

# **MARXISM & ESCHATOLOGY:**

*The Communistic Apocalypse  
According to St. Marx*

## ***Introductory Background***

While modern leftist academics routinely mock the Judeo-Christian apocalypse prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments (Joel 2; Isaiah 24; Matthew 24-25; 2 Thessalonians 1-2; Revelation 6-19) as something only a deranged literalist could entertain in his own fundamentalist mindset, they remain completely unaware that their most important leftist forefather, Karl Marx, was a false prophet of secular fundamentalism and profane eschatology. Many secular scholars presume taking the Old and New Testaments at face value leads to a dangerous, irrational and fundamentalist worldview. Even too many Christians seemingly chime in with leftist academics by eschewing the idea of a literal fulfillment of such apocalyptic predictions, especially when it comes to great events like the Rapture of the Church (1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18), the Great Tribulation (Jer 30:1-7; Rev 6-19), and the glorious Millennial Messianic Kingdom after the Second Coming of Christ (Zechariah 14; Matt 24:30-31; Rev 19:11-20:10). Many other Christians also ignore Old Testament Covenants (Abrahamic – Gen 12:1-4; Palestinian – Deut 30:1-10; Davidic – Psalm 89; New – Jer 31:31-34) which promise to bless the entire world beyond human imagination (Isa 2:1-4; Mic 4:1-4; Rev 20:1-6) before the Eternal State (Isa 66:22; Rev 21-22). While many Christian scholars are embarrassed by such Scriptures, they fail to understand that modernity itself would not even exist without such a Judeo-Christian apocalyptic worldview. “We of today, concerned with the unity of universal history and with its progress toward an ultimate goal or at least toward a better world, are still in the line of prophetic and messianic monotheism – however little we may think of ourselves in those terms.”<sup>1</sup>

Modern man has imbibed deeply from such apocalyptic wells, even to the point of subdividing human history into various epochs leading to a future progressive goal that is rooted in the biblical tradition. Many Christian scholars often criticize dispensationalists for dividing up the Bible into various landmark epochs. Yet when modern historians and scholars do the same with regard to secular history, they are unwittingly showing themselves to be students of the Word of God even though they no longer believe in the Bible.<sup>2</sup> “The apocalyptic idea became a commonplace, although historians have placed their apocalyptic movement at all sorts of times: the Renaissance, the invention of printing, the scientific movement of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup>, the French Revolution, the Liberal movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or even, as with Marxist historians, in the future.”<sup>3</sup> Ironically enough, while many Protestants were strongly developing their own millennial views during the 1800’s on a scale not before seen in Christian history, the political left was writing up their own liberal eschatological plan for human history on a parallel secular track – and Marxism was at the heart of the whole enterprise.

Modern man has placed his hope in a future eschaton where science and politics have been inappropriately hotwired with eschatology. This is accomplished by secularizing and profaning the Christian faith. Bible prophecies are ripped out its supernatural context and then applied to an ever increasing variety of secular events. As Christianity receded behind the wave of naturalism and secularism in western culture, apocalyptic political hubris filled in the vacuum left behind. Ironically enough, this has also led to insoluble political burdens which continue to haunt the modern mindset as ideologues, policy analysts and politicians foist upon unsuspecting populaces the full crushing weight of their apocalyptic concerns. “The moderns elaborate a philosophy of history by secularizing theological principles and applying them to an ever increasing number of empirical facts.”<sup>4</sup> Such misguided misapplications of the biblical apocalypse helped create the socialistic slaughterhouse that was the 20<sup>th</sup> century with Marxism leading the charge in the Soviet Union, China, and North Korea. Soviet, Chinese and North Korean communism in turn heavily influenced many countries in southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Latin and South America during the Cold War, which continue to reverberate even today in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Even though Karl Marx vehemently attacked all forms of idealism, religion, abstract philosophy, and utopianism, incredibly, he still naively believed that the future belonged to the collectivist communist state in which all class divisions, exacerbated by the evils of Industrial Capitalism, would eventually disappear through an international socialistic revolution at the end of history. His apocalyptic belief in a future eschaton of communism that would eventually destroy all of the evils of economic oppression

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<sup>1</sup> Lowith, Karl, *Meaning in History*, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Lowith, p. 19.

demonstrates his belief in humanistic progress eschatologically understood. At its core, Marxism is a secularized form of Christian eschatology that goes far afield from its so-called economic and scientific basis that Marx proudly touted. Karl Marx's false prophecies, written in the 19th century, amalgamated an extreme 'literal' socio-economic reading of life together with the so-called 'scientific' laws of 'progressive' societal evolution – both of which are indefensibly based on Judeo-Christian eschatological assumptions. With regard to the problem of fundamentalism, Christians need to learn to put the shoe on the other foot.

### ***The Judeo-Christian Eschatological Basis for Marxist Millenarianism***

Modern progressivism, belief in human progress, various brands of western socialism, and even communism itself, are all steeped in a modern philosophy of history that is deeply rooted in the apocalyptic Judeo-Christian tradition.<sup>5</sup> This is borne out by the fact that many socialist and political scholars often presume that the historical future itself is redemptive. While many have rejected the biblical worldview, they still believe and look forward to a hopeful and progressive future when all of the ills of society and the world will be ameliorated through some form of socialist and/or collectivist political transformation. While some may emphasize the gradual perfectibility of man over time like socialism often does, others, like Marxism, emphasize a more drastic, apocalyptic, even chiliastic view of history.

Marxism is classified as a form of millenarianism which "envisages an eschaton or an end of history, although unlike the Christian eschatologist this is for him not identical with the end of time and world. He holds, in other words, that the historical future is closed in that there will be a final state when all historical development has ceased but man and world will still endure."<sup>6</sup> The gradual perfectibilist, on the other hand, holds that the future is open. "No final state will be realized. It is only approximated without limit. Humanity comes closer and closer to it but will never reach it."<sup>7</sup>

Millenarianists like Marx believe that social development in history will "lead to its own abolition" after a long drawn out process of humanistic or socialistic political evolution. In other words, such scholars believe that before mankind becomes extinct "there will occur a millennial interval, a period when man is delivered from history because history has worked itself out and human affairs have become settled after a long process of fermentation."<sup>8</sup> Millenarianists are thus more revolutionary than their socialist cousins.

Millenarian thought is clearly rooted in the chiliastic tradition of the Judeo-Christian worldview, otherwise often known as millennialism. Marxian Millenarianism is, in reality, a secularized form of Judeo-Christian chiliasm or millennialism. The Kingdom of God predicted in the Old Testament and the Gospels has been replaced with communistic progress and utopianism. Pre-Millennialism, Post-Millennialism, and Dispensationalism are all, of course, forms of Christian chiliasm. Chiliasm or Millennialism means 1,000. It is based on Revelation 20:1-6 that promises there will be a literal and historical Messianic rule of 1,000 years on the earth at the end of history before it is converted into eternity in Revelation 21-22.

### ***The Ancient Doctrine of Eternal Return vs. The Judeo-Christian Worldview***

Both modern gradual perfectibilists and millenarianists stand in sharp contrast to the Greco-Roman mythology of Eternal Return. Before the rise of the Judeo-Christian worldview in Europe, the ancient Greeks and Romans viewed history as a vicious circle. The Judeo-Christian historical consciousness broke with the classical world that preceded it. "The ancients had generally seen the world as eternal, without beginning or end."<sup>9</sup> Such an attitude precludes the possibility of an eschatological view to history. As the Bible makes so clear with regard to history and prophecy, eschatology demands a linear conception of time. To the ancient Greeks and Romans, however, history mirrored Nature's life and death annual cycles and struggles. "The theory of world cycles was so widely current that it may almost be described as the orthodox theory of cosmic time among the Greeks, and it passed from them to the Romans."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Gruner, Rolf. *Philosophies of History: A Critical Essay*, pp. 19-38.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Bury, James Bagnell. *The Idea of Progress: An Inquiry to its Origin and Growth*, p. 12.

The sun goes up and the sun goes down. The constant repetition of the seasons and the perpetual cycle of birth, decay and rebirth were all natural phenomenon that justified the myth of Eternal Return. Similarly, the recurrences of the rise and fall of empires was recognized along with political cycles that begin with aristocracy and degenerate into despotism. Perhaps no one said it more eloquently than the Wise Preacher Solomon himself in the book of Ecclesiastes:

One generation goes and another comes, but the earth remains forever. The wind goes to the south and circles about the north; it circles and circles about continually, and on its circuit the wind returns and again. All the rivers run into the sea, and yet the sea is not full. To the place from which the rivers come, to there and from there they return again. All things are weary with toil and all words are feeble; man cannot utter it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. The thing that has been – it is what will be again, and that which has been done is that which will be done again, and there is nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:4-9).

In short, the ancients had an inherent prejudice against real change in history. The life and death cycles of nature not only trumped the importance of novelty but also prevented true progress and the possibility of reaching an eschatological goal from a historical point of view. Both Greek historians Herodotus (484-425 B.C.) and Thucydides (460-395 B.C.) followed the Greek cyclical view of time. Herodotus believed in a cosmic law of equilibrium of historical and natural forces, and Thucydides presumed that since human nature does not change, neither does history.<sup>11</sup>

On the Roman side of the hyphen, the cyclical view of history is perhaps best exemplified by Titus Livy (59 B.C.-17 A.D.). In Livy's *Early History of Rome*, he traces the historical account of Rome from its wild foundation by Romulus and Remus to roughly 350 B.C. Much of Livy's account revolves around the constant class struggle between the *plebians* (the lower class poor) and the *patricians* (the upper class rich) that is never resolved. The class struggle continues to reverberate throughout the entire history of Rome so that nothing really ever changes. Very unlike Marx, Livy did not believe that the problem of class warfare would somehow be ameliorated in the future. The past soundly demonstrated otherwise and thus presaged the future as well.

This is not to say that the ancients had no appreciation for a linear concept of time. Some certainly did. The Epicurean rationalist philosopher Lucretius (99-55 B.C.) certainly acknowledged the progressive rise of knowledge and civilization as a "step by step" historical process.<sup>12</sup> However, very unlike the moderns, he was not an optimist concerning the future. Lucretius was very pessimistic like so many other scholars and poets of his day. One will thus look in vain throughout the Greco-Roman literature to find a theory of hopeful human progress within history that is so typical of the modern mindset. While Plato may have contemplated a future utopian state, he never hoped for it, nor assumed that it could somehow be historically obtained in the future.

Indeed, it was the Roman Stoic philosopher Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 B.C. – 65 A.D.) who starkly wrote, "Ambitious, give up your fears; anxious, your fears. Vast chaos and the hungry mouth of Time consume us all."<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in many important ways, the Roman world was inferior to classical Greece. The Roman Empire "did singularly little to advance knowledge on any of the paths that the Greeks had opened up."<sup>14</sup> When compared to the Greeks, the Romans demonstrated retrogression rather than progress. Roman historian Polybius (200-118 B.C.) uniquely understood that all events do lead up to an end, but for him, the end game was domination of the Roman Empire, not progress or utopia.<sup>15</sup>

Greco-Roman philosophical and religious meaning was not tied to history, the apocalyptic future, or prophecy like it so often is in the Bible. Meaning in life would rather be found in timeless tales far removed from the hopeless circularity of history. Generally speaking, meaning in life was either abstractly contemplated by philosophers, or mystically appreciated through religious forms of spiritual escapism. It is the Bible alone that places such a premium on history and prophecy. While the God the Bible certainly

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<sup>11</sup> Lowith, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Carus, Titus Lucretius. *The Nature of Things*, 1446-1457, p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> Seneca, Lucius Annaeus. *Four Tragedies and Octavia*, 398-400, p. 171.

<sup>14</sup> Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History*, p. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Lowith, p. 7.

stands outside of history and time, He has chosen to reveal Himself historically and incarnationally which will ultimately have prophetic consequences in both time and eternity.

Unlike the Greeks and Romans, biblical meaning and purpose are inextricably bound up with history and prophecy. God has a purposeful plan in history centered in the first historical coming of Christ in great anticipation of his apocalyptic second coming. The humble king who was first rejected will ultimately return to the earth in great victory to set up the kingdom of God – a kingdom full of justice, peace and prosperity. The Greeks and Romans, however, did not share this eschatological view of history. To them, neither history, nor the apocalypse was ever seen as the basis for a future redemptive hope. The Greeks and Romans did not believe that history was meaningless, but it was still “not meaningful in the sense of being directed toward an ultimate end in a transcendent purpose that comprehends the whole course of events.”<sup>16</sup> In fact, very unlike the moderns, Greeks and Romans very often viewed history as something to escape from. What the Greeks and Romans were looking for was not a future redemption within the confines of the historical process, but a timeless beyond where suffering and death no longer held sway over the material body. To the classical world, time and history were not goal-orientated, but something to be lamented.

Memory of the past is insufficient to come up with the typically modern version of progressive hope within history. The Greco-Roman civilization had something of a linear concept of time. They did recognize the rise of civilization from its primitive ancestry, but they never associated human progress with future hope:

As for the destiny of man in history, the Greeks believed that man has resourcefulness to meet every situation with magnanimity – they did not go further than that. They were primarily concerned with the *logos* of the *kosmos*, not with the Lord and the meaning of history. Even the tutor<sup>17</sup> of Alexander the Great depreciated history over against poetry, and Plato might have said that the sphere of change and contingency is the province of historiography but not of philosophy. To the Greek thinkers a philosophy of history would have been a contradiction in terms.<sup>18</sup>

Eternal return and the relative meaninglessness of history was too strong of an influence on their hearts and minds to alter their pessimistic historical consciousness. They had some of the qualifying ingredients to contemplate the possibility of progress and hope, but there was a crucial link missing. That missing link was the Judeo-Christian historical outlook which provided an eschatological meaning to history:

When we remember that II Isaiah<sup>19</sup> and Herodotus were almost contemporaries, we realize the unbridgeable gulf that separates Greek wisdom from Jewish faith. The Christian and post-Christian outlook on history is futuristic, perverting the classical meaning of *historein*, which is related to present and past events. In the Greek and Roman mythologies and genealogies the past is re-presented as an everlasting foundation. In the Hebrew and Christian view of history, the past is a promise to the future; consequently, the interpretation of the past becomes a prophecy in reverse, demonstrating the past as a meaningful preparation for the future. Greek philosophers and historians were convinced that whatever is to happen will be the same pattern and character as past and present events; they never indulged in the prospective possibilities of the future.<sup>20</sup>

The Judeo-Christian apocalypse, everywhere assumed throughout the Old and New Testaments, provided an eschatological solution to the problem of history, suffering, and death. Furthermore, not only did Judeo-Christian eschatology provide meaning to history, it also gave hope and purpose to history as well. It was these meaningful eschatological and teleological features that helped pave the way for a

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<sup>16</sup> Lowith, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle was Alexander the Great's tutor.

<sup>18</sup> Lowith, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Jewish German scholar Karl Lowith (1897-1973) assumed the German higher critical theories of the Old Testament were true. He therefore makes deuterio-Isaiah contemporary with Herodotus in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

<sup>20</sup> Lowith, p. 6.

goal-orientated future utopianism that has consumed much of modern political thought, especially with regard to Marxism.

The progressive, linear concept of time and the modern orientation toward a hopeful, goal directed historical future are all based on countless biblical prophecies. The Judeo Christian worldview stressed that “history was primarily a history of salvation and, as such, the proper concern of prophets, preachers, and teachers. The very existence of a philosophy of history and its quest for meaning is due to the history of salvation; it emerged from the faith in an ultimate purpose.”<sup>21</sup> In particular, Isaiah and Micah prophesied that the nations will finally one day “hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3).” Today, this particular prophecy has become the very symbol of the United Nations. Even the great transition from the Old to the New Testament strongly teaches a progressive revelation of God within the confines of history. It is this particular view of history that modernity has wholeheartedly adopted, yet has abandoned the religious milieu in which such ideas were originally born.

### ***Marxian Economic Materialism as the Driving Force of Historical Evolution***

Certainly Marx was an economic analyst and a social scientist. Marx’s infamous *Das Kapital* is a herculean critique of what is today routinely called capitalism. The size and scope of the book is as intimidating as Communism itself. While Marx did spend an inordinate amount of time meticulously describing what he believed was the unfairness of the capitalistic system, he remained largely unaware that his primary motivation for writing such material was based on a philosophy of history that was far removed from his knowledge of political economy that he often prided himself in. In truth, Karl Marx was most concerned about understanding the historical developments that were propelling mankind toward communism and away from unjust capitalistic oppression. In 1867, “Marx was preparing to publish *Capital*, in which all history is absorbed into an economic process moving toward a final world revolution and world renovation. Representing the revolutionary movement of the 40’s in its most radical form, Marx wanted not to retard but to hasten the disintegration of the bourgeois-capitalist society for the sake of the final consummation of the whole historical process.”<sup>22</sup>

In his *Communist Manifesto*, Marx famously wrote, “let the ruling class tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians (the working class) have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win!”<sup>23</sup> The hubris of this statement is loaded with redemptive and eschatological ramifications. No matter how much Karl Marx may have asserted to the contrary, the overthrow of oppression and winning the world cannot be understood apart from a Messianic view of history. In fact, Marx believed that the Communist state that was about ready to be set up, beginning with the advanced country of Germany itself,<sup>24</sup> would eventually justify the suffering man through the evolutionary movement of history. The Communist state would eventually bring about a redemption that would surpass all the oppressive evils of the past and bring about a political harmony never seen before in human history – the equality of the Communistic man, i.e., a world without kings, feudalism and capitalism. The Communist state would be a veritable utopia on earth after a long evolutionary process of human suffering due to undeveloped economic realities and structural conditions that heretofore had been exploited by the ruling classes.

Karl Marx sharply criticized those who tried to solve their problems philosophically or religiously, i.e., in thought, and advocated that they can only be solved by changing reality in practice so that the problem disappears. For Marx, both religion and philosophy was too abstract because it could not change the empirical circumstances for the betterment of mankind. Marx claimed that the problem of religion and philosophy was its other-worldly, metaphysical nature. He found this continually annoying as it separated ideas from the material reality in which men must live. Instead, Marx asked for “the realm of reality and the realm of ideas to be made identical; he asked for practice to become philosophical and philosophy to become practical.”<sup>25</sup> For Marx, “philosophy has to become worldly political economy – Marxism.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 41.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Gruner, p. 73.

<sup>26</sup> Lowith, p. 35.

In other words, philosophy and religion had to be brought down to earth so that secular redemption could come through revolutionary practice, and not through thought or faith. As such, it was Marx who infamously wrote “the philosophers have only interpreted the world differently, what matters is to change it.”<sup>27</sup> Due to their indifference to the material necessities of life, philosophy and religion could only maintain the oppressive status quo. According to Marx, the abstraction and mysticism of both philosophy and religion were also used to artificially justify the oppressive exploitation of the working classes. Instead of representing truth, therefore, Marx asserted that philosophers and religionists espoused false ideologies detached from the real world that did no earthly good to society. Philosophy and religion invariably justified alienating forces in society that needed to be ameliorated. Henceforth, revolutionary, political activism became the hallmark of Marxist tradition, and his salvation program consisted of ridding mankind of the alienating traditions of philosophy and religion.

Marx especially hated idealism and the famous Cartesian dictum, “I think, therefore I am.”<sup>28</sup> Such a statement allowed Descartes to doubt everything that existed, including parts of his body, but he was not able to doubt his own consciousness.<sup>29</sup> The idealism of Descartes represents the epitome of western philosophy’s intense enthusiasm for an ideal, autonomous mind apart from the material world which surrounds it. Coinciding with the conception that man was made in God’s image, idealism held that the human consciousness belonged to the property of spirit. For the idealists, life was sealed up in the mind, expressing “the conviction that the fundamental history of humankind is the history of the mind.”<sup>30</sup>

It was this idealism, separating the mind from material reality, that Marx vehemently rejected. Marx saw man as abstract and indeterminate “without certain material and social conditions of existence.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, a man is not an individual without them.<sup>32</sup> Material realities are inextricably caught up with his entire being. In short, Marx refused to treat consciousness as abstract.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, in his preface to the second edition of *Das Kapital*, Marx wrote, “the ideal is nothing but the material world reflected in the mind of man, and translated into forms of thought.”<sup>34</sup>

Marx did not distinguish between material and intellectual activity because he viewed man as a practical being first. For Marx, to act humanly is to work.<sup>35</sup> Marx asserted man is primarily a needy being. To survive, he is forced to struggle with nature and work. This means that human beings are “essentially fabricators, changers, shapers, fashioners.”<sup>36</sup> As man works and struggles with nature, man “acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature.”<sup>37</sup> As such, as man interacts with his environment through economic activity, labor and work shapes the truth that men seek. Practical concerns determine knowledge.<sup>38</sup> Objective truth is therefore not a question of theory but of practice.<sup>39</sup>

For Marx, the pursuit of truth is materially grounded. Men do not pursue it because they have an allegedly innate love of truth or a disinterested desire for knowledge, for both these are historically derived and not inherent in human nature. Rather they pursue truth because they are needy beings who must engage in successful material and political praxis in order to satisfy their needs. If men had no needs, or did not care whether or not they satisfied them, or were able to satisfy them by waving a magic wand, they would accept the world as it is and not endeavor to know and control it.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Marx, Karl. *Theses on Feuerbach*, point 11.

<sup>28</sup> Descartes, Rene. *Discourse on Method and Meditations on First Philosophy*, pp. 18, 61.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 57-67.

<sup>30</sup> Barrett, William. *Death of the Soul*, p. 53.

<sup>31</sup> Parekh, Bhiku. *Marx’s Theory of Ideology*, p. 39.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Leff, Gordon. *The Tyranny of Concepts: A Critique of Marxism*, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Marx, Karl. *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 102.

<sup>35</sup> McBride, William. *The Philosophy of Marx*, p. 88.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 283.

<sup>38</sup> Parekh, p. 189.

<sup>39</sup> Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, point 2.

<sup>40</sup> Parekh., pp. 188-89.

For Marx, “knowledge cannot be understood, nor does it occur independently of its relation to action, the object of which is to change what is known.”<sup>41</sup> Knowledge is “never static since it affects the world around it.”<sup>42</sup> Marx himself bellowed, “man must prove the truth, i.e., reality and power, the worldliness of his thinking, in practice.”<sup>43</sup> Later Marxist writers would describe this materialistic process as praxis. Through successful praxis, man changes reality, his knowledge, and himself “so that it is history and not nature which reveals what man essentially is.”<sup>44</sup>

Since Marx insisted that the distinguishing mark of man is his ability to produce through the efforts of labor, he believed that the truth of who man is in his essence is objectified by the products of his own labor:

Human energy is objectified in the products of labor; and the labor being man’s essence, man himself becomes objectified. Marx calls this objectification self-externalization. Through work, man shows what he is and what he can do. Work produces objects that have a kind of existence of their own. Since these objects do not exist for themselves, but as means for sustaining of life, they fulfill their purpose by being destroyed in the form of consumption and so serve man’s reproduction.<sup>45</sup>

For Marx, however, self-externalization objectified in the products of industry leads to the alienation of man because of the great societal problem of the division of labor:

Social alienation occurs when man’s freedom over what he has created for his own enjoyment is taken away from him, when he is dispossessed of his own creation in the form of products or objects, when what he has externalized of himself is prevented from being internalized again as an object for subjective needs and their fulfillment.<sup>46</sup>

Social cooperation bases itself upon a division of labor and the specialization that goes along with it. As such, people can no longer consume all that they produce, and what they produce will often be consumed by another:

The individual no longer produces all needs but leaves it to others, according to their qualification, to contribute to the preservation of the whole. Thus the division of labor ... forms social institutions with roles that cannot be disregarded without causing immediate disturbance in all individual lives. The existence of all now depends on the particular contribution of each ... The social structure begins to acquire a life of its own, largely independent of its parts, and also develops an autonomy that tends to ignore the will of the members.<sup>47</sup>

In a word, the division of labor takes away freedom. It makes laborers and producers dependent upon an economic system which alienates them from their true essence, i.e., their work. Since work has been alienated by the division of labor, man himself is alienated as well.

For Marx, the root of all oppression and alienation in the world springs out of the division of labor. In the Marxist system, the division of labor signifies nothing other than the fall of mankind. Not only does the division of labor take away freedom, but it also redistributes it so that some people have it and others do not. The division of labor allows for some to be able to take control over production and make others dependent up on this control. The result is the development of classes and class warfare which Marx says leads to a further divide between mental and material labor with the mental laborers ruling over the material laborers, “the division of labor ... manifests itself also in the ruling class as the division of mental

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<sup>41</sup> Carlsnaes, Walter. *The Concept of Ideology and Political Analysis: A Critical Examination of its Usage by Marx, Lenin, and Mannheim*, p. 40.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, point 2.

<sup>44</sup> Gruner, p. 71.

<sup>45</sup> Barth, Hans. *Truth and Ideology*, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> Carlsnaes, p. 42-43.

<sup>47</sup> Barth, p. 82.

and material labor, so that inside this class one part appears as the thinkers of the class, while the others' attitude to these ideas and illusions is more passive and receptive, because they are in reality the active members of this class and have less time to make up illusions and ideas about themselves."<sup>48</sup> At this juncture, ideas become separate from reality. Theology and philosophy take over and simultaneously become "a manifestation of human misery and an attempt to escape from it."<sup>49</sup>

The result is idealism in its worst form as people are forced to look and imagine outside of reality for answers. It leads to the hallucination that consciousness can be viewed as apart from and separate from its existential conditions. "The separation of mental from physical work causes the human consciousness to create for itself an object of its own, the world of essences and ideas, which it now regards as the moving forces and ultimate aims of history."<sup>50</sup> As such, the division of labor leads to a false consciousness that subjugates man and dehumanizes him by making him "feel historically impotent."<sup>51</sup> The division of labor thus reflects man's lack of control over his own life, both the products that he creates and his relationship with other men. He becomes enslaved and oppressed to alien economic and social forms, so that instead of being a part of society, he feels separated from it.<sup>52</sup> Theology, philosophy and ideology then come along and justify this alienating relationship between people. It leads to what could be easily characterized as the tyranny of philosophical and religious concepts. "When traditional philosophy or theology represents political constitutions, judicial systems, and national codes of ethics as the manifestations of some metaphysical principle or divine being, it is simply testimony of man's ability to recognize that the superhuman power, whether it be God or the world spirit, is merely an expression of human self or alienation."<sup>53</sup>

Closely related is that Marx also believed all historical social evolution is rooted in labor and economic activity. Since man is primarily a laborer or producer, he is helplessly ensnared by socio-economic circumstances that inform his intentions. As his relational experiences are structured, so are his social experiences, and since his social experiences are structured, his forms of thought are as well. There is therefore no such thing as an isolated individual. People are socially conditioned or determined:

For Marx, man is an integral part of society, occupies a specific position in it, is shaped and circumscribed by the dominant patterns of relationship, has a limited range of alternatives available to him, and is profoundly constrained by the ideological, social, economic, and other pressures. His social context or being is an integral part of him; he taken together with it, constitutes the individual. No man therefore, can be detached from his social being and judged in the abstract.<sup>54</sup>

Such a collectivist position reflects the very heart and soul of communistic thought. A society is not a collection of individuals. On the contrary, Marx proudly asserted, "human essence is not an abstract notion inherent in the isolated individual. In reality, it is the ensemble of social relations."<sup>55</sup> Marx also wrote that all social life was practical, "all mysteries that mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in comprehension of this practice."<sup>56</sup> Marx strongly desired to root man in the economic and social realities of life which are objectively collectivist rather than abstractly isolated.

To help illustrate his dense materialism, Marx taught that society was likened to a building in which the socio-economic foundation supports the superstructure of politics, law, religion, morality, customs and philosophy. As a superstructure rests on its base, and not the other way around, the implication is that the base determines the superstructure. As the foundation, the mode of economic production is therefore the most significant part of the building as it supports all the rest. It follows then that the superstructure represents the cultural preservation and rationalization of the current economic mode of production. However, as the economic foundation shifts, the cultural-philosophical-political superstructure collapses without proper footing.

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<sup>48</sup> Marx, Karl *German Ideology*.

<sup>49</sup> Gruner, p. 72.

<sup>50</sup> Barth, p. 88.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Leff, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> Barth, p. 89.

<sup>54</sup> Parekh, p. 6.

<sup>55</sup> Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, point 6.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., point 8.

## ***Marxian Evolutionary Social Science & Hegelian Eschatology***

Even though Marx concludes that theological and philosophical ideologies cannot help change the oppressive status quo and are only manifestations of these domineering conditions, he strongly contends that human praxis cannot be denied. Social production never stops. It goes on changing, adapting and developing. Marx strongly held that the motor behind all human progress is economic social production. This is crucial for Marx because he believed that all changes in history are preceded by changes in productive forces,<sup>57</sup> and sooner or later, the expanding forces of production clash with the productive relations. Under Marxian social science, productive forces are defined as tools, techniques, and knowledge that man uses to survive in the natural world. Productive relations, on the other hand, are defined as relations of control over these productive forces.<sup>58</sup>

Under the Marxian interpretation this meant a contradiction develops between the social/political/ideological setup and the material forces of production; this results in an explosion when the former is violently adapted to the latter. Social and political institutions fail to keep in step with the economic development; they first restrict it and finally block it altogether.<sup>59</sup>

As the productive relations and the ideological forms lag behind,<sup>60</sup> the productive forces are restricted within the confines of the class structure. "As a result, the productive forces can no longer develop freely within the confines of the class structure: the old fetters the new, the relations fetter the forces, the contraction fetters the expansion."<sup>61</sup> In 1859, Marx wrote, "at a certain stage of development, the material productive forces of society come into conflict with the existing relations of production or – this merely expresses the same thing in legal terms – with the property relations within the framework of which they have operated hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an era of social revolution. The changes in the economic foundation lead sooner or later to the transformation of the whole immense superstructure."<sup>62</sup> In short, Marx believed that the ideas associated with social political institutions fail to keep up with economic progress which eventually outstrips and overthrows them.<sup>63</sup>

As such, Marx espoused the atheistic position that not only is all intellectual life conditioned by literal, materialistic socio-economic causes, but that such a literal dialectical relationship between man and the material forces of nature inevitably propels him progressively upward and onward toward the ultimate goal of socialistic freedom at the end of history. Marx understood economic contradiction, revolution and social transformation as materialistic vehicles of societal progress. In other words, the contradiction between the productive forces and relations press for realignment, but in any class society, this contradiction is very stressful because changes require the overthrow of the exploitive class. However, evolutionary change is the law of life and cannot be denied. The pressure, therefore, between the productive forces and the productive relation are finally released in revolution, and the result is a higher synthesis and realignment of that society. "In this manner the historical process takes on the character of a progressive movement."<sup>64</sup>

Marx's conception of history was shaped by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770-1831) dialectical methodology. In order to change the world, one must understand the laws of change. Marx was convinced that Hegel's dialectical methodology was the "logic of movement, of evolution, of change."<sup>65</sup> Hegel declared that the root of all movement and change is contradiction. Contradictory movements within history clash with each other. The fallout of the collision produces a new higher synthesis which Hegel called the dialectic:

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<sup>57</sup> Heiss, Robert. *Heiss, Kierkegaard*, Marx, p. 367.

<sup>58</sup> Rader, Melvin. *Marx's Interpretation of History*, p. 13.

<sup>59</sup> Gruner, pp. 83-84.

<sup>60</sup> Heiss, p. 367.

<sup>61</sup> Rader, p. 13.

<sup>62</sup> Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 12.

<sup>63</sup> Gruner, p. 84.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>65</sup> Novack, George Edward. *An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism*, p. 72.

To say that something develops dialectically is saying that it necessarily falls out with itself and releases its own opposite from itself so as to return to itself again – not by becoming the same as it had been originally but by realizing its unity on a higher level such that it is reconciled with its opposite, it then falls out with itself once more and so on.<sup>66</sup>

Through the synthesis of antithetical contradictions, history not only develops, but it also progresses. History becomes a struggle, and it is through this struggle that improvement is made.

However, Marx had to sever himself from Hegel's idealism. "Hegel was a metaphysician of the purest water."<sup>67</sup> Hegel's contradictions were sealed up in his idealistic thought. Hegel saw the contradictions of life as first and foremost a struggle between philosophical ideas competing and clashing with each other, but ultimately cross-fertilizing one another so that philosophy actually progresses. Furthermore, Hegel believed in a form of evolutionary pantheism that deified man. "Hegel denied the fundamental difference between the human and the divine. He thought of God as developing in man towards final perfection. This entailed that man was becoming more godlike and eventually fit to step outside history."<sup>68</sup> Truth itself was therefore not something to be approximated, but it was progressive by its very nature, pantheistically and eschatologically developing man, world and spirit within history. Since such idealism was a sacrilege in the Marxian system, Marx restricted Hegel's dialectic solely to the realm of political economy. Historical dialectical evolution was materially grounded. It is the conflict of classes which develops history, not the conflict of ideas. Marx thus famously turned Hegel's idealism upside down into a crass materialism that could explain the entire meaning of history.

Marx was convinced that this historical 'dialectic' was propelling mankind to greater and greater socio-economic production, distribution, and hence communistic freedom from the tyranny of capitalism. Over time, man's needs would be increasingly met to a greater and greater degree so that the working class divisions based on individualism, competition, and oppression would one day become obsolete and irrational. Through literal and materialistic contradictions of socio-economic conditions on the ground, history is dialectically moving in a revolutionary way to a higher and higher synthesis all the time.

Marx also viewed this whole dialectical process as inevitable. The 'scientific' laws of socio-economic evolutionary production and distribution, i.e., dialectical materialism, were considered inviolable. By seizing onto Hegel's dialectical method and applying it to socio-economic political realities on the ground, Marx went so far so as to predict the future. Having understood the laws of change and revolution that occur within history, Marx believed that he could create an outline for the development for the future communist advent centered in the rise of the proletariat, i.e., the working class who will usher in the new man of communism. Marx saw "in the proletariat the world-historical instrument for achieving the eschatological aim of history by a world revolution. The proletariat is the chosen people of historical materialism."<sup>69</sup>

Marx believed this wholeheartedly because in his mind, modern industry had simplified class struggle by bringing massive populations of workers into cities and towns and making them all subject to the same alienating capitalistic forces as everyone else. The 'us' verses 'them' could not be more clear under industrial capitalism, and the vast numbers of the proletariat was on the side of the working class. Karl Marx wrote "our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is splitting up more and more into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat."<sup>70</sup> He then pointed out, "Modern industry has converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist. Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers."<sup>71</sup> Likewise, for Marx, the small business owners and tradesmen will eventually "sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which Modern Industry is carried on and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized

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<sup>66</sup> Gruner, p. 58.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

<sup>68</sup> Gruner, pp. 68-69.

<sup>69</sup> Lowith, p. 37.

<sup>70</sup> Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production.”<sup>72</sup> Finally, thanks to the fact the industrial capitalism had destroyed the feudalism of the aristocracy together with its class divisions based on ‘natural’ superiority, the only nexus between the owner and the laborer was naked cash money<sup>73</sup> – a relationship which can never be justified or made permanent.

Marx thus believed that the endgame of this grand, evolutionary struggle in history was finally in sight. It would be decided in a great, apocalyptic revolution between the capitalists and the working class, with the proletariat being declared the victors. Through literal dialectical materialism, capitalism will have produced its own negation, i.e., the working class, by oppressing them. They, in turn, will eventually bring about the final rebellion against the capitalists to usher in the communist state. The capitalist stage of human history was to be “the closing chapter of the pre-historic stage of human society.”<sup>74</sup>

Oddly enough, however, the industrial proletariat will not produce its own negation. Due to the dialectical progress of mankind, production and distribution will no longer be a problem that created all of the class warfare in the first place. “Thanks to the expansive forces of capitalism and the growth of technology, such enormous progress has been made in the productive capacity that the whole class structure of modern society, including its ideological expressions, has become obsolete and irrational – a fetter rather than a spur to progress.”<sup>75</sup> The circumstances that require a division of labor will disappear making oppression based on class ideology materially impossible.

Hence, Marx foolishly believed he had resolved the problem of blind utopianism and false religious hope through the social ‘science’ of his evolutionary dialectical materialism. One could have ‘faith’ in the future without relying on God or religion. The social science of Marxian dialectical eschatology was sacrosanct, “what the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable.”<sup>76</sup>

With the advent of the communist state, mankind finally and literally reaches Marx’s materialistic millenarian paradise of atheism. Hence, in Marxism is seen one of the most vulgar forms of salvation by works ever conceived. Marx even presumed that once the revolutionary eschaton arrives, all of the false religious, theological and philosophical ideologies connected to medieval feudalism and capitalism will become superfluous in light of the evolutionary communistic progress of mankind. Esoteric religion and abstract philosophy based upon the backward socio-economic realities of the past will be relegated to the ash heap of history, all in the name of the progressive communist state.

Thus, Marx assumed as a matter of course that the ‘literal’ socio-economic evolutionary laws of history were inevitably leading mankind into the promised land of worldwide communism and socialism, free from useless philosophies, religious superstitions, selfish individualism and its inherent attachment to class divisions and the affliction of the working class. Under communism, the reality of what is will be reconciled with the reality of what ought to be. “The end and meaning of history should be the complete recovery of man. Once this goal is realized, social struggle comes to an end, and so does history. The realm of necessity is finished, and the realm of freedom begins, when the production and distribution of goods is socially controlled and has ceased to dominate man. Man at last returns to himself, his reintegration becomes a fact.”<sup>77</sup>

### ***The Outstanding Eschatological & ‘Scientific’ Inconsistencies of Marxian Fundamentalism***

In spite of Marx’s full scale frontal assault on Christianity, he remained completely oblivious to the basic Messianic spirit of his own political ideology. Instead of being the great socio-economic scientist that he assumed himself to be, he was, in fact, a speculative philosopher of history completely indebted to the Judeo-Christian apocalyptic heritage that he so routinely denounced and despised:

Neither the concepts of bourgeoisie and proletariat, nor the general view of history as an ever intensified struggle between two hostile camps, nor, least of all, the anticipation of its dramatic climax, can be verified in a purely empirical way. It is only in Marx’s ideological

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>73</sup> Lowith, p. 39.

<sup>74</sup> Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, p. 13.

<sup>75</sup> Rader, pp. 13-14.

<sup>76</sup> Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 19.

<sup>77</sup> Barth, p. 63.

consciousness that all history is a history of class struggles, while the real driving force behind this conception is a transparent messianism which has its unconscious root in Marx's own being, even in his race. He was a Jew of the Old Testament stature, though an emancipated Jew of the 19th century who felt strongly antireligious and even anti-Semitic. It is the old Jewish messianism and prophetism – unaltered by 2,000 years of economic history from handicraft to large scale industry – and Jewish insistence on absolute righteousness which explain the idealistic basis of Marx's materialism. Though perverted into secular prognostication, the Communist Manifesto still retains the basic features of a messianic faith.<sup>78</sup>

Not only did Marx develop a nuanced philosophy of history based on five epochs, but even these could easily be reduced to three.<sup>79</sup> Much like Christianity, Marx held to a basic tripartite division of history: the age of primitive communism standing for the age of innocence when communal hunter gatherers were dependent upon nature, followed by the division of labor in which the innocence of primitive communism was lost, and then completed by a return to a perfected communism at the end of history that was independent of nature showing how much man had progressed through the millennia. The fact that Marx even believed that the industrial proletariat will not produce his own negation further shows his indebtedness to apocalypticism:

It is not by chance that the last antagonism between the two hostile camps of bourgeoisie and proletariat corresponds to the Jewish-Christian belief in a final fight between Christ and Antichrist in the last epoch of history, that the task of the proletariat corresponds to the world-historical mission of the chosen people, that the redemptive and universal function of the most degraded class is conceived on the religious pattern of Cross and Resurrection, that the ultimate transformation of the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom, ... and that the whole process of history as outlined in the Communist Manifesto corresponds to the general scheme of the Jewish-Christian interpretation of history as a providential advance toward a final goal which is meaningful. Historical materialism is essentially, though secretly, a history of fulfillment and salvation in terms of social economy.<sup>80</sup>

According to Marx, the dialectic of history will come to an end in the communist eschaton. "The historical development was ruled by a principle such that this development reaches a point of completion; history is driven by a mechanism which causes history to abolish itself."<sup>81</sup> At that time, the necessity of dialectical materialism will be transformed into the eschaton of communistic freedom.

Needless to say, such an optimistic, apocalyptic view of history cannot be defended by science or by the 'literal' laws of socio-economic dialectical materialism as Marx would have it. Marx's use of science to explain eschatology is a gross misuse not of only of science but also of politics and history as well. Dialectical revolutionary change in and of itself does not and cannot necessitate progress. Indeed, it may even be entirely the opposite as it most certainly was in the case of 20th century Communism:

... that all historical change is dialectical in nature confers meaning on history only if dialectical change is also conceived as a change for the better or as going towards the realization of a goal or purpose. It is these features, i.e., the element of value and/or purpose, which generate meaning, not the dialectical rhythms as such. The latter by itself can only be neutral, at best, a matter of fact or of logic.<sup>82</sup>

Marx followed Hegel too closely. Marx presupposed that a synthesis through dialectical change leads to a higher and better state than the previous one. Struggle and the human misery associated with it had to be justified by the communist state at the end of history. Marx's so-called social science therefore views

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<sup>78</sup> Lowith, p. 44.

<sup>79</sup> Gruner, pp. 83-84.

<sup>80</sup> Lowith, pp. 44-45.

<sup>81</sup> Gruner, p. 84.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

history itself as redemptive – an ungrounded presupposition of the highest metaphysical order. History at once not only becomes a purpose-driven teleology, but is also deified. As such, the very theological and philosophical worldviews that Marx spent great pains trying to avoid throughout his entire life, was a materialistic mirage.

More troublesome still is that the great philosophical problem between determinism and freedom reappears once more. Marx was never able to reconcile the tension between his economic determinism and that men themselves “are their own agents in changing their history and themselves.”<sup>83</sup> For Marx, the great difference between what is the case and what ought to be the case results in a great chasm between science and eschatology, empiricism and philosophy of history.<sup>84</sup> To understand a historical development as deterministic according to inexorable scientific laws is to understand it as blind. This rules out the possibility of understanding it as rationally aligned toward a goal.<sup>85</sup> Marx deceived himself into believing that his social science could have it both ways, i.e., that dialectical socio-economic materialism was a blind force leading man and history into a rational, goal-orientated eschaton free from oppression. This is nothing but a leftist liberal fantasy built on what should be called dialectical fundamentalism:

Marx, in fact, knew before all scientific investigation that the present world order is wrong and is going to be put right, that man is a deformed, alienated being and will become whole and integrated. But intuitive certainty and millenarian expectation were not sufficient; what was required was rational support, and this has to be given at all costs in the form of which the moderns alone consider acceptable, the form of science, no matter that science also happens to be totally unsuitable.

Once again, science becomes dogged by its shadow – scientism. Marx’s social science was as much of an ideology as it was a philosophy of man and a theology about history. He was a millennial prophet of communistic scientism and apocalyptic revolution. “It would have been quite impossible to elaborate the vision of the proletariat’s messianic vocation on a purely scientific basis and to inspire millions of followers by a bare statement of the facts.”<sup>86</sup>

Indeed, leftist European intellectual Andre Gorz (1923-2007), who was very sympathetic to Marxism, severely criticized Marx’s eschatology, “we are not going anywhere. History has no meaning. There is nothing to be hoped for from history, and no reason to sacrifice anything to that idol. No longer can we give ourselves to a transcendent cause, expecting that it will repay our suffering and reward our sacrifice with interest.”<sup>87</sup> He even lamented over the fact that there was a crisis in Marxism that too many Marxists were ignoring – the very proletariat that they had set their hope on as the vanguard of revolutionary change had been shown to be a collectivized myth.<sup>88</sup> As far as Gorz is concerned, “the philosophy of the proletariat is a religion.”<sup>89</sup> Gorz enlightens his leftist readers further by informing them that Marxism was nothing more than a syncretism of Christianity, Hegelianism and scientism.<sup>90</sup> Gorz then replaced Hegel’s eschatology with the Marxian existentialism of Jean Paul Satre (1905-1980) and drifted over into the green movement as well. Many modern Marxists have followed suit.

However, even though Gorz gave up on Marxian apocalypticism that promoted the vicarious action of the working class, he still looked forward to a socialist utopia.<sup>91</sup> Thus, Gorz still unwittingly held to the forward looking Christian eschatological perspective that strongly informed his utopian worldview. He just rejected Marx’s cultish views of the proletariat and the scientism that went along with it. This, however, does not resolve the fundamental problem of Gorz’s worldview. Whether or not the Marxian utopia is viewed as scientifically inevitable or not is beside the point. Gorz is still operating under Christian eschatology so typical of modern man in general. Modern man rejects Christianity but still maintains its eschatological perspective:

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<sup>83</sup> Leff, p. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Gruner, p. 87.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Lowith, p. 45.

<sup>87</sup> Gorz, Andre. *Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay on Post Industrial Socialism*, p. 74.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15, 23-34.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-22.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp. 145-152.

... modern man's understanding of history – and thus also modern philosophy of history – has a religious ancestry without itself being religious. That is to say, it has retained the features such as the linear conception of time and the notion of history as a goal-directed process, but has jettisoned the sacred and supernatural context in which alone they had once made sense.<sup>92</sup>

In other words, a linear concept of time that views history as a goal-directed redemptive process makes little sense apart from an all-powerful transcendent Creator who is sovereign over all of history. Eschatology also requires the resurrection of the dead (Matthew 22:23-33; 1 Corinthians 15:20-32).

Interestingly enough, this was one of the reasons why Marx and Marxists prefer the more apocalyptic millenarian approach to human progress rather than the gradual perfectibility approach of socialism. They were far more realistic than their socialist cousins who saw progress continuing on indefinitely because they rightly understood that this would be meaningless if some kind of apocalyptic advent had not been reached within their own lifetime, or perhaps left to the nearest future generation. In fact, it seems as though Marxists and other modern millenarianists grew increasingly impatient with the slow progress of the human race. Indeed, the more they realized that technological progress was far outpacing social progress, the more mesmerized they became with societal revolution. Instead of producing more and more happiness, progress was breeding more and more discontentment:

What was the value of achievements of science and the improvement of the arts of life, if life itself could not be ameliorated? Was not some radical reconstruction possible in the social fabric, corresponding to the radical reconstruction inaugurated by Descartes in the principles of science and in methods of thought.<sup>93</sup>

Beginning with the French Revolution, the contrast between the Enlightenment and a dark background of social oppression strongly insinuated itself in many people's minds.<sup>94</sup> Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the great thinkers became increasingly preoccupied with social evil.<sup>95</sup>

Like Marx, they thus shifted their reasoning powers from the natural sciences to the social sciences. Furthermore, since social evil was not due to the fact that man was incorrigible, it must exist somewhere within the unequal structural relationships of society. As such, society itself needed to be changed, and the sooner the better.<sup>96</sup> More importantly, they conceived this goal of social redemption not somewhere down the road in the distant future, but rather just right around the corner to be ushered in by some kind of decisive revolution that had close affinities with the apocalypse of Saint John. However, by discarding the Judeo-Christian supernatural context in which the apocalypse alone had once made perfect sense, many Marxists and other modern millenarianists wound up devoting themselves to a political myth that they themselves will never be able to enjoy – perhaps the ultimate vanity of all vanities (Eccl 2:16-22; 4:1-3)..

Without a supernatural, transcendental Source that is not subject to the limitations of the historical process, a hopeful goal-orientated view of history is utter nonsense even with regard to the problem of evil. The disillusionments and grave disappointments that many Marxists and millenarianists often complain about cannot be ameliorated by a future communist and/or socialist eschaton anyway. The suffering of the past is already a historical fact. It demands justice just as much as any future generation that follows it. Why do Marxists place so much focus on ameliorating a future generation that past generations will never be able to enjoy? This secular tension is a contradictory one which only the resurrection of the dead can properly relieve. In short, the Christian apocalypse requires the resurrection:

The very secularity of their thought creates at least one great obstacle to their undertaking. It prevents them from justifying evil in the eyes of those who are affected by it. A man who suffers here and now cannot be consoled by being told that his misery serves a purpose in that it plays its necessary part in ensuring a glorious future for

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<sup>92</sup> Gruner, p. 28.

<sup>93</sup> Bury, p. 127.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp. 127-28.

<sup>96</sup> Dawson, *The Idea of Progress*, p. 5.

generations still to come. What matters to him is his life, and perhaps that of some of his contemporaries and immediate successors, not the life of people who will be born when he has been long dead; why should he have any interest in being a means to their happiness or perfection? In this respect traditional Christianity is on much stronger ground ... for according to its teaching each individual has access to a state of bliss in a future life to which his suffering in this life is essentially related.<sup>97</sup>

Secular eschatology loosed from its Christian moorings invariably degrades all previous generations to the status of a mere means to a future end that none of its peoples will ever be able to share in for the simple reason that they were born at the wrong time. What kind of social justice is this? It even justifies the sacrifice of past generations, which too many Marxist social engineers have been all too willing to be zealously engaged in. As is usually the case with Marxism, the end justifies the means. As such, the alleged Marxian concentration on social justice shows itself a hollow sham that cannot begin to deal with the great evils of life.

In reality, Marxists and modern millenarianists are secular fundamentalists. The 20th century also proved that this is the worst of kind of fundamentalism there is as state sponsored cults, usually under the guise of various forms of Marxism, have been responsible for the biggest genocides that history has yet to witness, all of which uncannily foreshadow the Great Tribulation of the prophetic future, and the rule of the coming Antichrist (1 Thess. 2:1-13; Rev 13). In their modern unbelief, Marxists and modern millenarianists have taken the apocalyptic burdens of Bible prophecies upon their own secular shoulders. This in turn unwittingly opened them up to the practice of horrific social engineering schemes that made the 20th century one gigantic collectivist slaughterhouse that affected the lives of hundreds of millions of people, not to mention the virtual slavery that was left behind in the lives of those who were not sacrificed.

Marxists and modern millenarianists took salvation into their own hands, and tried to convert history itself into an evolutionary forum in which collectivist man will develop himself into an entirely new man not beset by limiting or unfavorable circumstances. Because of their secular approach, such physical limitations and unfavorable circumstances were completely disassociated from the biblical concept of a fallen world. The problems therefore that trouble man had nothing to do with sin against an infinitely holy God, but rather was seen as the haphazard result of chaotic evolutionary processes which can optimistically be overcome by rearranging the 'literal' materialistic causes of such defects. The upshot of all this is that in the process of rearranging and correcting the materialistic causes of the so-called human condition, socialistic engineers have often left behind a staggering body count – quotas which even radical Jihadists have fallen far short of.<sup>98</sup> Worse is that since such social engineering schemes have all been done in the name of progress, science and collectivist politics that has everyone's ultimate good in mind, such shocking numbers have largely been cleansed of all its blood. The religious element latent in the political eschatology of Marxism somehow managed to whitewash the true catastrophic consequences of secular millenarianism.

### **Conclusion**

Unlike Marxists and other modern millenarianists, it has never been the responsibility of the Christian to help usher in the apocalypse. The apocalypse will come in due time according to divine determination, "it is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority (Acts 1:7)." In fact, the Bible teaches in many places that the apocalypse will overtake the world like a thief in the night catching everyone off guard (1 Thess 5:1-3; 2 Pet 3:1-10). Christians must be ready at all times since they do not know the exact time of the return of the Lord (1 Thess 5:4-9; 2 Pet 2:19, 3:10-15).

In other words, the Christian has NOT been called to be a social engineer or a community organizer, but to be a missionary of God's glorious grace to a dying and sinful world. In fact, most social engineering of the Christian is to be accomplished through prayer and witnessing (1 Tim 2:1-7), which is far more effective in changing people than political solutions will ever be. When done biblically, neither

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<sup>97</sup> Gruner, p. 11.

<sup>98</sup> If one includes National Socialism, another millenarian movement because of its emphasis upon the 1,000 year Reich, the body count in World War II alone was 50 million. This does not include Stalin's great purges, the Soviet gulag archipelago, North Korea, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, nor the killing fields of southeast Asia during the 1960's and 1970's.

does such prayerful and evangelistic actions violate the image of God inherent in all people, something which most moderns are not restricted by since they believe in evolution. What's more is that God purposefully forestalls the advent of the apocalypse precisely because it will be so destructive (Amos 5:18-20; Luke 9:51-56; Matthew 13:24-30).

Gathering up the tares too quickly is a common impulse among people that the Bible has much to say about. When Moses first tried to stop the oppression of the Egyptians, he was forced to flee to Midian for 40 years because he murdered an Egyptian citizen in the process. However, during the Exodus, Moses never had to worry about all the dead Egyptian bodies that piled up behind the Hebrews on their way out of Egypt. Men, like Moses, must learn the difficult lesson in life that God's timing is everything.

The great crisis of modern liberal politics is that that Marxists, progressives, and socialists (not to mention fascists & environmentalists), are all attempting to bring about a radical transformation of the world through mere politics, racism, political correctness, multiculturalism and the redistribution of wealth. All the while they make fun of the miraculous that is often found on the pages of the Bible, shockingly, they believe that they can bring about a collectivist utopia upon the earth through sleight of hand processes known as secularization and profanization. Through secularization they have taken apocalyptic notions from the Bible and transposed them into worldly political affairs by gutting the religious element. Through profanization they have taken such sacred eschatological prophecies and have reduced them to the merely secular or mundane by shucking the religious reverence associated with them. Faith, hope, change, transformation and a "yes we can" attitude are thus removed from their religious foundations, and transposed into empty political rhetoric that captivates the politically naïve and the unwary. In short, Christian faith in biblical prophecies has been replaced with the cult of political utopia.

The fundamental problem with Marxian eschatology, if not even the entire modern enterprise itself, is that it takes human history too seriously<sup>99</sup> without proper warrant. They have a faith in the future that is inconsistent with the harsh realities, limitations, sufferings and tragedies of life itself. Even though many moderns assume the meaningless, chaotic, and blind forces of biological evolutionary theory, ironically enough, thanks to their Judeo-Christian heritage, they still have faith in the future. Political eschatology has filled the empty cultural void left to the modern world by Darwin. Indeed, Marxists and millenarianists have purposefully confused history with eschatology in a gigantic attempt to bring about a collectivist social justice in the world this side of the grave. In so doing, however, they have taken human history, one of the most changeable and unreliable of all things, and converted it into a hollow eschatology of political pipe dreams that will never be historically realized. Without Christian theology, ascribing meaning to the ups and downs of history, or trying to justify history in the end through ideologies like communism, is a precarious enterprise at best, but usually dangerously naïve at the very least.

Even more stunning is that Marxists and millenarianists also wish to make their socialist utopia universal and collectivist, which makes it even more impossible to obtain. Such a political course of action requires massive social engineering that invariably runs roughshod over human dignity and freedom. The communistic/socialistic cure has very often been worse than the capitalistic disease they are purportedly trying to ameliorate. The bankruptcy of such an approach is now rearing its ugly head across the entire western world, both figuratively and literally with many states on the verge of economic meltdown. Thanks to their false hopes, dreams, and aspirations in an unobtainable humanistic utopia, many modern states are very close to joining the historical misery of the Third World. This will be the end result of their universal solidarity. All the while they continue to promote secular progress, hope and political eschatology, their false utopianism will ultimately lead them to the apocalypse instead (Psalm 2; Daniel 9:24-27; 1 Thess 5:3; Rev 6-19). The 20<sup>th</sup> century was a millenarian warning – a veritable harbinger of apocalyptic things to come.

*"Come, my people, enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you;  
Hide for a little while until indignation runs its course.  
For behold, the Lord is about to come out from His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;  
And the earth will reveal her bloodshed and will no longer cover her slain."*

*Isaiah 26:20-21*

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<sup>99</sup> Gruner, p. 1.

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