

Classless the rich
and the poor,
exploiters and



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Classless Society: A Dream of Marx: In the Marxian thought, the concept of “classless society” remains as a figment of imagination of Marx.

A classless society devoid of all kinds of exploitation and conflicts is only imaginary. Such a type of society never existed in the past, nor do we find it today. Marx, who had a deep historical insight, was quite aware of this. In spite of this awareness, Marx was cherishing such a dream in his mind. Marx, who had seen the pitiable lot of the workers in the initial stages of the Industrial Revolution, was helplessly aspiring for a classless society.

Marx was sufficiently aware of the Existence of Classes: “Classless society” means a society without the antagonistic classes or strata. It means a society in which the classes with opposing interests such as the land-owners and the landless, workers and management, freemen and slaves, the rich and the poor, exploiters and the exploited, capitalists and labourers, etc. are not found. Such a type of society never existed in the past. The very statement of Marx – “The history of the hitherto existing society is the history of the class struggles” makes it evident that he knew that classes had been in existence from the very beginning of history.

Circumstances Favouring the Emergence of “Classless Society”: As Marx stated, when the human society in its historical development reaches the capitalistic stage of production it gets divided into only two classes namely capitalist class [or the Bourgeoisie] and the working class [or the proletariats]. The former one is the “exploiting class” while the latter is the “exploited” one. Their interests always clash and conflict arises. It is this class conflict which is always responsible for social movements and revolutions.

When the class conflict reaches its final stage the workers gain upper hand in it. They become victorious in this struggle and establish their regime.

In the initial stages “ the dictatorship of the proletariat” will be established and thereafter it prepares the way for the transformation of the society. This transformation finally culminates in the establishment of the classless society. Capitalist System is sure to fall – Marx: Marx was of the opinion that the capitalist system would not last long because it is sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Hence Marx felt that “ The prophecy of capitalism is the prophecy of doom or despair.” About the whole system of capitalism Coser said, “ Thus, the capitalist system enlarges the number of workers, brings them together into compact groups, makes them class conscious, supplies them with means of inter-communication on a world-wide scale, reduces their purchasing power, and by increasingly exploiting them, arouses them to organised resistance.” Marx wanted such an imperfect system to go at the earliest. Hence he gave a call for the workers to put an end to it. Hence his clarion calls: “ workers of the whole world unite, you have nothing to lose, but your chains, you have a world to win.

” Marx was very sure of the fall of the capitalist system. Hence he wrote in the “ Communist Manifesto”: “ The Bourgeoisie produces its own grave-diggers. The fall of the Bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.” Establishment of the Classless “ Communist” Society: When man has become aware of his loss, of his alienation, as a universal non-human situation, it will be possible for him to proceed to a radical transformation of his situation by a revolution. This revolution will be the prelude to the establishment of communism and the reign of liberty

reconquered. “ In the place of old Bourgeoisie society with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” The Classless society, then in the Marxist thought, refers to “ the ultimate condition of social organisation, expected to occur when true communism is achieved.

The classless society is thus the final phase of communism where there will be no classes and no class conflicts. As per the imagination of Marx, in the communist society, that is going to be established after the revolution, the needs of the individuals will be taken proper care. The working principle of the communist society would be: “ From each according to his abilities and to each according to his needs.” This type of society provides opportunities which make the people feel that the entire society is at the back of everyone, because it is based on another noble principle namely: “ All for each and each for all.

” Political Principles of the Classless Society: What is the role of the state in a classless society -? This question is very significant in the Marxian thought. This question has given rise to confusions, disputes, controversies, and embarrassments within the circle of the communists or the Marxists. Marx was very much pessimistic about the state and had contempt for its role. He considered it nothing but the “ organised means of violence.” According to Marx, “ the state represents the dominant class in the society.” The state which is based on exploitation aims to protect the interests of the rich and of the ruling class.

About the role of the state Engels writes: Arising out of class contradictions, “the state becomes the state of the most powerful class; the class which rules in the economics and with its aid becomes also the class which rules in politics and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class.” It is thus clear that the communists themselves regard the state as an instrument of exploitation. Then, what is to be done with the state now-? The “ Withering away” of the State in the Socialist Society: The state in its historical development has always stood with the ruling class protecting its interests. Hence Engels stated that socialism should aim at not only removing the classes but also the state. “ After the class struggle has resulted in the victory of the proletariat and the establishment of a socialist society, however there will be no further need for such a repressive institution; theoretically, the state then, is expected to “ wither away.

” All that is needed is that the workers should unite and hasten the process of the revolution which will ultimately make the state disappear. It is believed that after the proletarian revolution “ the dictatorship of the proletariat” will bring about social and economic justice; then there will be no thesis, anti-thesis and class-war. One man will not exploit another man, and one class will not exploit another class. Thus the ground will be prepared for the disappearance of the state. “ The complete disappearance of the state marks the zenith of “ Marxian socialism.

” “ The State is not abolished, it withers Away”: In the words of Engels, “ the state is not abolished, it withers away.” He writes: “ The society that will reorganise production on the basis of the free and equal association of the producers will put the machinery of the state where it will then belong: into

the museum of antiquities by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe. Transformation of Socialism into Communism under the “ Dictatorship of the Proletariat”: Though the ultimate aim of the revolution is to establish a classless society, the proletariats are going to establish their dictatorship for some time. This dictatorship which will prevail for a short period will act to transform socialism into communism. In this transitional period, it will seize and centralise means of transport and communication. In the temporary phase, labour will be paid according to work, but the ultimate aim is to realise the principle “ from each according to his ability and to each according to his need.” The dictatorship of the proletariat will protect the needs of the working class and provide it socio-economic justice.

Thus, “ under the loving care of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialism will blossom into communism. Main Economic Principles of the Classless Society: As it is stated, in the final phase of communism classless social system will appear. In such a social system there will be “ one single form of public ownership of the means of production and full equality of all members of society. Under it, the all-round development of people will be accompanied by the growth of the productive forces through continuous progress in science and technology.

” In a communist society “ the ability of each person will be employed to the greatest benefit of all the people.” The classless society is one in which all the major industries, commercial establishments, banks, transport and communication systems will be collectively owned and their profits collectively shared. An increase in production or wealth or property will never result in an increase in inequality, but will add to the prosperity of all.

Medical, educational, commercial, banking, transport, communication and other facilities are made equally available for all.

Their main motto will be “ service” and not “ profit making.” All landed property will be in the ownership of the society and cultivation will be carried out on co-operative basis. In the whole economic field there will be no scope for exploitation of any kind.

Society Meeting the Requirements of the People: Classless society ensures uninterrupted progress of society and provides for all the members material and cultural benefits according to their growing needs. People’s requirements will be satisfied from public sources. Articles of personal use will be in the full ownership of each member of the society and will be at his disposal. Every able bodied person will participate in the social labour and thereby ensure the steady growth of the material and spiritual wealth of society.

The communist classless society represents the highest form of organisation of public life. Strengthening of the Societal Power under the Classless Community Society: Classless society is virtually the stateless society. It does not mean that there will be nothing but chaos in such a society. It will by no means be a society of anarchy, idleness and inactivity. On the contrary, people’s organisations will evolve on a voluntary basis to look into the needs of the masses. These organisations will have “ only a social base” and not a political one.

The rights, freedom, honour and dignity of the citizens will be closely protected by the society with the help of these organisations. Classless

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society is a homogeneous society: According to Marx, the elimination of the distinction between classes makes for greater homogeneity of society. All people will have equal status in society and will stand in the same relation to the means of production. All will actively participate in the management of public affairs for there is no scope for the re-emergence of the class system.

Marx was of the firm belief that in a classless communist society “

Harmonious relations will be established between the individual and society..... Classless communist society will, thus, constitute the highest form of organisation of the human community. For all their diversity, the requirements of people will express the sound reasonable requirements of the fully developed person.

” Critical Evaluation of the Marxian “ Theory of Classless Society”: 1. Marxian theory of classless society is regarded as the weakest link in his thought system. Marx was a strong advocate of change. He had great convictions and faith in his thoughts. This faith made him project his own concept of an ideal society, the communist classless society. His view that the historic social revolution will take the people to “ the brave new world” remains only a product of his wishful thinking. Establishment of socialism in a few of the countries [such as Russia that is, U.

S. S. R. of 1917-1990, China, Poland, etc.

] does not reveal as yet any desire to move “ from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom” [Lenin]. It only remains as an unfulfilled desire of the communists such as Lenin. 2.

Classless society of Marxian vision is not to be seen anywhere in the so called communist world even after more than 120 years of death of Marx. His prophecy relating to the “withering away of the state” has not come true. As a matter of fact, in the communist nations today, the state is increasing its power and authority day by day. 3. Marx’s theory of a classless society is a kind of Utopian dream. Marxian utopianism is also not regarded as his original ideal. According to Bogardus, Marxian communism is the result of the Plato’s communism and Moore’s “Utopianism.” 4.

Marxian concept of classless society remains only as a political instrument in the hands of the communists. This concept is being misused for gaining political benefits. It is thus reduced to the level of a tool of political propaganda.

5. “Like all dogmas, Marxism is strong in what it asserts and weak in what it denies.” Marx was, “at his best only when he was thundering as a prophet against the capitalists.” 6.

Durkheim considered Marxian socialism as the theory worthy of being rejected: Durkheim showed interest in Marxian socialism, but his concept of socialism was different from that of Marx’s. “He did not see the proletariat as the salvation of society, and he was greatly opposed to agitation or violence.” He regarded socialism as a movement worthy of being launched for the moral rejuvenation of society and not for obtaining temporary political gains through a violent revolution. He regarded Marxian socialism as “a set of disputable and out-of-date hypothesis” – [Lukes], In spite of its failures and shortcomings, both theoretical and practical, the theory of the

classless communist society makes an appeal to an increasing number. It has had a tremendous appeal to the people with a sense of social justice.