

LECTURE ON MARX

"Philosophy has attempted to understand the world;
it should have attempted to change it."
Karl Marx

- 1] The inversion of the Hegelian dialectic.
 - the primacy of matter over Spirit/Mind/Idea
 - the dialectical laws of materialism rather than the return of Spirit to itself as the driving force of history
 - the transformation of quantity into quality

- 2] The two elements of the economic basis of society (all else depends on this economic basis)
 - the forces of production
 - the relations of production

Forces of Production: objects of labour -- natural resources
-- raw materials

: instruments of labour -- tools, machines, factories

Relations of Production depend on ownership of the forces of production.

These relations/ownership structure any one society economically *and therefore in all other respects.*

Primitive Communism
Ancient Slavery
Mediaeval Feudalism
Bourgeois Capitalism
Socialism and Communism

- 3] The role of the "superstructure" (philosophy and religion)
 - all philosophy is an attempt at justifying one's economic privilege
 - all philosophy assumes that the superstructure is primary, when in fact dialectical materialism is.
 - philosophy includes such notions as liberalism (humans have rights just because they are *human*)
 - idealism (in both senses of the word: ideal=utopian, and ideal=metaphysical primacy of Idea/Mind/Spirit)
 - all religion is unrealistic idealism (both senses)
 - false fantasy
 - evil illusion
 - pseudo-science
 - rooted in the social oppression of the work masses, and in their (apparent) helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism
 - atheism alone is rational, since
 - the existence of God is unprovable
 - matter is eternal

the non-material always depends on the material
 humankind is the source of its own existence *as human*, human history
 being "the development of man through human labour and the
 development of nature for man." (Marx)

4] History and the Future

- history is driven by the laws of dialectical materialism
- knowledge arises from "practice"; i.e., from one's involvement in changing existing historical conditions
- truth is verified by success (achievement) in history
- history progresses towards freedom (i.e., economic freedom is the precondition of all other freedoms)
- such freedom renders the state superfluous, since no class remains to be suppressed
- freedom over nature (an abundance of consumer goods) and freedom over history (the abolition of class exploitation) eventually eliminates both the state (where the ruling class suppresses the ruled) and individual "excesses" (criminal behaviour) In short, economic freedom results in both political freedom and freedom from crime
- the above-mentioned freedom (over nature and history) fosters individual freedom:
 - freedom in work
 - freedom in community
 - freedom from ideology
- history is climaxed by the "end" of history when class struggle and the state disappear and unalloyed communism is the new era of peace and prosperity

5] Marx and Ethics

- any means to the end of the social ownership of the means of production is justified
- "morality" is part of the superstructure and as such a justification of the economic elite and their vehicle for oppressing the non-elite
- the ideological enemies of Marxist morality are liberalism
 - "objectivism"
 - "idealism"
- Marxist ethics is NOT hedonistic
 - utilitarian
 - egalitarian
 - relativistic
 - deterministic

(Reverend V. Shepherd)