

Quotations of Karl Marx

"The possessing class and the proletarian class express the same human alienation. But the former is satisfied with its situation, feels itself well established in it, recognizes this self-alienation as *its own* power, and thus has the *appearance* of a human existence. The latter feels itself crushed by this self-alienation, sees in it its own impotence and the reality of an inhuman situation...

If the proletariat triumphs, this does not mean that it becomes the absolute form of society, for it is only victorious by abolishing itself as well as its opposite. Thus the proletariat disappears along with the opposition which conditions it, private property.

In the fully developed proletariat, everything human is taken away, even the *appearance* of humanity. In the conditions of existence of the proletariat are condensed, in their most inhuman form, all the conditions of existence of present-day society. Man has lost himself, but he has not only acquired, at the same time, a theoretical consciousness of his loss, he has been forced, by an ineluctable, irremediable and impervious *distress*--by practical *necessity* --to revolt against this inhumanity...But it can only emancipate itself by destroying its own conditions of existence. It can only destroy its own conditions of existence by destroying all inhuman conditions of existence of present-day society." (Holy Family, 1845)

"If man is, by nature, a social being, he only develops his real nature in society, and the power of his nature should be measured not by the power of private individuals but by the power of society." (Holy Family, 1845)

"For the creation on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, as well as for the success of the cause itself, it is necessary for men themselves to be changed on a large scale, and this change can only occur in a practical movement, in a *revolution*. Revolution is necessary not only because the *ruling* class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because only in a revolution can *the class which overthrows it* rid itself of the accumulated rubbish of the past and become capable of reconstructing society." (German Ideology, 1845-6)

"*Communism* is the *positive* abolition of *private property*, of *human self-alienation*, and thus, the real *appropriation* of *human* nature, through and for man...It is the *definitive* resolution of the antagonism between man and Nature, and between man and man. (Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, 1844)

"Only in association with others has each individual the means of cultivating his talents in all directions. Only in a community therefore is personal freedom possible." (German Ideology, 1844-5) (What then, is Marx's definition of freedom? The full realization of the individual's human potential)

"The realm of freedom only begins, in fact, where that labor which is determined by need and external purposes ceases; it is therefore, by its very nature, outside the sphere of material production proper...Beyond [the realm of necessity] begins that development of human potentiality for its own sake, the true realm of freedom. (Capital, 1887)

"In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, production as a whole is regulated by society, thus making it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, raise cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, in accordance with my inclination." (German Ideology, 1845)

"In a socialist society, the 'fragmented' man would be replaced by the 'completely developed,' he for whom different social functions are but alternative forms of activity. People would fish, hunt, or engage in literary criticism without being professional fishermen, huntsmen or critics."

"Between capitalism and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*. (Critique of the Gotha Program, 1875)

"The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas: i. e., the class which is the dominant *material* force in society is at the same time its dominant *intellectual* force." (German Ideology, 1845)

"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in different ways; the point is to *change* it." (Theses on Feuerbach, 1845)

from Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy ed. by T. B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel