2.1.2: Introduction to Marxism
Marxism

- Marxism is what is known as a CONFLICT theory because it states that society is in conflict with each other and Marxism claims that this conflict is between the RICH and the POOR.

- Political and economic philosophy
While we associated it with the Soviet Union (1917-1991), Marx did not envision it this way. He saw it as **Liberation**, and as a leveller for creating a fairer society and how to get the best out of all people, not just those with money and power.
To really understand Marxism we need to start with its opposite, **capitalism**, which represents the type of society that we live in today.

In Marxist terms, it is an economic system based on **private** ownership of the means of **production**.
Marxism

- Marx was formulating his theories during the Industrial Revolution, a time when Britain and a few other countries were going through remarkable change.

- Rural - urban population shift at this time as people packed up & moved to cities to find work in the factories
Marxism

- The work was hard and often dangerous and the pay was very poor.
- Many factory owners did not want to pay high wages because this would mean less profit for the so children were often used a cheap labour.
Marxism

The Industrial Revolution created two distinct groups or people:

- **Bourgeoisie** vs **Proletariat**

  Marx was on the side of the proletariat as he saw them as being treated unfairly and oppressed by the factory owners.
Marxism

- So Marxists view capitalist society as being based on a system that encourages **inequality** because the rich will always need someone to do the work they don’t want to do.

- It’s called a conflict theory because society is in a conflict, the proletariat vs. the bourgeoisie.
Marxism

- Marx also suggested that at some point that the working class would realize that they have the power to change things through **education** and personal development some members of the proletariat would begin to understand the system better and devise ways of changing it.

- Marx believed that such radical change could only come about through **revolution**, when the workers rise up and overthrow those who are treating them unfairly.
Marxism

- Following the proletarians' defeat of capitalism, a new classless society would emerge based on the idea: 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs'.
- In such a society, land, industry, labour and wealth would be shared between all people. In other words, they were communally owned. All people would have the right to an education, and class structures would disappear.
- Marx called this system COMMUNISM
Karl Marx

Struggle Between Social Classes

The Haves vs. the Have Nots

Workers of the World Unite!

Classless Society
Lenin
## Evolution of Communist Thought

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Marx</th>
<th>Lenin</th>
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<td>- History was the story of class struggle.</td>
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<td>- The struggle Marx saw was between capitalists and the proletariat, or the workers.</td>
<td>- The struggle Lenin saw was capitalists against the proletariat and the peasants.</td>
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<td>- The proletariat’s numbers would become so great and their condition so poor that a spontaneous revolution would occur.</td>
<td>- The proletariat and the peasants were not capable of leading a revolution and needed the guidance of professional revolutionaries.</td>
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<td>- The revolution would end with a “dictatorship of the proletariat”—the communal ownership of wealth.</td>
<td>- After the revolution, the state needed to be run by a single party with disciplined, centrally directed administrators in order to ensure its goals.</td>
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