

Implications of the Imminent Collapse of Marxism

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There are four dynamic world views in competition today: Christianity, Marxism, Islam, Materialistic Humanism. The past five years has seen the greatest change in the role of Marxism. We need to understand what has happened in order to make sense of history and to prepare for service in the future.

Marxism has four planks in its foundation. First is a commitment to utopia on earth. The goal is the establishment of a worldwide pure communist state. Material prosperity and lack of political and military tensions are good goals. But are they sufficient goals for humanity? Must they be brought about by military conquest, social repression and political revolution? The USSR and China have answered both questions, "yes" from 1917 till now.

Second, Marxism is committed to the philosophical methodology of historical dialectical materialism. The crux of Marx's system is the dialectical model he modified from Hegel's dialectical idealism. Both systems use dialectics as a means of analysis. But Marx postulated that there were no truths beyond the facticity of human history. Thus, he concluded that human values should be materialistic and social. The wedding of dialectical methods of deriving truth with historical materialism has proven a potent force in political and world affairs. In the final analysis, the system posits a historical determinism: the individual counts for nothing except what he can contribute to the state through his physical labor or economic or political management.

The vehicle for moving through history toward state socialism and world communism is proletarian revolution, i.e., the revolt of the masses against entrenched bureaucracy and the domination of the upper classes. Communism does not seek to make all people become middle class or upper class, nor to merely supplant the present wealthy people with other people. It seeks to replace the whole system of unequal distribution of wealth with an equal distribution of wealth, whatever level that may find in society. The foundation for economic growth is based on the material labor value of the individual.

In addition to the utopian and dialectical historical materialistic planks, the third is suppression of religion and morals. With the decision to reject spiritual values, that is, with the commitment to materialism, came a rejection of any other base for moral values except the values derived from the goal of world communism. Consistent, rational Marxism rejects innate personal worth, personal or family values, the dignity of the individual, social or religious values, and any absolute values.

Finally, the fourth plank of Marxism is commitment to ongoing violent revolution to bring about the communist state. Lenin and Stalin, as well as Mao in China, believed that the historical process could be accelerated by construction of five year plans for growth followed by revolutions to shake up the

establishment and rid the state of entrenched bureaucrats. This would leave proletariat communists in power, guiding the masses to state socialism.

Until recently Marxism has been judged based on its promises of social utopia and material equality. After the consolidation of Soviet power in the 1930s (as we now know, through mass terror and murder; far more people were killed by Stalin than by Hitler), the Soviet empire grew quickly in the 1940s through the 1960s. But by the end of the 60s and into the 70s many of the promises of Marxism were showing signs of trouble in Russia and its satellites and in China. The building was still under construction and already it was showing signs of instability and inability to match the plans.

These problems came to a head in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. In response to the growing economic and social problems, in 1978 Reagan said, "Tear down the Wall." The Berlin Wall was a symbol of the repression and failure of the Marxist philosophy as it was being worked out by the USSR in Eastern Europe. The masses of East Germany wanted the material benefits and social and spiritual freedoms which they saw being realized by their families and friends in West Germany. The unity of the Soviet Empire was being challenged on almost all fronts around the world.

In 1981 Reagan made it clear that he was not going to placate the Soviets. He increased American aid to Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan, and Cambodia. He authorized the invasion of Grenada. That same year the Marshall of the Soviet armed forces, N. V. Ogarkov, complained that his forces were falling behind in military technology.

Just two years before this, Pope John Paul II had visited his native country of Poland and declared that Communism and Christianity were incompatible. A young Catholic electrician who had recently received Christ and was being disciplined by evangelicals responded to the Pope's challenge by launching a new labor movement called Solidarity. He is now the president of Poland.

In 1982, speaking to the British Parliament, Reagan began his attack on both moral and practical levels and declared that Communism is immoral and inefficient and predicted that, "It will end up on the ash heap of history." In 1983 he labeled the Soviet Union 'the Evil Empire.'

At the arms negotiations in Geneva in 1985 Gorbachev was clearly upset with Reagan's commitment to the Space Defence Initiative plan. Paul Nitze, then the chief arms control negotiator, said, "SDI really bothered Gorbachev. He made that clear in every meeting." (Fred Barnes, "Communism's Incredible Collapse, Reader's Digest, March 1990). That meeting was followed by commitments to military build-ups by West Germany and NATO.

The Communist structure began to crack. In 1986 Gorbachev accepted the American proposal to eliminate intermediate range missiles in Europe. He began to talk about the need to do massive restructuring of the Soviet government, *perestroika*. In 1988 Gorbachev began to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Later in 1988 Solidarity won a national election in Poland with over 80% of the votes. In 1989 Soviet miners began to strike, asking, among other things, for soap, toilet paper, and

sugar.

Production problems increased in all parts of Russia. 40% of the coal that is mined is consumed in mining more coal. A researcher at Harvard, Nick Eberstadt, says that life expectancy in the Soviet countries is lower in the 1980s than it was in the 1960s, and that no Soviet country has a life expectancy as high as the one in Jamaica.

In late 1989 and early 1990 crises led to revolution. The Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan. In Poland the work of nine years led to a new non-communist government. In Hungary the revolution took nine months. In East Germany it was accomplished in nine weeks. In Czechoslovakia it happened in nine days and in Romania in five days. Gorbachev began to talk about learning from the other countries in order to build a better Russia (glasnost).

We are led to ask, "why this has happened?" What is crumbling the foundation of Marxism, not only in Russia but in China? The promise of utopia and equality looks good on paper. But there are three major deficiencies.

First, Marxism has a wrong view of humanity. While material goods and wealth are important, people are worth more than what they can produce materially. Individuals and families are inherently valuable, not only to each other but to the growth of nations and in world affairs. God, our creator, has endowed each person with rights, says the American Declaration of Independence. One Russia watcher commented, "Like ideas, individuals matter." (Fred Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 110.)

Second, Marxism has a deficient view of history. The history of humanity is neither dialectical nor determined in the way Marx taught. If history is moving toward materialistic utopia and peace on earth, this is not clear from an analysis of the last twenty centuries. Modern events have been equally hard on Christian post-millennialists and utopian Marxists. History is often violent, but mass violence rarely leads to freedom, prosperity and peace.

Third, Marxism has no place for God. But there is a God and He is active in the affairs of people and nations. This belief is very evident even in Russia and the Soviet dominated nations. There are 10 million Communist Party members in Russia today, 50 million Orthodox, 40 million Muslims, and 6 million Roman Catholics and Protestants.

Billy Graham was in Russia in 1983 and saw thousands of conversions. Luis Palau was in Moscow in December, 1989 and between 1/3 and 1/2 of his audience (about 6000 new converts altogether) came forward each night indicating desire to know Jesus Christ personally. An evangelical people movement in the Ukraine, The Light of the Gospel, is providing for the JESUS movie to be shown to tens of thousands of people.

In his last public speech in Romania, Ceausescu was interrupted by the people shouting, "Marx is dead, God is alive, We stand with Jesus Christ." (CBS News Special, April 3, 1990) The new prime minister

of Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, was asked if he was a socialist. He replied, "I am a Catholic." (Barnes, *ibid.*, p. 108). In November, 1989 Gorbachev met with John Paul II and said, "We need the moral base Christianity can provide." (TIME, November 26, 1989) There is now a study group of American protestant scholars and Russian sociologists studying how to use the Ten Commandments to rebuild the moral base of the Russian people (Christianity Today, March 5, 1990).

This year, 1991, the Soviet Department of Education asked an international team of scholars and educators to write a 10 lesson series on teaching moral and spiritual values to children and youth. The resulting document will be taken this summer to Moscow, Vologda, and Leningrad to be presented to approximately 1200 teachers, along with literature, Bibles and 28 visiting scholars from five nations. The government is requesting this.

Karl Marx wrote, "There is a great battle going on all over the world which in the final analysis is a struggle for men's hearts, minds, and souls." This statement, which denies Marx's own materialism, is true. Recent history in the Soviet countries is deconstructing the edifice of Marxism in favor of Christianity and a more realistic view of humanity, history, values and God.