A close observation will reveal the fact that inequalities reign supreme in societies we live in. There are inequality of opportunity, inequality of social status, inequality of wealth, of culture. Enlightened people of all ages therefore have tried to solve this problem by recommending curtailment of wants and exaltation of poverty. They also appealed to the people to practise charity, to be kind and sympathetic towards the down-trodden, the lowly and the exploited. The socialists do not however accept facts of inequality and exploitation for granted and then proceed to iron out differences. Rather they stand for creating conditions in which inequalities cannot grow and sustain themselves. The socialists opine that if the means of production were in the hands of workers or the proletariats, poverty could have been eliminated. The term 'socialism' aims at a social reconstruction by removing all inequalities and exploitations.
Socialism is of different denominations and nomenclature. Marxists hold the view that marxian socialism is only scientific one while other types of socialism are sham and pretensions - bourgeois
utopian or simply bourgeois Revisionism. Marxian socialism is based on certain presuppositions. In accepts dialectical or historical materialism, class-struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat. It believes that socialism is to be achieved not through reformation or education but through violence and armed revolution and revolution is to be led by the proletariat. End justifies the means. The free trade and unrestrained competition in the capitalistic society will prepare the way for social revolution. Capitalism will crumble down through its inherent contradiction. In the concluding portion of the manifesto of the Communist Party written by Marx and Engels in 1884 it is clearly stated -

"The Communists openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win".

1 Marx and Engels : Manifesto of the Communist Party. 

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Marxism is the supreme exposition of all materialistic thoughts. It is based upon social study, history and economic theories. Aim is the elimination of exploitation through class-struggle and ultimate dictatorship of the proletarians brought about by violent revolution against all oppressors, colonialists, imperialists, and vested interests so on. It not only aims at establishment of classless society based on equality of opportunity for all, equality of social status, equal rights and privileges but also lays equal stress on work. From each according to one's capacity to each according to one's needs - It stands for scientific exploration of natural resources and utilising it to meet the growing needs of the people.

Philosophically it stands for materialism. Mind is the product of material circumstances. There is no such thing as 'soul'. It has no material existence - Therefore it has no existence. It is imaginary. So with it throws to the wind all metaphysical thoughts and speculations about life hereafter. The concept of God or Fate is motivated. It stagnates all progress. In gives handles to all sorts of prejudice, superstition, fear complex. Sin and redemption,
salvation - or in other words, whatever is brought in the trail of Christianity, for that matter, all religions are instruments of torture, oppression and exploitation. They cripple man's mind, energy and independent thinking and turn men into slaves of false ideas, hypocrisy, escoteric ideas, obscurantism and magic or occultism.

Marxism stands for dialectical materialism - There is the social force inherent in matter and material circumstances which acts and reacts upon each other. Progress and evolution come through such social interaction.

Dialectical materialism is a variation of Hegel's Dialectics - Thesis, Antithesis and Synthesis. Thesis generates antithesis which culminates in bringing about higher synthesis. Progress lies through this constant changes caused by thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Nothing is stagnant, nothing is constant or perpetual. It is an evergrowing process.

Human history is the history of this dialectics.

Class-struggle is a historical necessity. Classless society is the aim, in which there will be equality of all people - equal rights and privileges with equal obligations and duty, elimination of all exploiters, expropriation of all expropriaters. Capitalism which is the ultimate and
worse form of imperialism is the worst enemy of the people and
greatest stumbling block in the way of communism which aims
at elimination of inequality, and stands for peace, equality
and social justice. It is equated with "Kingdom of heaven" on
earth as prophesized by Christ. It is not an utopian view of
life. It is achievable but capable of translating into reality.
It is a society where there will be no necessity of police force.
Everyman will be a law unto himself.

All these and many more things and ideas are the
promise of communism. The path lay through violent and bloody
revolution and overthrowing of the kings, emperors, rulers,
and annihilation of capitalism, establishment of dictatorship
of the proletariat - replacement of bourgeois culture and
bourgeoisie by radical humanism etc.

Vivekananda may have little conflict with these ideas
excepting in the fact of denying the existence of soul or
immortality of soul, and the fact of 'cycle of birth' or trans-
migration of soul etc. Marxism denies the existence of soul,
or of anti-natal or pre-natal existence. It pooh poohs the
idea of heredity and emphasises the preponderating influence
of environments which can be controlled and guided by proper
organisation of material circumstances, education and persua-
sion etc.
In one of his letter written in 1896, Swamiji declared himself to be a socialist. "I am a socialist", said Vivekananda: "not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread". Clarifying his position further he said, "The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried - if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A distribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures." He conceived of an ideal socialistic society in which "the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial and the ideal of equality of the labourer will be kept in tact, minus their evils", Analyzing the condition of the people of India during the last part of nineteenth century Swamiji opined that by virtue of the existing economic system of the day, the poor were becoming poorer and the rich richer. He presents the nature and extent of exploitation in society of his time.

He in this context says that new ideas sprang up and

3 Letters of Vivekananda, p.320.
New societies began to be cultivated. One class of men went on manufacturing articles of utility and comfort, either by manual or intellectual labour. A second class took upon themselves the charge of protecting them, and all proceeded to exchange these things. And it so happened that a band of fellows who were very clever undertook to take these things from one place to another and, on the plea of remuneration for this, appropriated the major portion of their profit as their due. One tilled the ground, a second guarded the produce from being robbed, a third took it to another place and a fourth bought it. The cultivator got almost nothing; he who guarded the produce took away as much of it as he could by force; the merchant who brought it to the market took the lion's share; and the buyer had to pay out of all proportion for the things and smarted under the burden! The protector came to be known as the king, he who took the commodities from one place to another was the merchant. These two did not produce anything but still snatched away the best part of things and made themselves fat by virtually, reaping most of the fruits of cultivator's toil and labour. The poor few who produced all these things had often to go without his meals.

Thus we notice a striking similarity between the ideas of Vivekananda as set forth in the above passages and the analysis of the capitalistic society as x-rayed, exposed
and condemned by the marxian socialists.

By socialism Swami Vivekananda means a movement whereby the individuals acted freely and spontaneously for the good of the whole. To quote his words, "The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable - this is an eternal truth and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built". So Swamiji wants us to build up the individual not only on the basis of social morality but also on the concept of Advaita view of life.

In is wrong to call Swami Vivekananda a mere theoretician. He possessed a true revolutionary spirit having a dream of a "root and branch reform" of the world. To quote Swamiji, "To the reformers I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any of them. They want to reform only little bits, I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the method. Theirs is the method of destruction, mine is that of construction". Sister Nivedita rightly pointed out that Vivekananda was in truth the pioneer and prophet of a new world order. He had a social philosophy of his own thought; he has not left a 'Das Capital' like Karl Marx. We find his

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social philosophy scattered all over his complete works. That does not however mean that they are so many story and scattered thoughts. A collection and arrangement of them would take the shape of a complete system of thought which in comparison to others systems of social thought is unique in its originality and unassailable in its logic.

A comparative study of Marx and Vivekananda will reveal the fact that while Marx strives to achieve eradication of economic exploitation of forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions and institutions, Vivekananda looks at the same problem from a different angle of view and hence the solution offered by him becomes different from that of Karl Marx.

It is a fact that "Marxism is a powerful, integrated socio-politico-economic theory. Whether it is right or wrong, good or bad, about one-third of the world's population has willingly or unwillingly accepted it as its philosophy of life. It has been knocked at the doors of our nation for some time and has already gained admittance through the backdoor... The idea of revolution fires the young mind impatient with the slow role of social change and the fast multiplication of acts of social injustice. We now need a powerful philosophy which the Marxist concern for the poor
BUT WHICH IS FREE FROM ITS SINISTER MATERIALISTIC BASIS. BUT
SHOULD WE HAVE TO IMPORT ONE FROM OUTSIDE? DON'T WE ALREADY
HAVE ONE WITH US? HAVE WE GRASPED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE
MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA? HAVE WE NOT GOT A PHILOSOPHY
IN INDIA WHICH IS REVOLUTIONARY IN ITS CONCEPTS AND INSPIRING
TO OUR YOUNG MEN? HAVE WE NOT GOT A PHILOSOPHY WHICH CAN
INTEGRATE THE SOCIO-POLITICO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF OUR SOCIETY
AND ON WHICH WE CAN BUILD UP A STRONG, PROSPEROUS NATION?
HAVE WE NOT GOT A PHILOSOPHY WHICH CAN HELP THE PEOPLE IN
SOLVING THEIR DAY-TO-DAY PROBLEMS OF LIFE - WHICH CAN HELP
A STUDENT TO BECOME A BETTER STUDENT, A FARMER A BETTER FARMER,
AN EXECUTIVE A BETTER EXECUTIVE? HAVE WE NOT GOT A PHILOSOPHY
WHICH IS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL TO THE POOR AND THE DOWN-TRODDEN?
THESE WERE PRECISELY THE QUESTIONS THAT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
ASKED HIMSELF WHEN HE WANDERED ALL OVER INDIA AS A MENDICANT
MONK.6

In its concern for the poor and the lowly, in its
demand for a more equitable distribution of wealth and oppor-
tunity, in its insistence on rational equality, it (marxism)
gives us a social massage with which all idealists are in
agreement. BUT OUR SYMPATHY FOR THE SOCIAL PROGRAMME DOES NOT
NECESSARILY COMMIT US TO THE MARXIST PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE, ITS
ATHEISTIC CONCEPTION OF ULTIMATE REALITY, ITS NATURALISTIC
VIEW OF MAN, AND ITS DISREGARD OF THE SACREDNESS OF PERSONALITY.7

6 Swami Bhajanandana : Prabuddha Bharata, November 1976
7 Dr. S. Radhakrishnan : Religion and Society, p.25
For Swami Vivekananda, concentration of power, wisdom, wealth as such is not necessarily an evil as has been declared by Marx. He opines that when the society is in its infancy, such concentration is badly needed. History tells us that when the society is in its maturity a conflict arises between the ruling power and the common people. It is therefore necessary to know how power, wealth and wisdom should be so used as to remove any conflict between the ruling power and the common masses. To quote his words, "Wisdom, Knowledge, wealth, men, strength, powers and whatever else nature gathers and provides us with, are all only for diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand." Suffering comes because of our ignorance of this noble truth. Swamiji also speaks of another sublime truth which we cannot afford to ignore. "Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestation; but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming and the force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking meanness, piled up during millions of patient and silent years!" Here is the revolutionary seed.


and impetus in its message - the central theme of his approach to social justice.

Swamiji points out that this awakening of society is neither spontaneous nor inevitable happening. It has to be brought by the ceaseless activity of mankind. And for that purpose proper education is needed. The germs of socialistic ideas of Vivekananda have their roots in the Advaita view of reality. We have the essence of Advaita philosophy in the expression "That art thou". Swamiji says, "Thou art one with this Universal Being and as such, every soul that exists is your soul and everybody that exists, is your body, and in hunting anyone, you hurt yourself. As soon as the current of hatred is thrown outside whomsoever it hurts, it also hurts yourself, and if love comes out from you it is bound to come back to you, for I am the universe, this universe is my body. I am the Infinite, only I am not conscious of it now, but I am struggling to get this consciousness of the Infinite and perfection will be reached when full consciousness of this Infinite comes".¹⁰.

In the above expressions we find the foundation of socialism advocated by Swami Vivekananda which is completely distinguished from Marxian Socialism which has its basis in

¹⁰ Vivekananda: Thoughts on Vedanta, pp. 19-22.
materialism. Since the individual soul is basically identical with the Universal Soul or Brahman, there cannot be any difference between one individual and another. In actual practice however we come across inequalities of various types in society. Swamiji has beautifully expressed the conditions of existing society of his time in the following lines -

"The idea of privilege is the bane of human life. Two forces, as it were, are constantly at work, one making caste and the other breaking caste; in other words, the one making for privilege, the other breaking down privilege. And whenever privilege is broken down, more and more light and progress come to a race. This struggle we see all around us. Of course there is first the brutal idea of privilege, that of the strong over the weak. There is the privilege of wealth. If a man has more money than another, he wants a little privilege over those who have less. There is the still subtler and more powerful privilege of intellect; because one man knows more than others; he claims more privilege. And the last of all and the worst, because the most tyrannical is the privilege of spirituality. If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else." 11.

Vivekananda visualises that the other classes, that is, the priest, the warrior and the trader derive their fortune and position by exploiting the physical labour of the Sudras or the down-trodden. From a study of history he comes to the conclusion that Sudras have introduced civilisation among us. Hence it is wrong to call the Sudras base-born. Swamiji predicts what a future society was going to be like. He says, that human society is in turn governed by the four castes, the priests, the soldiers, the traders and the labourers. The first three have their day. Now is the time for the last - they must have it - none can resist it.

Swami Vivekananda goes on to say that the people of the upper class will have to express not only genuine sympathy for the sudras but also feel themselves as belonging to the same body as that of the Sudras. Through give and take the barrier between the two classes will gradually disappear. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, that is, by spreading education among the masses. Love is the cementing force between the elite and the masses. Swamiji says, "The power of love is infinitely of greater potency than the power
of hatred". Through clear insight he saw that what was needed was first of all an upheaval in religion. "Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. This is because in India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life ....... And if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics or society or any other things as your centre, as the vitality of your national life, the result will be that you become extinct." So in India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants - its spirituality. Everyman has to make his own choice; so has every nation. Swamiji's standpoint has been beautifully expressed by Swami Gambhirananda in the following passages -

"His (Swamiji's) stand was that though the people had to be fed and their standard of living had to be raised, this was not to be achieved at the cost of religion. Besides, he found no incompatibility between social progress and spiritual advancement. He wanted the masses to rise with their spiritual

heritage intact: 'Can you give them (the masses) their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature?' His motto was "elevation of the masses without injuring their religion". Vivekananda tells us that, of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destiny of the human race, none certainly is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call Religion. Everything goes to show that Socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food. What guarantee have we that this or any civilisation will last, unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right. SOCIALISM AS CONCEIVED TODAY IS A PRODUCT OF MATERIALISM, BUT THE PRESENT CRISIS IS NOT MERELY IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD BUT ALSO IN THE SOUL OF MAN AND IT CAN BE RESOLVED ONLY BY RELIGION WHICH RAISES MAN TO THE DIVINE STATE.

There is another distinctive mark in Vivekananda's social thinking. The solution of our national problems, according to him, "does not lie in bringing down the higher but by raising the lower up to the level of the higher. The ideal at one end

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is the Brahmin and the ideal at the other end is the chandala, and the whole work is to raise the chandala up to the Brahmin. Slowly and slowly you find more and more privileges granted to them" 15.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the greatest service one can do to one's fellow beings is to remind them of their divine nature and help them to realise and manifest the same. In his words, "first let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. Be and Make. "Let this be our Motto" 16. This is a real social reformation which is nothing but helping others to realise and manifest their own inherent divinity. We should bear in mind that the word 'Reform' is a misnomer. For if man be eternally divine, that is, eternally pure and perfect, then how there can be reform or change for the better? Hence Swamiji preaches that there is no reformation here from outside, but only growth from within. To quote his words -

"I donot therefore want any reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on national lines" 17(Nationalism and universalism are not contrary or contradictory ideas. One is the stepping-stone to the other. Nationalism is the doorway to universalism).

"I do not believe in reform. I believe in growth." 18

But we may talk of growth from the empirical standpoint. From the transcendental point of view there is no question of even 'growth'. For the eternally divine, eternally pure, eternally perfect, soul cannot grow. The soul simply is, there being then no question even of any realisation or manifestation from the transcendental point of view.

From the empirical point of view if reform means growth from within and change from without, then naturally reform is self-reform. The soul has to grow, expand and develop itself. From this it automatically follows that freedom is an essential condition of reform. If 'reform' means 'growth', if 'reform' means 'self-reform' then evidently no reform is at all possible, if the individuals are denied of full freedom of thought and action. In Swamiji's words, "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being. Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down. Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class or caste, or nation or institution, which bars the power

of free thought and action of an individual—even so long as
that power does not injure others is devilish and must go
down." 19  "Freedom is the only condition of growth; take that
off, the result is degeneration." 20  Hence we find a fundamental
difference between, Swami Vivekananda and Karl Marx. Swamiji
lays emphatic stress on the growth of individual whereas Marx
lays entire stress on centralised society or cumulative life.
But ideal social life cannot be achieveable if the individual
has to sacrifice his soul or individual existence. Individual
has source and the spirit and shall keep the light of social
life or socialism even burning, and generate more sparks and
energy even vitalising the organism of social life.

The bed-rock of Swamiji's socialism is therefore free-
dom and not historical determination. Although Vivekananda's
goal was achievement of a kind of classless society, he did not
encourage class-struggle. Swamiji tells us that we must take
care not to set up class strife between the poor peasants, the
labouring people and wealthy classes. Vivekananda's historical
studies led him to build up a doctrine of class struggle which
is completely different from Marxian doctrine in this social
revolution. Swamiji's view runs as follows — "Two attempts

(Tenth Edition)

(Tenth Edition)
have been made in the world to found social life: the one was
upon spirituality, the other upon materialism ........ At one
time the full flood of materialistic ideas prevails, and
everything in this life - prosperity, the education which
procures more pleasure, more food - will become glorious at
first and then that will degrade and degenerate. Along with
the prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousies
and hatreds of the human race. Competition and merciless cruelty
will be the watchward of the day ........ And the world
would be destroyed had not spirituality come to the rescue
and lent a helping hand to the sinking world"^21. Thus accord­
ing to Swami Vivekananda, materialism and spiritualism in
turn prevail in society. When spirituality ascends, there is
greater recognition of the rights and liberties of the common
man on the basis of the recognition of divinity in each man.
It is obvious that privileges of all types breakdown in such
a society. Here therefore there is greater class harmony. But
when materialism ascends, there is sky-high demand for privi­
leges by the strong, by the priest, by the ruler, by the wealthy
over the weak and the poor and these periods are therefore
periods of intense class-struggle. Class-struggle is therefore
a virtue of the materialistic phase of society only.

(Eleventh Edition)
The doctrine of class-struggle throws a flood of light upon the true role of religion in society. A period of religious upheaval is a period when privileges break down. Thus Vivekananda differs from Marx on the question of the role of religion in society. Religion is privilege-breaking and not privilege-making as has been conceived by Karl Marx. The role of genuine religious leaders will corroborate Swami's contention. From a study of the role of religious leaders it is obvious that they all tried to breakdown the barriers of privileges. This is especially true of India where at the end of each period of social struggle there came a religious upheaval to fulfil the demands of the masses. As Marx thinks religion to be the opium of the people, Vivekananda also did not like institutionalised religion. "If you want to be religious, enter not the gate of organised religions", he said, "If you take my advice, donot put your neck into the trap". On one occasion he used the Marxian phrase itself. "Religion is with these people a sort of intellectual opium-eating". Suffice it to say, that he accepted only that part of religion which does not separate man from man. To Swami, "altruistic


service alone is religion. The rest such as ceremonial observances is madness. For him true religion was certainly not the opium of the masses, it was a stimulus to make them realise their responsibility and answerability to fellow beings. Swami Vivekananda was a harbinger of Hindu renaissance and reformism and creator of a new scale of religious values.

To Swamiji, Religion is to be distinguished from priest-craft. Priest-craft according to him is the name of a system of privileges claimed on grounds of alleged spiritual superiority. The distinction between religion and priestcraft has been described by Vivekananda in the following manner:

"Priestcraft in its nature is cruel and heartless; religion goes down where priest-craft arises. Says that is why, the Vedanta, we must give up the idea of privilege, then will religion come. Before that there is no religion at all." Swamiji has laid threadbare the true nature of priest-craft through his analysis of historical process. That priestly power which began its strife for superiority with the royal power from the Vedic times and continued it down the ages, that hostility against the kshatra power,

24 Marie L. Burke "Swami Vivekananda in America New Discoveries, p.663.
Bhagavan Sri Krishna succeeded by his superhuman genius in putting a stop to, at least for the time being, during his earthly existence. That Brahmanya power was almost effaced from its field of work in India during the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, or perhaps, was holding its feeble stand by being subservient to the strong antagonistic religions. The Brahmanya power, since the appearance of Rajput power which held sway over India under the Mihira dynasty and others, made its last effort to recover its lost greatness; and in its effort to establish that supremacy it sold itself at the feet of the fierce hordes of barbarians, newly come from Central Asia, and to win their pleasure introduced in the land their hateful manners and customs. Moreover, it, the Brahmanya power, solely devoting itself to the easy means to dupe ignorant barbarians, brought into vogue mysterious rites and ceremonies backed by its new Mantras and the like. Thus from the above analysis it is clear that priest-power was class-determined to maintain its privilege and for that purpose it wanted to dupe people with 'Opium of the religion'. True religion is diametrically opposed to priest-craft in the sense that while the role of true religion is privilege-breaking, the role of priest-craft is privilege-making. Thus he declares in one place. "Ah, let every man and woman and child, without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and learn that behind the
strong and the weak, behind the high and the low, behind everyone, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great and good. All true religions are out to end all social injustice. Culmination of man's religious aspirations can be found in Advaita Vedanta. Analysing its role Vivekananda says: "The work of the Advaita is to breakdown all privileges." Thus we find that the difference between Marx and Vivekananda with respect to religion is fundamental. While Swamiji has made a clear water-tight compartment between true religion and priest-craft, Marx has made a mess of the two. "Root up priest-craft, from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world." The doctrine of equality advocated by Advaita Vedanta is to be spread to raise the masses. Swamiji's plan in this respect was to carry the light and the life of the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden within every soul. We have already pointed out that Swamiji's idea was not levelling down of the upper classes, but raising up of the masses. In this respect his confirmed opinion is that "Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture 

and renunciation. And a Brahmin is he who has killed all selfishness and who lives and works to acquire and propagate wisdom and the power of love." The masses, Swamiji, declares, are to be raised to this level. Thus in the ultimate analysis there will remain only one class and in a sense that will be a sort of classless society. "The enjoyment of advantage over another is privilege," says Swami Vivekananda. Socialists and Communists are determined to abolish this privilege in the spheres of acquisition and distribution of wealth, where they have succeeded only partially. But in other more subtle forms of privilege they have not scored any victory at all. Swamiji's approach was more fundamental inasmuch as he wanted a change in man's outlook through a great consciousness of true spiritual nature. He found the panacea of all social evils in non-dualistic Vedānta, which declares the essential divinity of all.

It is evident that the social philosophy of Vivekananda is based on the Vedāntic conception of equality. According to Vedānta, "the whole universe is a play of unity in variety" and differentiation is a sign of life. Hence "that all men should be the same, could never be, however we may try.

Men will be born differentiated, some will have more power than others. Therefore Swamiji comes to hold that absolute sameness as to external forms and positions can never be attained. "What can be attained is elimination of privilege". In the opinion of Swamiji, "this is really the work before the whole world." Entering deep into the matter, he observes, "The difficulty is not that one body of men are naturally more intelligent than another, but whether this body of men, because they have the advantage of intelligence, should take away even physical enjoyment from those who do not possess that advantage." Hence Vedantic conception of equality is to be realised not by stopping variation but by removing privileges based on variation. Socialism of Vivekananda is based on this Vedantic concept of equality and hence he declares: "We preach neither social equality nor inequality but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way."  

36 Letters, p. 83.
Swamiji must have been altered by the basic idea of Communistic society. As no less a person than his brother Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta who lived and died very recently, allegedly stated that had Vivekananda not come in contact with that "man" at Dakshineswar he would have been a Communist.

But fortunately for us, perhaps Swamiji coming as he did in contact with Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa came to be interested in Veda, Vedánta and the religious and cultural history of our ancient civilisation. He got enough of materials in the Upaniṣads, Buddhism, the Gītā and other scriptures to satisfy his hunger of knowledge and material for establishing his new religion - the religion of humanism - the core of the doctrine of which 'service of humanity' is the real worship of God - God does not lie anywhere else but here in the visible world. We sniff God everywhere and in every being and thing. Concept of God does not derogate anything from the concept of material prosperity provided there is equal distribution of property, equality of men, right, justice and performing one's ordained duty. Rather it stimulates the energy and the aspiration of humanity for some other higher things besides material satisfaction. Man has his supremacy over matter which is denied in materialistic concept. Indian philosophy upholds and establishes the supremacy of mind throughout its cultural and religious history. Vivekananda found nothing
discardent retrograding in the acceptance of the supremacy of mind over matter. Concept of other world, or acceptance of the concept of 'Perfection', or 'Idea', 'One Soul', rather stimulate the concept of brotherhood of men. Advaita Vedanta is a great cementing force in society. It is not based upon visionary ideas but established by the great seers, sages and Rishis of India. Last in the line to prove its validity is Sri Ramakrishna who proved beyond doubt the authenticity and truth of it. Vivekananda himself a great saint visualised it through the grace and initiation of Sri Ramakrishna. When all doubts about the existence of soul, the oneness of God and divinity in humanity in all created beings, even in nature and trees and grasses have been removed by Ramakrishna, he had no need to go to the commonest Marx-Engels or the materialist philosophers, to elevate the lot of the people to remove the suffering of mankind. He has the sense of reality to accept the scientific knowledge and machinery for the fulfilment of material prosperity. A hungry soul can have no religion he learnt from his great Guru. In Sri Ramakrishna's words, "Empty stomachs and religion go ill together. People must have food. Their minimum wants have to be supplied; otherwise they cannot apply their minds to God". Swami Vivekananda, a rationalist at the core of his heart is well aware of it. So how can he deny the prospect of material civilisation which produces all sorts of things of bare existence, things of enjoyment,
materials to satisfy human needs? But there is the necessity
of restraint, soberness, curtailment of excess. These cannot
be brought about by simple preaching, for which the prospect
of something higher and nobler is necessary. Herein comes
the great philosophy of the Upaniṣads and Veda which is
no longer a bookish or scholastic idea but a truth and reality
which he received from Śrī Ramakrishna. But to this higher
truth the material truth is to be subordinated and subdued
and contained. Thus he harmonises the two in his new religion
where heaven and earth, Eternal Spirit, Soul or God, and
humanity and humanitarianism make one and human virtues are
integrated.

In this great task Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta, Buddha's
humanism and humanitarianism and Śrī Ramakrishna's realisation
of great truth of oneness of religion, oneness of mankind,
and divinity of humanity (Jiva is Siva) served as central source,
motive force and main spring - 'prima causa'. Communism is
good, but Śrī Ramakrishna-Vivekananda philosophy and religion
is better. Communism is transient, Śrī Ramakrishna-Vivekananda
philosophy is perennial and permanent. Nay it is eternal. It
is the thought and philosophy that can bring about lasting
peace of the world.

It is soulful, soul-giving and soul-stirring. It
stimulates, excites - it is religious, humane and practical. It is at the same time broadbased upon recognition of material reality of the world and needs of worldly men.

If Marxism can fulfil man's material needs, new religion and philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda can fulfil both material and spiritual needs of people. It is complete and whole. It is all-pervading and all-pervasive. It denies nothing, it accepts all. It eliminates violence, establishes love and peace through peaceful and loving means. It is scientific, it is spiritual as well.

Thus Vivekananda can meet the Marxian challenge squarely, fairly and fully. He is the great Apollo - the eternal spirit of humanity and like Apollo again bestrides both the worlds - spiritual and mundane. Here is the mingling of heaven and earth - the divine and the mundane.

While we talk of Vivekananda the future man who has in mind the prospect of a world where earthly prosperity ushered in by science and material civilisation shall not go counter to the divine spirit of man. Hate, selfishness and jealousy, rivalry of power, of violence and war which have come out of the 'churn' of the ocean of material and industrial civilisation, like the poison which came out along with
'nectar' in the ancient lore of our Puranas, shall be diluted, neutralised, and completely disintegrated and eliminated from the world. That ideal world is within the purview of Vivekananda. It is not a utopian view of life, and fanciful idealism. It is within the grip of mankind who is the possessor or inheritor of divinity in him, provided he does not lose his divine soul in lure of material pleasure, provided he strives for the refulgence of his divine glory, provided he constantly keeps in mind his divine origin and divine purpose.

Vivekananda reminds the human race its divine origin, may his divinity directs him to his rightful and noble destiny.

'Lead kindly light, lead thou me on'

Yet basic reality of life - material comfort is not kept out of view of out of bounds; but it should be subordinated and contained. Religion and science are to be harmonised - former having predominance and mastery of the latter.

The struggle between these concepts has been co-eval with human history. The rivalry has continued from yore - over thousands of years - will alienate shifting of one by the other. All attempts at peaceful living have eluded the grasp of mankind. Perhaps mankind has such vision of world where the two could be equally recognised and harmonised. Materialists
and Idealists were at war, one claiming superiority over the other. They had no vision of the recognition, reconciliation of acceptance of the two in the social framework in one integrated concept where rightful position will be assigned to both, where rivalry will be thing of the past, where peace, love and prosperity will reign supreme.

Vivekananda had such a vision. So the typifies the human aspiration for eternal peace and love and prosperity. Here is the concept of an ideal world which is within the reach of mankind only if humanity is steeped in the reoriented philosophy of Vivekananda which is basically Advaita, Vedanta with divergence and variations from it vitally, and at places fundamentally - which accepts sustenance from other sources as well, particularly from Buddhism and again whose prime source of inspiration was Sri Ramakrishna - who was at once the root and branch and the nourishment of Swamiji through his life.

Mankind down the ages strove after bringing about a social change which will be stable, permanent, noble and just. But it was an ever baffling attempt and frustrating ideal - because there was lack of perfect vision - a vision that is ideal, yet deeply rooted in logic and reason. So their ideal remained as illusory as ever. Often these great
souls have been the objects of derision, persecution and '
crucifixion' or death. These great Rishis or saints had visions of glory to come, but they had not the logic of Swamiji. St. Paul tried to build up Christianity upon such bed-rock of philosophy. But he had hardly a vision of a world where divine and material can clasp hands, a world where peace and prosperity, divine love and mundane life can embrace each other and reside as good neighbours.

If communism tilts the balance of material prospect higher for a time, the antithesis of 'idealism—Divinity or religion' is lying in ambush to come out of its wilderness, and pounce upon it. Thus this recurring and alternate process has become the order of the earthly existence.

Vivekananda for the first time in human history accepted both the concepts and put them in their right-ful and appropriate set up. Here is life in full. Here is life in sunlike glory of Apollo in the Zenith of the firmament of human history. Vivekananda the Apollo of Indian cultural history rode across through the horizon and reached the acme of human culture and remained ever steady there.

Communism is a new challenge which enters the arena of social and cultural warfare with a demoniac force and gigantic and gargantuan shape eclipsing all that has been in
the past - in the ancient worlds of Greece, Rome and even India. All are upset in one throw of dice. But it is already a diminishing force. It is being devoured from within. Violence is begetting violence. Distrust, rivalry for position and love of power is undermining the entire system. Let us have a look at Russia and China. Today's leader and hero becomes tomorrow's villain. Despair is melodramatic and ludicrous. Signs of shift to the Revisionism is quite apparent. Why is it so? Because the whole system discarded the spiritual view of life and dismissed the soul - the soul-power. Mankind is looked at as chattels, not as living beings - not as brothers but as so-called comrades; having no eternal soul, having no divinity in them, having no anti-natal or post-natal existence. Leader of today thinks himself the supreme exponent - only correct exponent of Marxism whose prime aim is to degrade other erstwhile comrades. This process is inherent in Communists' order of today. It will be ever persisting there so long as they will be denying the existence of other aspect (spiritual) of life. That is why Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and even Subash Chandra Bose said, 'Communism is so far so good. But it is not the last word on reorganisation.' Let us accept it in its limited aspects - with all its limitation and imperfection upon its head but we should not be complaisant with it. We should not accept it as the panacea of all evils
for all time. One has to tread the full cycle of Indian
philosophy - Advaita Vedānta to reach that harbour of peace,
the destined goal of mankind. The path has been broadly laid
by Swamiji. It is the surest and the safest way free from
error or deviation or diversion.

Thus Vivekananda is atonce the future man and he is
the beacon light of humanity in the growing and encircling
darkness and gloom that threaten to eclipse the human life
and soul. He is the symbol of man's aspiration for finding
peace in life here and hereafter - His is the way to lead
mankind to destined and desired goal, where peace and prosp-
erness will live side by side, where heaven and earth will
commingle with each other, where divinity of man will not
lose himself in vain glory of material existence and material
pleasure - where rivalry between man and man will be the thing
of the past, where different nations with contrary views of life
will find enough ground for mutual understanding and peaceful
co-existence. Let not mankind lose sight of the fact that
humanity has a physical existence as well, which requires
fulfilment and satisfaction of physical needs and desires.

Marxism shall be pass through the alembic of Advaita
Vedānta to make its effect everlasting. Way of Marxism lays
through the arch of Indian spiritualism of Vedāntism of
Vivekananda and thus will form a complete arch of human history. But will it then be Marxism? Hardly so. It will be the victory of Vedāntism of Vivekananda. Better still the victory of spirit of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda.
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