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The Concept of Marxism and Its Correlation with Religion

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Abstract : *The ideology of Marxism which was a response to capitalism is considered a comprehensive view of life. Its emergence in the midst of oppression is seen as a significant solution. It is called a complete theoretical system. Marx with his ideology endeavour to defend and stop the exploitation of the proletariat caused by the capitalist bourgeoisie. This research is qualitative library research. Sources of data were obtained from several books, journals, and literature that have relevance to this research. While the analytical method used is a critical analysis method using an Islamic worldview approach. This study aims to explain the concept of Marxism and then analyze and criticize it with an Islamic worldview. The results of this study explain that the ideology of Marxism seems to provide a solution but it brings more complex problems. Instead of prospering humans from the alienation of the capitalist system, this ideology alienates humans in another way, namely distancing humans from private property which is allowed in Islam. This ideology has even alienated humans from their religion. The conclusion is that Marx is not fundamental in his efforts to provide solutions. He only looks at the*

economic aspect even though in this life there are various aspects. His solution is partial and does not move integrally as is the case in Islam.

Keywords : *Capitalism, Marxism, Karl Marx, Engel, Islamic Worldview*

Abstrak : *Ideologi marxisme yang lahir sebagai respon terhadap kapitalisme dianggap sebagai suatu pandangan hidup yang menyeluruh. Kehadirannya ditengah-tengah penindasan dipandang sebagai sebuah solusi yang cukup signifikan. Bahkan ia disebut sebagai suatu sistem teori yang lengkap dan komprehensif. Marx dengan ideologinya berupaya membela dan menghentikan eksploitasi terhadap kaum proletar yang disebabkan oleh kaum borjuis pemilik modal. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif pustaka. Sumber data didapatkan dari beberapa buku, jurnal dan literatur yang memiliki relevansi dengan penelitian ini. Metode analisis yang digunakan adalah metode analisis kritis dengan menggunakan pendekatan worldview Islam. Adapun tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan konsep Marxisme lalu menganalisa dan mengkritisnya dengan worldview Islam. Hasil dari penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa Ideologi Marxisme tampak memberikan solusi namun pada hakikatnya justru mendatangkan permasalahan baru yang lebih kompleks. Alih-alih mensejahterakan manusia dari alienasi sistem kapitalis, ideologi ini justru mengalienasi manusia dengan cara yang lain, yakni menjauhkan manusia dari kepemilikan pribadi yang jelas diperbolehkan dalam Islam. Ideologi ini bahkan telah mengalienasi manusia dari agamanya. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa Marx kurang mendasar dalam upayanya memberikan solusi. Ia hanya melihat dari aspek ekonomi padahal di dalam kehidupan ini terdapat berbagai aspek. Solusinya bersifat parsial dan tidak bergerak secara integral sebagaimana yang berlaku dalam Islam.*

Kata Kunci: *Kapitalisme, Marxisme, Karl Marx, Engel, Worldview Islam.*

A. Introduction

Marx is considered the discoverer of the laws of human historical development. This was conveyed by Engel in his speech at Marx's funeral as follows, "*just Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history*"¹. Marx is considered to play a role like Darwin who discovered the law of organic

¹Michael Albert, *Realizing Hope Life Beyond Capitalism* (Canada: Fernwood Publishing, 2006), 145.

natural development, while Marx discovered the law of human historical development. According to Marx in Franz Magnis, the motor of social change and development is the conflict between social classes, and they are the real historical actors.² It is not certain individuals who determine the course of history, but each social class that fights for its class interests objectively. It is not right for Marx if the upper class is considered the producer of history. History is obtained from the results of a collision where one oppresses and the other struggles to free himself from this oppression. For example, in the French Revolution where the lower and middle classes carried out a movement for liberation from the rule of the upper-class feudal. Therefore, the writing of history must be focused on the power of social class in the society concerned.

Marxist philosophy departs from its criticism of capitalism which exploits humans and seeks to act in the interests of the people.³ In this case, welfare is not based on conscience and forgets human nature. Humans who are bound and weak are made into commodities and then traded. The basic problem in this philosophy is based on materialism so the economy is considered the basis of human life. Everything is considered to start and end in the economy.⁴ Starting from here, then Karl Marx with his philosophy tries to provide solutions to the problems that occur.

Marxism is considered a complete theoretical system.⁵ His thoughts are considered a way of life that can provide solutions to the problems faced by humans. Even though in essence Marx saw that the basis of this world was only the economic aspect.⁶ Such a view seems narrow considering that in the life of the world, there are various aspects. Is it by overcoming the economic aspect that all the problems in this world can be solved, or is this opinion motivated by the personal background of Marx, who at that time was having problems in the economic field? If Marx's thoughts and ideas are considered as a comprehensive view of life so that

²Franz Magnis Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx Dari Sosialisme Utopis Ke Perselisihan Revisionisme*, 13th ed. (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2019), 130–33.

³*Ibid.*, 99.

⁴Allen W Wood, *Karl Marx*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004), xl.

⁵G.V Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (Moscow: Eden and Cedar Paul, 1928), 1.

⁶Wood, *Karl Marx...*, xl.

they are significant enough for a solution, then we will see this assumption from the Islamic view of life which covers all aspects of life.⁷

At first glance, Marx's philosophy seems to provide a solution, although, in essence, it creates new, more complex problems.⁸ Marx's ideology championed by Lenin⁹ at his time was considered a helper and bringer of welfare for the lower classes. Because he seeks to eliminate oppression. Even this ideology is affirmed and thrives in the world of politics, especially in communist countries. Even though it appears to provide a solution, on the other hand, this ideology creates new problems.¹⁰ In this paper, researchers will try to describe and critically analyze how the ideology offered by Marxism is to eliminate oppression.

B. Regarding Marxism

1. Definition of Marxism

Marxism is an independent and complete system that claims to be able to answer all human questions.¹¹ Plekhanov in the *Fundamental Problem of Marxism* considers that the existing Marxism is a comprehensive view and is the highest achievement as an applicable form of ancient theory whose foundations were laid by Democritus in Greece.¹² Marxism is nothing but a school or ideology that relies on Marx's thought, namely what we know as communism. Communists have always introduced themselves as the direct heirs of Marx's ideas and made these ideas an important ideology that drives their political life. Marxism is an ideology or theory about the economy and society which contains the teachings of various thoughts which are considered the official teachings of Marx. So, marxism is narrower than the teachings of Marx itself.¹³

⁷Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), 2001), 25.

⁸Albert, *Realizing Hope Life Beyond Capitalism...*, 150.

⁹Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 177.

¹⁰Albert, *Realizing Hope Life Beyond Capitalism...*, 151.

¹¹Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx Dari Sosialisme Utopis Ke Perselisihan Revisionisme*, 227.

¹²Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism...*, 177–83.

¹³Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 272.

Communism is a political movement of communist parties since the 1917 revolution¹⁴ led by Lenin and then developed into an international political and ideological force. This term is also used to describe the teachings of communism or Marxism-Leninism which is the official ideology of communism. In this ideology, there is the idea of Lenin which later developed the thought of Marx. This shows that Marx's communism was different from the communist system that Lenin built fifty years later.¹⁵ According to Marx communism is not a form of state capitalization, in which property rights are administered by the state.

Marxism is not like the ideals of Marx in his philosophical thought. This was proven by Ryazanov being exiled to a concentration camp in Siberia and then disappearing because he dared to publish original Marxist texts that did not comply with official Soviet Marxist dogma.¹⁶ Franz Magnis in his book *Dari Mao ke Marcuse* states that “*hampir seluruh pengagum Marx yang tidak termasuk sistem Soviet menolak Marxisme-Leninisme*”¹⁷. When Marx's thought is used as an ideology of political struggle, of course, there is siltation in it. Just as the proletariat does not fight for the ideals of self-liberation from oppression. They are getting closer to bourgeois ideals while still maintaining Marxist rhetoric.¹⁸

Marx and Engel wrote that the goal of communism is the abolition of private property. They said that “*the theory of the communist may be summed up in a single sentence: abolition of private property*”.¹⁹ In the thoughts and steps he took, Marx struggled to achieve independence. As his philosophical thoughts depart from Hegel's philosophy which according to him only reaches the theoretical level, then this must be realized so that it becomes practical philosophy. Franz said in *Karl Marx's Thoughts* that what he aspired to was independence and that for

¹⁴The Russian Revolution which changed the history of human civilization in its actions toppled the Tsarist monarchical regime and all the systems that supported it, namely, feudalism and capitalism. The Russian workers are united in their oppression, they are fighting against the tsarist regime to abolish oppression and build a society free from poverty and ignorance.

¹⁵Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 177.

¹⁶Franz Magnis Suseno, *Dari Mao Ke Marcuse Percikan Filsafat Marxis Pasca Lenin*, 3rd ed. (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017), 83.

¹⁷*Ibid*, 85.

¹⁸Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx...*, 229.

¹⁹Karl Marx and Frederick Engel, *Manifesto of The Communists Party*, (New York: International Publisher, 1848), 22.

independence to be realized, philosophy had to become a revolutionary practical force.²⁰ According to him, this embodiment needs to be fought for so that philosophy which studies the basis and nature of things becomes a solution for the world. This was the initial goal of Marx and Engel, which has changed its development to this day. Meanwhile, the existence of communism has never reached the ideals of Marx's teachings.

2. Typology of Marxist Philosophy

The philosophy of Marxism as an ideology has several concepts that are structured based on ideas. These concepts are the main ideas of Marx in his philosophy which are closely related to human life, as it aims to provide solutions and resolve all the problems that ensnare the people. These ideas are based on direct thoughts from Marx which are written in his books, either those he wrote himself or those he completed with Engel. These ideas also received explanations from their followers who then used these ideas as the basis for social movements in their lives. These ideas also characterize Marxism and distinguish it from other schools of thought.

a. Human and Society Concept

According to Marx, the fundamental difference that characterizes and distinguishes humans from other creatures is their consciousness. They play a role in production to meet their needs. This is explained by Marx in *The German Ideology* as follows:

“Man can be distinguished from animal by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life”²¹

Thus it means that Man can channel the intention in his consciousness to the production by which he can survive. In contrast, animals that directly meet their needs from natural products without going through the production and processing processes first. Humans prove themselves as social beings through their work.²² Because humans are weak creatures, humans cannot meet their own needs without the interference of

²⁰Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 48.

²¹Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (Progress Publisher, 1968), 6.

²²Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx...*, 97.

others. From this concept then humans need each other with one. The existence of a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction in humans, when they succeed in helping others, shows that human nature is a social being.

Marx considers that human work is the nature of self that can distinguish it from other things. Human work should be something that makes people happy, so that means they don't work under pressure as happens in the capitalist system. The compulsion of society in their work is caused by the inability to express oneself freely in their work.²³ Finally, Marx offered a new system to overcome the problems in the previous system, namely the system of socialism. But the socialism that Marx offered to liberate human beings from self-alienation and their environment has so far not been realized. The abolition of private ownership of production instruments to be further managed by the State and become common income has not been able to be realized even in a State that until now still adheres to Marxism-Leninism as its ideology.

Marx's offer of socialism as a solution to overthrow the capitalist system which exploits the lower classes seems to have not reached its basic analysis. Just as Marx criticized Feuerbach in the aspect of exploring the problem of human self-alienation which he considered to be less basic, so did Marx who was not fundamental in analyzing the problem to offering a solution. Marx only touched on the economic aspect as a solution even though many aspects of human life can support self-development, one of which is education. This solution seems more fundamental to recovering the human ability to fight for their rights and find their own identity. With education, one can even recover one's alienation. Another solution that Marx could offer was a *skill* for the lower class so they could carry out production independently. This of course begins with unifying the vision and mission of the workers so that they will move and unite to free themselves from oppression. Because it is the human self who can understand the problem as well as who can find a solution for himself.

b. Religion Concept

Religion for Marx is opium. He stated that man-made religion, not religion that made man.²⁴ Religion is the realization of human nature in mere wishful thinking, this indicates that humans have not been able to

²³Erich Fromm, *Konsep Manusia Menurut Marx*, 3rd ed. (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2004), 65.

²⁴Marx & Engel, *Manifesto of The Communist Party ...*, 378.

realize their true nature. This is where Marx concluded that religion causes humans to be alienated from themselves. According to Marx, man's pseudo-realization of religion must have been caused by one fundamental thing and must be explored to discover the nature of the problems he is facing. According to Marx in Franz Magnis, dismantling religion as a solution to human alienation will not eliminate egoism nor will it restore human nature as a social being. For him, religion is not the cause of human alienation from their social essence, but merely an expression. Furthermore, Marx revealed that the root cause is human alienation from their world. As Marx stated that religion is the realization of human nature in wishful thinking because human nature has no real reality. Religion is an expression of suffering and a protest against suffering as well as a form of the groaning of repressed beings.²⁵ So religion for him is nothing but an escape from the reality of the real world which is oppressive and restrictive.

Religion for Marx is just a human projection of his essence. Religion is only an illusion and humans engineering to know their potential. Marx said that religion is the opium of the people, nothing more than an appearance created by humans. God for him is just a human creation, not a human created by God.²⁶ Furthermore, Marx found these basic problems in the people themselves, namely in social relations. Religion for him is an escape from a society that is hegemonies by the power of the upper classes in society. As a result, they cannot freely express themselves and are alienated from religion, so they make religion an escape.²⁷ So Marx concluded that the basic problem lies in society which is an economic problem.²⁸

Karl Marx's thinking was heavily influenced by Hegel's philosophy which put forward rationality and freedom as the highest values.²⁹ But Marx as a materialist is certainly different from Hegel in his metaphysical aspects. Marx rejected Hegel's thought which stated that the driving force of the universe was the spirit of God. According to Marx, everything in

²⁵*Ibid*, 378.

²⁶Karl Marx, *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 1844, 378.

²⁷Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx...*, 76–77.

²⁸*Ibid*, 73–79.

²⁹*Ibid*, 47.

nature is driven by matter – which is dynamic – even the human spirit is considered the highest product of material development.³⁰

c. Marx's Critique of Capitalism

Karl Marx's philosophy is a form of his response to capitalism which is considered not to prosper people's lives. The system makes humans alienated from themselves. Humans do not work according to their potential but only fulfill the necessities of life, namely as workers who are exploited by the owners of capital.³¹ This results in humans not developing even though meeting these needs should be a means of self-development. Human liberties due to working under the orders of others made Marx offer the concept of socialism which he thought could prosper the workers and liberate them from oppression. One of the elements fought for in socialism is the abolition of private property rights and the abolition of social classes. Apart from trying to abolish class in society, he also tried to abolish the state, because for him the state was an institution that overshadowed the upper class, and never really supported and sympathized with the lower class.³² That is the offer that Marx fought for to realize the welfare of society, especially the oppressed proletariat.

The core of the teachings of Marxism is the abolition of capitalism which is considered to be oppressing the lower class by commercializing their workforce and considering it a commodity that is traded in the market. The abolition of capitalism offered by Marx is by implementing a system of socialism in a country. Private property is abolished because this is what causes the oppression of one over the other. The existence of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat creates a real gap in which the proletariat is the party that loses because of the exploitation of this work upon him. The cooperation between the two was never balanced because the upper class could still eat even without the lower class, while the lower class certainly could not eat without the upper class. Even though according to Marx the basis of life is the economy³³ so whatever is done must depart from this aspect as well as the problems that arise are closely related to the economy. The economy forms a social relation in society, creates awareness, and finally creates a class. From this aspect also actions and behaviors are formed because social reality gives birth to ideas. So the economy is the

³⁰*Ibid*, 224.

³¹*Ibid*, 99.

³²Marx & Engel, *SMainfesto of The Communist Party...*, 37.

³³Wood, *Karl Marx...*, xl.

basis of social behavior. From this, it appears that there is a contradiction in Marx's thought, if the economy will eventually create class then Marx with the basis of his life seems useless and futile in abolishing the class system because the economy which he calls the basis of life will always create a class. So Marx should have provided a solution by changing the basis of life so that the system would automatically be abolished, thus the economy would only become one of the elements in life.

d. Dialectical Materialism as a Method in Marxism

Marx's dialectic is influenced by Hegel's dialectic, the difference between the two lies in the basic object of the dialectic. Hegel with his idealism while Marx with his materialism. This seems clear as Aidit explained in his writings that Dialectical Materialism stems from the efforts of Marx and Engel to reform Hegel's dialectics materialistically and reform materialism dialectically. The basis of Hegel's dialectics includes three things. *First*, believe that the universe is an interconnected whole. *Second*, developments are caused by internal contradictions. *Third*, the theory of leaps in the process of development culminates in a change in the quality of something.³⁴ These three things contradict the Marxist dialectic.

The magnitude of the influence of Hegel's dialectics on Marx is confirmed by Aidit in his book entitled *Tentang Marxisme* as follows:

“Dengan tersusunnya dialektika Hegel, maka dalam dunia pikiran manusia terjadi revolusi menghancurkan metodologi metafisik yang berkuasa lebih dari 2000 tahun lamanya. Logika dialektik Hegel telah memberi dorongan yang kuat bagi kemajuan fikiran ilmiah dan meletakkan dasar yang kuat pula bagi materialisme Marxis”.³⁵

Matter in philosophy is everything that does not depend on human consciousness because it is an outside part of it. The matter is neither created nor controlled by ideas. But in his role, he can cause sensations and give rise to reflections in the human mind. So, matter in philosophy is the relationship between state and mind, or between subject and object. From this definition of matter, we can see that social phenomena are also included in the scope of matter because matter is absolute and eternal.³⁶ So the notion of matter in philosophy is nothing but

³⁴D.N Aidit, *Tentang Marxisme* (Jakarta: Akademi Ilmu Sosial, 1963), 25–26.

³⁵*Ibid*, 26.

³⁶*Ibid*, 29.

an extension of matter in natural science. Ideas are determined by material as cited by Aidit from Karl Marx in his book *Tentang Marxisme*, he stated that “*ide itu tidak lain daripada dunia materiil yang dicerminkan oleh otak manusia dan diterjemahkan dalam bentuk-bentuk pikiran*”³⁷ however there is also an active role idea to the material. Marx used the dialectical method in studying and understanding natural phenomena while the theory used was materialist theory. Aidit explained that the dialectical method is a way of knowing, studying, and analyzing everything based on the laws of dialectics, namely the laws regarding the mutual relations and development of phenomena that apply objectively in this world.³⁸

Marx's dialectic emphasizes the existence of interrelationships and interrelationships between one symptom and a thought or one symptom with other phenomena objectively, not subjectively. The relationship between symptoms must be understood objectively and scientifically and rejects subjectivity. Whereas in the dialectics of reason with natural phenomena, there must be human subjectivity which is a conscious being with ideas and thoughts. As stated by Muhammad Muslih in the book *Filsafat Ilmu* that knowledge is never separated from the subjectivity of the individual who knows. The relationship between knowledge and human existence is a fact that cannot be avoided, so scientific claims about the objectivity of science can still be questioned.³⁹ So, there is nothing truly objective in life, including in terms of the relationship and dialectic of thoughts with natural phenomena.

Dialectical materialism favors matter over ideas or thoughts which it considers secondary. The idea for him is a reflection of the objectivity of the mind. Everything in this world is composed and formed from matter. This world is the only thing that is real because its basis and essence are matter.⁴⁰ The essence of dialectical materialism is the belief that reality consists only of matter as explained by Franz in his book *dari Mao ke Marcuse Percikan Filsafat Marxis Pasca Lenin* as follows:

“Manusia dan segala kehidupan rohaninya dianggap sebagai perkembangan materi. Tidak ada Allah maupun makhluk-makhluk halus, tidak ada jiwa dan tidak ada kehidupan sesudah kematian. Materi berkembang berdasarkan ketegangan-ketegangan dialektis

³⁷*Ibid.*, 30.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 32.

³⁹Muhammad Muslih, *Filsafat Ilmu* (Yogyakarta: LESFI, 2019), 18.

⁴⁰D.N Aidit, *Tentang Marxisme...*, 29.

yang menjadi hakikatnya. Metode ini juga merupakan filsafat alam karena menurutnya alam material adalah dasar segala yang ada”.⁴¹

Dialectical materialism applied in Marxism is none other than Engel's merit. Franz emphasized that Engel's new contribution to Marxism was dialectical materialism. Engel applied dialectic which became Marx's method in analyzing a historical development in nature. He wanted to provide an understanding of nature that is both dialectical and materialist.⁴² This shows Engel's significant role in the development of thought after Marx which later became Marxism.

C. Correlation between Marxism and Religion

1. Relations between Marxism, Communism, and Religion

The emergence of the ideology of communism with the good intentions of succeeding in quelling the hegemony of capitalism was inseparable from criticism in theological matters. The reason is that communism as an ideology massively leads its followers to leave religion (atheists). This can be seen from their various kinds of doctrines which are very active in directing people to hate or even become enemies of religion. The famous expression of one of the leaders of communism, Karl Marx, really illustrates the disharmony of the relationship between religion and communism. In his expression, he said that “*religion is the opium of the masses*”.⁴³ Opium in the sense of giving satisfaction, even if it's fake and doesn't change the bad situation of the addict. In the same way, he considers religion to give false satisfaction without changing the bad situation of its adherents.⁴⁴ For example, religion promises rewards in the afterlife for those who steadfastly accept their "fate" or "cross". The impact is that small communities no longer fight for their fate, but accept all forms of oppression they suffer, things that benefit the upper classes who oppress them.

On another occasion, Karl Marx also expressed his anxiety about religion. Although he does not reject the presence of religion head-on, he

⁴¹Suseno, *Dari Mao Ke Marcuse ...*, 65–66.

⁴²Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 224.

⁴³Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" in David McLellan (Ed.) *Karl Marx Selected Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71.

⁴⁴Suseno, *Pemikiran Karl Marx ...*, 123.

firmly rejects systems that smell of (illusions) religion.⁴⁵ What he criticized was not the object of religion directly, but humans and their adherents. And the religion he means is that which cannot be rationalized, and cannot bring progress to the real world, such as; the economy, people's welfare, prosperity, manners, and all aspects related to material affairs. For him, religion will only make people confined and unproductive. This is because humans are only objects of God who cannot control themselves in this real life.

Other figures such as Vladimir Lenin also hate religion. It was noted that after the revolution, he carried out property confiscation and massive discrimination against religious groups, churches, and temples. He did not hesitate to exterminate anyone who was considered counter-revolution and fought back through *Cheka*.⁴⁶ In addition, since the beginning of his reign, Joseph Stalin also strictly prohibited all kinds of religious activities because according to his religion and its adherents were a threat from within to his ideology and power. This was also what Mao Zedong did, banning all kinds of religious and belief activities on the pretext that both were forms of pro-feudalism and capitalism.⁴⁷ Admittedly, communism and capitalism, although both are contradictory, were born from the spirit of the *Renaissance* of Western civilization which was motivated by their hatred of religion.⁴⁸ So it is very natural that the relationship between the two (religion and communism) has never been or even will not be harmonious.

As a Left Hegelian, Marx from his youth had chosen to be anti-religious and very militant with his philosophy of life (*credo*) that "criticism of religion is the basis of all criticism."⁴⁹ In summary, we can see Marx's views on religion in his writings, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, he stated that religion was created by humans as the result of their highest illusion of what can never be achieved. It is the opium of society, drugging its adherents with pseudo-bliss, and alienating humans

⁴⁵ Louis Leahy, *Aliran-Aliran Besar Atheisme: Tinjauan Kritis* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992), 99.

⁴⁶V. I. Lenin, *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 26 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1077), 258.

⁴⁷Idzam Fautanu, *Filsafat Politik* (Jakarta: GP Press, 2013), 239–59.

⁴⁸Muhamad Yakub Mubarak, "Problem Teologis Ideologi Komunisme," Vol. 13, No. 1, Mei (2017): 45–70.

⁴⁹Bryan Magee, *The Story of Philosophy* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2008), 164.

from real life. According to him, abolishing religion is the only way for humans to find true happiness. So, it is not strange if the doctrine taught to followers of the ideology of communism is to be an atheist (godless). Even more than that, being anti-God (antithesis) by hating and eliminating religion.⁵⁰

For Marx, no religion and its doctrines can be considered true.⁵¹ Because of this he never considered the difference between religious beliefs and superstitions, or between false and true religions. He even explicitly calls religious objects "religious ghosts" (religious phantoms). And consistently he also refers to them as residents of the "mist-enveloped".⁵² This reason may make him assume and state that religion makes humans alienated (alienated) from the reality of life. This is because, according to Marx, religion has manipulated human beings over the realities of life they face by giving hope for a future life that is essential and eternal. So humans shift the orientation of life from the present which is material (worldly) to the future which is non-material (ukhrawi).⁵³

A similar view from a figure who criticized religion, Friedrich Nietzsche stated that religion does not change human orientation but perpetuates myths (beliefs) in fossilized (religious) societies. Religion with its absolute values is considered to deny human existence which is completely uncertain and does not contribute in the least to changes in the changing conditions of human reality. At a certain moment, religious values which are believed by their adherents to be absolute will lose their absoluteness because they are not contextualized, and finally, a value crisis will occur which will lead to its collapse.⁵⁴ It is in this condition that Nietzsche assesses that humans experience what is known as an anomaly. Because they hold on to something that is no longer absolute (uncertainty).

When viewed from the presentation of the views of the figures above, it will be seen that the common thread that can be drawn is that they

⁵⁰ Karl Marx, *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (London: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 71.

⁵¹Karl Marx, *The Critique of the Gotha Program* (Moscow, 1970), 35.

⁵²Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr and Company, 1904), 372.

⁵³Doyl Paul Johnson, *Teori Sosiologi Klasik Dan Modern* (Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1988), 141.

⁵⁴ST. Sunardi, *Nietsche* (Yogyakarta: LkiS, 2001), 21.

both position religion only as a product of human creative activity. It means that religion with all the values and morality that it has for them is the result of human creative activities directed at the goal of maintaining life and its needs. However, according to them, religion has not succeeded in shaping the survival and needs of human life, but rather alienation. Because religion is considered to make human limitations to develop their creativity.

The world's cynical view of communism towards religion wants the destruction of religion, family, law, rights, and everything related to them. Anyone and anyone who opposes the views of communism with their ideology will be destroyed. Its ultimate goal is to create a world without private property ownership, to accept orders and governments without questioning them, and to allow the family to live with its people without religion, morals, or ideals. And the culmination of all these goals is the denial of the existence of God. Because, according to him, without the presence of God, humans are not bound and free to express their creativity. So that with that humans can feel happiness, an adequate life, as well as worldly wealth and success.⁵⁵ In the end, they want all religions (without exception) that are considered to be restrictive, as well as anything that is considered to endanger the existence of the ideology of communism, to disappear from human civilization.

Not only did they criticize religion, but Marx and his followers also did not hesitate to criticize God. As has become their inherent nature to deny the existence of the afterlife and deny the existence of God in the application of their life.⁵⁶ Feuerbach himself stated that the dimension of divinity and the entire religious world is an imaginary world, God is the highest human illusion, while the real world is only the material world itself.⁵⁷ The only way to make a human being a real human being is by waking up from his (religious) dream. Then destroying the alienation by denying God as the negation of human nature. Its meaning, denial means the elimination of illusions and alienation as a result of the projection of

⁵⁵John S. Wood, *100 Things You Should Know About Communism And Religion*, (Washington, D.C: Committee on Un-American Activities, U.S. House of Representatives, 1949), 39.

⁵⁶Fadhillah Rachmawati, "Kritik Terhadap Konsep Ideologi Komunisme Karl Marx," *Jurnal Sosiologi Agama Indonesia (JSAI)* 1, no. 1 (2020): 67.

⁵⁷Muhamad Yakub Mubarak, "Problem Teologis Ideologi Komunisme," *Tsaqafah*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2017): 54.

human ideals. Thus, the problem of the existence and non-existence of God is precisely the problem of the existence and non-existence of human beings.⁵⁸

In other words, it can be said that Marxism is the perfect form of Atheist Humanism. They reject God because God is the reflection of a certain human condition which Marxism not only wants to understand but also to burn to the ground. Marx's writings also philosophically explain atheism and its justification. He contrasts the idea of humanity as its principle (*causa*) with the idea of God as the Creator. According to him, recognizing the condition of being a created being or his dependence on the Creator is a characteristic of people who are alienated to.⁵⁹ That is, a complete human being in the Marxist view is a human who has understood that he obtained existence from himself.

For a Marxist, fighting for human freedom from alienation based on the principle of realist dialectical materialism and making the balance of truth only exist in the empirical method is a commitment. However, if you take a closer look at this view, it turns out that it is not without weaknesses. How could it not be, this Marxist thought reduces the universe to mere material reality and limits truth only to the sensory ratio?⁶⁰ The assumption that the empirical method is the only balance of scientific truth so that there is a rejection of non-empirical rational logic has an impact on the establishment of an ideology of denial of the existence of God, rejecting the absoluteness of revelation as a source of the epistemology of science, and denying everything that relies on these two things (including religious truth).⁶¹

Responding to this thought, Ghanim Abduh explained that all creations in this universe must have a 'dzat' who created them (*al-Khaliq*). All beings are either created by themselves or created by others and there is no other choice. However, the reality captured by the human senses proves

⁵⁸ Siti Murtiningsih, "Teologi Tuhan Mati Tinjauan Tentang Eksistensi Tuhan Dan Otonomi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Ateisme," *Jurnal-Lib UGM 1* No. 2 (1997): 62.

⁵⁹ Murtiningsih, "Teologi Tuhan Mati Tinjauan Tentang Eksistensi Tuhan Dan Otonomi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Ateisme."

⁶⁰ Derajat Fitra Marandika, "Keteransingan Manusia Menurut Karl Marx," *Jurnal Tsaqafah* Vol. 14, N (2018): 317.

⁶¹ Adnin Armas dan Harda Armayanto, *Islamisasi Ilmu Pengetahuan: Respons Terhadap Tradisi Keilmuan Barat*, Dalam Harda Armayanto, Ed., *Framework Studi Islam: Kajian Multidisiplin Wacana Keislaman Kontemporer* (Ponorogo: Fakultas Ushuluddin Unida Gontor- Unida Gontor Press, 2018), 1-27.

that the view that states that humans are created by themselves is rejected because humans will be created and creators themselves at one time, and this is impossible. Therefore, what is very possible is that humans were created by others. In this way, the existence of the creator will be proven.⁶² It means, the existence of something that can be sensed and thought of as a creation of the creator, and that the creator is other than the self that can be sensed and imagined in the mind has been proven to exist.

2. Relations between Marxism and 'Islam Kiri'

In a common definition, the term "left" is translated as a party that tends to be radical, socialist, "anarchist," reformist, progressive, or liberal. In simple terms, "left" means always wanting something called progress, inspiring human excellence, or something called "social destiny."⁶³ However, when viewed from a humanitarian perspective, the word "left" which is juxtaposed with Islam will give rise to the meaning of those who are controlled, the oppressed, and the poor.

Furthermore, specifically, the term 'Left Islam' began to be widely known since the launch of the *Left Islamic (Al-Yasar al-Islami)* written by Hassan Hanafi, an Egyptian thinker. Although the term Left Islam is closely related to Hassan Hanafi, however, the term was not his creation but was used earlier by AG Salih in an article in 1972: "Dalam Islam, kiri memperjuangkan pemusnahan penindasan bagi orang-orang miskin dan tertindas, ia juga memperjuangkan persamaan hak dan kewajiban di antara seluruh masyarakat. Singkat kata, Kiri adalah kecenderungan sosialistik dalam Islam".⁶⁴ Even though Salih said this, it also needs to be understood that for Hassan, the Left and the Right do not "exist" in Islam itself, but "exist" at the social, political, economic, and historical levels.⁶⁵

The presence of the Islamic Left is considered by some as part of the theology of liberation (*liberation theology*). According to Hassan Hanafi, one of the core concepts of this concept is *Islam is the liberation*

⁶² Ghanim Abduh, *Kritik Atas Sosialisme Marxisme* (Bangil: Al-Izzah, 2003), 13–14.

⁶³ Carl Oglesby, *The New Left Reader* (New York: Grove Press, 1969), 1; Kazuo Shimogaki, *Kiri Islam. Antara Modernisme Dan Postmodernisme*. Terj. Imam Aziz (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 1993), 112.

⁶⁴ Ahmad Gabbas Salih, *Al-Yamin Wa al-Yasar Fi al-Islam*, (Beirut: al-Muassasah al-Arabiyah li Dirasat wa an-Nasyr, 1972), 7.

⁶⁵ Hassan Hanafi, *Madza Ya'ni al-Yasar al-Islami*, n.d., 7; Kazuo Shimogaki, *Kiri Islam ...*, 7.

religion, namely that Islam is a liberating religion. This emphasizes that the liberation of Muslims and the oppressed is the pressure point in this group. Apart from that, other figures are seen as one frequency in the concept of Islamic Left, namely Ali Syariati, an Iranian revolutionary Islamic thinker, Asghar Ali Engineer, a human rights fighter from India, and Haji Mohammad Misbach, a figure from the Indonesian Sarekat Islam.

In the analysis contained in the book *Islam Kiri: Melawan Kapitaslime Modal Dari Wacana Menuju Gerakan*, several characteristics mark this Left Islamic movement. Among them; *first*, the orientation towards changing the oppressive social structure and exposing all forms of development crimes. *Second*, encourage religion as a liberating force, especially for adherents who are socially threatened by a destructive economic and political system. *Third*, adapting all of his teachings to dismantle all political, social, and cultural systems that alienate the poor and systems that have encouraged discrimination. *Fourth*, seeing the root of the problem lies in the world's political and economic system which has been unfair from the beginning and sided with the interests of the investors. *Fifth*, placing Islam as the last revealed religion which is firstly oriented towards eradicating economic oppression and in the conditions required to allow the use of physical force for the sake of upholding justice, and *sixth*, many of its religious leaders come from the poor and oppressed.⁶⁶ Of these six, it implies that Leftist Islam cannot be separated from unjust conditions and uses Islam [red. agama] as a basis for pushing for change. In addition, social and economic factors become a reference for welfare eligibility.

3. Islamic Position Against Marxism

Islam is a religion as well as a civilization that has a *worldview*. According to Berghout, the worldview of Islam includes three basic aspects of Islam, namely, Islam, faith, and Ihsan, he states in *The Islamic Worldview*, “*definition of worldview, Islam, Iman, Ihsan. Islam as a way of life, tawhid, creation, prophethood, eschatology, seen and unseen, God, man, life, vicegerency have been dealt with in various works*”.⁶⁷ Islam means mind or shari'ah, faith means belief or aqidah and Ihsan means

⁶⁶Eko Supriyadi, “Book Riview. Islam Kiri: Melawan Kapitaslime Modal Dari Wacana Menuju Gerakan,” *Al-Manar*, Vol. 1 (2004):17–18.

⁶⁷Abdelaziz Berghout, *Introduction to the Islamic Worldview: Study of Selected Essential* (Malaysia: IIUM Press, 2010), 3.

action or morals. These three components play a role and are interrelated with one another starting from the first one.

In Islam, worldview is composed of a set of components in the form of absolute concepts, “fundamental elements are permanently established... these are...the nature of God; of revelation (Qur’an); of his creation; of man and the psychology of the human soul; of knowledge; of religion; of freedom; of values and virtues; of happiness.”⁶⁸ God, revelation (al-Qur’an), creation (nature), the human soul, knowledge, religion, freedom, values and virtues, happiness, and so on. These concepts in Islam are absolute, in contrast to the West which tends to be relative because humans are the central aspect of it. This explains that Islam is a *worldview* in which a Muslim reads his world.

Islam and the West have different foundations so different characteristics are formed. The principles of worldview in Islam are Hadith, reason, experience, and intuition while the principles of Western worldview are ratios and philosophical speculation. The approach used in Islam is monotheism, namely the concept of universal unity while the West uses a dichotomous approach. The characteristics that appear in the Islamic worldview include rational, metaphysical, and supra-rational, some are permanent and some are changing while the West is rational, non-metaphysical, open, and always changing. The worldview of Islam has the meaning of reality and truth, *al-Haq* and *al-Haqiqah*, with metaphysical and physical rational dimensions, while the West has the meaning of *truth* socio-cultural dimensions, rational empirical.

The objects of study in Islam include the nature of *al-Mulk* and the nature of the *shahadah*. While the object of study in the West includes empirical and non-metaphysical realities.⁶⁹ In this way, one can find the differences in the worldviews of Islam and the West which have different footings and foundations in their outlook on life and way of thinking. The most striking thing to see the difference between the two lies in Islam with its physical as well as metaphysical world while the West only examines the physical world which produces objective truth. While for Islam not all empirical realities must be true, these mistakes can be justified by *shari’ah* which will lead to Islamization by incorporating Islamic

⁶⁸Al-Attas, *Prolegomena to The Metaphysics of Islam...*, 29.

⁶⁹Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, *Worldview Sebagai Asas Epistemologi Islam Dalam Framework Studi Islam* (Ponorogo: Unida Gontor Press, 2018), xxi.

content into the wrong aspects so that it can bring benefits to the common good.

An explanation of the differences in the Western and Islamic worldviews shows that Islam and Marxism are different in the principles of their beliefs but have similarities in other respects. If Marxism is based on materialism which at the same time negates metaphysics, while in Islam metaphysics is included in its basic beliefs. The similarities between the two are that they both aim and intend to provide solutions to the problems of the people, it's just that the solutions provided are once again based on something very different. From the phenomena that exist in society, it can be seen which one is present as a solution and which creates new problems. Solutions in pure Islam are for the benefit of the people without the interference of human egoism, while in Marxism the solutions given are based on human considerations based on personal experience. This is of course different from the solutions given to one another because everyone – even though they live with the same socio-historical background – has a different view of reality even in the offered solutions. This is because, in each of these considerations, there is human subjectivity with personal interests.

Marx offered socialism by abolishing private ownership while in Islam private ownership is allowed on condition that conditions apply. The concept of ownership in Islam is divided into two parts. *First*, is private ownership. Islam has the concept of private ownership which causes other people not to have the right to something, while the owner may use it according to the rules that apply in Islam.⁷⁰ *Second*, public ownership includes goods whose benefits are enjoyed by everyone such as public roads, bridges, rivers, springs, roads, rails, museums, parks, public libraries, and so on.⁷¹

Private ownership in Islam is permissible with provisions for obtaining these assets while freedom in obtaining them can lead to social inequality because there will be some groups who justify various ways to fulfill their needs. This is the beginning of the exploitation of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. As for the limitation of ownership, the ideals of socialism kill the human spirit at work. No matter how much

⁷⁰Wahbah Zuhaili, *Fiqh Al-Islam Wa Adillatuhu*, 2nd ed., vol. Juz 4 (Damaskus: Dar al-Fikr, 1985), 57.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, Juz 4:58.

wealth one has, it is not a problem because in Islam there is an order for zakat and alms to be given to those who are entitled to receive it.

Michael Albert criticized Marxism in his book entitled *Realizing hope life beyond capitalism*, according to him change is fun but not the changes brought by Marxism. He stated: "I would certainly be happy about the change, yes, but I wouldn't yet celebrate Marxism, because the pareconist perspective indicates that Marxism has a much more damning and less tractable problem than over-prioritizing economics. Marxism ironically, not only over-prioritizes economy, it gets economics wrong...the orthodox Marxist concept for explaining how economic inputs and outputs exchange, misunderstand the determination of wages, prices, and profit in capitalist economies"⁷²

Because the pareconist perspective shows that Marxism has problems that are much more burdensome and more difficult to trace than prioritizing the economy. Ironically, Marxism, not only over-prioritized economics, it misled economics, and orthodox Marxist concepts to explain how inputs and outputs of the economy were exchanged, and misunderstood the determination of wages, prices, and profits in a capitalist economy. In this case, according to Albert, there is a Marxist misunderstanding in understanding and responding to capitalists. He considered the solutions offered by Marx to be even more burdensome and created new problems than those already implemented in a capitalist economy. Marx's response was considered excessive and made the economic system chaotic. He further said: "Marxism never investigates the possibility that other relations of work and economic life can divide people into critically important opposed groups with different circumstances, motives, and means. Marxism's fatal weakness in this regard is that it ignores the possibility that factors other than ownership can also produce classes and that its overlooking additional possibilities compromises many core insights of the Marxist framework"⁷³

Marxism has never investigated the possibility that other relations of work and economic life could divide people into very important groups with different circumstances, motives, and ways. Marxism's fatal weakness in this respect is that it ignores the possibility that factors other than the property can also produce classes and that ignoring the additional possibility harms

⁷²Albert, *Realizing Hope Life Beyond Capitalism...*, 150.

⁷³*Ibid*, 151.

many of the core insights of the Marxist framework. According to Albert, Marx did not think comprehensively in his philosophy. His attention is only focused on private property, even though many factors can give rise to new classes in society besides private ownership.

According to Albert, Marxists deny the existence of a class of coordinators or professionals, he says: the remaining problem with Marxism is that in virtually every variant, however flexible and enriched it is, Marxist class theory denies the existence of what I call the coordinator (or professional-managerial, or technocratic) class and underemphasizes, or more often denies, its antagonism with the working class as well as with capitalists. This failure obstructs class analysis of the old Soviet, Eastern European, and third-world non-capitalist economies, and of capitalism itself. Worse, it interferes with attaining worthy goals".⁷⁴

The remaining problem with Marxism is that in almost every variant, however flexible and enriched, Marxist class theory denies the existence of what I would call a coordinating (or professional-managerial, or technocratic) class and places less emphasis on, or more often denies, its opposition to the working class as well as with the capitalists. This failure hampered the analysis of the old Soviet, Eastern European, and third-world non-capitalist economic classes, and capitalism itself. Even worse, it interferes with achieving worthy goals.

D. Conclusion

Marx was very critical in his philosophy, he accepted Hegel's dialectic but rejected his idealism, meaning that he only took what was needed and left the rest. Furthermore, he built his philosophy by studying the social conditions of society and the problems they faced. Instead of freeing humans from alienation, they alienate humans in other ways by eliminating the concept of private ownership and replacing it with the concept of shared ownership which means alienating humans from their essence. The offer makes humans lose their competitiveness in trying their best to continue to survive and protect themselves from harmful things. Human nature has the concept of private property as he has the right to own and take care of himself physically. Equating the concept of ownership is tantamount to alienating humans from their true nature, as he criticizes religion which is considered to alienate humans.

⁷⁴*Ibid*, 150.

Marx's offer of socialism as a solution to overthrow the capitalist system which exploits the lower classes seems to have not reached its basic analysis. Just as Marx criticized Feuerbach in the aspect of exploring the problem of human self-alienation which he considered to be less basic, so did Marx who was not fundamental in analyzing the problem to offering a solution. Marx only touched on the economic aspect as a solution even though many aspects of human life can support their development, one of which is education. This solution seems to be more fundamental to restoring the human ability to fight for their rights and find their own identity. With education, one can even recover one's alienation. Albert's criticism that Marx forgot to predict that formation was not only caused by economic aspects but many other factors. [.]

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