope of manipulation of the needs of different people?' Therefore, even if the bourgeoisie is overthrown from power, wouldn't it result in the creation of some other form of oppression based on the same methods of production as Marx argued was formed by capitalism as there are needs of people and that needs to be fulfilled using resources for which we need a system of resource distribution and ownership and production of goods and services as well. So, it is not as straightforward as it looks, even socialism would create conflicts between different people as everyone would want more resources based on their tendency to maximise self-interest and profit as is in the case of common and public goods as we know today.

## LEARNINGS

The Communist Manifesto thus teaches about the struggles of class and society under capitalism. Learning about capitalism and its base on the material conception of history, we see that capitalism is based on class exploitation where profit maximisation is the main drive, and

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

the worker is treated as an alien to his work, that is, the benefits of his work are taken by the owner, i.e. the person who employs the factors of productions. Under capitalism, these economic conditions result in a deeply exploitative relationship between the bourgeoisie (capitalist class) and the proletariat (working class). This exploitation is further forced by market competition, which is even further enforced by globalisation and world market competition, which leaves working classes within non-Western countries much more exploited. He views, however, that there is a common thread linking the working classes across the world, the strong, unified resistance of these classes, which should aim for socialism. Marx, therefore, suggests that the working class must recognise their shared interests and unite in resistance to the capitalist system, advocating for socialism as a solution, as the abolition of private property rights is a solution to exploitation.

## CONCLUSION

The bourgeoisie are the ruling class, and they have the power to define ruling ideologies. Executives of the modern state are just a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie, and it is all based on the self-interest of profit maximisation. The proletariats develop in proportion with the capital, so the exploitation. To overcome oppression, change is necessary that can be only adduced by uniting and coming together regardless of nationality. 'The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workingmen of all countries, unite.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*