

John Locke and Karl Marx on Private Property

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Abstract

John Locke, the late seventeenth century philosopher, the fore runner of liberalism justified the right to private property in the pre- industrial revolution period. Karl Marx, the nineteenth century philosopher, fore runner of Marxism, argued for abolition of private property. This paper would be comparing the two thinkers on the concept of private property and their totally divergent arguments lead to emergence of Liberalism and Marxism. John Locke's analysis of private property led him to the concept of political sovereign that is a representative government and Karl Marx's analysis of private property led him to a stateless society.

Words: *private property, exchange, civil government, liberalism, surplus value, alienation, capitalism, dictatorship of the proletariat, and communism.*

One cannot compare John Locke and Karl Marx's views on private property, but their analysis led to a drastic change in the society. Locke defines right to property as right to life liberty and property. When a man mixes his own labour with the land, then that land becomes his own property. He wrote his book Two Treatises on Civil Government to safeguard the right to private property. In contrast to Locke who views property as an essential part of individual freedom, Marx contends that labour theory of value leads to alienation in an industrial society and it's a major obstacle for the attainment of individual freedom leading to abolition of private property.

Locke's Theory of Property

Property as a Natural Right

According to Locke property existed prior to the government. Earlier, property was viewed as something created by the government, it came as a shock to the ruling classes that it was a consequence of property, governments were formed to preserve property. Locke expresses the hope after the English Revolution in 1688, King William would justify to the people of England, natural rights would be preserved, the nation would be

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