Marx: Overall Doctrine and Dynamics of Social Change

Doctrine of Marx

Society comprises of a moving balance of ANTITHETICAL forces that generate social change by their tension and struggle. Struggle (not peace) is the engine of progress. Marx's vision is based on an evolutionary point of departure.

- Struggle - engine of progress
- Strife - father of all things
- Social Conflict - core of historical progress

Marx's thinking was in contrast with the doctrine of his time (18th C) but in tune with 19th century thought.

Conflict Theory

Why Struggle?
Because of Dissatisfaction

Dissatisfaction - the Historical Act
Men struggle against nature to fulfill own needs. Since, man is a perpetually dissatisfied animal; struggle does not end when primary needs are fulfilled. Fulfillment of current needs leads to production of new needs. This production of new need is the first historical act.

Actors of the Historical Act
In the fulfillment of own need, men engage in antagonistic cooperation. Division of labor emerges in the society. The division leads to formation of antagonistic classes. These classes are the Prime Actors of the Historical Act.

Historical Specificity
Historical Specificity is the hallmark of Marx's approach. All the previous historical periods are marked by class struggle. These struggles differed according to historical stages. The character of overall social matrix determines the forms of struggle. E.g. modern factory workers vs medieval journey men are functionally distinct.
Contrast in View (Marx vs Comte/Hegel)
Comte believed that evolution of mankind resulted from the evolution of ideas or of the human spirit. Marx took as his point of departure that the evolution in man's material condition and varying ways men combined together in order to gain a livelihood.

Marx claims that ideas are not prime movers but are the reflections of the material interests that impel men in their dealing with others. The acceptance of ideas depends upon something that is not an idea.

Dynamics of Social Change
Men make their own history [no any extra force energy exists]. Human history is the process through which men change themselves. Men compete themselves against nature to dominate in the process of fulfillment of their needs.

In course of their history, men transform the nature to make it better serve their own purpose. In this process of transforming nature, they transform themselves.

Animals passively adjust to nature's requirements, whereas, men fashion tools to transform their natural habitat. Men begin to distinguish from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence. In this process, they indirectly produce their material life.

Men remake their own life everyday in the process of production. Production can be done only in association with others (labor) [which makes man a zoon politician]. The relations men establish with nature through labor are reflected in their social relationships. Specific mode of production creates specific mode of relationship.

Mode of Production and Means of Production
Specific forms of social organization are created in tune with specific mode of production. All these mode of social organization are characterized by social inequality. Social inequality has its root on differential access to the means of production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primitive undifferentiated Hordes</th>
<th>Division of Labor</th>
<th>Emergence of Stratification</th>
<th>Dominance (on economic surplus)</th>
<th>Domination continues for ever</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
**4 major modes of production:**

Each stage in history is conceived as a functional whole within its specific mode of production. Specific mode of production creates distinctive type of antagonism between exploiting and exploited classes (revolt between classes).

Not all exploited classes are victorious in revolt against exploiters. Only those classes who represent a mode production that would dominate in the future gain success in combating against their exploiters.

The victorious new productive forces (which were developed in the matrix of old mode of production) break down the old mode of production and create new material conditions for further advance (new mode of production takes place, higher relation of production establishes).

However, bourgeois relations of production are the last antagonistic forms of social process of production. When they have been overthrown by proletariat, the existing dialectical principle ceases to operate. Harmony replaces social conflict.

**The Class Theory**
History of society till now is the history of struggles. Ever since human society emerged, it has remained fundamentally divided between classes. Classes clash in the pursuit of class interests. Class interests and the confrontation of power are the central determinant of historical and social process.

The center of analysis: *How the relationships between men are shaped by their relative positions in means of production?*

The differential access in scarce resources and scarce power creates classes of buyers and sellers of labor power.

Individual interest > Productive Relation > Class interest
[Class in itself + Class for itself]
Classes are aggregate of persons performing same function in production system.

**Alienation**

*Note: the term Alienation is not found in later writings of Marx*

Two important aspects of history of man:
- Increasing control of man over nature
- Increasing alienation of man

Marx's two questions:
- How can men project their own power and values upon the objects which are beyond their control?
- What are social causes of this phenomenon?

Alienation is a condition in which men are dominated by forces of their own creation. Men's creations confront men as alien powers. OBJECTIFICATION is the practice of alienation. Man continues producing objects to subordinate others and conversely is subordinated by the object itself.

Money - the alien entity: Money is the alienated essence of one's work and the essence dominates him and he worships it. Religious alienation occurs in consciousness/inner life whereas economic alienation occurs in real life (both inner and outer life).

4 fold aspect of Alienation in work:
- alienated from objects produced by him
- alienated from process of production
- alienated from himself
- alienated from community of his fellows

Objects produced stand opposed to labor as an alien being as a power independent of the producer. The more the worker expands himself in the work, the more powerful becomes the world of created objects, the poorer he becomes in his inner life, and the less he belongs to himself.

Alienation is both process and result of production. The worker himself feels homeless as he belongs to another person in the process of production.
(process alienation). The producer himself feels helpless as he goes on creating objects (result alienation).