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Response to the Communist Manifesto

The communist manifesto was a political pamphlet by the 1848 by a pair of German philosophers by the name of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Marx et al.). This manifesto pioneered the communist movement by the intellectuals behind the communist party in Germany. The manifesto embodied the viewpoint of its writers and delved deeper into the materialistic conception of history itself. It surveyed the economic systems in place in the world, such a feudalism and later capitalism, which, in his opinion, was to be overthrown by the oppressed worker’s society in time. The manifesto was essentially a summary of all the theories that concerned the nature of the society and the politics of the time when it was first released. It documented the class struggle under the umbrella of capitalism and discussed how the worker class was much better off if they gave up the capitalist economic system and lose their chains, the chains that were holding them down once and for all.

Thus, the communists operated under the idea to abolish the ownership of private property and raise the position of the working class to that of the ruling class. The opening lines of the manifesto called communism a specter that is haunting Europe and motivated the working class to lose its chains in an effort to bring them up in the social hierarchy of things and help them feel like a significant part of society.

While most people are keen to improve the present economic system in one way or another. Yet, in order to do so, we are reluctant to move away from capitalism, and are often critical of the ideas presented by one of the most famous and vocal critics of capitalism, Karl Marx. While his political and economic ideas have been used to designed some of the most disastrously planned economies, at the same time Marx and his ideas should not be dismissed too quickly. His work was prevalent at the time and his diagnosis of the ills of capitalism is responsible for helping us navigate towards a more promising future. Reforms are necessary for capitalism and the analysis presented by Marx is going to be an integral part of it.

As a part of the communist party in Germany, he was part of a group of intellectuals that advocated overthrowing the class system and the abolition of privacy property. He soon had to flee Germany as a result of the views that he held, and eventually settled in London. Marx wrote on a number of subjects. However, he did discuss any subject as vehemently as he discussed communication and its dominion over the western world. Some of the problems that he identified with capitalism back in the day.

The criticism on capitalism presented by Marx had much to do with the idea of how work can be a source of pleasure to most people. In order to feel satisfied with what they achieve on a daily basis, it was essential that they see themselves in the object they created and find joy in what they did. The possibility of enjoying what one does is lost in capitalism, given that a job under capitalism is highly specialized and requires individuals with a certain skillset. While it does make the modern economy highly efficient, it takes away the sense of contribution a worker may feel. It leads to a feeling of alienation among the workers and what they do. While also being unfulfilling, modern work under capitalism is also insecure at its best. Under capitalism, no one has any sense of worth. A human being is utterly expendable, just a factor among various factors in the modern economy and workplace that can easily be replaced. Marx was aware of the fact that none of the workers that are a part of the modern workforce want to be let go just because of factors that are not in the worker’s control (Adorno and Horkheimer).

In this regard, communism emerges as a better alternative, which understand the human need for being wanted and to know that we have a place in the heart of the world. It was this ideal that made the concept of workers being paid minimum wage under capitalism, while business owners only got richer and richer with time. This was one of the biggest qualms Marx had with capitalism, since he believed that this accumulation of a wide profit margin at the expense of the workers keeps them oppressed and would keep them stuck in a vicious cycle that had no way out. Marx saw this profit as a fancy term for exploitation of the workforce, which is not getting its due worth. While capitalism was not all bad for the capitalists, that is the bourgeois class of the society, it was certainly not in the favor of the proletariat class, which is something Marx saw as extremely unfair.

Capitalism also defined human relations on the basis of financial reasons, which move human relationship away from the idea of love and towards mutual economic interests of various units within the family. Under commodity fetishism, people, whether bourgeois or proletariat, were unable to form close familial bonds that brought them closer together and laid the foundations of honest relationships. While Marx was completely right about the ills of capitalism, where it teaches us to be anxious, conformist, competitive and politically complacent, at the same time communism is not an ideal economic system for the world in a number of ways (Adorno and Horkheimer).

For instance, the theories presented by Marx were far removed from reality and could not be applied in a practical manner. It presented a reduced system of incentives, which is hard to accept for a society that is driven by incentives. Furthermore, others are of the viewpoint that the thoughts presented by Marx are outdated, especially with regard to the political system, economic system, and social system that is in place at present. Another criticism for communism stems from the fact that lack of factual data in the manifesto which would prove the supremacy of communism over capitalism. It is one of the biggest reasons that leads towards skepticism in the mere idea of communism and its practical application. Furthermore, the critics of Marx also believed that the toppling of the superstructure of society, that Marx wanted the worker class to do, was more of a pipedream given the realities of the situation as well as the human consciousness on the matter. The only way the worker class could alleviate its position in society was to take control through the means of production. This was the only logical way for man to free himself, without loosing access to basic necessities in life. However, given that it was not a possibility at the time, the idea was simply not plausible.

Marx’s manifesto was rooted in the belief of social change, a social change that could only take place if the lower classes in society chose to rise and take on the mantle of redefining economic structure of society. However, such a feat was easier said than done, considering the oppressed do not have the means to rise, especially in the present economy.

Works Cited

Adorno, Theodor W., and Max Horkheimer. *Towards a New Manifesto*. Verso, 2019.

Marx, Karl, et al. *The Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital*. Knickerbocker Classics, 2019.