



Karl Marx: Key Ideas

- The proletariat exist in false consciousness
- The ruling class have ideological control through the superstructure
- The Base (economy) determines the Superstructure (all other institutions)
- Revolution is inevitable because the iron law of Capitalism is that exploitation must carry on increasing.
- Communism is the final stage of societal evolution (the abolition of private property)
- The purpose of research is to find out more about the laws of Capitalism to see when revolution is ripe
- The fundamental problem with Capitalism is that it causes alienation
- Relationship between them is Exploitation (Surplus Value)
- Two classes: Bourgeois – Proletariat

Marxism

Louis Althusser: Scientific Marxism

- Capitalism needs to collapse before socialism comes about.
- people are incapable of having genuinely revolutionary ideas within the existing Capitalist system
- Criticised humanistic Marxism – structure determines everything
- the Repressive state apparatus = the army
- Criticised Marx – There are three levels of control: economic, political, and ideological.
- The Bourgeois maintain control on all three levels and they all reinforce each other.
- the Ideological state apparatus = mainly education and the media
- Transnational Capitalist Class (Sklaire)
- Global Exploitation by TNCs (Wallerstein's WST)
- Alienation – Amazon!

Antonio Gramsci: Humanistic Marxism

- Criticised Marx because he thought individuals are more active, not passive
- Introduced the concept of Hegemony – Ruling class maintain power through Coercive and Hegemonic control
- Ruling class hegemonic control is never complete because they are too few
- the proletariat have dual consciousness – they can see through Bourgeois ideology.

Criticisms

- Work is less alienating for the self-employed
- Capitalism is less exploitative (welfare state)
- More complex class structure
- Postmodernism – people are free, not under false consciousness
- What's the alternative? Failure of communism in Eastern Europe

Marxism might still be relevant today

- Evidence of elite control of superstructure – Independent schools links
- Contradictions in Capitalism (David Harvey)
- Transnational Capitalist Class (Sklaire)
- Global Exploitation by TNCs (Wallerstein's WST)
- Alienation – Amazon!