

WHO IS TO BE CHALLENGED? CAPITALISM OR RATIONALITIES

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Abstract

Although there may be disagreements on almost all issues within Marxism, all schools from Western to Eastern Marxism are agreed on two points. They are clear and precise about the enemy: capitalism. And there is almost absolute consensus about the target of political struggle: bourgeois class. In the examination of Marxism it will be shown that there is no exact location and center of capitalism and bourgeoisie class, the overthrowing of which is presupposed to lead humanity to freedom and justice. This will be drawn upon the argument of Foucault. Foucault argues that it is useless to organize the class struggle against contemporary forms of power. He shows that modern forms of power do not spring from the bourgeois class but from various forms of rationalities. And it will also be argued that different forms of rationalities cannot be contested by class struggle. However, they can effectively be challenged by what Foucault calls the 'resistance movement'.

Keywords: Revolution, Class, Resistance Movement, Foucault, Marx, Rationality

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Introduction

In the intellectual history scholars usually predicate about what is to come. Marx occupies a unique position among them. He made many interesting predications. He foresaw the fall of capitalism, rise of bloody revolution, class struggle in Germany, peaceful overthrow of the British bourgeoisie class, the development of capitalist class in the Eastern Europe, radical class division in the world, the highest degree of exploitation etc. Most of the predications of Marx are proved false.

This failure led me to explore the reasons behind failure of Marx. This paper undertakes investigation of Marx's writings to find out the mechanism on the basis of which Marx understands the process of social change. This mechanism of social change gives him foundation to predict.

For this end I have applied the appropriate cum comparative methodology. The findings of methodology show that the central concepts around which the process of Marxist social change revolves is the Bourgeoisie class and class struggle. This methodology further demonstrates that class struggle and the Bourgeoisie class are no longer the prominent ingredients of social change in the modern Western societies.

This fact takes me to the works of French philosopher, Michel Foucault. The writings of Foucault show us why Marx was wrong to believe in the fall of capitalism, the rise of class struggle and the birth of classless society.

As follows I will proceed. The first part consisting of two sections discusses the role of bloody revolution for change in illiberal and orthodox societies and explores the peaceful mechanism for change in liberal and democratic societies. The second part consisting of two sections explicates the Foucauldian critique of class struggle from the perspective of resistance movements and highlights the importance not of the bourgeoisie class but of rationalities.

Part A

Violent Revolution for Illiberal and Undemocratic Societies

Marx argues that class struggle will take the form of global struggle against capitalism. As long as the political struggle does not turn into a revolutionary movement it cannot overthrow capitalism. Revolution would take place when the capitalist society attains the highest development of productive forces. The highest development of productive forces has two consequences. First, it turns the different segments and various classes of society into two exclusive blocks: oppressed and oppressor. Second, the development of the productive forces would furnish the capitalist society with unlimited recourses that would be instrumentalized for and after revolution.

Marx argues that the revolution not only transforms the material relations of production but also the subjects who are the part of revolution. Despite various shifts in Marx's position on almost all issues Steven Best argues that Marx has been consistent to maintain that capitalism could not be adequately changed through social reforms. Only revolution can overthrow capitalism. However, some authors argue that Marx around 1870s has shifted his position from armed revolution to peaceful transition. I would shortly discuss it below.

Marx gives immense importance to revolution in the fight against capitalism. He states both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration which can only take place in a practical movement, a revolution; the revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the ruling class cannot be overthrown on any other way, but also because the class overthrowing it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fit to found society anew.¹

From the perspective of Marx revolution brings about change at two distinct but corresponding levels: material and consciousness level. The material transformation is the transformation of relations of production from private to communal. After revolt all private property would be nationalized. To Marx, this is perhaps a necessary but not a sufficient condition to transform the society at its foundation. Corresponding to the material change the alteration is needed at the level of consciousness/subjects. Not only are the relations of productions needed to be turned communal, so is consciousness. Both necessary and sufficient conditions are to be meted out for true change. The transformation of subjects as well as of material relations is absolutely necessary for the substantial change. This is because of the fact neither the new relations of production are workable with the old ways nor is new way of life with old means of productions. Marx explains “the material doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and upbringing forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that it is essential to educate the educator himself. This doctrine must, therefore, divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice”.² Only by means of revolution matter/body/desire and spirit/reason/subject can simultaneously be changed and transformed. From the perspective of materialism it is important to note the subject is to be transformed not by the means of consciousness but by physical/practical means.

In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx foresees bloody revolution. The change would be brought about by physical force. Marx and Engels declare “the Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible over-throw of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win”.³ To Marx, in the *Communist Manifesto*, blood is an integral part of revolution. There is no revolution without violence or blood. The reason is simple. The Proletarian class has no such legal power to nationalize the private means of productions. Neither do they have access to formal and institutional educational system to create the space for change. Nor do they give ruling ideas. They are ideologically and politically deprived. They are denied of political, legal and institutional means to transform the existing social condition. The Proletarian class is forced to resort to physical force to bring about social change. Bloody revolution is the only alternative.

¹ Karl Marx, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), pp. 52-53.

² Ibid., p. 3.

³ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, (New York, Book surge LIC, 2007), p. 44.

Marx argues that revolution is embedded in the capitalist relations of production. That is why it is inevitable. Marx claims that the Proletarian class does not need to get support from outside to overthrow capitalism. Capitalism would strengthen the Proletarian class by itself to such a point that the class becomes powerful enough to challenge it. The Proletarian class gradually gains strength from small scale to large. At the first stage, the industrial growth multiplies the numbers of the Proletariat. Second, the capitalist mode of production neutralizes and equalizes all existing differences and interests of different unions of working laborers. It reduces different classes into two. At the third stage it develops class consciousness which eventually at the fourth stage results in the class struggle. Marx foresees the development of class struggle into global struggle against capitalism. The global struggle addresses not the issues of a particular community but of whole humanity as such. Marx explains the piecemeal rise of global struggle “the essential condition for the existence, and for the sway of the Bourgeois class, is the formation and augmentation of capital; the condition for capital is wage-labor. Wage-labor rests exclusively on competition between the laborers. The advance of industry, whose involuntary promoter is the Bourgeois, replaces the isolation of the laborers, due to competition, by their revolutionary combination, due to association. The development of the modern Industry therefore cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the Bourgeois produces and appropriates products. What the Bourgeois, therefore, produces, above all, is its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the Proletariat are equally inevitable”.⁴

The strength the Proletariats gain through the development of capitalism would be a major force in bringing down private property, the base of capitalism. To Marx, the overthrow of the existing state of society by the communist revolution and the abolition of private property is identical.⁵

Peaceful Revolt for Democratic and Liberal Societies

Adam Schaff argues that in around 1870s Marx shifts his stand on the inevitable development of ‘armed revolution’.⁶ Keeping in view the strong political and legal structure in England, Netherland and America at late nineteenth century Marx argues that the Proletariat class can capture the echelons of power through peaceful means. Marx argues that the legal and political structure of American and British societies permits the peaceful transition to power. The proletariat class outweighs the bourgeois class in numbers. So, by means of the electoral democratic process the proletariat class could come into power. The relative democratic structure of the given society determines the degree of suitability of peaceful and violent takeover of power. Sidney Hook, in this regard, puts “revolution (for Marx and Engels) can be violent or peace-full depending upon the presence of democratic political possibilities but whether peaceful or not the socialist revolution must be democratic”.⁷ On account of democratic legal and political framework Marx excludes England, America, and Netherland from the category of states needing violent change. That is why Adam Schaff states that the term revolution is used in

⁴ Karl Marx *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, (Moscow, Progress Publishers), p. 496.

⁵ Karl Marx *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, (Moscow, Progress Publishers), p. 51.

⁶ Adam Schaff, ‘Marxist Theory on Revolution and Violence’ *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Pennsylvania, 1973, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 266.

⁷ Sidney Hook, ‘Myth and Fact in the Marxist Theory of Revolution and Violence’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1973, Vol. 34, No. 2, p. 271.

the broader (peaceful) as well as in narrower sense (violent) by Marx.⁸ Rustam Singh explores the status of violence in Marx' theory of revolution and attempts to draw the mechanism to determine socio-political conditions suitable for a peaceful transition. However, in the course of developing argument Singh confuses two distinct models of historical change i.e. economic and class struggle model.⁹ One is given in *the German Ideology* and the other in *The Communist Manifesto*. Economic model understands the social change from the perspective of the conflict between the relations of production and productive forces. This conflict is as similar as the laws of nature. Labor class has no role to play. It is just an instrument of change guided by economic forces. In *the Communist Manifesto* social change is explored from the perspective of class struggle. In this sketch the class is an agency of social change but not just a means in the hands of economic laws.

In view of present discussion it becomes clear that Marx defends the idea of peaceful transition or peaceful revolution in conditions where it is viable and practical. The social conditions in which bourgeoisie class is strong and highly influential at the echelons of power Marx looks for the armed revolution.

This reading contests Marx's earlier position held in *the German Ideology*, in which the armed revolution is not only posited essential for the material alteration but essential as well for subjective transformation. But in the latter period the change of material conditions through social reforms stand out to be necessary as well as sufficient condition for Marx in around 1870s.

Marx's vacillation from armed revolution to peaceful transition has provoked controversies. It divided the Marxist intellectuals into two groups. For example, from the standpoint of bloody revolution Professor Allan Gilbert argues that the only means to overthrow capitalism is violent revolution.¹⁰ In contrast to Gilbert's point of view Shlomo Avineri argues that Marx has to be salvaged from clutches of revolution.¹¹

The Proletariat Class Wields All Power

There is also a shift in Marx's writings on the 'agency' of peaceful or armed revolution. It is either to be the class by itself or the class under the *dictatorship* of party that would lead the revolution. In the earlier period Marx gives immense importance to the role of Proletariat class in organizing the class struggle. It was the time when the Proletariat class was growing in numbers and multiplying its centers of power. Over the period of time the Proletariat class instead of getting more power was gradually becoming weak. The class is divided into self-interest groups, fighting for petty interests. It destroyed the unity of the Proletariat class. Powerlessness of the class results in dependency upon the Bourgeois class. These

⁸ Adam Schaff, 'Marxist Theory on Revolution and Violence', p. 264.

⁹ Rustam Singh, 'Status of Violence in Marx's Theory of Revolution' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Delhi, 1989, Vol. 24, No. 4, pp. 9-20.

¹⁰ Alan Gilbert, 'Salvaging Marx from Avineri,' *Political Theory*, New York, 1976 Vol. 4, No.1, pp. 9-34.

¹¹ Shlomo, Avineri, 'How to Save Marx from the Alchemists of Revolution', *Political Theory*, New York, 1976, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp 35-44.

conditions had shaken Marx's belief in the potential of the Proletariat class to lead towards revolution. In these conditions Marx sheds light upon the importance of party in the organization of class and leading revolution. The party replaces the class. From 1848 the communist party takes the role much like, of shepherd and the class turns into the flock.

Ollman and Andrew point out that Marx loosely uses the term 'classes'.¹² In the one place the class stands for group, in the other for faction, or even for union or landowner. But, according to Rolf Dahrendorf, Marx was not *only* guilty of the imprecise use of the term but almost all the authors of the period showed lack of consistency and precision in the use of the term. Dahrendorf criticizes Marx's designation of 'class'.¹³ According to Dahrendorf, Marx confuses the relationship between authority and property. But reply to Dahrendorf's critique by Lawrence is worth mentioning. He attempts to show that 1) Dahrendorf overlooks crucial characteristics of Marx's theory, (2) he engages in confused comparisons of "organism" and "society" in order to support part of his critique, (3) Dahrendorf misrepresents Marx's usage of "property," (4) and he obfuscates the concept of authority by equating it with domination.¹⁴

Despite loose connotation of the term class in the works of Marx, Ollman finds a common point among them i.e. hostility. Ollman defines class through hostility and Andrew in terms of revolutionary impetus.¹⁵ Andrew like Ollman finds unity in the plural uses of classes.

Apart from inconsistent use of the term 'class' Marx defends the supremacy of class in relation to the communist party. At the first place, I want to make clear that, for Marx, there is no class struggle without party. The communist party is the integral part of the communist struggle against capitalism. The question is not about the existence of party within the class but the status and role of party.

Marx argues that the interest of the Proletariat class cannot be qualified to be the 'class interest'. For, the Proletariat class represents itself as the embodiment of labor process. It is the source of historical development and would eventually control the productive forces and provide unprecedented domination upon nature. From the standpoint of Marx the interest of Proletariat amounts to be the interest of humanity. Marx explains "class making a revolution comes forward from the very start, if only because it is opposed to a class, not as a class but as the representative of the whole of society, as the whole mass of society confronting the one ruling class" since it incorporates all individuals whether originally belonging to the Proletariat or not (Marx, 1976, p. 60). Marx characterizes the Proletariat as a representation of abstracted universality. For this reason *Communist Manifesto* sees Proletariat class as a Political Subject, not the subject which can be characterized in terms of Hegelian Spirit or Mind. In the struggle against oppression and exploitation Marx acknowledges the primacy of class upon party. The party is an instrument to the ends of the class. To Marx, at each given historical stage there had been undeveloped forms of classes such as freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord

¹² Bertell Ollman, 'Marx's Use of "Class"', *American Journal of Sociology*, Chicago, 1968, Vol. 73, No. 5, pp. 573-580.

¹³ Rolf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, London, Routledge, 1959, p. 22.

¹⁴ Lawrence E. Hazelrigg, 'Class, Property, and Authority: Dahrendorf's Critique of Marx's Theory of Class', *Social Forces*, Oxford, 1972, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 473-48.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 464.

and serf, guild master and journeyman.¹⁶ Over the long period of struggle against exploitation the class becomes mature and transparent to itself. It becomes autonomous, independent and sovereign in the understanding of its genuine interests and proper means of attaining it. The communist party is an instrument or vehicle of attaining it. It cannot by itself sets forth the goals, programs and policies. The *Communist Manifesto* reads "the most advanced and resolute section of the working-class parties of every country, that section which pushes forward all others". The small segment of intellectuals making up the Communist Party cannot determine the destiny of the Proletariat class.

The Dictatorship of Communist Party

Marx, in a letter to his friend Josef Wedemeyr, writes "(1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases of the development of production, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society?"¹⁷ In this letter Marx considers 'the dictatorship of Proletariat' as transitional stage in the development and differentiation of history. Perhaps, for Marx, the dictatorship is unavoidable stage for the establishment of classless society. In 1850 and in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx interchangeably uses the terms 'dictatorship' and 'rule' of the Proletariat class. He does not make a distinction between them.

Out of the large body of Marx's contribution only on two occasions Marx uses the terms 'dictatorship' and 'rule' interchangeably. Additionally on both occasion he does not illustrate the terms in detail. Marx's imprecise use of term provoked controversies regarding the meaning and significance of 'dictatorship of the party'. It has been subject to various interpretations. We can trace out two broad trends in controversies. One interprets dictatorship in terms of unconditional control of the Communist party upon the affairs of class. The other understands it in terms of democratic and parliamentary rule.

Engels equates the Commune with the dictatorship of the Proletariat. His understanding of dictatorship of the proletariat derives from his theory of anarchism. In contrast to Engels's understanding, Karl Kautsky, Hal Draper and Rosa Luxemburg clarify that Marx did not confer antidemocratic meanings to the phrase 'dictatorship of Proletariat'. By dictatorship Marx only means the rule of the Proletariat class. Marx was always against the idea of 'tyrannical rule'. Draper shows that it was Plekhanov who initially inserted the antidemocratic meanings to the term. Lenin and Stalin drawing upon Plekhanov's reading of Marx inclined towards authoritarianism.¹⁸ Robert Mayer in his recent study persuasively argued that Plekhanov was not guilty of the misuse of phrase but Lenin and Stalin.¹⁹

¹⁶ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 9.

¹⁷ Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1978, p. 220.

¹⁸ Barany Zoltan, 'The 'Volatile' Marxian Concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat', *Studies in East European Thought*, Netherland, 1997, Vol. 49. No. 1, p. 1.

¹⁹ Robert Mayer, 'The Dictatorship of the Proletariat from Plekhanov to Lenin', *Studies in East European Thought*, Netherland, 1993, Vol. 45, No. 4, pp. 255-280.

When Marx is silent about the exact meaning of term 'dictatorship' I think we can draw the meaning of the term from his views on the potential of the Proletariat class to organize struggle. This strategy is premised upon the belief if the class is autonomous and sovereign then it does not need to be subservient to the tyranny of the Communist party.

From 1848 to 1852 Marx frequently points out the weakness and threats to the Proletariat class in the face of Bourgeoisie's growing strength and power. In the period when Marx employs the term 'dictatorship' he looks to be pessimistic about the potential of the Proletariat class. He consistently argued that the proletariats class lacks the political and general education in comparison to the Bourgeois. The divisions and conflicts among the Bourgeois classes force them to take help from Proletariat. In the process of taking help Bourgeois class educates and furnishes the Proletariat with political training. Marx writes "bourgeoisie itself, therefore supplies the Proletariat with its own elements of political and general education, in other words, it furnishes the Proletariat with weapons for fighting the Bourgeois".²⁰ In the face of intellectual and material dependency upon the bourgeois class Marx argues that 'I have satisfied myself of one thing that it is a society of genuine working men but that these workers are directed by social and political theorists of another class. Communist party therefore has to transcend from Bourgeois' dependency. Marx in an address to the Communist league in 1848 discusses the potential threats the party faces and stressed the need of reorganization of the party. Marx argues on the presumption that the party being independent can lead the class to revolution. The role of the communist party is central in the organization of the revolutionary movement of the working class. The Proletariat class being dependent upon the Bourgeoisie seems to be incapable, to Marx, to organize a revolutionary movement until and unless the party leads the class to its inherent objective. Keeping in view the contemporary conditions of workers Gramsci becomes more pessimistic than Marx. He argues that the intellectuals in the Communist Party have to shape the will of workers. For, the intellectuals are presumed to have privileged access to truth and knowledge concealed to masses. In this context he gives priority to the small segments of intellectuals in the place of class. Gramsci makes an important distinction between traditional and organic intellectuals. For him the former is the defender of ruling class interests, latter voices for suppressed community.²¹ Gramsci supports the idea to take all power which theoretically belongs to the labor class and to give this power to the communist party. He defends coercive measures, totalitarian policies, monolithic approach and unchallenged authority of the state-party so the party or the state could change the established attitude of masses, sex patterns, and social norms in accordance with the requirements of the modern productive forces. Because of this reason Gramsci believes and supports some sort of Platonic view of the intellectual. The intellectual in the party comprehends and understands the successive phases of history and therefore he is capable to understand it in totality and unity. The workers are the men-in-the-masses, therefore incapable to comprehend reality. The intellectuals would provide the standard of good and employ coercive measures if needed to confirm the masses in accordance with the given standard. Gramsci rejects individualism, sectarianism, pluralism and provides guidance and condemns alcohol and sex since all these doctrines and practices according to Gramsci keep the masses blind to the real good.²² In Hook's

²⁰ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 17.

²¹ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison* trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978.

²² Ibid, p. 242, 334, 148.

reading Marx never used the term dictatorship of the party in the sense taken by Gramsci.²³ Hook's analysis shows that Lenin, Stalin and Gramsci intentionally concealed the democratic elements present in Marx's theory of revolution. They do not adhere to fundamentals of Marx's theory. Hook clarifies that Marx has never made use of term "the dictatorship of Proletariat or of the Communist Party in the tyrannical sense. It is Bolshevik or Leninist-Stalinist terminology. To Marx and Engels the only source of revolution is the labor class and all power belongs to it.

Surprisingly Lukacs, a French Marxist, is more skeptic than Gramsci. To him, the workers on the one hand show no unity, far sightedness, maturity and additionally the members of class are involved in peripheral struggles or conflicts which created division among themselves; the theory on the other hand demands the opposite of what they represent. The proletariat have become powerless in their struggle against capitalism. Lukacs in order to understand powerlessness of the Proletariat class from a viable theoretical framework introduces a concept of 'totality'. He emphasizes that every object and relations must be seen in relation to totality, not in isolation. By the means of dialectical analysis one must connect all aspects of social life in totality. Dialectics exposes the causes of powerlessness of the class and attempts to situate them within the immanent consciousness of the Proletariat. This immanent consciousness would be imparted from the outside (party) since the existing consciousness has been contaminated. The party intellectuals and leaders have to be independent of existing class consciousness.²⁴

Despite changes in Marx's views on revolution, class and party, Marx is surprisingly consistent and precise throughout his lifetime about the enemy i.e. capitalist class/capitalism. Additionally the notion of capitalism/capitalist class is always drawn upon the doctrine of historical materialism. This perspective bound with materialism restricts Marx to look up to the global political struggle or the revolutionary means of change. And the change always equates with the change of class or the change from private relations of production to communal ones.

Part B

Foucault criticizes Marx on account of his ill-conceived *means* of change. Additionally and necessarily he disagrees with Marx on the idea that political struggle should target the capitalist class. Foucault argues that there is no need to organize the global political struggle against capitalist state. To Foucault, the target of political struggle what he calls 'resistance movement' must not be the class but the mind or the forms of rationalities operating in the background of modern institutions. Trombadori, an Italian Marxist, in an introduction to a book, rightly explains that "in reply to Marx's famous thesis that philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world when the real point is to [materially] change it. Foucault would no doubt have argued that our constant task must be to keep changing our minds."

In the place of class struggle Foucault argues that the resistance movement would be viable and useful, and the target of resistance movements would not be global such as capitalism but local for example the specific forms of rationalities.

²³ Ibid., p. 272.

²⁴ Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, London: Merlin Press, 1971, p. 21, 41.

Resistance Movement in the place of Class Struggle

Foucault makes a distinction between politics and progressive politics in order to defend himself from Marxists' charge that his work has no bearings upon the contemporary society. He explains that the form of politics he practices is *progressive*. The Foucauldian distinction is drawn upon the way the change is conceived. Foucault argues that the points of change are specific, precise and local. There are no universal, ideal and abstract locations. He puts "a progressive politics is a politics which recognizes the historical and specific conditions of a practice, whereas other politics recognize only ideal necessities, univocal determinations and the free interplay of individual initiatives. A progressive politics is a politics which defines, within a practice, possibilities for transformation and the play of dependencies between those transformations, whereas other politics rely upon the uniform abstraction of change or the thaumaturgic of genius".²⁵ Foucault challenges the Marxist form of doing politics. Politics especially informed by Marxism heavily rely upon revolutions and revolutionary movements directed to the global, universal and ideal centers.

Foucault argues that the struggles that are motivated by progressive politics cannot be global but specific. Moreover, Foucault challenges the legitimacy and effectiveness of global revolutionary struggle. He claims that the global struggles are dangerous, misdirected and politically oriented.²⁶ In challenge to class struggle Foucault hopes that a new form of struggle would rise in the future what is called the 'resistance movements'.²⁷

Foucault labels the 'resistance movement' as transversal. By transversal he means that the struggles are not nation state specific. They may develop in more than one country at the same time. Additionally and necessarily they do not target the particular form of government and economy. Being so much specific and precise about the issues, this form of struggle does not directly address the general problems of governing.

Foucault argues that the resistance movements are immediate for two reasons. First, these struggles embrace individuals who are directly affected by the instances of power. The individuals who are the closest to power networks are the members of the movements. The affected individuals come up with complaints and suggestions. They are the ones who organize resistance against the dominant forms of power. The resistance does not rest upon the universality of human nature but upon the specificity of power structure. The target of these struggles is not the chief enemy, the capitalism, but the immediate enemy. Second, the resistance movements are not futuristic. They do not look up to the solutions lying in the remote future. To these movements, the more the problem is immediate the more the solution is. They do not hope for future answers to the immediate questions. From the perspective of Foucault I may label the Marxist class struggle as the "mediated resistance movements".

²⁵ David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault*, New York, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group 1995, p. 195.

²⁶ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, New York: The New Press, 2000, p. 297.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 329-331.

There is no center of the resistance movement directing and controlling its activities. Instead, there is plurality of resistances so is the plurality of power relations. These points of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. There is no single locus of great refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary.²⁸ In the modern society every individual is the point upon which and through which power manifests.

Foucault is also accused that he strategically takes up particular problems in order to distract attention from the essential problems.²⁹ In response to charge Foucault argues that the effective way to address problems is to address them in specific and concrete manner. This is the only way through which problems can effectively be dealt with. He clarifies that raising local problems does not mean to refute general ones. Local issues are directly related with the most general and essential. For example, the study on sexuality and prison not only shows how sexuality and imprisonment have been historically formed as the objects of knowledge and control but it calls the fundamental presumptions of the Western discourses into question as well. The investigations on sexuality demonstrate that the great systems of knowledge have also had the effects of subjection and rule.³⁰ Foucault says “it is quite true that I localize problems, but I believe that this permits me to make others emerge from them that are very general according to habitual practice”.³¹

According to Foucault, the resistance movements are always in danger of losing their way. They face problems, stakes and dangers that may lead them to failures. They are open to political maneuvering and administrative control. Additionally, the danger the resistance movements faces while being local and specific is that they may remain “at the level of conjectural struggle, pressing demands restricted to particular sectors”.³² Foucault’s precise investigations of madness, disease, sexuality and power create a wrong impression that Foucault’s inquiry has no general import. The utility of investigations may be restricted only to the field in which it is carried out.

In this context Foucault recalls the failure of *Madness and Civilization* and *the Birth of Clinic* to challenge the practices of medicine. Around 1960s Foucault was anticipating that his inquiry into madness and clinic would challenge the foundations of Psychology and Psychiatry. Unfortunately, according to Foucault, his work provoked anti-psychiatric movements which he never expected and planned. Foucault distanced himself from these movements. Foucault clarifies that he did not intend to challenge the epistemic foundation of discourses. Instead, he wants to establish that epistemological foundations rest upon inherent formal laws of discourse.³³ Additionally and necessarily, the resistance movements are prone to political manipulation. The political parties, interest groups and trade unions may instrumentalize the impetus of the resistance movements for their own ends.³⁴

²⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol.2: The Use of Pleasure*, trans. Robert Hurley United States: Vintage Books, 1990, pp.95-96.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx*, United States: Semiotext, 1991, pp. 164-165.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

³¹ Ibid., p. 153.

³² Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 130.

³³ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol.1* ed. Paul Rabinow : Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, New York: The New Press, 1997, p. 45, 55.

³⁴ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 130.

Besides these dangers the most immediate risk local struggles are facing is the lack of a “global strategy” or “outside support”.³⁵ Being local and specific resistance movements cannot appeal to all. In this regard Foucault gives an example of such movements that were launched around the prisoners, the penal system and the police-judicial system. These movements failed to get outside support because these struggles had been developed “in solitary” among social workers and ex-prisoners.

Despite dangers and risks Foucault does not doubt the potential of local resistance movement to bring about change. He argues that these movements have been partially successful in the domain of psychiatry. Partial success “proves that these local, specific struggles have not been a mistake and have not led to a dead end”.³⁶

Foucault examines the status of modern society not from the perspective of totality or future achievement. Instead, he explores it in its immediacy. In this context he appreciates Kant’s attempt to reconnect the broken linkage between the present and philosophy. He criticizes the traditional, abstract, absolute and universal sketch of philosophy from the view of his conviction that philosophical investigation has to be about the present in its concrete form. Foucault finds a glimpse of hope in the present. He considers the present as a moment which forces us to face difference with respect to yesterday.

Resistance Movement not Targeting Class but Forms of Rationalities and Effects of Power

For, the class struggle does not target the specific and local problems in their specific context but global issues conceived in isolation of specificity. The class struggle is not local and specific. It engages all those who are directly and indirectly affected. It does not look for immediate solutions. Instead they look for the source or the roots of the problems in abstraction. They do not address the problems but seek to trace their roots out. They target the foundation. They are obsessed with the roots and foundations. They are foundationlist in the sense that they consider problems as the aftereffect of the earthquake lying deep in the center of it. That is why they do not target the immediate problems faced by the capitalist societies but seek to abolish private property on the belief that private property is the root cause of exploitation. They do not target the unemployment, banking system, inflation rate, expenses upon the war against terrorism etc.

The target of resistance struggle is power effects resulting from the operation of specific rationalities. Medical profession, psychiatric institutes, prisons, and schools can be criticized on various grounds. For instance, medical profession and schools can be challenged on the basis of making undue profit; prison authorities on the grounds of not providing due facilities to the prisoners and the clinics having no labs and professional experts. The resistance movements do not directly address these concerns. Medical profession is targeted when it exercises an uncontrolled power over people’s bodies and their health. These movements never demand the abolition of institutions. They know that abolition of institutions will never challenge the form of power and rationality of which the institutions are the product.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 130.

³⁶ Ibid.

The resistance movements do not only challenge the effects of power linked with various forms of rationalities, competence and qualification but launch the movement against the secrecy, deformation and mystifying representations imposed on people.³⁷ These struggles do not believe in the form of knowledge lying outside the power networks. They are neither skeptical nor absolute in their view of truth, rationality and knowledge. They have faith in the category of knowledge, truth, reason and power. To them, truth and reason never existed outside the relations of power and Foucault does not repeat the mistake to separate knowledge and reason from power.

The fundamental question surrounding the resistance movements is, who are we? They are refusal of the Marxist abstractions, economic and ideological state violence, which ignore who we are individually, and also refusal of a scientific or administrative inquisition that determines who one is.³⁸

Foucault finds three types of wars that are waged in contemporary societies over the period of time. The wars against the forms of domination based upon ethnic, social and religious grounds; the wars against the forms of exploitation that separate the workers from what they produce; and finally the wars against the forms of subjection that are becoming popular and frequent in the contemporary era. Although all these struggles are also waged in the contemporary era, the struggles against the subjection are the fundamental and central feature of the present period.³⁹ These struggles are against such forms of power which turn individuals into subjects. Foucault uses the term 'subject' with dual meaning. First the subject is one who is under someone else's control and subject is also one who is tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.⁴⁰ Both forms of subject imply subjugation. These resistance movements have to stand back from subjection and have to refuse what we have become so far, subjects. Foucault argues that resistance movements can work against subjugation. This is because the subjugation has not so far turned individual into a cog in a machine. The subjugation is not so overwhelming that resistance cannot be launched.⁴¹ One more important point Foucault mentions regarding the second form of subjugation is that the process of tidying oneself to identity by self-determinism is itself rests upon freedom. He argues "it should also be noted that power relations are possible only insofar as the subjects are free. If one of them were completely at the other's disposal and became his thing, and object on which he could wreak boundless and limitless violence, there would not be any relations of power. Thus, in order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides. Even when power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has "total power" over the other, power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of killing himself, of leaping out the window, or the killing the other person".⁴²

³⁷ Ibid., p. 330.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 331.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol.1* ed. Paul Rabinow : Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, New York: The New Press, 1997, p. 292.

⁴² Ibid.

Subjugation is possible where freedom is given to individuals, the individuals must always be in a state of resistance against power relations.⁴³ The term resistance signifies that the individuals have an option of not allowing others to control their conduct. The individual can fight against the way he is determined by the teacher/psychologist/doctor/family member. The resistance against the modern system of governance is not based upon universal truth or values but upon the specificity of power relations. Foucault explains that the resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power but “inside” power as there is no “escaping” or no absolute outside from where power can be challenged.⁴⁴

Conclusion

Neither peaceful class struggle nor armed revolution is viable to alter the modern forms of power. Additionally and necessarily there are neither binary classes nor Marxist’s portrayed capitalist state. Resistance can only be useful and effective as long as it is, at the first place, specific and precise and at the second, it targets the forms of rationalities. The Arab Spring may be a good example to highlight the significance and the relevance of the Resistance movements. These movements are not governed by the class conflict or the grand narrative. Instead, they are local, precise and specific.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 95.

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Vol.3 The Care of Self*, trans. Robert Hurley (United States: Vintage Books, 1988, p. 95, 122.