**Question: What is Marxist political theory? Discuss the basic ideas of Marxist theory to the study of political theory.**

**Introduction**

Karl Marx (5 May 1818 – 14 March 1883) was a German philosopher, economist, historian, sociologist, political theorist, journalist and socialist revolutionary. Born in Trier, Germany, Marx studied law and philosophy at university. He married Jenny von Westphalen in 1843. Due to his political publications, Marx became stateless and lived in exile with his wife and children in London for decades, where he continued to develop his thought in collaboration with German thinker Friedrich Engels and publish his writings, researching in the reading room of the British Museum. His best-known titles are the 1848 pamphlet The Communist Manifesto and the three-volume Das Kapital (1867–1883). Marx's political and philosophical thought had enormous influence on subsequent intellectual, economic and political history. His name has been used as an adjective, a noun and a school of social theory.

**Marxist Theory**

Karl Marx wanted to know the causes of economic changes in human society. He also wanted to discover what further changes are required. He established that the changes in human society were not the least accidental like changes in external nature. He worked out a scientific theory of society based on the actual experience of men. He had an opinion that it was quite impossible to separate his economic theories from historical and social theories.

Marx attempted to demonstrate that a socialist program must be based upon a systematic interpretation of social evaluations and a critical analysis of the existing system of production and exchange. His design was to show how a socialist community is to be built upon capitalist foundations. The basic ideas of Marxist Political Theory can be mentioned as follows:

1. **Dialectical Materialism:** The concept of Karl Marx regarding the Dialectical Materialism is different from that of Hegelian one. According to Marx, the existing capitalist system is ‘Thesis’ and the ideas to establish a classless, stateless society and the society free from exploitation is the ‘Anti-Thesis’. Marx believes that the class struggle (reaction) between the two classes, capitalist and the proletariat must create Synthesis in society. Unlike Hegel, Marx said that Socialism is the ultimate truth and it is the end point of the Thesis, Anti-Thesis and Synthesis process.
2. **Materialistic or the Economic Interpretation of History:** It is one of the most important theories of Karl Marx. According to Marx, the material or economic factors are alone responsible for changing of history. On the basis of economic factors other structures of the society like religion, laws, etc. grow up. He explains that it is the mode of production which establishes the social relation in society. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord: the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist”.
3. **Class Struggle**: Karl Marx in his communist Manifesto (1848) said, “The history of all hitherto existing in the society is the history of class struggle. According to Marx some situations are responsible for class struggle in society. These situations are- class interest, open competition among the capitalists, development of communication system, and unhealthy situation of workers. In class struggle the capitalist will be defeated and the power of state will be used by the Proletariat against the capitalists. Till the complete destruction of capitalism the struggle will continue and this period was called by Marx as transitional period or dictatorship of proletariat. After the total abolition of capitalists system, there will be no need of state and there.
4. **Surplus Value:** The theory of Surplus value is an important theory of Karl Marx to the study of his political Philosophy. According to Marx, the Surplus Value is created by the workers and consumed by the capitalists. It is gross injustice to the workers which compels the workers to be united against the capitalists.

According to Marx, the workers are paid minimum wages for their works and compel them to work for a long period of time without any bonus. The produced goods are sold with huge profit and the capitalists again invest the profit as their capital. Resultantly the richer become richer and the poorer become poorer. Marx stresses that, the surplus value is created by the workers and therefore, this should be distributed among them. Consuming surplus value the capitalists always exploit the workers.According to Marx the surplus value makes the capitalists idle, concentration of capital in hand of capitalist, Increases class consciousness among the workers, paves the way for the destruction of capitalists creates dictatorship of proletariat.

1. **Dictatorship of the proletariat:** After the total abolition of capitalist system, there will be no need of state and then a classless and stateless society will be established by the proletariat and that society will be free from any exploitation. In the dictatorship of proletariat all power of the capitalist’s will transfer to hands of the proletariat. The proletariat will confiscate the industries of the capitalists and the profit of industries will be distributed among the workers.

**Conclusion**

In his theory Marx focused many things about social phenomena i.e. present socio-economic and political situation of capitalist society. According to him it is capitalist class which is responsible for all kinds of social discrimination in society. Therefore he wanted to establish a classless society. Again, in his theory he did not favor existence of state. State is class institution used by capitalist class as an instrument to exploit the poor. Therefore, he opined that it should be abolished. Marx believes that the mood of production is main factor which shapes the social structure in society.