

## MARXISM – ATTRACTIVE AND DECEPTIVE

Apologetics  
Zavadka, 15th June 2019  
Pavel Hanes

### OUTLINE

#### 0. INTRODUCTION

- 0.1. SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE BOTHERED?
- 0.2. THE GROWING DISCONTENT
- 0.3. MARXISM DEFINED(?)
- 0.4. COMMUNISM (MARXIST AND RUSSIAN)

#### 1. THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MARXISM

- 1.1. CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL EVILS
- 1.2. JUSTICE (NOT MERCY)
- 1.3. PROGRESS (HOPE)
- 1.4. THE PARTY

#### 2. ERRORS OF THE MARXIST SYSTEM

- 2.1. SUSPICION (→ RICOEUR)
- 2.2. WORLDVIEW
- 2.3. ANTHROPOLOGY
- 2.4. JUDGMENT AND SALVATION

#### 3. TO REMEMBER

### 0. INTRODUCTION

- Idealism *increases in direct proportion* to one's distance from the problem. (John Galsworthy)

#### 0.1. SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE BOTHERED?

- Why should Christians be bothered about the resurgence of Marxism?
  - **1Tim 2:1-4** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.
- (Alasdair MACINTYRE *Marxism and Christianity*) **Christianity** is the grandmother of **Bolshevism**. O. SPENGLER
- Beyond Michael Novak „democratic capitalism“ (*The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* 1982)
- Beyond Peter Berger „capitalist revolution“ (50 propositions)<sup>1</sup>
  - capitalism – the greatest productive power in history
  - the highest material standard of living for large masses
  - education has become the single most important vehicle of upward mobility.
  - Capitalism is a necessary but not sufficient condition of democracy under modern conditions.
  - Certain components of Western bourgeois culture (notably those of activism, rational innovativeness, and self-discipline) are prerequisites of successful capitalist development anywhere.
  - Socialism is one of the most powerful myths of the modern era;

---

<sup>1</sup> Peter L. BERGER *The Capitalist Revolution*, New York : Basic Books, 1986.

- Tony Campolo : church criticising capitalism  
([http://www.jesus.org.uk/ja/mag\\_talkingto\\_campolo.shtml](http://www.jesus.org.uk/ja/mag_talkingto_campolo.shtml) [02-11-2009])

Do you think the church is scared to critique capitalism?

Yes it is. Years ago, we fought communism, a materialistic philosophy. The irony is that capitalism is even more materialistic. Having said that, I believe in the free enterprise system, which is different to capitalism. Free enterprise says we want to give people the freedom to create economic ventures that will be **serviceable**. Christianity is **democratic**, in that it believes in the dignity of the individual. The individual must have the right to make decisions that determine their own destiny. People should have freedom to make economic decisions; even bad ones. But I am not a capitalist. Capitalism is evil for two reasons. Firstly it makes no hesitation in saying that the primary motive in all you do is profit. The Bible says we should not be motivated by profits; we should be motivated by love to meet people's needs. Of course, when you start a business, you need to make a profit. But profit is not the bottom line for a Christian. The Christian has to look at ... what he or she is producing and ask whether they can say to the Lord, "I did something good for others in Your name."

## 0.2. THE GROWING DISCONTENT

- the problem of economic crises and the problem of boredom (emptiness) → blaming the system
- THE GREAT LENIN DEBATE OF 2012 (LeBlanc *Unfinished Leninism*, 2014)
- Raoul VANEIGEM *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (2001) „The truth of the theory of immiseration is demonstrated today, not, as Marx expected, in the sphere of goods necessary for survival, since these, far from becoming scarce, have become more and more abundant; ... Thus the salvation of the soul is survival itself, which is always the enemy of real life Nothing but the will to live incorporated through myth, mediated, emptied of its real content. Work to survive, survive by consuming, survive to consume: the hellish cycle is complete.“
- Richard GILMAN-OPALSKY *Precarious Communism* (2014) „But general disinterest in communist forms from previous generations does not mean that there is no communist desire in the world today. (p.4) A world organized by the logic of capital is a world organized against the diverse interests of most people on Earth.“ (p.5)
- DERRIDA *Positions* (1967 [Fr]; 1972 [En]) Now, we cannot consider Marx's, Engels's or Lenin's texts as completely finished elaborations that are simply to be "applied" to the current situation. In saying this, I am not advocating anything contrary to "Marxism," I am convinced of it. ...These texts are not to be read according to a hermeneutical or exegetical method which would seek out a finished signified beneath a textual surface. Reading is transformational.

([https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online\\_articles/karl-marx-at-200-fatal-flaw-politics-social-democracy](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/karl-marx-at-200-fatal-flaw-politics-social-democracy))

• Two hundred years after Marx's birth, Marxism is experiencing a renaissance. Sales of *Capital*, *The Communist Manifesto*, and Marx's have soared since 2008, and intellectuals are publishing books like *Why Marx was Right* and proclaiming Marxism to be the best guide to understanding the contemporary world

- Marxism as moral and cultural critique (*Frankfurt School*)

## 0.3. MARXISM DEFINED(?)

- Marxism – a "grand theory"
- [Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy] Chinese Marxism is a mixture of elements from Confucianism, German Marxism, Soviet Leninism and China's own guerrilla experience.
- [Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy] In the broader sense, Western Marxism does not denote any specific doctrine, but indicates a range of concerns that have exercised Marxist philosophers in advanced capitalist societies. These concerns primarily have been of three kinds: (1) epistemological - what would justify the claim that Marxist social theory and, in particular, the materialist conception of history are true?; (2) ethical - does the Marxist critique of capitalism require ethical foundations, and if so, where are these to be discovered; and (3) practical - if the economic collapse of capitalism can no longer be regarded as inevitable, who are the agents who can be expected to carry through a socialist transformation?

- Marxism: (1) philosophy [worldview & ethics], (2) economics [value, labour], (3) politics [theory of the state] → but the key to everything is *economics* → *Das Kapital*...
- To understand Marxism we need at least some understanding of *economics*. (David C. Colander *Economics*) „In the study of economics, coordination refers to how the three central problems facing any economy are solved. These central problems are: (1) What, and how much, to produce, (2) How to produce it, (3) For whom to produce it.“

(Robert Freedman *The Marxist System*) Marxism connects everything that happens on the face of the planet with Marx's view that economic factors determine the course of history. Marx assumes that all social institutions can be understood from the premises of economic analysis and its handmaiden, class analysis. Armed with that understanding, society can reorder

- itself to suit its purposes.

#### 0.4. COMMUNISM (MARXIST AND RUSSIAN)

##### 0.4.1. WESTERN

- Engels DRAFT OF A COMMUNIST CONFESSION OF FAITH I
  - Question 1: Are you a Communist?
    - Answer: Yes.
  - Question 2: What is the aim of the Communists?
    - Answer: To organise society in such a way that every member of it can develop and use all his capabilities and powers in complete freedom and without thereby infringing the basic conditions of this society.
- Feuerbach *Werke II*, p. 413

Was mein Princip ist? Ego und Alter Ego „Egoismus“ und „Communismus,“ denn beide sind so unzertrennlich, als Kopf und Herz. Ohne Egoismus hast Du keinen Kopf, und ohne Communismus kein Herz.

- *The Communist Manifesto* → the most influential text written in the 19th ct.

(*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*) Communism is the belief that society should be organized without private property, all productive property being held communally, publicly or in common. A communist system is one based on a community of goods. It is generally presented as a positive alternative to competition, a system that is thought to divide people; communism is expected to draw people together and to create a community. In most cases the arguments for communism advocate replacing competition with cooperation either for its own sake or to promote a goal such as equality, or to free specific groups of people to serve a higher ideal such as the state or God.

##### 0.4.2. RUSSIAN

- [MASARYK *Svetova revoluce*] „Rusové jsou neschopni provést komunism marxistický jsou jako celek ještě příliš nekulturní a carismem pokažení, aby chápali a prováděli Marxovy názory o komunismu jakožto definitivním stadiu dlouhého historického procesu.“
- Berdyaev *The Origin of Russian Communism* (1937 → 1955)

(p. 17): Чтобы понять источники русского коммунизма и уяснить себе характер русской революции, нужно знать, что представляет собой то своеобразное явление, которое в России именуется «интеллигенция»... (p. 18): Она обладала способностью жить исключительно идеями. По условиям русского политического строя интеллигенция оказалась оторванной от реального социального дела и это очень способствовало развитию в ней социальной мечтательности. В России самодержавной и крепостнической вырабатывались самые радикальные социалистические и анархические идеи. ... (p. 125): В коммунизме есть здоровое, верное и вполне согласное с христианством понимание жизни каждого человека, как служения сверхличной цели, как служения не себе, а великому целому. ... (p. 129): Коммунизм, не как социальная система, а как религия, фанатически враждебен всякой религии и более всего христианской. Он сам хочет быть религией, идущей на смену христианству, он претендует ответить на религиозные запросы человеческой

души, дать смысл жизни. Коммунизм целостен, он охватывает всю жизнь, он не относится к какойлибо социальной области.

- Masaryk *The Spirit of Russia* (1919),

In England and France, therefore, Marxism has made headway slowly, and only by small degrees has it been accepted by the working classes and their leaders. In Russia, Marxism found the field occupied by Russian socialism and its traditions of nihilism and terrorism, the traditions of the revolutionary narodnicestvo.

- David Duke *The Secret Behind Communism*

Solzhenitsyn: "You must understand. The leading Bolsheviks who took over Russia were not Russians. They hated Russians. They hated Christians. Driven by ethnic hatred they tortured and slaughtered millions of Russians without a shred of human remorse. The October Revolution was not what you call in America the 'Russian Revolution.'

## 1. THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF MARXISM

- WOOD Ellen Meiksins *Democracy against Capitalism*,
  - „There is something odd about the assumption that the collapse of Communism represents a terminal crisis for Marxism.“
- (Djilas *The New Class*) ...typical of all Communist theories. In proceeding from immediate needs, the parties create generalities, ostensibly scientific conclusions and theories, and proclaim half-truths as truths
- Leszek Kolakowski, one of the most articulate critics of Marxism, said "the *lie* is the *immortal soul of communism*..."

### 1.1. CRITIQUE OF SOCIAL EVILS

- (*Feuerbach 11*) "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to **change** it." [Die Philosophen haben die Welt nur verschieden *interpretiert*, es kömmt drauf an, sie zu *verändern*.]
- (*Feuerbach 8*) "All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice."
- a Marxist assessment of Marxism:

(Terry EAGLETON *Why Marx Was Right*) Marxism is a critique of capitalism—the most searching, rigorous, comprehensive critique of its kind ever to be launched. It is also the only such critique that has transformed large sectors of the globe. It follows, then, that as long as capitalism is still in business, Marxism must be as well.

#### 1.1.1. ALIENATION THEORY

- Simon & Garfunkel 1965 *I Am a Rock*
  - I am a rock
  - I am an island
  - I've built walls
  - A fortress deep and mighty
  - That none may penetrate
  - I have no need of friendship, friendship causes pain
- Marx's "discovery"

Marx thinks  
he has found in the alienation of labor the riddle of the historical  
becoming of alienated mankind.

- Marx on alienation

(Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. First Manuscript) What, then, constitutes the alienation of labor? [die Entäußerung der Arbeit] First, the fact that labor is external to the worker [die Arbeit dem Arbeiter *äußerlich* ist], i.e., it does not belong to his intrinsic nature; that in his work, therefore, he does

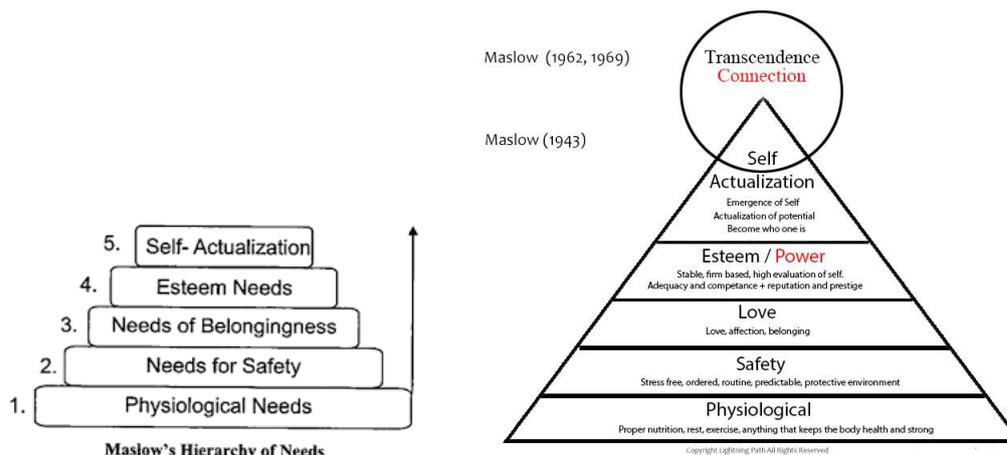
not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind. The worker therefore only feels himself outside his work, and in his work feels outside himself. He feels at home when he is not working, and when he is working he does not feel at home. His labor is therefore not voluntary, but coerced; it is forced labor. It is therefore not the satisfaction of a need; it is merely a means to satisfy needs external to it. Its alien character emerges clearly in the fact that as soon as no physical or other compulsion exists, labor is shunned like the plague. External labor, labor in which man alienates himself, is a labor of self-sacrifice, of mortification. Lastly, the external character of labor for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own, but someone else's, that it does not belong to him, that in it he belongs, not to himself, but to another. Just as in religion the spontaneous activity of the human imagination, of the human brain and the human heart, operates on the individual independently of him – that is, operates as an alien, divine or diabolical activity – so is the worker's activity not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self.

- Novack & Mandel (1973)

(*The Marxist Theory of Alienation*) For Marxism the forms of alienation are products of man's impotence before the forces of nature and of society and his ignorance of the laws of their operation. They are not everlasting. They can diminish to the extent that man's control over his habitat and his social relations and his scientific knowledge of their processes of development are amplified. They will wither away and cease entirely when his command over nature and social organization is consummated under socialism.

### 1.1.2. POVERTY AND HUMAN NEEDS (MASLOW)

- the *poor* and the *lumpenproletariat*...
- the theory of *the base* and *the superstructure*...



### 1.1.3. COMPASSION

- ENGELS *Condition of the Working Class in England*,

"foul lanes, courts, and yards, are interposed between this and the adjoining streets .... There are many cellars which have no light but from the door .... In some of these cellars the inhabitants sleep on the floors which are all earthen; but in general, they have bedsteads (the framework of a bed on which the mattress and bedclothes are placed) .... Nicholson's Court ... contains 151 persons in 28 small apartments ... their state is very miserable, there being only two bedsteads and two blankets in the whole court."

### 1.1.4. LABOUR IN THE CENTRE

- (Jozer TISCHNER *Marxism & Christianity*) *Marxism* is primarily a philosophy of human *labor*.
- *proletariat* → the "saviour"; always just in its views, demands and actions...

## 1.2. JUSTICE (NOT MERCY)

- "social justice" → the term originated in Catholic social teachings (Novak book → review)

[Michael Novak *Social Justice: Not What You Think It Is*]<sup>2</sup> For its proponents, “social justice” is usually undefined. Originally a Catholic term, first used about **1840** for a **new kind of virtue (or habit)** necessary for postagrarian societies, the term has been bent by secular “progressive” thinkers to mean uniform state distribution of society’s advantages and disadvantages. Social justice is really the capacity to organize with others to accomplish ends that benefit the whole community. If people are to live free of state control, they must possess this new virtue of cooperation and association.

- “justice” redefined as “rights”
- justice = system of *duties* and *rights* and *sanctions* → somebody’s *right* has to be somebody’s *duty*... but whose? there should be

### 1.2.1. HUMANISM

- man=god idolatry

(*Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher, February, 1844*) The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest essence for man — hence, with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence

### 1.2.2. LIBERATION THEOLOGY

- (Ronald Nash [ed] *Liberation Theology*, p. 10) “Liberation theology has taken as its primary source of revelation the consciousness and experience of the oppressed classes.”

### 1.2.3. QUICK SOLUTIONS (REVOLUTION)

(LENIN *The State and Revolution*) ...it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution (без насильственной революции), but also without the destruction of the apparatus of state power, which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this “alienation.” As we shall see later, Marx very explicitly drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion on the strength of a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution.

- violence is the only solution (→ Stalin)

### 1.2.4. EGALITARIANISM

- Equality of (1) needs fulfillment – equality of (2) basic capabilities – equality of (3) opportunity.
- four types of equality: (1) political, (2) legal, (3) social, and (4) economic.
- [Thomas Nagel] moral equality between persons, according to which equal weight should be given to each person
- no hierarchy; no difference...

[MASARYK *Svetova revoluce*, p. 203] Normální stav společnosti politický a sociální nedá se uskutečnit bez; silného individualismu, to jest bez svobodné iniciativy jednotlivců, a to prakticky znamená takový režim, který umožňuje rozvoj rozmanitých individualit, fysicky i duchovně od přírody nesterjně nadaných.

### 1.2.1. ENVY

- Proudhon: “Property is robbery” (Qu’est-ce que la propriété? → le vol)
- revenge → expropriation → *The New Class* (Milovan DJILAS); *Animal Farm* (ORWELL)
- Fernandez de la Mora *Egalitarian envy*...

argues that envy, both individual and group envy, is a personal vice that has been made into a political virtue, a pernicious yet all too human emotion which over the years has slowly, imperceptibly, become politicized, woven into the innermost tissue of Western governmental systems under the high-sounding rubric of “egalitarianism.”

<sup>2</sup> [http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf\\_media/2009/pdf/hl\\_1138.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/thf_media/2009/pdf/hl_1138.pdf) []

### 1.3. PROGRESS (HOPE)

- [Robert Nisbet *Conservatism*, p. 5] ...for much of the last two centuries developmentalism was embraced so widely that the idea of progress became something of a popular religion
- [Nisbet *History of the Idea of Progress*] Durante unos tres mil años no ha habido en Occidente ninguna idea más importante, y ni siquiera quizás tan importante, como la idea de progreso

#### 1.3.1. SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS

- all human problems begin with the unequal distribution of property

#### 1.3.2. SCIENTISM (HEGELIAN)

- logic → reality: Hegel's concept of logic is simply that ideas are related to one another by rules, the same rules that relate realworld events to one another. Dialectic is thus a kind of logic in action with the real world.

### 1.4. THE PARTY

- no nasty political scene (politics behind closed doors)
- positive and hopeful news
- the *Party* is always right → “divine” authority and guidance...

## 2. ERRORS OF THE MARXIST SYSTEM

- a short comparison of the suggested Marxist solutions with free society and Christianity
- NOVAK: “capitalism” → derived not from “capital” (money), but from “caput” (head, mind, ingeniousness) → three power centers: [(1) political (2) economic (3) moral-cultural].
  - capitalism: (1) human inventiveness [Gn 1 *imago dei*]; (2) human community [Gn 2, love]; (3) sin [Gn 3, supervision]
- **four freedoms** → Roosevelt, 1941 State of the Union address: (1) Freedom of speech (2) Freedom of worship (3) Freedom from want (4) Freedom from fear

### 2.1. SUSPICION (→ RICOEUR)

- the three “masters of suspicion”: Marx, Nietzsche, Freud
- Marx → motto *De omnibus dubitandum* (1 April 1865)

(WEST & SANDERS *Transparency and Conspiracy*) Our world, and the exercise of power within it, is becoming more “transparent.” Such, at least, is the conclusion that one might draw from listening to contemporary global-speak.

- → occult cosmologies...
- “The Bible reveals that human nature possesses an incurable suspicion of God.”<sup>3</sup>
- **1Cor 13:7** Love bears all things, believes all things (πάντα πιστεύει), hopes all things, endures all things

### 2.2. WORLDVIEW

#### 2.2.1. ATHEISM

- **Ps 14:1** The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."
- motive: take control; get rid of judgment;

#### 2.2.2. RATIONALISM

- HEGEL “what is rational is real”
- ~ pantheism (Spinoza)

### 2.3. ANTHROPOLOGY

- (Schall *Religion, Wealth and Poverty*, p. 21) Seemingly business in the newer catechism has replaced "original sin" as the cause of evil in the world

<sup>3</sup> CHAMBERS, O. *The Philosophy of Sin*.

**2.3.1. HUMAN NATURE**

- **Jer 17:9** The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
- **Ps 51:5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- **Rom 7:9** I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died

**2.3.2. HUMAN DESTINY**

- *Imago Dei* → the world to come

**2.4. JUDGMENT AND SALVATION****2.4.1. THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

- **Matthew 25:44-45** 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'
- Rebellion is no solution (Marx) "Prometheus is the foremost saint and martyr in the philosopher's calendar" (MEW EB I, 265)
- "rejectionist" ideology – no cooperation with non-communist parties...

**3. TO REMEMBER**

- Marxism's potential to attract should never be underestimated.
- Christians should understand the workings of Marxism and talk about its fundamental errors.
- Christian answer to Marxism has to be in substituting temporary hope with eternal hope while also in practical political/social/cultural activism for improvement life in this world