

1. Biography – Karl Marx

- * Born 1818, Trier, Germany
- * Studied law and philosophy at University of Bonn, then University of Berlin
- * Influenced by G.W.F. Hegel and joined Young Hegelians (critics of religion and authority)
- * Developed interest in materialism, human freedom, social progress
- * Completed doctorate in philosophy in 1841
- * Turned to journalism and political writing; barred from academia for radicalism
- * Moved to Paris (1843); met Friedrich Engels (1844), shared anti-capitalist beliefs
- * Co-authored The Communist Manifesto (1848)
- * Settled in London (1859 onward); researched and wrote Das Kapital (1867)
- * Died 1883, London

2. Marxist Theory – Core Concepts

- * Marxism: analytical framework for understanding economics and society
- * Foundation for later systems: socialism and communism
- * Central class conflict:
 - * Bourgeoisie: owns means of production
 - * Proletariat: sells labour to bourgeoisie
 - * Exploitation: workers paid less than the value they produce → surplus value taken by capitalists
 - * Labour Theory of Value: value determined by labour time required for production
 - * Example: if laptop takes 100 hours, bread takes 1 hour → laptop = 100× value of bread
 - * Surplus Value: profit arises only from unpaid labour
- * Critique of Capitalism:
 - * Produces poverty and inequality
 - * Alienates workers from their labour and identity
 - * Leads to self-destruction as profits fall and exploitation increases
- * Socialism:
 - * Collective control of property and production
 - * Wealth distributed based on contribution
 - * Aims to reduce inequality and ensure social welfare
- * Communism:
 - * Classless society, no private property
 - * Principle: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”
 - * Final stage after socialism

3. Real-World Examples and Influence

Soviet Union (1917–1991)

- * 1917 Bolshevik Revolution ended Tsarist rule
- * Abolished private ownership; centralized planning (Five-Year Plans)
- * Collectivized farms - famine and resistance
- * Rapid industrialization, poor consumer goods
- * Single-party Communist rule; collapsed 1991 due to inefficiency and stagnation

China (1949–present)

- * 1949 Communist Revolution led by Mao Zedong
- * Land reforms and collectivization; Great Leap Forward (1958–62) caused famine
- * Cultural Revolution (1966–76): persecution of intellectuals
- * Deng Xiaoping reforms (1978): market elements, foreign investment
- * Current model: “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (state + market)
- * One-party authoritarian system continues

Western Socialist Influences

- * UK (post-1945): welfare state, NHS, nationalized sectors
- * Scandinavia: social democracy; universal welfare, strong labour rights
- * USA (1930s–1960s): New Deal, Social Security, Medicare, civil rights reforms
- * Canada (mid-20th century): universal healthcare, pensions, unemployment insurance within mixed-market system