

Against marx and engels criticism of private ownership

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Against Marx and Engels' criticism of private ownership: One of the cornerstones of Marxist economic theory is the abolition of private property and in its stead have common communal rights. This is a noble and idealistic idea but one suffering from lack of applicability. It has been proven true on many occasions that people are motivated to work hard when they are offered material incentives. The possibility and potential to own a house or a car or a jewel is what motivates most of us to work. Such being human psychology, it is futile to think of idealistic conceptions espoused by Marx and Engels. A cursory look at the state of commons underscores the ineffectiveness of this mode of ownership. For example, our environment is degrading at a rapid pace. The quality water in the oceans and rivers, the pollution levels in the air we breathe and the steady destruction of erstwhile pristine ecosystems can all be attributed to lack of private ownership. If only all these resources were privately owned, it is difficult to foresee how they will be allowed to decline as is presently happening. When valuable resources such as these will have private ownership, the owner will ensure that his property is kept in good condition. This fact makes a strong case for promoting private ownership of property and wealth.

Let us take the case of prosperity in America. For long, the cherished dream (the so-called American Dream) for every family is to own a comfortable house, decent car and have the money to be able to send children to college. It is fair to claim that hard-working and sincere citizens should be entitled to this basic aspiration. And the institution of private ownership is what ensures that such wishes are fulfilled. To put it in perspective, we only need look at societies that had embraced the communist view of common property and

its effectiveness. In the erstwhile communist society of USSR, the standards of living for a large majority of the population were just above levels of sustenance. Moreover, the spirit of individuality was suppressed and in its place a uniform conformist mentality instated in the minds of citizens. This explains why the USSR eventually, but inevitably, collapsed. And a dynamic capitalist economy has taken center stage in Russia presently. The prosperity of countries in Western Europe can also be attributed to their governments' active encouragement of private ownership of land, business enterprises, consumer goods, etc.

In their defense, Marx and Engels would point to the collateral damage that result from capitalism and private ownership. The issue of global warming, for example, is not redressed seriously by governments of international institutions because it does not fully come under their purview. Marx and Engels will state that when only those things that can be fully owned will be protected, the future of the planet's and our species' survival will remain neglected. When a major ecological catastrophe would unfold, there would be little meaning an individual's ownership of a piece of land or wad of cash. After all, people must first be alive in order to enjoy what they own. Marx and Engels will also delight in highlighting how, under the neoliberal economic regime (which champions private property), the distribution of wealth among the population is extremely disproportionate. In America, for example, the top 1% of the population own more than 80% of the country's wealth. Marx and Engels will ask: 'Is this the kind of private property ownership we would ideally want?'