

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## Thinking Further About Marxism

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Marxism has produced the greatest degree of social, physical, and moral ruin the world has ever known. Wherein does it err?

Marxism errs in four ways. It is first of all *poor economics*. Marx preached that there were laws of economics that could not profitably be violated but if obeyed would produce a classless society and consequent utopia. He even attempted to articulate what those laws were. But in the end his arguments are unconvincing. Why is that so?

It is so because Marx's arguments lack a base in the realities of economics. In his discussions of value in *Das Kapital*, for instance, Marx asserts that the value of a given commodity can be derived by summing the cost of the raw materials and the labor invested in manufacturing the product. He discusses this point for many pages—but ignores completely the point that value is not truly derived from cost but is instead derived from utility. No matter what a thing costs to manufacture, it is valueless if no one will pay to buy it. No matter what price may be assigned a product by the manufacturer, the actual value of the product is determined only when someone puts up the cash to pay for it. Other components of value are irrelevant.

Yet to this day the Soviet Union imposes state control of prices and has a currency so lacking a connection to demand and productivity that it only works within a closed system, and even then not well. When the Russian ruble passes into a free society where there is no state mandate to use it as a medium of exchange, it becomes even more useless, losing more than 90 percent of its so-called value. So again, value is not derived from a declaration of the Party but from utility in the real world.

Marx deals at great length with the matter of value in *Das Kapital*. He would have us believe that the ultimate problems of the world derive from the fact that the *bourgeoisie* has stolen the "excess value" called profit from the *proletariat*. As a result, Marx argues, the *proletariat*, the working class, labors in utter hopelessness, drops deeper into



# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

discouragement, and finally dies in distress because of capitalist exploitation. From this come all of the difficulties the world faces, he says.

In taking this view, Marx is actually making profit a life force by which the world is run. For Darwin, the life force was natural selection, but for Marx, it is excess value. He who possesses this excess value has in his hands mastery of the world, the future, and the universe. He is escalated to a godlike level and marches across history, conquering and to conquer.

Marx saw the possession of value as the natural right of the *proletariat*. Slaves are transformed into world-changers the moment that excess value, having been taken from the capitalists, is put into their hands. Profit is the Promethean fire, the lodestone, the Holy Grail, the key to divinity. The Marxist man is the god of the future. Stupendous is the destiny that will come to the sons and daughters of the Party when the economic value stolen from them by the *bourgeoisie* becomes theirs.

What a load to put on mere economics! This is hysteria, not economics. It may even be “good hysteria,” but bad economics it is.

Marxism is also *bad psychology*. It is a pure illusion to believe that millions of people are trembling with ecstasy in anticipation of the prospect of laboring “each according to his ability” so that they can give to their fellow man “each according to his need.” If Marx’s understanding of human attitudes is true, it is impossible to prove from any evidence from any place on the face of the earth, especially in the Soviet Union.

Russia, a very large country, has a gross national product only 25 percent that of the United States. Why is this? It is simply that the competent will not work extensively and dependably to support the incompetent. Especially are they reluctant to support a tyrannical state whose leaders live in splendid wealth and grind people into poverty.

Splendid wealth it is. How wealthy was made evident in November 1989 when East Germany deposed its Communist dictatorship.

What an event that was. On November 9, 1989, James Baker, Secretary of State for the United States, said, “Three days ago, no one in the world could have predicted this event.” That day, 100,000 people had come over the Berlin Wall to West Berlin and had greeted their new freedom with ecstasy. They toasted one another with champagne, danced on top of the Berlin Wall, and greeted old friends whom they had expected never to see again in this life. It was one of the greatest outpourings of ecstasy that the world has ever seen over a given political event.

## Lion and Lamb Apologetics

Out of all of this, the Communist government of East Germany was deposed. The astonishing part of it was that Erich Honecker, the leader of the East German state, was found to be a wealthy man indeed. The press brought the report that he owned thirty-two homes, which he used as residences at one or another time. They reported also that he imported one hundred tons of grain every year from the West in order to feed the stags at his private hunting reserve, so that he and his cronies could have good hunting.

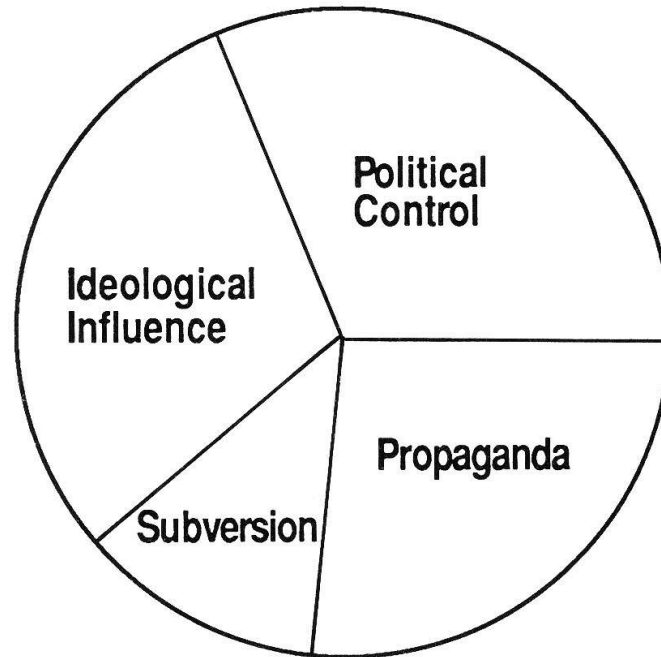
One can imagine the revulsion felt by the people when they heard this. This hypocritical man had preached for years that the East Germans must make great sacrifices in order to bring the Communist paradise to pass in the future. Few East Germans suspected that Honecker had created his own paradise in the present.

The story was the same in other Eastern European nations. Romania was a noteworthy example. Nicolae Ceausescu, who with his wife was executed Christmas Day 1989, was also a man of great wealth. He had subjugated the Romanians in one of the most oppressive dictatorships on earth, even to the extent of killing thousands of them who would not obey his commands.

After his execution, the press carried stories about Ceausescu's wealth similar to those reported about Honecker. He had built for himself a palace bigger than the one at Versailles. When the revolutionary government opened the palace and people were conducted on tours through it, they were staggered at its splendor. So great was their astonishment that they wondered what to do with the building, wondered what use it might have in any future government.

It is now more than ever common knowledge that the Communist dictators are hypocrites. They impose great programs of austerity on their people, but they themselves live in splendor beyond the imagination of most of the inhabitants of earth. These late revelations can only increase the difficulty Communist leaders will have in calling their people to sacrifice. For such a call to succeed, it must be presented more strongly and—sad but true—a greater show of force must be used to back it up.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'



*Fig. 5. Relative strength of the sources of Marxist influence*

In addition, Communism is *bad futurism*. In any circumstance it is difficult to the point of impossible to predict the outcome of a given action. We do not know what the day or the hour shall bring forth. Still, Communism has arrogantly boasted that over time the Communist man will be produced, the state will wither away, and utopia will emerge. The Communists have been repeating this baseless boilerplate for more than a hundred years, while all the while the opposite is actually taking place. The state is not withering away, and utopia is not coming to pass. The restive masses are courageously starting to say to their leaders, "Get out and let us lead our own lives and make our own decisions."

One of the great lessons to be learned about life is that any given situation comes to pass from multiple causes and produces multiple consequences. That elementary truth escapes many foolish people who think that they can predict the exact outcome of a given individual action or group activity. No matter how genuine may be the intention and how thorough-going the preparations, the outcome of anything is, in the last analysis, unknown to us. Especially is this true when one arrogates to himself the authority to predict the outcome of group activity.

As the 1990s began, the world saw an illustration of this truth. Millions in Eastern Europe had lived behind the Iron Curtain their entire lives. According to the Communist promise of personal and social conditioning, these people could be expected to be loyal and true sons of the Party. But alas for the Communists, exactly the opposite was revealed to be true.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

When the states of Eastern Europe renounced Communism, the people began coming forward with grisly stories as to what the parental state had done to them in trying to bring about the appropriate social conditioning. These people will, in all probability (we must be careful about predicting the future), be some of the most hard-boiled opponents of Communist ideology in the world. Futurism and humility go hand in hand. The Communists have never been very good at either.

5

A fourth shortcoming of Communism is that it is *pitiful theology*. Any system of thought that begins with the statement "There is no God" produces instant intellectual vertigo. Having no first principle, no epistemological foundation, it cannot prove secondary assertions, tertiary thoughts, or even up, down, or around. Logic that begins in midair cannot finally demonstrate the truth or falsity of anything. The theological propositions of Communism are no more dependable than the wind in the willows. Surely the test of time proves this to all thinking people. Unfortunately, many must endure the test of time who will not early on force themselves to apply the test of logic or the test of Holy Scripture.

Admittedly, the word *theology* should be applied reluctantly to the Communist system of thought. Nevertheless, the statements the Communists have made about God, destiny, the future, human shortcomings, the object of faith, and many other things are obviously similar to theological propositions, as a comparison of Marxist propositions and the propositions of Christian theology makes evident.

The Communists assert that there is no God, whereas Christians insist that God is and that He presides above the nations.

Marxist thought denies the existence of original sin, whereas Christians know that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The Communists insist that the conversion experience comes about because of the transport of discovering the truths of dialectical materialism. The Christian knows that being born again comes about through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Communists believe that the world changes because of revolutionary activity and continues to be viable because of the ongoing revolution against the vestiges of *bourgeois* mentality. The Christian knows what is the true wellspring of rebirth: a person becomes a new creature only when he receives Christ as personal Savior, and his continuing viability is a consequence of the wonderful promise of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27).

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

As for the future, the Communist has nothing to promise except an atheistic utopia, whereas the Christian knows that the future is in the hands of God. Utopia will be produced only when Christ comes again, for He only is the Lord of the universe and the One who can bring utopia to pass.

On the matter of Communism and theology, a development has taken place in our generation that has come as a surprise to those who thought about the future just a generation ago. That development is the Christian-Marxist coalescence called Liberation Theology.

It was my opportunity to attend a conference held at the Vatican in the early 1960s under the tutelage of Pope John XXIII. The motto of the conference was "Peace on Earth," and much was said about this fascinating subject.

In reading through the literature distributed at the conference, I was fascinated to notice that a new call was being extended that was unheard of in Christian theology previous to this time. The call was for a *rapprochement*, a *détente*, between Catholicism and Communism. One and another speaker talked about the possibilities of a Marxist-Christian dialogue and then of a coming together of these two hostile entities for the purposes of affecting the future.

My reaction was, *This is most interesting—but it is quite ridiculous*. No one, to my knowledge, thought of a Marxist-Christian dialogue as a serious possibility. The reason for this cynicism on the part of both the Marxist and Christian communities was that there was no rationale, no theological construct, by which such a merger could be justified or even understood.

Soon, however, that construct was invented—liberation theology. This interesting set of views grew out of Latin American Catholicism and has, as it is now reported, captured one-half of Roman Catholicism. Liberation theology has also captured the Protestant left and is not without its influence on evangelical Christianity.

What is liberation theology? It is the view that holds that Christ came into the world to be our economic liberator. It asserts that His first purpose was to free the poor and the oppressed from the shackles of economic constriction.

In actuality, liberation theology redefines sin. In liberation theology *sin* is to possess wealth in the face of the world's poverty. *Righteousness* is therefore to redistribute that wealth, giving it to the poor.

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Evangelism is also redefined. It is seen as the announcement of the economic liberation of Christ and the invitation to the oppressed peoples of the world to join in the revolution He now ordains.

Liberation theology advances another fascinating rationale. In that possessing money is the essence of sin, it follows that the most sinful system in the world is capitalism. The liberationists then ask, From whence does capitalism come? The answer is, of course, the United States. For the liberationist, then, the sinful system is capitalism, the iniquitous nation is America, and the great Satan of the world is the President of the United States. Most interestingly, by these twists of logic liberation theology joins the Marxist cause and advocates the overthrow of the United States—and, for that matter, Christian civilization—in the oncoming Marxist revolution.

Absurd as this may sound, liberation theology is very strong in many parts of the world, especially in the nations of the southern tier. And although it has lost ground in some places, liberation theology continues to be a serious spiritual subversion within Christianity and a serious threat to the stability of the world. It has been called “the greatest threat that the Church has faced in all of its history.”

The emergence of liberation theology makes clear that Marxism moves across the world in many a strange disguise. The predictions of its early expiration may therefore be exaggerated to an unsafe degree.

More than the remains of Karl Marx lie today in Highgate Cemetery. There also are buried the hopes, the dreams, the human possibilities of more millions of pitiable souls than the world will ever be able to imagine. But, also, the ghost of Karl Marx continues to move across the world.

Beware! It may be more than a poltergeist.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Breese, D. (1990). *Seven men who rule the world from the grave* (pp. 79–86). Moody Publishers.