

# Just Another Religion: The Marxist Paradox



Religion is sensibly recognised as the demand to abandon free-thought and reason, and rather to: follow dogmatic doctrine, denounce rival sects as heretical, bow unquestioningly to wise and benevolent superiors, and trust in divine providence and the assured hand of fate. These same characteristics define Marxism (and its various bastard progeny) too.

Karl Marx famously described religion as:

*...the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. (from Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right)*

Paradoxically however, Marx's notions of prostrate submission beneath the proletarian vanguard, noble myths, dialectical self-deceit, and historical-materialism all mimic the stupefying effects of religion. This renders adherents of Marxism in the same intellectual quagmire as Pharisees of other religions. 'But Marxists are atheists!' you may protest. No matter. Even though it drops the god-head and the promise of everlasting life, the Marxist brand of religion is as stultifying, repressive, oppressive, and menacing as even the most ardently fundamentalist Theism.

There are many parallels between Marxism and Theism. For example, the practice of deriving almost all of their ideology from one book (Torah, Bible, Koran, or Das Kapital), the 'Cult of Personality' surrounding figures such as Jesus, Mohammed, Joseph Smith or Ché Guevara, or the habit of manipulating nationalist sentiments to advance their cause. The most important and condemning parallel, however, is that Marxism and Theism are equally the:

*...decisive negation of human liberty... necessarily end[ing] in the enslavement of mankind, both in theory and practice. (Michael Bakunin, God and the State)*

Consider George Orwell's anti-totalitarian classic, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The replacement of Big Brother with a religious icon, Ahmadinejad or Ratzinger maybe, would not alter the dystopian nightmare one iota. 'Double-think' can be identified in the Vatican's vacillation over purgatory – it is invented, preached as gospel truth, then retracted and turns out never to have been true; and in the USSR - Trotsky is a revolutionary hero, then he is declared a treacherous enemy, and then he was never a hero at all – but all along the Vatican and the Kremlin were equally *infallible*. 'Negation of the negation' and other such dialectical devices are a corruption of free-thought and rationale. 'Thought-crime' is also a common theme. Moses' Decalogue forbade 'coveting' neighbour's asses and so on (later reiterated in the New Testament, when Jesus declares those who have considered adultery to be already guilty of adultery). Marxist regimes prohibit free-speech, free-press, freedom of opinion – in other words, free-thought. This demands the impossible from their respective 'masses', everyone is *de facto* guilty of thought-crime - one outcome being the urge to finger-point the transgressions of others, to deflect unwelcome attention from one's own 'impure thoughts'.

This leads us to the importance of maintaining the herd - indoctrinating the young before they can think freely and reasonably, and inquisitions or purges against apostasy and defection. Richard Dawkins, has been vocal among many, against the idea of children being designated as

Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Mormon, whatever - they haven't made a rational choice to join, they've simply been included and indoctrinated because of the religion of their parents. Even when particular sects hold off on official baptism to the age of 13 or 14, the young people involved have scarcely had an opportunity to weigh-up the relative merits of their myriad of options – they have only been told on good authority that their family's religion is the 'one true faith' and the only path to avoid eternal fiery damnation. And so it is under Marxist authoritarianism, the same mind-numbing techniques of propaganda and manipulation of information are used to create unquestioning and obedient subjects who appear to participate fully, freely and wilfully with their particular regime of oppression. In China's Cultural Revolution children were taught to recite Mao's 'Little Red Book' in its entirety, just like scripture. Even outside education, policies of misinformation meant that facts inconsistent with the regimes' purported 'truth' were distorted or even unreported and suppressed. If techniques of homogenisation fall short, as is *highly* probable with the human mind's will to knowledge and freedom, then punishment and correction must be used. The Spanish Inquisition and the Soviet NKVD used essentially the same tactics in torturing false confessions from their victims, and presented their absurd and horrific testimonies as a lesson to other would-be deviants - in both Theism and Marxism *fear* is a key tool for enforcing compliance.

In short, there are no real alternative options. Marxism and Theism represent themselves as

absolute truths – and there are *absolutely* no absolute truths.

The central emphasis of the Torah, Bible, Koran, Das Kapital (and the texts of most other religions) is the certainty of a glorious end-point, the incontrovertible finale where good triumphs over evil. In Theism, all the faithful float up into heaven and all the baddies burn and suffer in eternal torment; In Marxism, there is perfect communism and all the capitalists are dead and gone. Historical-Materialism basically means that the march of the proletarian dictatorship cannot be halted, it is a certainty, capitalism creates the proletariat which rises up and crushes capitalism – the end. Marx's positivist epistemology assured him that by examining past events and current trends (of the mid 1800s) he would be able to prophecy the direction of future events and how best to manipulate them. This all unravelled rather pointedly (as did positivism itself) during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, though there are still those who cling to Marx's predictions – just as there are those who still follow the ramblings of Nostradamus. In common with the Zionists' 'test of a chosen people', lingering Marxists argue that its current discredit and impotence is merely a temporary set-back in the inevitable meta-narrative, or that the original texts have been misinterpreted...

When someone allows themselves to be submitted to doctrine or dogma they are forfeiting their capacity for free enquiry. The shackling of the mind in this way alleviates the uncertainties, confusions and struggles of freedom - suddenly, a lighted path is laid out and you can 'progress' with confidence. But this is merely a myth, and an ignoble one at that.

*Fortunately, however, the human mind never was, and never can be, bound by fixities. Hence it is forging ahead in its restless march towards knowledge and life. (Emma Goldman, The Philosophy of Atheism).*

And for any Marxists who inadvertently read this, feel free to dismiss it as bourgeois deficiency, eh?

Paul Emick, April 2011

