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[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



Moe Peavey History of Western Political Thought The Communist Manifesto

The Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx in 1848 is noted as one of the most influential political documents in the world. The publication of the book earned Marx the reputation of a prominent sociologist and political theorist. Despite his renown, there are many controversies concerning the ideas and concepts of communism formulated in the papers that are still heatedly debated even today. Marx opened the book with, " The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. " (p. 4). He scrutinized the class differences and social inequality between the Proletariats and Bourgeoisies, two terms he coined to represent social classes that do not own the means of production and social classes that do own the means of production respectively. Since The Communist Manifesto was produced in an era of great social distress, it was the result of Marx's desire to eliminate the gap between the two classes in order to ameliorate the social, political, and economic conditions of the Proletarians. To achieve equality, Marx encouraged the Proletarians to conspire against the Bourgeoisies to end the exploitation of lower social classes and set up a communistic society where class distinction is a leap of imagination. However, his ideal required changes that a society cannot successfully adapt to and do not ultimately provide equality. Marx's theories were established upon only class stratification and ignored the many other factors that contribute to the foundation of a society. The entire list of demands that outlines the rules and regulations of communism do not fundamentally offer fairness. Communism disrupts the whole social exchange system which will eventually corrupt the economy of a society. Thus, the theories introduced in The Communist Manifesto by Karl

Marx are not relevant in modern industrialized societies primarily because they focus only on the issue of class stratification and neglected the other complications involved in a society. Marx believed that “ Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — bourgeoisie and proletariat. ” (p. 4). It was a vital mistake to polarize the people exclusively on classes instead of taking into account the other factors that contribute to the build-up of a society such as traditions, religious ideologies, trust, laws, cultures, and such. Attempting to create equilibrium between solely the classes will cause new and severe problems that cannot be fixed with Marx’s theories. As Bryam (2001) identified, there are four basic areas of inquiry based on the discipline of sociology: social structure (the way in which society is organized), social order (how a society is held together), social change (how and why societies such as institutions, power, values, and beliefs change), and social stratification (the manner in which valued resources are distributed). The entirety of Marx’s arguments for communism is based on the assumption that there are only two hostile classes and the differences between these classes is what is throwing a society into turmoil. However, he overlooked the fact that class stratification is but merely a branch of social stratification. Altering the balance of social stratification will greatly impact the other social factors. The impact that the social factors receive when class stratification is changed will differ depending on the way the society is organized. Karl Marx himself emphasized that the reason why the previous communistic doctrines did not produce favorable results was because they do not work for all countries. Marx (1998) noted, “ German philosophers,

would-be philosophers, and beaux esprits (men of letters), eagerly seized on this literature, only forgetting that when these writings immigrated from France into Germany, French social conditions had not immigrated along with them. " (p. 27). Despite this acknowledgement, Marx connoted from preceding criticisms that his communistic ideas were universally applicable. On a global scale, this was not the case. Factually speaking, the majority of citizens of communistic countries suffer through the commonly accepted fears of civilization such as poverty, war, and hunger. Major examples include North Korea, China, Soviet Union, Vietnam, and Cuba. Although Cuba appears to be relatively successful, the former leader, Fidel Castro, has recently announced that communism " does not work" form them. In chapter two of The Communist Manifesto, Marx romantically outlined the basic demands that are required for communism. Despite the shortage of length, an outstanding sum of unfair and discriminating requisitions that contradict the purpose of the book appeared within the sentences. The annexation or abolition of real estates, inheritance, and money, along with the centralization of means of communication and transportation all put limits on the choices of citizens. An equable distribution of populace and equal obligation for all to work will allocate people to unfavorable regions. Furthermore, not fully matured students are required to work and study at the same time. It is unethical to deprive a person of their freedom and coerce them into doing what the State wants. More importantly, the class differences did not disappear as it moved from the divide between the Proletariat and Bourgeoisie to the citizens and the State as Bryam (2001) pointed out. Another important job of the social exchange system is to

regulate the supply and demand system. Most commonly, this concept is used to describe the market conditions for goods and services. Ideally, supply and demand exist dependent on each other so they can adjust accordingly to find a balance that suits both. Since Marx sought after an autocratic market, the supply and demand exist independent of each other. There are several issues involved with this lack of interdependence. Strict government control limits the flexibility of quantities manufactured as demands are not continuously accounted for. This distorts the actual amount of supplies needed to meet the demand and causes a society to easily produce more or produce less products or services than needed. Either way, the government loses money which contributes majorly to the corruption of the economy. The supply and demand system is also used to describe people or work forces. When people are free to choose, they look for jobs that they can and want to do. This freedom incites an enthusiasm for these people to work hard to meet the demand. However, Marx again disregarded the relationship between supply and demand and fancied a system that did not coordinate the two. Marx thought, " Communism ... subjugates to the power of united individuals. Its organization is therefore essentially economic..." (p. 71). He distributed people to where he thought they were needed and deprived them of choice. Although physically united, the workers are not mentally or spiritually united because the drive, their interest, to work is absent. Workmen who are not motivated to work have a low efficiency rate and produce low quality products. It is also one of the prime causes of the deterioration of the economy. Communism, under certain conditions and circumstances, is beneficial. For example, the system that a

family uses to run the house is often communism. In this case, it is very beneficial as it keeps the transactions within the household organized and under control. However, this form of control does more harm than good when expanded to a modern industrialized society because there are many other problems than simply the issue of class differences. Karl Marx based all his theories on the issue of class differences but class stratification is only one of the many factors that make up the establishment of a society. It is therefore unreasonable to enlarge the scale of the application of his theories to an entire society. Next, despite the erroneous assumption that all societies revolve around class stratification, Marx continued to outline the changes that should be made to achieve communism. It is essential to note that these modifications cannot be successfully adapted to but more importantly, while equality is achieved among citizens, a new inequality emerged between the citizens and the State. Moreover, with this new dictatorial government, the social exchange system, including the supply and demand system, cannot freely adjust to the market which will cause the downfall of the economy. Of course, there are many forms of communism that cannot be refuted using the above points but they are variations of the one introduced in *The Communist Manifesto*. Marx caused global suffering with a book fewer than 100 pages but he should still be accredited for his zeal to end inequality. Then again, even in his most powerful words, he still did not seem to understand to full extent of the damage that communism could cause. " The first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class to win the battle of democracy. " (Marx, p. 22) Democracy. What democracy? Bryman, A. (2001). Social

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