

The strengths and weaknesses of marxism



I have chosen to write about Marxism as it is the starting foundation for the class system we use today. He saw how Capitalism fed down to the working class and produced a top down approach to how our present system within our everyday life works. He was a revolutionary on the back of the industrial revolution; his ideas were in my opinion a catalyst to the future. His vision of what would be although unbeknown by him at the time has shown rapid growth within industry and community. The system that Marx sees is and has been the same for the last 2 centuries (Giddens A 2006 pg. 15-16).

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class home in Trier on the river Moselle in Germany on May 5, 1818. He was born of Rabbis but had a protestant baptism to save his father's job as a lawyer. Marx gained a passion for romantic literature and Saint-Simonian politics. Saint Simon himself advocated a society which was lead " scientifically" by men who had the intellect and training to guide society using policies arrived at " scientifically." Calling for the creation of a new science which would focus on man as a social creature (which eventually would be created and called sociology). (www. pinn. net 2003). Marx went on to study at the University of Berlin for a further four years due to his father's influence. Marx became a member of the Young Hegelian movement. This group, which included the theologians Bruno Bauer and David Friedrich Strauss, produced a radical critique of Christianity and, by implication, the liberal opposition to the Prussian autocracy. Finding a university career closed by the Prussian government, Marx moved into journalism and, in October 1842, became editor, in Cologne, of the influential Rheinische Zeitung, a liberal newspaper backed by industrialists. Marx's articles, particularly those on economic

questions, forced the Prussian government to close the paper. Marx worked on what was known as the material conception of history. Of which the basic thesis was that “ the nature of individuals depends on the material conditions determining their production.” Marx traced the history of the various modes of production and predicted the collapse of the present one — industrial capitalism — and its replacement by communism. Marx’s health was beginning to deteriorate and although he was still making commentaries on his previous works and philosophies. Marx’s health did not improve. He travelled to European spas and even to Algeria in search of recuperation. The deaths of his eldest daughter and his wife clouded the last years of his life. Marx died March 14, 1883 and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in North London.(Kries S 2000).

Communism was the predecessor of Marxism. “ The Communist Manifesto”. The Communist Manifesto was a summary of his entire social and political philosophy. The publication of this book occurred at a most propitious time. The book appeared on the eve of the 1848 revolution in France and less than one year before an attempted revolution in Germany. After the failure of the 1848 revolution in Germany he was expelled from his country of origin and moved to London. (Newcombe J 2000) The capitalist society is a system that relies on lower waged workers to produce, and build profits for those who build the higher class system, because their own economic circumstances allow them to do so. Communism however is something that principally is a great idea but as many things politically becomes corrupted and the equal power is then seen as a dictatorship and not as a principle of equality to all. Marx was radical when looking at his ideas of industrialism. We see clearly

that he recognises a class system that starts ultimately from Capitalism. He starts to make waves about his findings which begin to disturb a country such as Germany who would seem relatively strong in the industrial fields and a world leader in the coming of the industrial revolution. He talks about the class system and how he saw the emergence of the working class. Before in the history of Britain there were rich or poor. In modern day there is the wealthy, the middle class, working class and beneath the breadline. Marx clearly sees that Capitalists form a ruling class. The group that make up the waged workers are the working class. Another branch of the working class are the Proletariat, these were the workers from the land who went on to expand cities and towns. Giddens goes on to say Marx stated that capitalism is inherently a class system, class relations are characterized by conflict. (A Giddens 2006 pg. 16). All about philosophy states that " Under capitalism, the proletariat, the working class or " the people, " own only their capacity to work; they have the ability only to sell their own labour. According to Marx a class is defined by the relations of its members to the means of production (www. allaboutphilosphy. org 2002). It is clear to see how the ideals of Marxism can link with the basis of socialism. It is however my belief that Marx did not intend his ideas and works to turn to the communist regime that came about under Stalin. Principally communism has its strengths.

The idea that the working class reap more benefits for their labour is an ideal scenario, and thus is one of the strengths that a Marxist value represents. This is where Marx was at with his theories of Capitalisms demise.

Unfortunately due to corrupted leadership communism in some parts of the

world has become extreme Socialist power under dictatorship. This has caused in certain countries peoples freedoms in speech, and their own political beliefs to be stifled and open to persecution. Marx wanted to see fairness for hard labour. Marx himself stated “ The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and range. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. With the increasing value of the world of things proceeds in direct proportion to the devaluation of the world of men. Labour produces not only commodities; it produces itself and the worker as a commodity — and does so in the proportion in which it produces commodities generally.”(Kries S- 2000). Marx at the time of his works was hated by Governments; he was deported and slandered for his views and beliefs. Some of the Socialist values that Marx touches upon are a foundation for our present labour party in the UK and are a good foundation which realistically the working class and Unions can stand by. This was the rationale of their manifesto; unfortunately the socialist side of Socialism has waned due to power and Capitalisms dominance into present day. Some of these views are shared with the writer of Perspective for the 21st Century: communist revolution or the destruction of humanity. (World Revolution 2004).

The conclusion drawn about t Marxism is that it brings about some conflicting views. In principle we see how Marxism can work and how it links with socialist ideas and theories. Personally having been being raised up in a socialist household, I have never really had an interest in politics or the views that the family held politically. The problem that Socialism has is how

the world has developed in what is relatively a very short time. It would be hard to believe Marx did not see how technology would have the rise that it has, this has brought about mass profiteering e. g. Bill Gates, Lord Alan Sugar and others in a similar field. Banking has grown as has lending and borrowing on a mass financial scale. More and more people are investing money whether it is in property or shares. Socialisms values and idealisms relied solely on hard work and a less complicated system economically than we have in the 21st century. Capitalism has always been apparent, but its rise started to come in the industrial revolution and has become major worldwide. Trading is now at a premium and communist countries are changing due to revolutionaries bringing about change. World Trading is a major key to a wealthier state and there is mistrust with Western Governments towards Communist states. Marx's ultimate dream would never really have become world dominant, after Stalin took Communism to another level and turned it into a dictatorship. From Stalin's ideas of Communism mistrust of these idealisms was then destroyed and the Western world would have very little to do with its ideals and theories. Could there be a turnaround in the future and that capitalism actually takes a backseat. This is ultimately what Karl Marx wanted to see in his lifetime. The idea of a minimum wage structure is a little towards a Marxist view but it's still not the picture that Marx draws up for us on how socialism would work and how a successful uncorrupted communist regime in a country would head up what Marx had worked on throughout his theories and writings.