

POLITICAL THEORY: MARXIAN TRADITION

(POL3C10)



STUDY MATERIAL

THIRD SEMESTER

**M.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE
(2019 Admission onwards)**

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MODULE I

POLITICAL THEORY: MARXIAN TRADITION

Karl Marx was a socialist, historian, sociologist and journalist; without any doubt the most influential socialist thinker to emerge in the 19th century. Although he was largely ignored by scholars in his lifetime, his socio - economic and political ideas gained rapid acceptance in the socialist movement after his death in 1883. Karl Marx was an intellectual who developed influential political dogmas. He as the first socio - political philosopher to bring together the various elements of socialist thought into both a comprehensive world view and an emotional principle of class struggle. Marxism is not only a critical evaluator of capitalism but also offered a feasible or credible alternative to it. Marxism is an orientation, programme of action and a working class movement inspired millions of people throughout the world.

Marxian political and philosophical dogmas had tremendous influence on subsequent intellectual, economic and political history and his name has been used as a school of social theory popularly branded as ‘Marxian Tradition’. Marxian theories about society, economics and politics - collectively understood as Marxism - hold that human societies develop through class struggle. Later it was crystalised, interpreted, and applied by many leaders like Lenin, Stalin, and Mao etc. in various socio economic systems. Employing a critical approach known as ‘historical materialism’, Marx

predicted that, like previous socio-economic systems, capitalism produced internal tensions which would lead to its self-destruction and replacement by a new system of socialism. For Marx, class antagonisms under capitalism, owing in part to its instability and crisis prone nature, would eventuate the working class development of class consciousness, leading to their conquest of political power and eventually the establishment of a classless, communist society constituted by a free association of producers. Marx actively pressed for its implementation, arguing that the working class should carry out organised revolutionary action to topple capitalism and bring about socio-economic emancipation.

Karl Marx being one of the most influential figures in human history and his work has been both lauded and criticised. His work in economics laid the basis for much of the current understanding of labour and its relation to capital, and subsequent economic thought. Many intellectuals, labour unions, artists and political parties worldwide have been influenced by Marx's work, with many modifying or adapting his ideas. As such Marxism is not such a philosophical school. On the contrary, it supersedes the old philosophy – the philosophy that was the property of small elite, the aristocracy of the intellect. It marked the beginning of a completely new period in the history of philosophy, when it became a scientific weapon in the hands of the proletarian masses in their struggle for the emancipation from capitalism. Therefore, Marx is typically cited as one of the principal architects of modern social science and the socio political methodology is popularly

branded as ‘Marxian tradition’.

MARX AND ENGELS

Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883) born in Germany in 1818. Educated at Bonn and Berlin universities and later settled at Paris to study socialism. Where he met Bakunin and Friderich Engels. Engels helped Marx from time to time and combindly authored many books. As a prolific writer, his most important works are – ‘*The Class Struggle in France*’(1850), ‘*The Communist Manifesto*’ (In collaboration with Engels) 1848; ‘*Das Capital*’ was published in three volumes in 1867,1885,1894 respectively; ‘*The Critique of Political Economy*’ (1859); ‘*The Holy Family*’ (1865); ‘*Value Price and Profit*’ (1865); ‘*The Poverty of Philosophy* and *The Civil War in France*’ etc. The ‘*Communist Manifesto*’ is called as ‘the Bible of Communism’ and is most widely read socialist document which contains the clearest and most compact statement of Marxian theory. He died in 1883 at London.

a. Marxian method of the study of society and its dynamics

Marxism offered one of the unique methodologies to examine the social phenomena. The major premises which are making Marxism as a scientific approach to analyse the society and its dynamic are dialectical approach. The dialectical approach considers the innermost nature of things to be dynamic and conflictual rather than inert and static, a view therefore that searches with in things for their contradictory attitudes. Dialectical approach holds that the world is not

complex of things but of processes, that matter is inseparable from motion, that motion of matter comprehends an infinite diversity of forms which arise one from another and pass into another, and that things exist not as separate individual units but in essential relation and interconnection. This is a philosophic premise on which Marx and Engels established the dialectical materialistic conception of development. The key to understanding development in nature and society and leaps and breaks in continuity which characterise all real development - lies in the recognition of the inner contradictions and opposite conflicting tendencies which are in operation in all processes. Marx's dialectic is scientific because it explains the contradictions in thought and the crises of the socio - economic life in terms of the particular contradictory essential relations, which generate them.

Dialectical method considers all social transition and development as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state as a development from the simple to the complex, from lower to the higher takes place as a disclosure of the contradictions inherent in things and society as a struggle of opposite tendencies which operate on the basis of these contradictions. Marxian dialectic is scientific because it explains the contradictions in thought in socio - economic life. The dialectical approach engraved in Marxism provide better vision to the social phenomena because, as per the Marxism, the basic tenet of all phenomena concerned to social change is on the economic system of the society, and its ramifications.

Besides materialist approach was also used by Karl Marx in his socio - political analysis and explanation. The material approach to history - a perspective that highlights the central role played in history by the productive activities of mankind and located a principle motive for historical change in the struggle among social classes over their respective spheres. Materialism teaches that the world is by its very nature material; that everything, which exists, comes to being based on material causes, arises and develops in accordance with the laws of motion of matter. Materialism says that matter is objective reality existing, 'outside' and 'independent' of the mind. Ideas, conceptions and consciousness and, therefore, politics, law and morality of the people flow from their material activity and economic relations of man. It is the economic conditions and forces and not the ideas of truth, justice etc. that mould social and political institutions.

Marx saw evolutionary changes in the ethical, religious, social, economic and political ideas and institutions of humankind. The chief motive force, which brings about these changes in things, is not the Hegelian 'ideas' but the material conditions of life. It is not the 'consciousness of man, which determines the material conditions of life but the material conditions of life that determines the consciousnesses'. The most important material conditions of life in society are the 'productive forces' and next importance to the 'forces of production' is the 'conditions of production', which includes the form of state laws and the groupings of social classes. The productive forces of society are basis of

civil institutions like law and government. The forces of production are the gift of nature; man creates the conditions of production. Any expansion or improvement in the productive forces makes the old laws, these results in the discontent and society enters on a revolutionary period. There is a struggle in the social order for the adaptation of new forces of production. Thus, the disharmony between the forces of production creates conflict, with the conditions of production. That is why Marx rejects the Hegelian primacy of thought over matter and holds that thought reflects material reality. In Marxian social analysis, economic power which has the ultimate power which determines the political and social relations of man.

b. Materialist Dialectics; Historical Materialism (Base/Super structure Relations)

Dialectics is the base of Marxist philosophy. The term '*dialectic*' originated from Greek '*dialogue*', which means 'a conversation between two or more people.' However, it has a special meaning in Marx's philosophy; the term 'dialectics' referred to the unitary theory with the help of conflict between two opposite events. Marxism used dialectic materialism and historical materialism as a way of interpretation of human civilisation, which known as materialistic interpretation of history or socio - economic interpretation of history; borrowed these concepts from Hegel. This says that, what happened in the society is created by materialistic or economic circumstances and all social institutions like religion, art, culture, civilisation are all determined by the material or economic condition. Marx was of the opinion that economy is

the base of all things determines its social, religious and cultural life. Human history of every stage like primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and capitalism entirely depend upon the economic condition or economic environment of that stage. According to Marxism, in future a new economic condition will arise upon within the womb of modern capitalist society, which would replace the entire economic system of capitalism and establish a new economic system according to which the entire superstructure will be transformed into different shape.

According to Marx, the social process of production determines the man's relation and their right in society. The mode of production, the relations of production and the means of production – all these construct the economic structure of a society. This economic structure also transforms itself with the development of mode of production and because of it, the social consciousness of man also changes. Marx gives a new interpretation about social system, known as economic interpretation of society. From the primitive age man continuously wield over the nature and because of it, new things are coming under the man's utility and mode of production and its process.

In the development of various social stages, economy does not only determine the social mode of production but the social relation of production is also determined by it. In this way, the arrival of social relation of production from its particular economic system divides the social members into different classes. In the modern age, the capitalist economy

divides the social members into two broad categories – bourgeoisie and proletariat. According to Marxism, how the social property is distributed and who will accrue how much property are determined by the economic system of that particular stage. Therefore, the transformation in economic mode of production, the social system, social structure and social changes happen and they get into a new shape.

The essential ideas are as follows: -

- a. Men enter into definite relations by the forces of economic circumstances such as the forces and relations of production. Thus, historical processes are determined by production.
- b. The infrastructure of society includes forces and relations of production. On this is based the super structure of legal and political institutions as well as ways of thinking.
- c. The mechanism of the historical movement is the contradiction between the forces and relations of production.
- d. This contradiction leads to class struggle which, according to Karl Marx is the main factor in the historical evolution.
- e. The dialectics of the forces of relation of production implies a theory of revolution.
- f. Social reality governs consciousness and not *vice-versa*.
- g. The stages of human history may be distinguished based

on their mode of production like Primitive, Slavery, Feudalism and Capitalist systems.

The ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ has a class character in a class society because of the antagonistic nature of base in different social formations, such as Feudalism, Slavery and Capitalism, and this antagonistic nature of base reflect itself within the superstructure. Moreover, the intellectual basis of state rule, the ideas justifying the use of state power and its distribution depends upon certain economical base. The intellectual social culture is merely a superstructure resting on the relation of production, on ownership of the means of production; or of socio- economic circumstances. The class as social ideas arise out of dominant views and institutions of the society is the product of a definite economic structure of exploiting class. The whole sets of legal, political and social ideas and institutions, which serve to protect the existing economic system and to suppress opposition to it. Therefore, the history of class struggle proves that the dominant class establishes the legal, political and ideological superstructure of any society to fulfill the role of protecting and upholding the economic structure of that society and the interest of ruling class.

The process of originating and developing the social ideas is a complex and often contradictory one. These ideas, known as superstructure, do not come automatically into the world as the reflection of the base or economic realities. Human beings create these social ideas not arbitrarily, but in accordance with existing economic condition, i.e. the base.

There is a relative independence in the development of social ideas. The origin and development of economic conditions directly affect on the existing moral, religious, political, social, philosophical, ethical, legal and other ideas and transform into a new ideological form determined by the economic base.

The relation between base and superstructure has a dialectic character. According to dialectic method, all things and process are in a state of development; our material world represents itself through the process of ever changing form of social facts and matters. All the social events and things holistically related and depend upon each other. The development of society is possible within this relation - the relations of contradictions between two opposites. All the social events evolving through a particular process and the cumulative change in the material base encourage in the social superstructure like thoughts, feelings, views and institutions etc. Therefore, feelings, consciousness, thoughts, institutions and social systems are reflection of material world or the base. As these thoughts, consciousness, views, institutions and social systems grown in the course of material development, therefore, they are all the by - product of material base and they it is impossible to eliminate them from its material base. Therefore, superstructure depends upon the base. However, the relations between base and superstructure have a dialectic relation. It is not true that the base always plays the primary role in social system; in spite of this in some cases superstructure have the power to transform the entire base. Superstructure is represented itself in the state, ideology, social

institutions, way of life etc. These are all having a great importance in the process of historical development.

In a short, base plays the prime role of the social development as universally, but in particular cases superstructure also affect the movement of historical development by the help of a particular ideology. When the old social system became their fetter, with the help of a particular ideology the members of the society make a revolution that deconstruct its previous social system and from there arise a new social system by the help of that particular ideology. Here the superstructure affects the base and both base and superstructure interact with each other. That is why Engels understood that, material production and each historical age inevitably emerge from material condition which makes the base of the intellectual and the political history of that age. According to Marxism, the economic structure formed the real basis of social life because historical materialism gives this determining importance to economy.

c. Theory of Classes, Class Struggle and concept of Alienation

A social class is any aggregate of persons who performs the same functions in the organisation of production. To Marx, a class is a group with intrinsic tendencies and interests that differ from those of other groups within society, the basis of a fundamental antagonism between such groups. For example, it is in the labourer's best interest to maximise wages and benefits and in the capitalist's best interest to maximise profit at the expense of such, leading to a

contradiction within the capitalist system, even if the laborers and capitalists themselves are unaware of the clash of interests. In Marxian sense, a class is identified in five variables:-

1. Conflicts over the distribution of economic rewards between the classes.
2. Easy communication between the individuals in the same class positions so that ideas and action programmes are readily disseminated.
3. Growth of class-consciousness in the sense that the members of the class have a feeling of solidarity and understanding of their historical role.
4. Profound dissatisfaction of the lower class over its inability to control the economic structure of which it feels itself to be the exploited victim.
5. Establishment of a political organisation resulting from the economic structure, the historical situation and the maturation of the class - consciousness.

Marxian class theory asserts that an individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by his role in the production process, and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. A class is those who share common economic interests, are conscious of those interests, and engage in collective action, which advances those interests. Within Marxian class theory, the structure of the production process forms the basis of class construction. Marx distinguishes one class from another on

two bases:

- (a) Ownership of the means of production and
- (b) Control of the labor power of others.

Marx stated that the society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other. In capitalism; capitalists or bourgeoisie own the means of production; and workers or proletariat, do not own any means of production or the ability to purchase the labour power of others. Property relations determine class, not by income or status, which may ultimately, leads to class conflict.

The development of class conflict, the struggle between classes was initially confined to individual factories. Eventually, given the maturing of capitalism, the growing disparity between life conditions of bourgeoisie and proletariat, and the increasing homogenisation within each class, individual struggles become generalised to coalitions across factories. Increasingly class conflict is manifested at the societal level. Class consciousness is increased, common interests and policies are organised, and the use of and struggle for political power occurs. Classes become political forces. The distribution of political power is determined by power over the production i.e., capital. Capital confers political power, which the bourgeois class uses to legitimatise and protect their property and consequent social relations. Class relations are political, and in the mature capitalist society, the state's business is that of the bourgeoisie.

Moreover, the intellectual basis of state rule, the ideas justifying the use of state power and its distribution, are those of the ruling class. The intellectual social culture is merely a superstructure resting on the relation of production, on ownership of the means of production. Finally, the division between classes will widen and the condition of the exploited worker will deteriorate so badly that social structure collapses and the class struggle transformed into a proletarian revolution.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule unrestricted by law and based on force of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, a rule enjoying the sympathy and support of the labouring and exploited masses. When the proletarians are organised into a class and establish their supremacy over the bourgeoisie and the purpose of this is to emancipate the workers then that can be termed dictatorship of the proletariat. The workers' triumph will eliminate the basis of class division in property through public ownership of the means of production. The basis of classes thus wiped away, a classless society will ensue and since political power to protect the bourgeoisie against the workers is unnecessary and the state will wither away.

Concept of Alienation

Alienation to Karl Marx it is a material and social process and used the term '*Entfremdung*' (estrangement) to analyse alienation. Karl Marx argued that alienation was a natural consequence of capitalism because of several reasons. This is because the forces of capitalism manipulate the

labours in order to increase productivity and output. The results are that the workers will ultimately lose hope and determination. The reason is that the capitalists strive to ensure that the activities of the workers are oriented towards specific goals and objectives. The organisations are to ensure that labour can be exploited to attain the maximum surplus value. The labour were considered an instrument, which leads to the loss of personal identity. It can lead to frustration and resentment since the modes of production are privately owned.

Because of living in a class-based, class-conscious ranking or stratified capitalist society, the labours are bound to sell their power, strength, expertise and skills to the capitalists. Consequently, the workers have no control over their product of labour and on the labour, itself which is their life activity and this becomes only a means to an end of the capitalist. So they got estranged from it and fall a prey to alienation. Due to these circumstances, the workers became estranged from their own-self and their own-nature on the one hand and alienated from other human beings as well as from their work.

In '*The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*', Karl Marx described the course and methods due to which the working class was exploited by the capitalists. Due to that exploitation, the capitalists and the working classes were estranged. The working people put everything into their jobs but get little in return. This causes class conflict and estrangement between the both. Therefore, Marx says that the capitalist rule the workers and the working class becomes alienated. This alienation is multi dimensional and

encompasses all areas of life - religion, politics, social and economic relations - but it particularly effects in labour.

This alienation in labour appears as the following types of that alienation.

1. Objectification (alienation of or from things or production)
2. Self-alienation (alienation from one's own activity)
3. Species alienation (means man's estrangement from his species being or essential nature).
4. Alienation from other people.

Alienated Labour is important in understanding Marxian critique of capitalism, more central to Marx critique of capitalism is class struggle. Marx views "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". In a capitalist society, division arises from the existence of private property. There is division between the bourgeoisie, the owners of the means of production, and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie is the ruling class; not only by economic power through the ownership of wealth, but by also wielding political power. The bourgeoisie, since establishment of modern industry, has established exclusive political sway in form of a modern representative state. The state is "a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie". For Marx the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is one of irreconcilable conflict, the proletariat is necessarily and systematically exploited under capitalism. Marx believed that labour is the only real source of wealth.

Thus, in search of profit the capitalist extract this surplus value by paying the workers less than the value of their labour.

Private property is an essential feature of capitalism. Marx criticises the capitalist notion of 'Private Property'. Marx explains that in the case when property is actually the product of another's work, it becomes human alienation. In such a scenario under capitalism, labour is effectively reduced to a mere commodity and work becomes depersonalised. In this view workers efforts enrich and empower those who oppress them, the capitalist, alienated from their product and processes of their labour and ultimately, from themselves as creative and social beings. Activity of work has a special significance essential to human beings, yet under the conditions of alienated labour, this denied. Marx observes because of alienated labour renders the capitalist argument that private property motivates. In a capitalist society, division arises from the existence of private property. There is division between the bourgeoisie, the owners of the means of production, and the proletariat.

Marx believed that the oppression inbuilt into capitalism consequently means that it will be its own gravedigger. The crisis of overproduction will bring forth a proletarian revolution. The revolution against bourgeoisie goes through stages of development. This allows the proletariat to form a class, an identity, a collective consciousness. The expanding union of workers forms one character and this mobilises into a national struggle; the proletariat against the bourgeoisie. Marx proclaimed that this

proletarian revolution was inevitable, beginning with the seizure of the means of production, the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to contain a counter-revolution and then the eventual peaceful transition to socialism.

Marx argued that eventually class antagonism would fade and a fully communist society would come into existence and the proletarian state would ‘wither away’. A communist society would eradicate all private property; and all property would be owned in common by all. It would be a classless society. Commodity production would be replaced by one of production for use geared to the satisfaction of genuine human needs. With this Marx argues, “The pre-history of man would come to an end, allowing human beings for the first time to realise their full potential”.

Karl Marx exerted tremendous influence on human thinking and social movements by his philosophy from mid-nineteen century onwards. Prof. Maxey says, “It is hard to deal temporarily with a man whom millions revere as God and millions despise as devil. The only honest way to deal with such a thinker is to be to throw emotion out of window and try to understand him”.

Friedrich Engels (1820-1895)

Friedrich Engels Born at Barmen in 1820, in what was then the Rhenish province of Prussia. Engels was an example of a militant devoted all his life to the struggle of the working class. He came from a family of industrialists, and could have lived in wealth and comfort without paying any attention to the

political struggle. But like Marx, and many other young students revolted by the misery of the world in which they lived, while still young he acquired an exceptional political maturity, in contact with the workers struggle in Britain, France, and then Germany. It was inevitable that the proletariat should attract a certain number of intellectual elements to its ranks, in this period when it was forming itself as a class, and developing its political struggle.

In 1844, Engels wrote an article – ‘*Contribution to the critique of political economy*’; which opened Marx’s eyes to the fundamental nature of the capitalist economy. His work on ‘*The Condition of the Working Class in England*’, published in 1845, was to become a reference book for a whole generation of revolutionaries. Two years later, it was also Engels who drew up ‘*The Principles of Communism*’, in the form of a questionnaire, which was to serve as a preliminary sketch for the composition of the world famous ‘*Communist Manifesto*’, signed jointly by Marx and Engels. ‘*The Communist Manifesto*’, which influenced all subsequent communist literature and regarded as a classic exposition of modern communist views, appeared in 1848. It was written by Marx, partly on the basis of a draft prepared by Engels. Contributions to the theoretical exposition of communism made by Engels include the following major works: ‘*Herr Eugen Duhring’s Revolution in Science*’ (known popularly as *Anti-Duhring*), (1878); several chapters of which, published separately under the title ‘*Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*’ (1892), have become one of the best-known basic expositions of socialism;

'Origin of the Family', 'Private Property and the State' (1884); and *'Dialectics of Nature'*, written between 1872 and 1882 and published posthumously in 1925. Engels made what is considered his greatest single contribution to Marxism after the death of Marx by editing, from rough drafts and notes, the second and third volumes of Marx's *'Das Capital'*.

In fact, most of Marx and Engels immense contribution to the workers movement was the fruit of their mutual collaboration. They first really have to know each other in Paris during the summer of 1844. Henceforth, there began a joint work, which lasted all their lives, a rare mutual confidence which was based not just on an exceptional friendship, but on a shared conviction in the historic role of the proletariat and a constant struggle for the party spirit, to win over more and more elements to the revolutionary combat. From the time they met, Marx and Engels together quickly went beyond their philosophical visions of the world, to devote themselves to this unprecedented historical event: the development of an exploited class, the proletariat, which was also a revolutionary class. A class all the more revolutionary in that it could acquire a clear 'class consciousness', rid of the prejudices and self-mystifications that weighed on past revolutionary classes like the bourgeoisie.

'The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State' is a historical materialist treatise by Friedrich Engels. It is partially based on notes by Karl Marx to Lewis H. Morgan's book *'Ancient Society'* (1877). The book is an early anthropological work and is regarded as one of the first major

works on family economics. *'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'* begins with an extensive discussion of *'Ancient Society'* and describes the major stages of human development. It is argued that the first domestic institution in human history was not the patriarchal nuclear family but the matrilineal clan. Engels here follows Lewis H. Morgan's thesis as outlined in his major book, *'Ancient Society'*. Morgan was an American lawyer who championed the land rights of Native Americans and became adopted as an honorary member of the Seneca Iroquois tribe. Traditionally, the Iroquois had lived in communal long houses based on matrilineal descent and matrilocal residence, an arrangement giving women much solidarity and power. Engels stressed the theoretical significance of Morgan's highlighting of the matrilineal clan. The re-discovery of the original mother-right gens as the stage preliminary to the father-right gens of the civilised peoples has the same significance for the history of primitive society as Darwin's theory of evolution has for biology, and Marx's theory of surplus value for political economy.

Primitive communism, according to Engels was based in the matrilineal clan where women lived with their classificatory sisters – applying the principle that 'my sister's child is my child'. Because they lived and worked together, women in these communal households, felt strong bonds of solidarity with one another, enabling them when necessary to take action against non-cooperative males. As to their family system, when occupying the old long-houses, it is probable that someone clan predominated, the women taking in

husbands, however, from the other clans; and sometimes, for a novelty, some of their sons bringing in their young wives until they felt brave enough to leave their mothers. Usually, the female portion ruled the house, and were doubtless clannish enough about it. According to Morgan, later the rise of alienable property disempowered women by triggering a switch to patrilocal residence and patrilineal descent.

Engels emphasised the importance of social relations of power and control over material resources rather than supposed psychological deficiencies of primitive people. In the eyes of both Morgan and Engels, terms such as ‘savagery’ and ‘barbarism’ were respectful and honorific, not negative. Engels summarises Morgan’s three main stages as follows:

1. Savagery – the period in which man’s appropriation of products in their natural state predominates; the products of human art are chiefly instruments which assist this appropriation.
2. Barbarism – the period during which man learns to breed domestic animals and to practice agriculture, and acquires methods of increasing the supply of natural products by human activity.
3. Civilisation – the period in which man learns a more advanced application of work to the products of nature, the period of industry proper and of art.

Engels’ ideas on the role of property in the creation of the modern family and as such modern civilisation begin to become a theme of enquiry. Bourgeois law dictates the rules

for relationships and inheritances. As such, two partners, even when their marriage is not arranged, will always have the preservation of inheritance in mind and as such will never be entirely free to choose their partner. Engels argues that a relationship based on property rights and forced monogamy will only lead to the proliferation of immorality and prostitution. The only class, according to Engels, which is free from these restraints of property, and as a result from the danger of moral decay, is the proletariat, as they lack the monetary means that are the basis of the bourgeois marriage. Monogamy is therefore guaranteed by the fact that theirs is a voluntary sex-love relationship.

Frederick Engels wrote *'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'* with the purpose of providing a materialist analysis of how the family as we know it came to be with the rise of class society, and with it, the oppression of women. In it, Engels uses the materialist method of looking at actual developments in the history of human society to expand on Morgan's ideas and argue that the family as we know it is not a staple of all human societies, but the result of the rise of class society. Like the state, the family comes about in the interest of a small ruling class seeking to maintain control over their property.

The social revolution which Engels believed was about to happen would eliminate class differences, and therefore also the need for prostitution and the enslavement of women. If men needed only to be concerned with sex, love and no longer with property and inheritance, then monogamy would come

naturally.

Most of the political writings were produced by Marx and Engels to describe specific political events and to situate them in a specific historical context and provide a theoretical basis for the identification of political class interests and an appropriate mode of intervention in the class struggle. They draw on several principles of explanation on society and combine different themes and approaches. They offer a series of acute generalisations and present a number of valuable practical concepts for socio - political analysis. They focus upon the organisation of the state apparatus as well as the appropriation and organisation of state power. They produced tremendous influence on later socialist writers in this direction.

MODULE 2

LENIN (1870-1924)

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, the man who made Marxism a practical creed in Russia and dedicated to the cause of revolution. He was born in a middle class family. From the Law University of Kazan he was expelled due to the radical activities and later he was under the constant surveillance of the police. In 1895, he was arrested and sent to prison. He guided a revolutionary organisation from his prison cell. In 1897, he was sentenced to three years exile in Siberia. His period of exile ended in 1900. Thereafter, he engaged completely in revolutionary activities. After the October Revolution in 1917, he became the leader of Bolsheviks. As a theorist, Lenin is best known for his analysis of revolutionary tactics and his study of imperialism. Until he was stricken by illness in 1922, Lenin remained the most powerful single leader in Russia. He died on January 21, 1924.

The major works of Lenin are; *'The Development of Capitalism in Russia'* (1899), *'One Step Forward, Two Steps Back'* (1904), *'Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution'* (1905), *'Materialism and Empirio-criticism'* (1909), *'Philosophical Notebooks'* (1913), *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination'* (1914) *'Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism'* (1916) and *'What is to be Done?'* etc.

a. Lenin's Theory of State and Revolution

To Lenin, state is the product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonism. Though this antagonism is irreconcilable, the state, being a capitalist organisation, tries by persuasion or compulsion, to reconcile the workers to it, thereby perpetuating their oppression and exploitation. History shows that the state as a special apparatus for coercing the people. The state has been an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed class. Usually the state controlled by the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. The ancient and feudal states were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs; likewise, the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital.

The domination of the majority by the minority leaves little scope for justice or equality in a capitalist state. Lenin was not a believer of democracy, he says, it as the 'dictatorship of capitalist over the exploited working class'. The state represents the force and this force must be opposed by force and overpowered by the workers. Lenin distinguished the state and the government that the state is the organisation of the class of proletarians as a state power, the purpose of which is to crush the resistance of the exploiters, organise socialist economy, put an end to the classes and so on. But government on the other hand, is the peak of that state organisation, the ruling peak. The state is to be abolished because it represents

an agency of repression but the communist believed that it “even be used as a powerful weapon to change of itself the whole basis of property and thus by force to make possible the coming of Communism”.

Lenin felt that the state was not a permanent organisation, but a mere class organisation used for the purpose of exploitation. In his words, state is nothing but the machine for the suppression of one class over another. As the state is only a temporary institution, which is to be made use of in the revolution, in order to forcibly suppress the opponents, it is a perfect absurdity to speak about the free popular state. So long as the proletariat still needs the state, its needs not in the interests of freedom, but in order to suppress the opponents and when it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the state as such ceases to exist.

As soon as Communism is established, the state becomes unnecessary because there is no one to be suppressed in a classless society. There will be true freedom for all and the state will not be needed. It will wither away when the society was reached a stage when the maxim of ‘each according to his ability, to each according to his needs’ becomes applicable. The process of ‘withering away of the state’ begins with the dictatorship of the proletariat because the task of the proletarian majority is suppressing the capitalist minority is qualitatively and quantitatively different and easier than that of the present capitalist state. When the Proletariat turns the means of production into the property of the society it abolish itself as proletariat abolish all class distinctions and class

conflict and abolishes state.

Lenin in his '*State and Revolution*' refers two stages of the communist society - the lower stage and the higher. In the lower stage, after the means of production have been nationalized and there is no private property of individuals, every individual perform some socially useful functions .He receives from the society, in return, a corresponding quantity of products on the basis of the formula 'each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. The second is the withering away of the state and classless society exists.

Lenin was of the opinion that the revolution in Russia was in accordance with the revolutionary principle of Marx. He believed that there were certain pre requisites for bringing revolution, namely-

- a. There should be a group of resolute revolutionaries who should work with clear determination, object and views.
- b. There should be discontentment among the people due to socio economic reasons.
- c. Common masses should support the revolutionaries.
- d. Revolutionaries should take appropriate time for forging revolution.

Lenin lay great emphasis on revolution, which he felt, was an essential step towards socialism but in the initial stage, it was possible only in the countries, which had no healthy democratic traditions. He believed that by parliamentary methods the existing socio - political and economic institutions

could not be transformed into the socialistic institutions. The workers must adopt the revolutionary methods for capturing power. He stressed that there must be adequate and competent number of people should be ready to reap the fruits of revolution and for that, he felt the workers were to play a predominant role. Lenin says that the revolution will go unrewarded if immediately thereafter individual means of production were not replaced by collective methods and means. Means of production and distribution should also be brought under collective control. Wasteful energies in competitions should be preserved for constructive production.

b. Democratic Centralism and Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Democratic centralism is the application of Marxian method to the question of how to organise to lead the working class in the revolutionary transformation of society. The principles of democratic centralism is a process of collective decision making and collective action that cantake a variety of forms, corresponding to the development of the organisation and the changing demands of the class struggle.

Democratic centralism is a method of organisation that embodies two elements- democracy and centralism, in an ever-changing dialectical relationship of struggle and unity. The communists must determine the synthesis of the two that enables their organisations to provide coherent and decisive leadership to the working class. The democratic aspect of democratic centralism ensures effective decision-making. It includes thorough discussion of political questions, full airing

of minority viewpoints, collective decision making or periodic review of delegated decisions, reports from the members on their work and analyses, provisions for initiatives from members, and criticism of all aspects of political, organisational, and theoretical practice. The democratic practice of the organisation rests on the principle that collective decisions made by majority vote after a full, informed, and frank discussion are more likely to reflect the interests of the working class than decisions made without such a discussion.

Centralism is necessary to ensure unity of action in carrying out the organisation's decisions, to provide strategic and tactical flexibility in dealing with the highly centralised bourgeois state, and to create the basis in social practice for evaluating the organisation's line. Centralism includes leadership at all levels summing up the ideas and experience of the membership, drawing up proposals for the organisation to consider, presenting political arguments for the positions it recommends, implementing policy, and responding decisively to guide the organisation and the working class through the twists and turns of the struggle.

Democratic centralism work on the following basis:

Political Unity: - Only overall political unity can stimulate individuals to make the commitment necessary to participate in a communist organisation, or motivate a minority to subordinate itself to carry out the proposals of the majority. The degree of unity required for communist organisation depends on the development of the communists and the nature

of their political tasks.

Cadre Development: - Democratic centralism requires that members have a firm, critical, and individual grasp of Marxist theory and practice. If too many members lack these abilities, the party will lack that dialogue between members and leaders, base and center, party and masses that is essential to democratic centralist decision making, practice, and evaluation.

Political Leadership: - Communist leadership has the responsibility of guiding the organisation's work through the process of theory-plan and practice. Important at all times, the role of leadership takes on particular importance in periods of revolutionary crisis or repression. Its work therefore requires a high degree of theoretical and practical experience and mature political judgment. It requires further an ability to lead, not simply command, the organisation, and through it, the masses. Also important is the educational role of leadership in helping to develop new leaders from among the members, and increasing the theoretical and practical capabilities of the membership in general.

Criticism and Self-Criticism: - Changing conditions, incorrect political line, and mistakes in implementing line or in style of work are inevitable and require regular summation and reevaluation of work. Mistakes will be more or less serious, more or less harmful to the movement—but the failure to examine and correct errors is even more serious and harmful. To make democratic centralism work, criticism and self-criticism must be practiced throughout the organisation.

Leaders and members must learn to assess honestly the strengths and weaknesses of both individuals and the organisation as a whole. Equally important, this dialogue of criticism and self-criticism must be practiced not only within the organisation, but also between the organisation and the masses. Attempts to place the party above the criticism of the masses have taken several forms. The party and the working class can only win by transforming themselves in the process of transforming society. Neither aspect of the revolution can succeed without the practice of serious criticism and self-criticism.

Dictatorship of the proletariat

To Marx and Engels, the dictatorship of the proletariat means the establishment of a truly democratic state with the working class majority over the bourgeois minority. To Lenin, the dictatorship 'over' the proletariat of the communist party, which was the only revolutionary party capable of crushing capitalism, establishing socialism and maintaining it. Lenin believed that dictatorship of the communist party over the proletariat was the true democracy because it was a dictatorship in the interest of workers.

To Lenin, dictatorship of the proletariat was the instrument of proletarian revolution, its organ and its main stay. The object of this dictatorship is to overthrow capitalism, crush the resistance of the overthrown capitalist, consolidate the proletarian revolution and complete it to the goal of socialism. Revolution can overthrow capitalist but cannot consolidate its gain and achieve socialism without the

dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin says that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle – bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative - against the forces and traditions of old society; that is the capitalist society.

The dictatorship of the proletariat of Lenin's conception presents certain features. It is rule unrestrained by law and based on the superior force of the proletariat. It is not a complete democracy of all. It is a democracy for the proletariat and a dictatorship against the capitalist. It is a proletarian democracy. It works through the 'Soviets' instead of the old territorial parliamentary institutions. It does not mean the end of class struggle but its continuation in a new form against the still resisting capitalist elements. It is a special form of class alliance between the proletarian and non-proletarian and anti-capitalist elements.

c. Theory of Imperialism

It was in the theory of imperialism that Lenin fulfilled the task of bringing Marxism up to date. Lenin regarded Imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism. As capitalism develops, units of industrial production grow bigger and combine in trusts and cartels, to produce monopoly capitalism. The same process takes place in financial world; banks combine and become the masters of capital that industrialists are; so that monopoly capitalism is also finance capitalism. Monopoly Finance Capitalism is aggressively expansionist. Its expansionist tendencies lead to three consequences. That is-

- a. The exploitation of colonial people;
- b. Promotion of international war between capitalist countries; and
- c. The ultimate collapse of capitalism itself.

In his *‘Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism’* (1916) Lenin made a comprehensive investigation of imperialism. It is regarded as an outstanding contribution to the treasure store of creative Marxism. Lenin argued that modern imperialism (or *capitalist imperialism*) constitutes a new stage in the history of capitalism. The first stage, he said, was the competitive form of capitalism characterised by relatively small-scale enterprises, few of which dominated their market. The newer stage of capitalism, however, the imperialist stage, is characterised by huge monopolistic or semi-monopolistic (oligopolistic) corporations.

Lenin made the choice to use the term imperialism not just to refer to certain political policies of aggression, conquest, and foreign control, but more importantly to refer to an *economic system that depends upon such “policies” for its very existence*. This is a profound new meaning for the term imperialism. However, Lenin went well beyond this fundamental proposition, that modern imperialism is “the monopoly stage of capitalism”. According to Lenin, an adequate definition of modern imperialism needs to embrace "five essential features":

- 1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies, which play a

decisive role in economic life.

- 2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a "financial oligarchy."
- 3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- 4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies, which share the world among themselves.
- 5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.

Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed.

Imperialism contains the evils and contradictions of capitalism and thereby prepares for the ultimate collapse and replacement by socialism. In fact, transition from capitalism to socialism is through imperialism. To Lenin, imperialism is 'moribund' capitalism; containing a number of contradictions which ultimately destroy capitalism. There is firstly, the contradiction or antagonism between capital and labour. Capital exploits labour and brings the exploited workers to revolution. Secondly, a contradiction or struggle between

various imperialist powers and industrial combines for a new territory, new markets and sources of material. There is also contradiction between colonial people, which arouses the revolutionary outlook, and spirit among the latter as happened in India, and other countries. Imperialism, thus, creates conditions favourable to the destruction of capitalism by promoting class and international conflicts and revolutionary outlook among the proletariat.

Lenin's contribution

Lenin's most important contribution to the theory of Marxism is his concept of the revolutionary theory which he brought into the line with the conditions of new era of imperialism and the proletarian revolutions, of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism and the building up of a communist society. Marx thought that class - consciousness would develop in the working class spontaneously due to economic misery and the leadership would come from their ranks. Lenin on the other hand, considered that a disciplined Communist Party could only arouse political consciousness amongst the workers and lead Russia to revolution.

Lenin waged an unrelenting battle against all kind of deviations from the revolutionary course of Marxism, from class positions of the proletariat and against revisionism of reformism. He vigorously combated all attempts to turn Marxism into a collection of dry and rigid dogmas or formulas, divorced from reality, from practice. He repeatedly said that Marxism was not a dogma but a guide to action.

Another greatest contribution of Lenin was that he adapted Marxism to Russia. Lenin was a Russian and being an arch revolutionary; very soon realised that revolution was possible in Russia only under certain circumstances. The Czar must be defeated in war and there must be a group of highly disciplined and professional revolutionaries who must be in a position to take over the Government of the country.

Before the outbreak of the First Great War, Lenin was convinced that there would be world war and Russia would be defeated but the real problem before Lenin was how to train revolutionaries who could take over the government in the event of the defeat of Russia. However, Lenin had to face great difficulty because Marx predicted that a revolution could take place only in a country where there was full -fledged capitalism. There were no short cuts to revolution. However, Russia was essentially an agricultural country and there was no full - fledged capitalism there.

Therefore, the philosophy of Marx could not be applied to Russia. In spite of this difficulty, Lenin came to the firm conclusion that the revolution could take place in Russia if Czar, Nicholas II was defeated in the war and a most disciplined and secret cadre of the Communist Party was ready to take the reigns of the government.

Lenin on the role of professional revolutionaries:

According to William Ebenstein, “For that purpose Lenin believed that first workers were to form labour organisations with primarily economic objectives, operating

openly, legally and as publicly as conditions allow. Side by side with such organisations, there are to be small groups of professional revolutionaries, patterned after the army and the police, highly select and entirely secret.

Lenin said that the professional revolutionaries should guide and supervise the open communist-led economic associations—the trade unions, the co-operatives and the rest. Lenin advised these professional revolutionaries to form cells and infiltrate in social, economic and political bodies of the societies whether they are schools, churches, labour unions or political parties.

But Lenin especially emphasised the active role of the professional revolutionaries when he advocated them to infiltrate into armed forces, the police and the government. It should be particularly noted that with the help of these professional revolutionaries Lenin brought about the revolution and was able to throw off the most autocratic regime of the Czar (Russian Emperor).

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party did something that had never been done before in history; helped to lead the first successful socialist revolution. The Russian Revolution under Lenin inspired the world's oppressed masses and helped change the world relationship of forces. Lenin's ideas influenced revolutions in China, Korea, Yugoslavia, Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua and beyond. His theories and principles of revolution continued to inspire oppressed throughout the world. His most important contributions were the role of revolutionary leadership and the need to build a

party of professional revolutionaries. Lenin helped to clarify the role of the capitalist state and the necessary components of a socialist revolution. He also explained capitalism's transition to monopoly capitalism and imperialism as well as the socialist position on the right of oppressed nations to self-determination.

Besides, Lenin greatly expanded the Marxist understanding of the capitalist state. In "State and Revolution," he argued that only through the working class seizing the means of production and smashing the capitalist state could a socialist state become a reality. This is because the interests of the working class and the capitalist class cannot be reconciled. In the struggle between oppressor and oppressed, the state protects the interests of the ruling class. In other words, the only way to build socialism, defend the revolution, and ultimately get rid of classes is for the working class, the vast majority of society, to seize political power.

MODULE 3

MAO TSE TUNG (1893-1997)

Mao Tes-Tung was one of the most important figures in the history of communist china. A Chinese communist revolutionary who became the founding father of the People's Republic of China, which he ruled as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976. Mao is regarded as one of the most important and influential individuals in modern world history. He is also known as a political intellect, theorist, military strategist, poet, and visionary. He came under the influence of the Communist Party of China at very early stages. Although he cannot be regarded as the founder of the communist party of china, but devoted himself to the cause of propagation of communism in China.

The major works of Mao are: '*On Guerrilla Warfare*' (1937), '*On Practice*' (1937), '*On Contradiction*' (1937), '*On Protracted War*' (1938), '*In Memory of Norman Bethune*' (1939), '*On New Democracy*' (1940), '*Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*' (1942) '*Serve the People*' (1944), '*The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*' (1945) '*On the Correct Handling of the Contradictions Among the People*' etc.

ON CONTRADICTION

'*On Contradiction*' was written in August 1937, as an interpretation of the philosophy of dialectical materialism,

while Mao was at his guerrilla base in Yanan. Along with ‘*On Practice*’, it forms the philosophical underpinnings of the political ideology that would later become Maoism. Mao suggests that all movement and life is a result of contradiction. Mao presents his paper into different sections - the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and principal aspect of contradiction, the identity and struggle of aspects of contradiction, the place of antagonism in contradiction, and finally the conclusion. Mao further develops the theme laid out in ‘*On Contradiction*’ in his 1957 speech on the correct handling of contradictions among the People.

Mao describes existence as being made up of constant transformation and contradiction. Nothing is constant as in metaphysics and can only exist based on opposing contradictions. He uses the concept of dialectical materialism, contradiction, as derived by Karl Marx, usually refers to an opposition of social forces. This concept is one of the three main points of Marxism. Most prominently, capitalism entails a social system that has contradictions because the social classes have conflicting collective goals. These contradictions stem from the social structure of society and inherently lead to class conflict, economic crisis, and eventually revolution and leads to political power. The dialectic says that nothing is permanent and is the logic of change and can explain the concepts of evolution. Materialism refers to the existence of only one world and verifies that things can exist without the mind. Things existed well before humans had knowledge of

them. For materialists, consciousness is the mind and it exists within the body rather than apart from it. All things are made of matter. Dialectical materialism combines the two concepts into an important Marxist ideal. Mao saw dialectics as the study of contradiction based on a statement made by Lenin.

The two opposing world outlooks according to Mao are the metaphysical and dialectical concepts. For long time the metaphysical view was held by both Chinese and Europeans. Mao refers to the metaphysicians as ‘vulgar evolutionists.’ They believe in a static and unchanging world where things repeat themselves rather than changing with history. It cannot explain change and development over time. This concept cannot explain the ‘qualitative diversity of things.’ An example of the unchanging situations of metaphysics is the exploitation, competition, and individualism that are repeatedly found in slave societies. In dialectics, things are understood by their internal change and relationship with other objects. Contradiction within an object fuels its development and evolution.

The contradiction has a two-fold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end. Contradiction is the basis of life and drives it forward. No one phenomenon can exist without its contradictory opposite, such as victory and defeat. ‘Unity of opposites’ allows for a balance of contradiction. Mao saying that difference is made up of

contradiction and is contradiction. “No society - past, present, or future - could escape contradictions, for this was a characteristic of all matter in the universe”

Mao finds the best way to talk about the relativity of contradiction is to look at it in several different parts. “The contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity.” This contradiction is the essence of a thing. When one can identify the particular essence, one can understand the object. These particular contradictions also differentiate one object from another. When old processes change, new processes and contradictions emerge. Each contradiction has its own way of being solved, and the resolution must be found accordingly to the particular contradiction. Mao believes that one must look at things objectively when reviewing a conflict. When one is biased and subjective, he cannot fully understand the contradictions and aspects of an object.

This subject focuses on the concept of one contradiction allowing other contradictions to exist. For example, in a capitalist society, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie allow the other contradictions, such as the one between imperialists and their colonies. There is always only one principal contradiction; however, the contradictions can trade places of importance. When looking at numerous contradictions, one must understand which contradiction is superior. Contradictions are not static and will transform into one another. Mao uses examples in Chinese history and society to symbolise the concept of a principal

contradiction and its continual changing. “Neither imperialist oppression of the colonies nor the fate of the colonies to suffer under that oppression can last forever.” Based on the idea of Antagonistic contradiction is the impossibility of compromise between different social classes. The term is most often applied in Maoist theory, which holds that differences between the two primary classes, the working class and the bourgeoisie are so great that there is no way to bring about a reconciliation of their views. Because the groups involved have diametrically opposed concerns, their objectives are so dissimilar and contradictory that no mutually acceptable resolution can be found. Non-antagonistic contradictions may be resolved through mere debate, but antagonistic contradictions can only be resolved through struggle. In Maoism, the antagonistic contradiction was usually that between the peasantry and the land owning class. Mao focuses on antagonistic contradiction as the ‘struggle of opposites’. It is an absolute and universal concept. When one tries to solve the conflict of antagonistic contradictions, one must find his solution based on each situation.

b. Views on the role of peasantry in revolution

China’s peasantry played a decisive role in Mao’s communist revolution and helped his communist forces to defeat Chiang Kai-Shek’s Kuomintang. Without the support of the peasants Mao’s communist forces would have been unable to defeat the superior Japanese and Kuomintang armies. Recognising this, Mao based the revolution around the peasantry. Indeed, they formed a key part of Mao’s theoretical

approach to Marxism. A number of factors, such as the conduct of the communists and the Kuomintang in governance and war and the way Mao structured his revolution to be intimately connected with the peasantry, are what enabled the ultimate victory of Mao's peasant communist revolution.

Karl Marx believed that a communist revolution could only begin in an industrialised capitalist state. He predicted that this sort of society would create the political means and motivation for them to seize control of and redirect the resources of society towards benefiting the needs of the majority. A peasant society would not be receptive to revolutionary goals because of the peasantry's ties to tradition, sense of powerlessness, and relative ignorance of the world beyond the village. Peasants would be unable to develop the class consciousness, and in turn would never engage in revolution to improve their plight.

Mao disagreed with Marx's analysis of a peasant society, believing that it too could engage in and win a revolution. He recognised how Chinese peasants of the past had supported the revolutionary, untraditional ideologies espoused by the Taiping and Boxer rebellions. He was also aware of how the peasantry had engaged in rebellion against imperialist powers. Mao equated the peasantry's tradition with the ideology of Marxism, would enable a successful, peasant-based communist revolution to occur in China. Mao thus had supreme faith in the peasantry, seeing it not as a backwards reactionary class but rather as the class which would enable and carry out revolutionary change in China.

Mao based his revolutionary strategy around the concept of the ‘people’s war’, and was supported by widespread popular support. Through good words and deeds, such as exemplary conduct by soldiers and reforms aimed at helping the peasantry, the communists would gain the support and loyalty of the people. They would then help support and sustain the communist revolutionary war effort. While the peasants were perhaps unfamiliar with Marxist theory, they were supportive towards the good deeds and kind acts done by Mao’s forces, and this helped legitimise the communist cause.

Mao’s revolutionary strategy was designed around the peasants, and thus necessarily garnered their good will and support. The Kuomintang, meanwhile, alienated many peasants through the continuation of unjust and oppressive rule and perceptions of illegitimacy. As a result, in the final struggle for power following Second World War between the communists and the Kuomintang, the communist forces were immensely strengthened and the Kuomintang was largely demoralised and weakened. The communist victory was easily obtained. The factors described above therefore enabled the ultimate success of Mao’s communist peasant revolution.

c. New Democracy, Cultural Revolution

The New Democracy or the ‘New Democratic Revolution’ is a concept based on Mao’s ‘Bloc of Four Social Classes’ theory in post-revolutionary China which argued originally that democracy in China would take a decisively distinct path, much different from that of the liberal capitalist and parliamentary democratic systems

in the Western world as well as Soviet-style Socialism in Eastern Europe. The new democracy is based on a compromise: it does not go in for the immediate application of Stalinist principles. It means welding the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie into a united front under the leadership of the working class, and from this proceeding to the creation of a state of the people's democratic dictatorship. A state led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.

Mao Tse Tung said that the task of the system is to strengthen the people's state apparatus - meaning principally the people's army, the people's police and the people's courts - thereby safeguarding national defense and protecting the people's interest. China, under the leadership of the working class and the communist Party, can develop steadily from an agricultural into an industrial country and from a New Democratic into a socialist and eventually, communist society, eliminating classed and realising universal harmony. Mao's definition of 'New Democracy' is based on the Leninist idea of practical democracy. Mao said that communist china free to seek and find her independent national self-expression; a society not growing in the organic way of growth but forcibly shaped in a mould. He described three stages by which the Marxist aim was to be accomplished in china.

1. Placing the country under the political leadership of the communist party and working through the party regime.
2. Carrying through a socialistic revolution by means of policies operated by the state: and

3. Producing the soviet pattern in Chinese life and society through the practice of socialism.

People's Democracy is democracy with regard to those classes of society only which it recognises healthy for its own life and progress. The classes which it considers reactionary and unhealthy are suppressed. Mao Tse Tung wrote. "We definitely have no benevolent policies toward the reactionary or the counter - revolutionary activities of the reactionary classes. Our benevolent policy does not apply to such deeds or such persons who are outside the ranks of the people it applies only to the people. The people's state is for the protection of the people. Once they have a people's state, they have the possibility of applying democratic methods on a nationwide and comprehensive scale to educate and reform them so that they may get rid of the influences of domestic and foreign reactionaries. Thus, the people can reform their bad habits and thoughts derived from the old society so that they would not take the wrong road pointed out to them by the reactionaries but continue to advance and develop toward a socialist and then communist society".

In fact, according to Mao the foundation of the people's democratic dictatorship is, the alliance of the working class, peasantry and urban petty - bourgeoisie. It is essentially the alliance of the workers and peasants, because these two classes comprise majority of china's population. In overthrowing imperialism and the reactionary clique of the Kuomintang, these two classes are the major force. The transition from 'New Democracy' to socialism also depends

primarily upon the alliance of these two classes. Mao ranks of the people, giving them freedom of speech, of assembly and of convocation. The right to vote given to the people only, not to dictatorship over the reactionaries combine to form the democratic dictatorship of the people. It was to strengthen the apparatus of the popular state. This applies principally to army, the police, and the judiciary. The army, the police and the judiciary are the instruments by which class oppresses class. Towards hostile classes the state apparatus is the instrument of oppression it is violent and not benevolent.

The people's democratic dictatorship Mao strongly delivered must have the leadership of the working class. This is because the working class is the most far - sighted class, most impartially just and most filled with revolutionary thoroughness and consistency. The entire history of revolution proves that "without the leadership of the working class, a revolution will fail but with the leadership of the working class a revolution will be victorious." Mao firmly believes that in an era of imperialism, no other class in any country can lead any genuine revolution to victory.

In 1958, after China's first Five-Year Plan, Mao called for 'grassroots socialism' in order to accelerate his plans for turning China into a modern industrialised state. In this spirit, Mao launched the 'Great Leap Forward', established People's Communes in the countryside, and began the mass mobilisation of the people into collectives. Many communities were assigned production of a single commodity - steel. Mao vowed to increase agricultural production to twice 1957 levels.

The Great Leap was an economic failure. Uneducated farmers attempted to produce steel on a massive scale, partially relying on backyard furnaces to achieve the production targets set by local cadres. The steel produced was low quality and largely useless. The Great Leap reduced harvest sizes and led to a decline in the production of most goods except substandard pig iron and steel. Furthermore, local authorities frequently exaggerated production numbers, hiding and intensifying the problem for several years. In the meantime, chaos in the collectives, bad weather, and exports of food necessary to secure hard currency resulted in the Great Chinese Famine. Food was in desperate shortage, and production fell dramatically. The famine caused the deaths of millions of people, particularly in poorer inland regions.

The Great Leap's failure reduced Mao's prestige within the Party. Forced to take major responsibility, in 1959, Mao resigned as the President of the People's Republic of China, China's *de jure* head of state, and was succeeded by Liu Shaoqi. In July, senior Party leaders convened at the scenic Mount Lu to discuss policy. At the conference, Marshal Peng Dehuai, the Minister of Defence, criticised Great Leap policies in a private letter to Mao, writing that it was plagued by mismanagement and cautioning against elevating political dogma over the laws of economics.

Despite the moderate tone of Peng's letter, Mao took it as a personal attack against his leadership. Following the Conference, Peng was removed from his posts, and accused him of being a 'right-opportunist'. Peng was replaced by Lin

Biao, another revolutionary army general who became a stauncher Mao supporter later in his career. While the Lushan Conference served as a death knell for Peng, Mao's most vocal critic, it led to a shift of power to moderates led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who took effective control of the economy following 1959.

By the early 1960s, many of the Great Leap's economic policies were reversed by initiatives spearheaded by Liu, Deng, and Zhou Enlai. This moderate group of pragmatists was unenthusiastic about Mao's utopian visions. Owing to his loss of esteem within the party, Mao developed a decadent and eccentric lifestyle. By 1962, while Zhou, Liu and Deng managed affairs of state and the economy, Mao had effectively withdrawn from economic decision-making, and focused much of his time on further contemplating his contributions to Marxist–Leninist social theory, including the idea of 'continuous revolution'. This theory's ultimate aim was to set the stage for Mao to restore his brand of Communism and his personal prestige within the Party.

'The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution', better known as 'The Cultural Revolution', was a communist social-political movement established by Mao in an attempt to revive Communism in China and reassert his dominance within the Chinese Communist Party. Mao's former attempt at revolution in the form of The Great Leap Forward in 1958 had seen the rapid collectivisation and industrialisation of society, causing economic turmoil and killing over 15 million in the Great Chinese Famine. By 1966, Mao believed the party had been

overrun by bourgeois agendas and needed to be saved from the dangers of capitalism and old Chinese tradition. Once again, Maoist ideology was imposed upon the population of China. The Cultural Revolution was from 1966 until 1976. Launched by Mao Tse Tung, then Chairman of the Communist Party of China, alleged that bourgeois elements had infiltrated the government and society at large, and aiming to restore capitalism. He declared that its stated goal was to preserve true communist ideology in the country by purging remnants of capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society, and to reimpose Mao Tse Tung. To eliminate his rivals within the Communist Party of China, Mao insisted that these 'revisionists' be removed through violent class struggle.

China's youth responded to Mao's appeal by forming Red Guard groups around the country. The movement spread into the military, urban workers, and the Communist Party leadership itself. It resulted in widespread factional struggles in all walks of life. In the top leadership, it led to a mass purge of senior officials, most notably Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. During the same period, Mao's personality cult grew to immense proportions. The Cultural Revolution of 1966-69 was indeed an attempt by Mao to protect his own power and position. This is evident from the fact that it was brought about in response to the huge public debate that was taking place between the rightists and the Maoists over the course of action to follow. Mao while facing criticisms and in order to save the revolution that was his brainchild, started using his position to appeal to masses. It was through this appeal that he introduced

the Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution resulted in nothing but great disruption ruined millions of lives and also held up China's economic development for ten years. Therefore, the Cultural Revolution did not bring any positive results, which makes the intention behind it quite clear. Mao had given the following ideas about Cultural Revolution:

About marriage Mao said that under feudal domination marriage is barbaric and inhuman institution. Mao says that the whole feudal system of marriage, including power of parent to arrange for their children, to exercise compulsion, and all purchase and sale in marriage contracts shall be abolished. Secondly, children are masters of society; the women of China are vast reserve of labour. Thirdly, there should be collective production, through co-operatives. Therefore, the co-operatives should be encouraged. Fourthly, the Feudalism is considered as an ally of imperialism and said that land reforms should be introduced favourable to peasants. Lastly, economic planning should be introduced for the better interest of the society.

Mao Tse Tung made a historic contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism in the spheres of philosophy, practice and Theory. Mao developed the first military line of the proletariat in semi-colonial agrarian based third world countries through his work on protracted peoples War. Mao created the most democratic society in the history of mankind in the Chinese revolution from the Socialist to the stage of the Cultural Revolution. Mao was the first Marxist to

recognise the need for continuing class struggle under the dictatorship of the Proletariat. He thus founded the theory of continuous revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. As such he offered an Asiatic form of socialism.

MODULE 4

ANTONIO GRAMSCI (1891 –1937)

Antonio Francesco Gramsci was an Italian Marxist and social philosopher, writer, politician and political theorist known as one of the most important Marxist thinkers of the 20th century. As the founder and leader of the Communist Party, he was imprisoned in 1926 by Mussolini's fascist regime. He wrote more than 30 notebooks and 3,000 pages of history and analysis during his imprisonment. His '*Prison Notebooks*' are considered a highly original contribution to 20 century political theory. Gramsci drew insights from varying sources – not only from other Marxists theorist but also thinkers such as Niccolo Machiavelli, Italian philosopher; Vilfredo Pareto, Italian sociologist; Georges Sorel, French philosopher and theorist and Benedetto Croce, Italian idealist philosopher, historian and politician. The '*Prison Notebooks*' cover a wide range of topics, including Italian history and nationalism, the French Revolution, Fascism, civil society, folklore, religion and high and popular culture. Gramsci is popular for developing theoretical framework of cultural hegemony, which defines how states use cultural institutions to maintain power in capitalist societies.

Majority of Gramsci's intellectual work well elucidated in his '*Prison Notebooks*', a large compendium of essays, commentaries, and letters written during his internment, which began to be published in fragmentary fashion after World War

II. These writings include Gramsci's thesis on hegemony, the role of intellectuals, and the status of the peasantry in Left analysis. His theory was based on an origin of Marx's conception concerning the development and operation of the capitalist society, composed by the contrary duality between dominant class and subordinate class, between possessors and the poor, the capitalists and the proletariat. The private ownership both of the earth and of the means of production of the material life has, in the superstructure, i.e. in the philosophical and spiritual sphere of the society, a direct correspondence.

Gramsci supports the ideologies of Marx that the class which seizes the material power also seizes the conceptual power or the power of the ideas, and he took advantage of extending and to developing his political theory. His main hypothesis is that the superstructure maintains the class relationships, and that this dominance is executed by the mechanisms of hegemony of the State and of the civil society. To overawe this hegemony, it would be necessary to develop counter-hegemony, what can be gotten if the working class, including the socialist intellectuals, encourage the creation and the development of a new culture, in opposition to the bourgeois hegemony. The emphasis of the economic and social transformation happens in the superstructure, in the field of the values and norms are in man and world's visualisation.

According to Marxist interpretation of socio-economic relations the root of everything is the mode of production. This is not only applied to modern capitalism but to older

systems. The economic base is the only relevant component of society, so that everything stems from this base; culture, laws, religion, language and any other aspect of society have no other root than the economic system. As a reaction to the prevailing orthodoxy, though isolated from the contemporary debates of Marxist philosophy, Gramsci's thought was the most significant. Rather than any other contemporary Marxist thinker Gramsci adding a social and cultural framework to understand social and economic relations. His influence extends beyond that of Marxist theory and informs cultural theory and even right - wing thinking. He was isolated from the currents of intellectual discourse in the fascist jail and spent much of his later life in doing so.

Gramsci on Superstructure

Gramsci's 'Super structuralism' starts with his assertion that the superstructures of society had a reciprocal relationship with the economic base, and that through this mutual influence could affect and even change the economic base. The role of law, culture, language, religion and tradition were given validity by Gramsci that was denied by Marxist orthodoxy. This extension is key in his ideas concerning hegemony, and his consideration of them informs his conception of an advanced capitalist society. The bourgeois control of society and the modes of production stems from their control and influence in these superstructures. Gramsci is giving the bourgeois control of society a cultural aspect dependent on their hegemony, something that is entirely beyond the scope of strict materialism.

According to Marxist interpretation of socio-economic relations, the root of everything is the mode of production. This is not only applied to modern capitalism but to older systems. The economic base is the only relevant component of society, so that everything stems from this base; culture, laws, religion, language and any other aspect of society have no other root than the economic system. As a reaction to the prevailing orthodoxy, though isolated from the contemporary debates of Marxist philosophy, Gramsci's thought was the most significant. Rather than any other contemporary Marxist thinker Gramsci adding a social and cultural framework to understand social and economic relations.

Base and superstructure are the two layers of the society according to classical Marxian tradition. However, in Gramsci, base and superstructure do not remain apart from each other, though they both have their own arenas of operation. Gramsci is in favour of a unity between the two, base and superstructure. In simple words, the entire society can be understood not just purely in terms of economics. Culture, ideologies, moral principles etc. have an important role to play in determining the society. For Karl Marx, the changes in economic aspects determined the changes in the society. However, in Gramsci the elements in superstructure also equally have an important role in determining social changes. He believes in the unity of both base and superstructure to create a bloc. Similar is his attitude regarding the unity between theory and practice. He also is in favour of creating a social bloc by uniting the intellectuals with the simple common

masses.

Gramsci's influence extends beyond that of Marxist theory and informs cultural theory and even right wing thinking. He was isolated from the currents of intellectual discourse in the fascist jail and spent much of his later life in doing so. Gramsci is however the Marxist theoretician of the 'superstructures' in the English speaking world, and as such his work has had a profound influence on many fields beyond that of Marxist philosophy from cultural studies to sociology. His rethinking of the relationship between base and superstructure and his ideas relating to hegemony have been validated by many historical events, such as the USSR which can be attributed to a collapse in hegemony for the Communist Party. Gramsci's ideas on hegemony are now used by right-wing political parties in their quest for power, a use that demonstrates the wide applicability of the concept. His ideas on the relationship between the base and superstructure, and the reciprocal relationship between them are now seemingly proved through many examples completely disproving Marxist orthodoxy.

a. Theory of Hegemony and the role of Intellectuals

Gramsci's main contribution to Marxism remains his concept of cultural hegemony. It explains how the ruling class manages to dominate and rule over other classes. The concept of 'hegemony' first appeared in Gramsci's '*Notes on the Southern Question*' (1926) where it was defined as a system of class alliance in which a 'hegemonic class' exercised political leadership over 'subaltern classes' by winning them over. In

this respect, unlike his Marxist predecessors, Gramsci insists on the role of ideology by which the dominant class maintains its rule and domination in society.

For Gramsci, instead of imposing its rule by means of force and coercion, the ruling class seeks to establish the consent of other classes to their rule. However, there are different kinds of conceptual vagueness regarding 'hegemony' as it is used as a catchword to distinguish Gramsci's thinking from that of other Marxists, the general meaning assigned to the term 'domination', is a kind of supremacy. It is the supremacy of a group over the other group in the society. But Gramsci does not see it as mere domination as understood by the earlier Marxist thinkers. For him it is an 'intellectual moral leadership over the subordinate groups'. Gramsci writes that the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as domination and as intellectual and moral leadership. A social group dominates antagonistic groups which it tends to 'liquidate' or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power; it subsequently becomes dominant.

Antonio Gramsci shares with Marx and the Marxists as a whole their belief that the struggle between the ruling class and the subordinate working class is what enables society to move forward. However, when it comes to the way the ruling class dominates and rules, Gramsci distances himself a lot from Marxism. In other words, whereas the Marxists focus on the coercive practices of the ruling class and its tendency to

exploit the proletariat by means of force, Gramsci emphasises the role of ideology. In his opinion, before the ruling class resorts to direct force and coercion, it seeks to make its rule acceptable by all classes. This is what Gramsci calls “hegemony”.

Marx divides society into two major components - base and superstructure. The first is represented by the economic structure and the second by socialising mechanisms such as language, religion, education, law, ideology, mass media and the army. It needs to be emphasised here that Marx believes the economic base of society is what determines its social, political and cultural environment. He argues that the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. He adds that the society’s economic relations constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.

According to Marx, since the ruling class owns and controls the means of production, it must equally control the means of intellectual and cultural production. Consequently, the ideas of the ruling class must be the prevailing ideas in society. By implication, therefore, what follows is that since the economic base is the determining element in society, the success of the working class revolution requires a fundamental change in the economic base. Marx and his followers are so obsessed with the economic factor and ignored the role culture and ideology can play in the production of social relations. For

Marx, the economic base determines the status of the people occupy in society. This is to imply that if the working class wants to become the dominant class in society, it must have total control of the base. That is, revolution would be possible only if there is a fundamental change in the economic base.

Gramsci rejects the Marxist claim that the power of the ruling class is limited to the economic base. For him, a social class becomes hegemonic not only by controlling the means of production and coercing other classes but rather by establishing their consent. In fact, consent is so important to Gramscian theory of hegemony. Before the ruling class resorts to force and coercion, it seeks to indoctrinate the proletariat with those ideas that make them consent to their subordinate position. Unlike the Marxian obsession with the economic base, Gramsci pays more attention to ideology and ideas. For Gramsci, as long as the ideas of the subaltern people are dominated, the dominant class will not need to use force and oppression to maintain its rule.

Gramsci takes Marx's division of the state into a base and a superstructure a step further when he divides the superstructure into what he calls political society and civil society. Whereas political society stands for such coercive institutions as the government, armed forces, police, the legal system and the like, civil society refers to those institutions that are not coercive, including all institutions used in the construction of public opinion. Gramsci says that everything which influences or able to influence public opinion, directly or indirectly, belongs to it: libraries, schools, associations and

clubs of various kinds, even architecture and the layout and names of streets etc. constitutes the civil society.

In Gramsci's opinion, the supremacy of a social group or class manifested itself in two different ways-

- a. 'Domination' or coercion, and
- b. 'Intellectual and moral leadership' or hegemony.

Whereas the first type of supremacy (i.e. domination) is exercised through force by political society, the second (i.e. hegemony) is exercised through consent by civil society. This is to mean that the coercive machinery of the state achieves domination while hegemony attained through various ways in which the institutions of civil society operate to shape, directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality. To establish hegemony Gramsci gives more importance to the role played by the intellectuals in a social system.

The role of the intellectuals was the central idea of Gramsci's thought. Karl Marx used this term on a very basic sense by just making a distinction between manual and mental labour but Gramsci gave a much wider dimension to this idea. Gramsci says that all men are intellectuals but they are not intellectuals by social function. He is of the view that every man outside the sphere of his professional activity carries on some kind of intellectual endeavor. In his essay '*The Formation of the Intellectuals*', Gramsci not only deals with the question of whether intellectuals can be seen as individual groups or whether they are the representatives of various social

classes, but also engages with the process of formation of the intellectuals and the kinds of intellectuals that are usually considered. For him intellectuals are people who are responsible for creating, maintaining and expanding the hegemony of the particular class they represent.

Gramsci visualised that intellectuals are decisive in articulating and disseminating the outlooks of the classes for which they speak, in a way that goes beyond the simple expression of economic interests. According to Gramsci, intellectuals are a broader group of social agents, includes not only scholars and artists or, in his own terms, the ‘organisers of culture’ but also functionaries who exercise technical or directive capacities in society. Among these officials, administrators and bureaucrats, industrial managers, politicians, are included. Besides, Gramsci categorises these intellectuals in two dimensions: the horizontal and the vertical dimensions. On the vertical dimension, he categorised the ‘specialists’ those who organise industry in particular for the capitalists. On the horizontal dimension, Gramsci categorises intellectuals as:

- A. The organic intellectuals and
- B. The traditional intellectuals.

Organic Intellectuals:

Organic intellectuals are entrepreneurs and organisers of the mass population. They organise a new culture, social class, and they can act as a voice for the working class. According to Gramsci, the organic intellectuals are a new class

creates along side itself and elaborates in the course of its development. Organic intellectuals are special individuals who give a voice to those who need one and can inspire a group of people to fight for something worth fighting for. Organic intellectuals, the thinking and organising element of a particular fundamental social class. These intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. The organic intellectuals are those groups of intellectuals which emerge when a new class rises and which is why they remain tied to that class. They can be seen as revolutionary as their emergence occurs in opposition to and in place of an already established class and its intellectuals.

Gramsci's idea of organic intellectuals is based on his support and work for the working classes. In the '*Prison Notebooks*' Gramsci identifies that the development of capitalism was accompanied by the growth of new types of intellectual – entrepreneurs, bureaucrats, business lawyers, economists, engineers and industrial technicians. It is within the latter categories that he sees some potential for the development of an intelligentsia that is organic to the labour movement. Writing in the context of the working class movement, Gramsci believed that a true organic intellectual would be someone with both the knowledge of the industry technology and someone who was also involved in the labour. He saw such people as having the best understanding to win control from the bourgeoisie.

Traditional Intellectuals:

According to Gramsci the rural intellectuals are much more traditional in nature mainly because they remain close to the 'petite bourgeoisie' class. This type of intellectuals performs a socio-political role because they create an organic relationship between the peasant classes and the organs of the state. Gramsci also gave a kind of class character to the rural intellectuals. The rural intellectuals may include priest, lawyer, teacher, doctor etc. have a different kind of living standards than the normal peasant community and they become a source of motivation for the peasant class to improve their standards.

The feature of the traditional intellectuals remains their detachment from the process of production and labour, their engagement in the private spheres of religion, ethics and education as well as their acknowledged or unacknowledged association with the ruling class of their time. Traditional intellectuals are significant in the way hegemony operates because for an emerging class to entirely overthrow the ruling class, it becomes necessary for the traditional intellectuals to come under the influence of the emerging class ideology. Gramsci believed that the more the number of organic intellectuals the working class produced, greater would be their influence on the space of ideology.

Different intellectuals have shaped the ideologies that have formed societies; each class creates one or more groups of intellectuals. Thus, if the working class wants to thrive in becoming hegemonic, it must also create its own intellectuals to develop a new ideology. Gramsci also contributed his

political ideology in describing the role of intellectuals. Gramsci proposes that although all tasks require a degree of intellectual and creative ability, some persons will be required to perform tasks or functions, which are visibly intellectual. Gramsci stated that the revolutionary intellectuals should originate from within the working class rather than imposed from outside or above it.

Gramsci says that the intellectuals are the deputies of the dominant group, the functionaries, exercising the subaltern but important functions of political government and social hegemony. The organic intellectuals are most important since they are actually elaborate and spread organic ideology. The political importance of these intellectuals are as a historically and realistically progressive class will be able to establish their dominance over the intellectuals of other classes, and hence will be able to create a system of solidarity maintained so long as the progressive class remains progressive. Gramsci considers that intellectuals has vital role in the revolutionary transformation of society. He debated that intellectuals provide a philosophy as well as advice for the masses so that they do not question the ruling position of the bourgeoisie.

c. Gramsci's concept of ideology and state

Gramsci was distinctive than that of his predecessors and contemporaries essentially because it overcame both epiphenomenalism and class reductionism. Ideological epiphenomenalism consisted basically of the claim that the ideological superstructure was determined mechanically by the economic infrastructure, and that ideology played no role in

the economic life of society or in revolutionary change for that matter. Revolutionary change resulted from the dynamics and tensions of economic contradictions grounded in the mode of production. The contradictions of the relations of production and forces of production, coupled with the economic contradictions of antagonistic classes in the realm of production determine every qualitative transformation of the institutional fabric and the ideological formation of the social system in crisis.

This notion of social revolution brought about an ultimate implication for capitalist society. Capitalist society would inevitably collapse because of its own economic laws and contradictions of increased proletarianisation and pauperisation. This crisis would only be resolved through the decisive capture and smashing of the state apparatus by the proletariat, the revolutionary class then to hold legitimate power. This successful appropriation of state power was construed to preclude any form of class alliance based on a defined hierarchy of ideological, economic, and political interests led by the genuine fundamental interests of the proletariat. Hence, the interpretation of state power was one of pure coercion and force as to other classes without considerations for their consent.

This conception of ideology and revolution by Gramsci was often combined with a reductionist interpretation of ideology which argued that ideologies necessarily had a class character, as such an ideology of the capitalist class and an ideology of the working class. Both ideologies antagonistic,

defined, and mutually exclusive in their totality. The ultimate implication of this conception was that classes at the economic level were ‘duplicated’ at the ideological level through ideological discourses exclusively of their own. The combination of these notions led to formulations in which ideology was conceived to have a class nature and was considered to play no significant role in social and revolutionary dynamics. On other occasions, ideologies were given a certain degree of efficacy vis-a-vis revolutionary change in society while still being conceived of as having a class determination. Of course, it was Gramsci who rectified the notion of ideology by overcoming both epiphenomenalism and class reductionism, and by redefining the term ‘ideology’ in terms of practices, politico-ideological discourses, and elements.

Antonio Gramsci’s conception of ideology overcame epiphenomenalism by describing ideology as a “terrain” of practices, principles, and dogmas having a material and institutional nature constituting individual subjects once these were placed into such a terrain. Since ideology constituted individuals as subjects and social agents in society had an important function in the realm of production as well as in the overall structure of society. This function was as real in the recurring dynamics of a mode of production or productive system.

Gramsci’s conception of ideology overcame class reductionism by asserting that classes in the infrastructure were not duplicated in the superstructure through ideological

elements exclusively of their own. This meant that it was possible for there to be a crossover of classes at the ideological sphere of civil society. Ideological elements did not have a necessary class belonging, ideological systems were defined by their ideological discourses and these by ideological elements; hence ideological elements could be articulated in the different ideological discourses of those classes contending for hegemony.

The most distinctive aspect of Gramsci's concept of ideology is his notion of 'organic ideology'. Ideology was defined in terms of a system of class rule, i.e. hegemony, in which there was an organic arrangement of all ideological elements into a unified system. This complex arrangement constituted what is known as 'organic ideology'. The expression of the communal life of the given social bloc wherein a class held state power and hence social hegemony. In a given hegemonic system, a hegemonic class held state power through its economic supremacy and through its ability to successfully articulate or express in a coherent, unified fashion the most essential elements in the ideological discourses of the subordinate classes in civil society.

The organic ideology is diffused throughout civil society through social institutions and structures such as the family, churches, the media, schools, the legal system, and other organisations such as the trade unions, chambers of commerce, and economic associations; by virtue of the integration of diverse class interests and practices into a unified system of socioeconomic relations. Organic ideology

emanates from the dynamic function of articulation performed by social agents, Gramsci called ‘organic intellectuals’. An organic ideology was formulated by organic intellectuals through an articulating principle which unifying the various ideological elements from the discourses of subaltern groups and forming from them a unified ideological system, became hegemony. Two classes or two members of different classes could advocate the same ideological element and articulate it in their particular ideological discourses; it was conceivable for a solid class alliance through the process of ideological absorption. This was possible if a group or class could develop organic intellectuals and an articulating principle capable of absorbing ideologically, economically, and politically other classes in the hegemonic system.

To summarise, Antonio Gramsci credited as the most influential philosophers of the Left in the twentieth century. In early years of academic life, Gramsci published writing and he contributed articles on a number of subjects, essays on general themes, literary and theatre criticism and, increasingly as the war went on, he initiated writing for the Turin edition of the principal Socialist newspaper ‘*Avanti*’, political commentaries. Gramsci showed, by his work in developing his concept of hegemony. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony revealed that popular democratic struggles, and the parliamentary institutions which they have helped to shape, do not have a necessary class character. Instead, they are a territory for political struggle between the two major classes the working class and the capitalist class. Gramsci had great contribution to

Marxist theory. Gramsci brought new theoretical bases into truly dialectical Marxist revolutionary theory with concepts such as ‘organic ideology’, ‘civil society’, ‘political society’, ‘organic intellectuals’ and ‘hegemony’, etc.

MODULE 5

CONTEMPORARY MARXISM

LOUISE ALTHUSSER

Louis Pierre Althusser (1918–1990) was one of the most influential Marxist philosophers of the 20th Century. He was born in Algeria and studied in Paris, where he eventually became Professor of Philosophy. Althusser was a long-time member of the French Communist Party. His arguments and theses were set against the threats that he saw attacking the theoretical foundations of Marxism. These included both the influence of empiricism on Marxist theory, and humanist and reformist socialist orientations, which manifested as divisions in the European communist parties, as well as the problem of the cult of personality and of ideology. Althusser is commonly referred to as a structural Marxist, although his relationship to other schools of French structuralism is not a simple affiliation and he was critical of many aspects of structuralism.

As they seemed to offer a renewal of Marxist thought as well as to render Marxism philosophically respectable, the claims he advanced in the 1960s about Marxist philosophy were discussed and debated world wide. Despite the comparative indifference shown to his work as a whole after these events, the theory of ideology Althusser developed within it has been broadly deployed in the social sciences and humanities and has provided a foundation for much ‘post-Marxist’ philosophy. In addition, aspects of Althusser’s project

have served as inspiration for Analytic Marxism as well as for Critical Realism. Althusser's work continues to inform the research programs of literary studies, political philosophy, history, economics, and sociology. In addition, his autobiography has been subject to much critical attention over the last decade.

A great deal has been written on Louis Althusser and his theories. The best source of information on Althusser's philosophy is his own published works, including, '*Essays in Self-Criticism*' (London, 1976), '*For Marx*' (1970), '*Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*' (1971), '*Politics and History*' (London, 1972), '*Reading Capital*' (with Etienne Balibar) (London, 1970), and his posthumous '*Politics and History*' (New York, 1993) etc.

Althusser on Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus

"Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," was extracted from '*Philosophy of the Encounter: Later Writings*' has been widely distributed, anthologised, and translated. Here Althusser argues for a materialist understanding of ideology. Rather than considering ideology as mistaken ideas about the world, for him ideology is essentially practical. He says that Ideology does not exist in the world of ideas conceived as a spiritual world, rather exists in institutions and the practices specific to them or more precisely: ideology exists in '*apparatuses*' and the '*practices*' specific to them.

Althusser began his argument by citing Marx's strong insistence that the capitalist mode of production could never

survive unless its social conditions were reproduced. For him, non-class aspects of the society in which capitalist class structures prevail comprise the conditions of those structures' existence. Without the reproduction of those non-class aspects; and he was especially interested in the ideological conditions. Moreover, Althusser insisted that nothing guarantees the reproduction of capitalism's ideological conditions of existence. That is, the capitalist class structure does not automatically or necessarily succeed in reproducing its non-class conditions of existence. The ideological conditions of capitalist class structures of production are always more or less a problem for capitalism and capitalists. The latter seek to shape and control them such that they provide the needed supports. However, they do so against contradictory social influences that can make politics and ideology undermine more than they support capitalism.

Given the Marxian tradition's the 'state apparatus' reproduces the legal and political conditions for capitalist exploitation, Althusser took up the term but refocused it instead on how ideological conditions were reproduced. He thus distinguished between two sets of apparatuses. The first set was political and comprised the state and most of its various activities and branches: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). The RSA maintained and wielded a monopoly of the means of force in capitalist societies and applied that monopoly to support capitalist class structures. By repressing the threats to capitalist class structures that it recognised, the state's branches, activities, and officials constituted a

Repressive State Apparatus. In Althusser's view, a different set of apparatuses played a parallel role in sustaining capitalist class structures. He named that set the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) to stress a certain parallel to the RSA despite their differences.

Althusser takes the Marxist theory of the State forward by distinguishing the repressive State Apparatus from the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA). The ISAs consist of an array of institutions and multiple realities that propagate a wide range of ideologies such as Religious ISA, Educational ISA, Family ISA, Legal ISA, Political ISA, Communications ISA, Cultural ISA etc. He accentuates the differences between the RSA and the ISAs as follows:

1. The RSA functions as a unified entity (an organised whole) as opposed to the ISA which is diverse and plural. However, what unites the disparate ISAs is the fact that they are ultimately controlled by the ruling ideology.
2. The RSA function predominantly by means of repression and violence and secondarily by ideology whereas the ISA functions predominantly by ideology and secondarily by repression and violence. The ISA functions in a concealed and a symbolic manner.

Althusser included among state ideological apparatuses the schools, the family, religions and religious institutions, and the mass media. As with the RSAs, capitalists' efforts to shape the functioning of ISAs contested with the often differently directed efforts of others. Althusser found RSAs to be more

unified and controlled in targeting and performing the functions that capitalists wanted, whereas the ISAs were more elusive, diverse, and contested terrains where capitalists often had more difficulties in securing their agendas as opposed to others’.

Ideology and ISAs work, in Althusser’s view, by ‘interpellation’. That is, institutions such as families, churches, schools, mass media, and so on all “call” individuals in particular ways that prescribe and enforce

- (a) Thinking in specific ways about their identities, relationships with other individuals, and their connections to social institutions, and
- (b) Acting accordingly. In his subtle formulations, Althusser focuses on the ‘subjectivity’ of such interpellated individuals.

He sees the ISA as quite literally imposing very particular subjectivities upon individuals. Had Althusser written later, he might well have used “identity” synonymously with “particular subjectivity.” In any case, he argued that ISAs do more than create subjectivities/identities in the individuals whom they interpellate. They also aim to have such subjects imagine that their subjectivities/identities are internally self-generated.

Modern capitalism presses its ISAs to interpellate and thus to identify individuals in those particular ways that will provide the ideological conditions of existence for capitalist exploitation. ISAs serve capitalism in so far as they effectively

interpellate subjects within systems that make them at least accept and at best celebrate capitalist exploitation. This ideology of the subject that ISAs impose on individuals affirms, in an ironic twist, that their subjectivity consists of a quite radical independence and autonomy. That is, individuals are interpellated as free subjects who cause or originate their belief systems, their actions, and their social institutions. Individuals are shaped by ISAs to believe that their conformity to the needs of capitalist class structures is something quite different, a life path freely chosen by an independent and autonomous subject. In Althusser's words, the individual within modern capitalist societies is interpellated by ISAs as "free" so that he "freely accepts ...subjection".

Althusser points out a number of these apparatuses, most prominently the church, the school, trade unions, and the family. These social institutions have the capacity to not only inculcate a worldview that is conducive to bourgeois domination, but also enforce these beliefs by means of a series of rituals, habits, and customs, which are more or less compulsory. In his view, these ideological apparatuses can be described as belonging to the state, even if they appear separate from it. He says that the state has two components:

- A. a repressive state apparatus, which includes the army, the police, and the courts, and enforces class domination directly, and
- B. the ideological state apparatuses (ISA), which maintain complicity and identification with class society.

Controversially, Althusser argues that the domestic sphere of family life is included in the domain of the state, because it functions to maintain and develop an ideology that will maintain psychological adherence to and participation in class society. In this context, the church and the school system as ideological state apparatuses.

Althusser argues that ideology has a profound relationship with subjective experience; the practices and beliefs inherent to ideology produce a sense of identity. Our conscious experience of the world and sense of individual always bound up in effects of the social institutions. It is in the nature of ideology to conceal this artificial and imposed nature. Rather than viewing our immediate experiences as conditioned, they appear to be obvious interpretations of the world. Althusser's point is not that an obscure veil of appearance inevitably conceals the real world. Rather, he argues that this mediated experience of the world constructed according to a rational purpose to "*ensure the reproduction of the relations of production.*" In his analysis, ideology tasked with knotting together of superstructure and base. It is the cultural necessity that maintains the durability of a mode of production. Althusser believed that ideology was a basic aspect of subjective experience, thereby persisting even in a post-capitalist society.

Althusser's view is that the economy fundamentally structured by exploitation, and this exploitation always produces conflict. Ideology strives to ensure the continuation of the capitalist mode of production and continuing working-

class adherence to a system that oppresses them. However, he argues that ideology cannot maintain an unbroken domination, because it is produced by apparatuses that are enmeshed in material class society. Because these apparatuses are bound up in labour, they cannot be fully owned and controlled by the capitalist state, and they are not fully reconcilable into a consistent social whole. As a result, ideology carries with it proletarian values, as well as bourgeois domination. The proletarian elements that have been distorted in capitalist ideology can be strengthened and clarified to the degree that eventually the entire edifice can be overthrown in a revolutionary process. However, because individual experience is always constituted by ideology, this process of liberation must always take place as part of a commitment to working-class activity, not as a personal break with delusion and conformity.

Althusser argues that the basic contradictions and irrationalities of the capitalist system will also interfere with the ability of ideology to fully capture a convincing experience of the world. These inherent contradictions produce “*ideological sub-formations.*” He argues that it was exactly these contradictions and sub-formations that characterised the eruption of discontent and insurrection by French workers and students in May 1968. In the later stages of the Russian Revolution Lenin understood this basic framework, and that is why he was so interested in reforming education and social institutions.

For Althusser, class struggle takes place within

ideology, and Marxist science can discern this process. He argues that the capacity to understand ideology from a scientific point of view is also a product of class struggle and the historical achievement of the workers movement.

b. The Frankfurt School and its contribution to Marxist Theory

The Frankfurt School is a school of social theory and philosophy associated in part with the Institute for Social Research at the Goethe University Frankfurt. The ‘Frankfurt School’ refers to a group of German-American theorists who developed powerful analyses of the changes in Western capitalist societies that occurred since the classical theory of Marx. Theorists like Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, T.W. Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, and Erich Fromm etc. produced the first accounts of critical social theory. The Frankfurt School also generated one of the first models of critical cultural studies that analyses the processes of cultural production and political economy, the politics of cultural texts, and audience reception and use of cultural artifacts.

Moving from Germany to the United States, the Frankfurt School experienced at first hand the rise of a media culture involving film, popular music, radio, television, and other forms of mass culture. In the United States, where they found themselves in exile, media production was by and large a form of commercial entertainment controlled by big corporations. Key theorists in this connection are Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno developed an account of the ‘culture industry’ to call attention to the industrialisation and

commercialisation of culture under capitalist relations of production. This situation was most marked in the United States that had little state support of film or television industries, and where a highly commercial mass culture emerged that came to be a distinctive feature of capitalist societies and a focus of critical cultural studies.

During the 1930s, the Frankfurt school developed a critical and trans-disciplinary approach to cultural and communications studies, combining political economy, textual analysis, and analysis of social and ideological effects. They coined the term ‘culture industry’ to signify the process of the industrialisation of mass-produced culture and the commercial imperatives that drove the system. The critical theorists analysed all mass-mediated cultural artifacts within the context of industrial production, in which the commodities of the culture industries exhibited the same features as other products of mass production: commodification, standardisation, and massification. The culture industries had the specific function, however, of providing ideological legitimisation of the existing capitalist societies and of integrating individuals into its way of life.

Adorno’s analyses of popular music, television, and Lowenthal’s studies of popular literature and magazines, Herzog’s studies of radio soap operas, and the perspectives and critiques of mass culture developed in Horkheimer provide many examples of the Frankfurt school approach. Moreover, in their theories of the culture industries and critiques of mass culture, they were among the first social theorists its importance in the

reproduction of contemporary societies. In their view, mass culture and communications stand in the center of leisure activity, are important agents of socialisation, mediators of political reality, and should thus be seen as major institutions of contemporary societies with a variety of economic, political, cultural and social effects.

Furthermore, the critical theorists investigated the cultural industries in a political context as a form of the integration of the working class into capitalist societies. The Frankfurt school theorists were among the first Neo-Marxian groups to examine the effects of mass culture and the rise of the consumer society on the working classes which were to be the instrument of revolution in the classical Marxian scenario. They analysed the ways that the culture industries and consumer society were stabilising contemporary capitalism and accordingly sought new strategies for political change, agencies of political transformation, and models for political emancipation that could serve as norms of social critique and goals for political struggle. This project required rethinking Marxian theory and produced many important contributions as well as some problematical positions.

The Frankfurt school focused intently on technology and culture, indicating how technology was becoming both a major force of production and formative mode of social organisation and control. In the realm of culture, technology produced mass culture that habituated individuals to conform to the dominant patterns of thought and behavior, and thus provided powerful instruments of social control and domination.

Max Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno's analysis of the culture industry published in their book '*Dialectic of Enlightenment*', appeared in 1948. They argued that the system of cultural production dominated by film, radio broadcasting, newspapers, and magazines, was controlled by advertising and commercial imperatives, and served to create subservience to the system of consumer capitalism. While later critics pronounced their approach too manipulative, reductive, and elitist, it provides an important corrective to more populist approaches to media culture that downplay the way the media industries exert power over audiences and help produce thought and behavior that conforms to the existing society.

The Frankfurt School also provides useful historical perspectives on the transition from traditional culture and modernism in the arts to a mass produced media and consumer society. In his path-breaking book '*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*', Jurgen Habermas further historicises Adorno and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry. Providing historical background to the triumph of the culture industry, Habermas notes how bourgeois society in the late 18th and 19th century was distinguished by the rise of a public sphere that stood between civil society and the state and which mediated between public and private interests. For the first time in history, individuals and groups could shape public opinion, giving direct expression to their needs and interests while influencing political practice. The bourgeois public sphere made it possible to form a realm of public opinion that opposed state power and the powerful interests that were coming to shape

bourgeois society.

Habermas notes a transition from the liberal public sphere which originated in the Enlightenment and the American and French Revolution to a media dominated public sphere in the current stage of what he calls ‘welfare state capitalism and mass democracy.’ This historical transformation is grounded in Horkheimer and Adorno’s analysis of the culture industry, in which giant corporations have taken over the public sphere and transformed it from a site of rational debate into one of manipulative consumption and passivity. In this transformation, ‘public opinion’ shifts from rational consensus emerging from debate, discussion, and reflection to the manufactured opinion of polls or media experts. For Habermas, the interconnection between the sphere of public debate and individual participation has thus been fractured and transmuted into that of a realm of political manipulation and spectacle, in which citizen consumers ingest and absorb passively entertainment and information. ‘Citizens’ thus become spectators of media presentations and discourse which arbitrate public discussion and reduce its audiences to objects of news, information, and public affairs.

The culture industry thesis described both the production of massified cultural products and homogenised subjectivities. Mass culture for the Frankfurt School produced desires, dreams, hopes, fears, and longings, as well as unending desire for consumer products. The culture industry produced cultural consumers who would consume its products and conform to the dictates and the behaviors of the existing

society. Yet, as Walter Benjamin pointed out, the culture industry produces rational and critical consumers able to dissect and discriminate among cultural texts and performances, much as sports fans learn to analyse and criticise sports events.

One can see the Frankfurt school work as articulation of a theory of the stage of state and monopoly capitalism that became dominant during the 1930s. This was an era of large organisations, theorised earlier by Austro-Marxist Rudolf Hilferding as „organised capitalism“, in which the state and giant corporations managed the economy and in which individuals submitted to state and corporate control. This period is often described as ‘Fordism’ to designate the system of mass production and the homogenising regime of capital which wanted to produce mass desires, tastes, and behavior. It was thus an era of mass production and consumption characterised by uniformity and homogeneity of needs, thought, and behavior producing a mass society and what the Frankfurt school described as ‘the end of the individual.’ No longer was individual thought and action the motor of social and cultural progress; instead giant organisations and institutions overpowered individuals.

During this period, mass culture and communication were instrumental in generating the modes of thought and behavior appropriate to a highly organised and massified social order. Thus, the Frankfurt school theory of the culture industry articulates a major historical shift to an era in which mass consumption and culture was indispensable to producing a

consumer society based on homogeneous needs and desires for mass-produced products and a mass society based on social organisation and homogeneity.
