

Materialist Conception Of History

Materialist Conception of History: Understanding Society Through Material Conditions **materialist conception of history** is a foundational theory in the study of society and history that emphasizes the role of material conditions in shaping human development. Rooted in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, this perspective shifts the focus away from ideas, culture, or politics as primary drivers of historical change and instead highlights economic factors, modes of production, and class relations. If you've ever wondered what really propels societies forward or why certain historical events unfold the way they do, the materialist conception of history offers a compelling lens through which to explore these questions.

What Is the Materialist Conception of History?

At its core, the materialist conception of history—sometimes called historical materialism—posits that the economic base of society fundamentally influences all other aspects of life, including politics, law, culture, and ideology. In other words, the way people produce their means of subsistence—food, shelter, tools, and other essentials—determines the social structures and

ideas that arise. This approach contrasts sharply with idealist philosophies that view ideas or consciousness as the primary drivers of history. Instead, historical materialism insists that material realities, especially relations of production and economic systems, are the foundation upon which societies build their institutions and beliefs.

The Economic Base and Superstructure

One of the most important concepts within this framework is the distinction between the “base” and the “superstructure.” The base consists of the forces and relations of production—essentially, the ways in which goods are produced and how labor is organized. The superstructure, on the other hand, includes the legal system, political institutions, religions, and cultural norms. The materialist conception of history argues that the base shapes and conditions the superstructure. For example, a feudal economic base with serfs and lords leads to a political system centered around monarchy and a cultural ideology that justifies hierarchical authority. When the economic base changes—say, through the rise of capitalism—the superstructure also transforms, giving way to new laws, political forms, and ideas that reflect the interests of the new ruling class.

The Historical Progression Through Modes of Production

A key insight of the materialist conception of history is that

history can be understood as a series of stages characterized by different modes of production. Each stage arises from the contradictions and conflicts inherent in the preceding one.

From Primitive Communism to Capitalism

Early human societies started with what Marx and Engels called “primitive communism,” where resources were shared collectively without class divisions. As societies evolved, they transitioned through various modes of production, including:

1. ****Slave society:**** Marked by the ownership of slaves as laborers, creating a clear division between masters and slaves.
2. ****Feudalism:**** Characterized by land ownership by nobles and serfs working the land under obligations.
3. ****Capitalism:**** Defined by private ownership of the means of production and wage labor.

Each transition was driven by changes in productive forces—innovations in technology, shifts in labor organization, or new ways of exploiting resources—that made old systems inefficient or contradictory.

Class Struggle as the Engine of Change

Integral to this theory is the concept of class struggle. In every mode of production, society is divided into classes with opposing interests—for example, slaves versus slave owners, serfs versus feudal lords, or workers versus capitalists. The conflict between

these classes creates tensions that eventually lead to social transformation. The materialist conception of history views this class conflict as the motor that pushes society from one stage to another. When the ruling class can no longer maintain control through the existing mode of production, revolutionary change becomes inevitable.

Why Does the Materialist Conception of History Matter Today?

Understanding the materialist conception of history isn't just an academic exercise; it has real-world implications for analyzing contemporary society and anticipating future developments.

Insights into Modern Social and Economic Issues

By focusing on economic relationships and class dynamics, this approach helps to explain many modern phenomena, such as:

1. **Economic inequality:** The concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few capitalists while workers struggle.
2. **Political movements:** How labor unions, socialist parties, and other groups emerge in response to exploitation.
3. **Cultural trends:** The way dominant ideologies often serve to justify and maintain existing economic arrangements.

Recognizing the material roots of social problems can guide activists and policymakers in crafting solutions that address

underlying economic structures rather than merely treating symptoms.

Critiques and Adaptations

While the materialist conception of history offers powerful tools, it has also faced criticism for being overly deterministic or reductionist—that is, focusing too much on economics at the expense of ideas, culture, or individual agency. Many contemporary scholars argue for a more nuanced view that balances material conditions with other social factors. Nonetheless, the core insight remains influential: material conditions form the foundation of societal change, and understanding these conditions is crucial for interpreting history and shaping the future.

Applying the Materialist Conception of History: Tips for Analysis

If you want to use this framework in your own study of history or society, consider these practical steps:

1. **Identify the mode of production:** Determine what economic system is dominant and how production is organized.
2. **Examine class relations:** Look for the classes involved, their interests, and how they interact or conflict.
3. **Analyze the superstructure:** Explore how laws, politics, and culture reflect and support the economic base.

4. **Consider contradictions:** Identify tensions or conflicts within the system that might lead to change.
5. **Look at historical transitions:** Study how shifts in productive forces have led to transformations in society.

By applying these steps, you can develop a richer understanding of historical events and social dynamics beyond surface explanations.

The Legacy of the Materialist Conception of History

The materialist conception of history has shaped not only academic disciplines like sociology, economics, and political science but also political movements around the world. From labor struggles to revolutionary uprisings, the theory has inspired generations to analyze society critically and seek transformative change. Moreover, its emphasis on material conditions continues to resonate in debates about globalization, technological change, and environmental crises. As societies face new challenges, the materialist perspective reminds us to look beneath the surface and consider how economic structures influence every aspect of human life. Exploring history through this lens opens up a dynamic and interconnected view of human progress, encouraging us to think critically about where we come from and where we might be headed.

Materialist Conception of History: The Foundational Framework for Understanding Societal Evolution The materialist conception

of history stands as one of the most transformative intellectual paradigms in the history of social science, offering a rigorous, empirically grounded lens through which to analyze the development of human societies. Rooted in historical materialism, this framework posits that the material conditions—specifically the modes of production and relations of production—serve as the primary drivers of historical change, superseding idealist, voluntarist, or top-down interpretations that attribute societal evolution to ideas, great individuals, or abstract ideals. Unlike idealist theories that treat consciousness or ideology as the engine of progress, materialist history asserts that economic structures and class relations fundamentally shape law, politics, culture, and ideology. This article provides an ultra-comprehensive exploration of the materialist conception of history, synthesizing its philosophical foundations, historical development, core mechanisms, real-world applications, strategic implications, and enduring relevance in contemporary scholarship and policy.

Historical Foundations and Philosophical Origins

The materialist conception of history finds its most systematic articulation in the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, particularly in the *Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *The German Ideology* (1845–46). However, its intellectual roots extend deeper into classical materialism, drawing from pre-Marxist thinkers such as

Ludwig Feuerbach, Denis Diderot, and later, the French materialists like Holbach. These philosophers rejected Cartesian dualism and idealist metaphysics, emphasizing that human thought and social institutions emerge from material realities rather than transcendent ideas. Marx's revolutionary insight was to invert Hegelian dialectics: while Hegel saw history as the unfolding of Spirit (Geist), Marx grounded dialectics in material practice. The dialectical materialist method asserts that contradictions within the material base—especially between productive forces (tools, labor technologies, resources) and relations of production (ownership, class hierarchy)—generate social tensions that culminate in revolutionary change. This materialist ontology rejects metaphysical explanations, insisting that social being determines consciousness, not vice versa. The core thesis is that history progresses through successive modes of production—primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and ultimately socialism—each defined by a specific configuration of economic base and superstructure (institutions, culture, ideology). Each mode contains internal contradictions that, when resolved through class struggle, propel society into a new developmental stage. This historical trajectory is not linear or inevitable but shaped by material constraints, technological innovation, and class conflict. The philosophical shift from idealism to materialism in historical analysis marked a paradigmatic rupture. Where Hegel viewed history as rational progress guided by spirit, Marx inverted this by grounding rationality in material practice. This materialist turn enabled a scientific approach to history—one that treats social phenomena

as outcomes of tangible, observable economic relations rather than abstract moral or intellectual ideals.

Core Mechanisms and Structural Dynamics

At the heart of the materialist conception of history lie three interlocking mechanisms: modes of production, class struggle, and dialectical development.

Modes of Production: The Economic Core

A mode of production consists of two interdependent components: the productive forces and the relations of production. Productive forces encompass all material means—tools, technology, labor, natural resources—used to transform nature and generate surplus value. Relations of production define how individuals organize labor, own property, and distribute goods within society. These relations are historically specific and determine the social, political, and ideological superstructure. Marx identified distinct modes of production across history: - **Primitive communism**: pre-class society based on communal ownership and subsistence agriculture. - **Slave society**: characterized by direct exploitation of enslaved labor and feudal-like land tenure. - **Feudalism**: based on land ownership, serfdom, and hierarchical feudal obligations. - **Capitalism**: defined by wage labor, private property, and market competition. - **Socialism**:

transitional stage toward communism, marked by collective ownership and planned production. Each mode contains internal contradictions that drive historical change. For example, capitalism's reliance on wage labor generates exploitation, alienation, and periodic crises—tensions that intensify class conflict between bourgeoisie (owners) and proletariat (workers). These contradictions are not abstract; they manifest in real economic crises, labor unrest, and systemic inequality. The mode of production's structure determines not only economic organization but also legal systems, political institutions, and cultural norms. The superstructure—laws, religion, philosophy, art—serves to legitimize and stabilize the dominant relations of production. When contradictions between base and superstructure become acute, revolutionary change emerges. Marx's analysis of capitalism reveals how finance capital, automation, and global commodity chains intensify exploitation, creating conditions ripe for systemic transformation.

Dialectical Development and Historical Contradictions

Dialectical materialism provides the methodological engine for historical analysis. Unlike static or teleological models, dialectics emphasizes contradiction, change, and qualitative leaps. History is not a smooth progression but a series of conflict-driven transformations. Class struggle is the motor of dialectical development. Each mode of production generates class antagonisms: owners vs. labor, landlords vs. peasants, capitalists

vs. workers. As productive forces evolve—say, from artisanal craftsmanship to industrial machinery—they clash with existing relations of production, which become fettering constraints. This contradiction leads to revolutionary rupture: capitalism's contradictions, such as overproduction crises and the immiseration of the proletariat, create the objective conditions for socialist revolution. This dialectical logic extends beyond economics. Ideology, culture, and institutions are not autonomous but reflect and reinforce class interests. Ideology functions as a tool of domination—what Marx called “false consciousness”—masking exploitation and naturalizing inequality. For example, liberal notions of meritocracy obscure structural barriers, sustaining capitalist legitimacy. The materialist conception thus reveals history as a dynamic, conflict-laden process shaped by material interests, not divine will or heroic vision. Change arises not from individual genius but from collective class action responding to material pressures. Real-world applications of the materialist framework span sociology, economics, political science, and history. Marxist historians analyze feudalism not as a moral order but as a system defined by land control and serf exploitation. Capitalist industrialization is studied through the lens of wage labor, surplus value extraction, and urban proletarianization. Contemporary scholars apply materialist analysis to globalization, tracing how transnational capital reshapes labor regimes and state sovereignty. In political strategy, the materialist conception underpins revolutionary movements, labor organizing, and anti-imperialist struggles. From the Paris

Commune to 20th-century socialist revolutions, movements grounded in materialist analysis sought to dismantle exploitative structures and build equitable alternatives. Even non-revolutionary policy reform draws on materialist insights—identifying root causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation rather than treating symptoms.

Benefits, Drawbacks, and Strategic Implications

The materialist conception of history offers profound analytical benefits. It provides a unified framework for understanding complex social phenomena through material causality, enabling systematic critique of capitalism and other systems. It exposes ideological mystifications, revealing how power operates through economic domination. By emphasizing historical continuity and change, it supports evidence-based policy design aimed at structural reform. Yet, the framework is not without limitations. Critics argue it risks economic determinism—overemphasizing material conditions at the expense of culture, agency, or ideology. Some contend it underestimates the autonomy of ideas and the complexity of human motivation. Others note that Marx's predictions about proletarian revolution have not materialized as expected, challenging the model's predictive power. Nonetheless, contemporary scholars refine materialism into multi-dimensional approaches. Neo-Marxist theorists like Antonio Gramsci introduce cultural hegemony, showing how ideology secures consent without force. Immanuel Wallerstein's

world-systems theory extends materialism globally, analyzing capitalist imperialism as a core-periphery dynamic. These adaptations preserve core insights while acknowledging pluralism. Strategically, the materialist conception informs activist movements, academic research, and policy innovation. It empowers organizers to frame struggles in systemic terms—connecting wage theft to corporate power, or climate collapse to fossil fuel capital. Policymakers use it to diagnose root causes of inequality, poverty, and ecological crisis, crafting interventions that target structural change rather than temporary relief.

Comparisons with Alternative Historical Theories

The materialist conception stands in contrast to idealist, voluntarist, and postmodern interpretations of history. Idealism, exemplified by Hegel and later Hegelian

Materialist Conception of History: An Analytical Review

materialist conception of history stands as one of the most influential and debated frameworks within the social sciences and historiography. Rooted in Marxist theory, it posits that the material conditions of a society—its economic structures, modes of production, and class relations—are the primary drivers of historical development. This perspective shifts the analytical focus away from ideas, culture, or individual agency, emphasizing instead the economic base as the foundation shaping societal superstructures like politics, law, and ideology.

Understanding the materialist conception of history requires a nuanced examination of its theoretical underpinnings, historical applications, and the critiques it has faced over time. By delving into its core principles and contrasting it with alternative historical interpretations, this article aims to provide an insightful and balanced overview of the theory's relevance in contemporary historiography and social analysis.

Foundations of the Materialist Conception of History

The materialist conception of history, often synonymous with historical materialism, was primarily formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century. At its core, it argues that the mode of production—how a society produces and distributes goods—determines the organization and development of that society. This economic base influences the social relations and ideological institutions, which Marx described as the superstructure.

Economic Base and Superstructure

According to this framework, the economic base consists of:

1. The forces of production: tools, technology, labor power
2. The relations of production: property relations, class dynamics

The superstructure includes the political institutions, legal systems, religions, and cultural norms that arise from and serve

to legitimize the existing economic base. For example, in a capitalist society, the legal system often protects private property rights, reflecting the interests of the ruling capitalist class. This dialectical relationship suggests that changes in the economic base eventually lead to transformations in the superstructure. Historical revolutions, such as the transition from feudalism to capitalism, are thus explained through shifts in production modes and class struggles.

Class Struggle as the Engine of History

Central to the materialist conception is the concept of class struggle. Marx viewed history as a continuous conflict between classes with opposing economic interests. The ruling class controls the means of production, while the oppressed class provides labor. This antagonism creates tensions that drive social change. For instance, the feudal lords and serfs in medieval Europe had conflicting interests, culminating in the eventual decline of feudalism and the rise of capitalist economies. The materialist conception interprets these historical transformations as the inevitable outcomes of economic contradictions and class conflicts.

Applications and Impact in Historical Analysis

The materialist conception of history has profoundly influenced academic disciplines beyond Marxist theory, including sociology,

political science, and anthropology. It provides a framework to analyze historical phenomena through economic and social structures rather than attributing change solely to great individuals or ideological shifts.

Use in Historical Research

Historians adopting this approach tend to focus on:

1. Economic data and production methods
2. Class relations and labor movements
3. The role of material interests in shaping political events

For example, studies of the Industrial Revolution often highlight how technological innovations altered production forces, leading to new capitalist relations and social upheavals such as labor strikes and urbanization.

Comparisons with Idealist and Other Historical Theories

The materialist conception contrasts sharply with idealist interpretations, which prioritize ideas, culture, or individual consciousness as the primary drivers of history. Idealists argue that shifts in philosophy, religion, or leadership are the catalysts for change, whereas materialists see these as reflections of underlying economic realities. Additionally, some contemporary historians advocate for more pluralistic or postmodern approaches that challenge the deterministic elements of historical materialism. They emphasize the complexity of

historical causation, including identity, culture, and contingency.

Critiques and Limitations

While influential, the materialist conception of history has not escaped criticism. Scholars have pointed to several limitations:

1. **Economic Determinism:** Critics argue that it overly reduces complex social phenomena to economic factors, neglecting the autonomy of ideas and culture.
2. **Underestimation of Individual Agency:** The theory tends to downplay the role of individuals and non-economic motivations in shaping history.
3. **Historical Exceptions:** Some historical events do not neatly fit into the model of class struggle or economic base-superstructure dynamics.
4. **Changing Modes of Production:** The applicability of the framework in post-industrial or digital economies remains debated.

Moreover, the deterministic tone sometimes associated with historical materialism has been challenged by scholars advocating for more nuanced and multi-causal interpretations.

Modern Adaptations and Relevance

Despite critiques, the materialist conception of history remains a vital analytical tool. Contemporary Marxist scholars have adapted it to analyze globalization, neoliberalism, and environmental issues, broadening the scope of economic and

ecological forces in historical change. For example, eco-Marxism incorporates environmental degradation into the analysis of capitalist production, emphasizing the material limits of economic growth and their historical consequences. Similarly, discussions around labor in the gig economy revisit the theory's insights on class and production in a new context.

Key Features and Advantages

The materialist conception's strengths lie in its systematic approach to understanding societal change. Key features include:

1. **Structural Analysis:** It provides a macro-level perspective on history, enabling the study of long-term social and economic trends.
2. **Emphasis on Material Conditions:** Focus on tangible, measurable factors such as production techniques and economic relationships enhances empirical research.
3. **Integration of Class Dynamics:** Highlights power relations and social conflict as engines of transformation.
4. **Predictive Potential:** The framework suggests patterns in historical development, such as the rise and fall of economic systems.

These features make the materialist conception valuable for both historical inquiry and contemporary social critique.

Conclusion

The materialist conception of history continues to be a foundational theory for understanding historical development through the lens of economic and social structures. While it faces valid criticisms and has evolved over time, its focus on the material conditions underlying societal change remains a powerful tool in academic and political discourse. By situating history within the context of production and class struggle, it challenges scholars to consider the often unseen economic forces shaping human events and ideologies. As global challenges intensify and economic systems transform, revisiting this conception offers critical insights into the dynamics of history and society.

For many readers, encountering Materialist Conception Of History is not always a planned event. Sometimes it begins with a question, a task, or a moment of curiosity that appears unexpectedly. Having the ability to access the material immediately changes how that curiosity is handled.

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Access without excessive cost opens doors. When financial pressure is removed, exploration becomes more adventurous. Readers feel free to explore unfamiliar topics, knowing that

curiosity does not come with unnecessary risk.

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strengthens collective understanding.

Revisiting familiar passages often reveals new insights. What once felt complex may later feel clear. Growth becomes visible through repeated engagement rather than rushed completion.

With Materialist Conception Of History readily available, learning becomes less about finishing and more about returning. The book remains present, patient, and ready whenever attention shifts back.

This steady availability encourages a calmer relationship with knowledge. There is no pressure to absorb everything at once. Understanding unfolds naturally, shaped by time and reflection.

In this way, reading becomes less transactional and more personal. The value lies not only in information gained, but in the habit of thoughtful engagement that develops along the way.

The Materialist Conception of History: A Foundational Lens on Global Transformation

In the annals of intellectual history, few frameworks have shaped the understanding of societal change more profoundly than the materialist conception of history. Rooted in the dialectical rigor of classical Marxism, this conceptual apparatus transcends mere

historiography—it functions as a critical methodology for interpreting the relentless forces driving human civilization. Emerging from the crucible of 19th-century industrial upheaval, the materialist conception reframes history not as the chronicle of great individuals or abstract ideals, but as the unfolding drama of material conditions, class struggle, and economic base-superstructure dynamics. Over time, it has evolved into a global analytical lens—one that has informed revolutions, shaped policy, provoked fierce ideological battles, and continues to resonate in the analysis of contemporary capitalism, inequality, and systemic crisis. The origins of this conception lie not in philosophy alone, but in the volatile socioeconomic landscape of early industrial Europe. The Industrial Revolution had shattered pre-modern social orders, replacing agrarian hierarchies with factory-based production, urbanization, and proletarianization. Figures like Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, steeped in the labor unrest, factory reports, and capitalist expansion of their era, sought to explain the chaos not through moral judgment or divine providence, but through material processes. Marx's 1859 Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy** laid the groundwork: history, he argued, is the history of class conflict, driven fundamentally by contradictions within the modes of production. The materialist conception thus emerged as a revolutionary tool—a way to decode the invisible machinery of power embedded in economic systems. Marx's collaboration with Engels crystallized this framework in *The German Ideology** (1845–46), where they sharply rejected idealist historiography—epitomized by Hegel's notion of the “world

spirit”—and instead posited that “it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social being.” This inversion—from ideas to material forces—constituted a radical epistemological shift. History, on this view, is not guided by enlightened thought but by the contradictions inherent in modes of production: feudalism gave way to capitalism not through enlightened reform, but through the unresolved tensions between productive forces (technology, labor) and relations of production (ownership, class domination). The materialist conception thus identifies the engine of history in economic base, with ideological superstructures—law, religion, culture—reflecting and reinforcing dominant class interests. The geopolitical and economic context of the mid-19th century was indispensable to this synthesis. Europe was undergoing unprecedented proletarianization: millions displaced from rural communities into industrial cities, subjected to brutal working conditions, and subjected to cyclical crises of overproduction. Simultaneously, colonial expansion fueled capitalist accumulation, exporting surplus while extracting resources and labor from colonized regions. Marx’s analysis in *Capital* (1867) dissected how surplus value was extracted from wage labor, revealing capitalism’s inherent antagonism: profit depends on the subordination of labor, generating recurrent class conflict. The materialist conception thus offered not only a diagnostic tool but a revolutionary imperative—understanding history’s material roots enabled the working class to recognize its collective power. As the 20th century unfolded, the materialist conception was both tested and transformed. In the Soviet Union, Marxist-

Leninist doctrine codified it as the official historiographical framework, shaping state narratives, educational curricula, and even archaeological interpretation. The USSR's official historiography, epitomized by figures like Mikhail Pavlov and later revisions under Brezhnev, emphasized dialectical materialism as the sole valid method, marginalizing alternative readings. Yet this institutionalization also exposed vulnerabilities: the rigid dogmatism often obscured historical complexity, reducing multifaceted events to linear class struggles. The collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1989–91 triggered global introspection—was the materialist model obsolete, or merely incomplete? In Western academia, the materialist conception survived but evolved. The Frankfurt School, particularly Adorno and Horkheimer, critiqued its economic reductionism, arguing that culture, ideology, and psychological dimensions resisted simple class reduction. Meanwhile, dependency theorists in Latin America—like André Gunder Frank—adapted the framework to global capitalism, demonstrating how core-periphery dynamics perpetuated underdevelopment. Dependency theory reframed the materialist lens globally, showing how colonial extraction and neocolonial economic structures reproduced inequality across continents. This expansion underscored a key strength: the materialist conception is not static, but a flexible analytical scaffold adaptable to diverse historical and geographic contexts. The industry impact of the materialist conception is profound and multifaceted. Labor movements worldwide adopted its logic, framing strikes and unionization not as isolated disputes but as expressions of systemic class conflict. The rise of social

democracy in Europe, the civil rights movement’s intersection with economic justice in the U.S., and anti-apartheid struggles in South Africa all drew implicitly on materialist understandings of power. Even contemporary movements—Black Lives Matter, climate justice, and global labor strikes—ref

Questions & Answers About materialist conception of history

No	Question	Answer
1	What is the materialist conception of history?	The materialist conception of history is a theory developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels which posits that the economic base of society, including the means of production and relations of production, fundamentally determines the social, political, and ideological superstructure. Historical development is driven primarily by material economic factors rather than ideas or values.
2	How does the materialist conception of history explain social change?	According to the materialist conception of history, social change occurs through the conflict between different classes arising from contradictions within the economic base. For example, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat in capitalist societies leads to revolutionary change and the transformation of social structures.

3	What role do the means and relations of production play in the materialist conception of history?	In the materialist conception of history, the means of production (tools, technology, resources) and relations of production (social relationships and ownership patterns) form the economic base that shapes the entire society. Changes in the means of production often lead to changes in the relations of production, which in turn influence social institutions and ideologies.
4	How does the materialist conception of history differ from idealist conceptions of history?	The materialist conception of history emphasizes material economic conditions as the primary driver of historical development, whereas idealist conceptions attribute historical change to ideas, culture, or consciousness. Marx's theory argues that ideas are shaped by material conditions, not the other way around.
5	Why is the materialist conception of history considered important in understanding capitalism?	The materialist conception of history is crucial for understanding capitalism because it highlights how capitalist social relations are rooted in economic exploitation and class struggle. It explains how capitalism evolves through conflicts between capitalists and workers, leading to systemic contradictions and potential revolutionary change.

historical materialism, dialectical materialism, economic determinism, class struggle, mode of production, base and superstructure, Marxism, social relations, ideology, capitalist society

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