

THE ROOT AND FRUIT OF SOCIALISM

Socialism's Perspective and Product

Socialism is satanic at its core. It attempts to challenge the will of God and to change the ways of God (1 John 4:1-5).

The Source of Socialism

Socialism is a product of godless European philosophies. The Protestant Reformation, begun in 1517, sparked a revival of biblical Christianity in Europe, but the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of England eliminated reformists or expelled them to the New World. A mass migration of biblical Christians to America depleted Europe of genuine Christian influence.

As a result, Europe embraced a godless movement of human reasoning called the Enlightenment Period or the Age of Reason. The Enlightenment produced the French Revolution (1789) and ignited a renewed interest in ideas like atheism (Nietzsche), existentialism (Kierkegaard), naturalism (Hegel), evolution (Darwin), higher criticism (Wellhausen), deism (Herbert), and others in the 1800s. Out of these man-made philosophies emerged Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the fathers of modern socialism and Communism. In his book *The Naked Communist*, Cleon Skousen describes their background.

Marx was born in Germany in 1818, to a family of distinguished scholars and rabbis. However, Marx's father decided to break the ties of the past, remove his family from the synagogue, and join a Protestant congregation. Marx rejected his family's new faith and pursued a life of atheism. Though he had a brilliant mind, Marx was hot-tempered and rebellious. The letters from his parents complain of his ego, discourtesy, and constant demands for money. He was nearly expelled from the University of Bonn for excessive drinking and rioting. When he transferred to the University of Berlin, he studied philosophy, specializing in naturalism and materialism under George Hegel.

Hegel inspired Marx with a desire to eradicate Christianity, introducing him to David Strauss' book, *Life of Jesus*, which contended that the Gospels were not true. One of Marx's close associates, Bruno Bauer, even claimed that the Gospels were forgeries, that Jesus never existed, but that He was a figure of fiction. Thus, Marx was convinced that Christianity was a fraud, and he soon began publishing his *Journal of Atheism*.

Though married, Marx was a neglectful husband and father, who squandered what little money they had on selfish pleasures. When his wife received her inheritance, he traveled throughout Europe without his family. While his wife and kids starved and lived in poverty, Marx could be found at the library studying and writing. He never attained a profession, an office, a regular occupation, or a dependable means of livelihood. Whatever money he had was given to him by friends or family.

Karl's best friend, Friedrich Engels, was a confused German youth whose mind was a melting pot of defiant, self-centered, atheistic, naturalistic, anti-capitalist ideas. Marx convinced Engels that revolutionary Communism was the answer to man's problems. Together, they became acquainted with an organization called the Communist League. In 1847, the British chapter of the League commissioned Marx and Engels to prepare a document setting forth its philosophy and goals. That document became known as *Communist Manifesto* (1848).

While Communism was not a new concept, Marx's document gave it a capital "C." His manifesto spelled out six objectives – the overthrow of capitalism, the abolition of private property, the elimination of the family, the abolition of classes, the overthrow of all governments, and the establishment of communal property. Marx also included ten steps for instituting Communism in any given country. Today, these steps are known as the "Ten Planks of Communism."

Before we filter his philosophy through a biblical worldview, it might be helpful to read some of Marx's doctrines. What follows are excerpts from his book *Communist Manifesto*.

Communist Manifesto, 1848

The history of society is a history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, oppressor and oppressed, have stood in opposition to one another. Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other – the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat. By Bourgeoisie is meant the class of modern capitalists (business owners), owners of the means of production and employee wage-labor. By Proletariat is meant the class of modern wage-laborers (employees) who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor in order to live.

The Bourgeoisie has set up that single, unconscionable freedom – free trade (competition) – veiled by religious and political illusions. It has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. These laborers, who must sell themselves, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and they are consequently exposed to all the [changes] of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market.

Every class struggle is a political struggle. The aim of the Communist is the overthrow of Bourgeois supremacy and the conquest of political power by the Proletariat (dictatorship). Their supremacy may be achieved by the abolition of Bourgeois property. In this sense, the theory of the Communist may be summed up in the single phrase – the abolition of private property. Likewise, [we promote] the abolition of the family. The Bourgeois family is based on capital (property). The family will vanish with its vanishing capital.

The Proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest (seize) all capital (property) from the Bourgeoisie and to centralize all means of production in the hands of the State. Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be affected except by means of despotic (tyrannical) inroads on the rights of property. Communism abolishes eternal truths. It abolishes all religion and all morality. Communism acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.

These measures will, of course, be different in different countries. Nevertheless, in the most advanced countries, the following [measures] will be generally applicable.

1. Abolish private property and the application of all rents to public purposes. [“Eminent domain,” in U.S.]
2. Institute a heavy, progressive income tax. [U.S. 1913, with the passing of the *16th Amendment*]
3. Abolish all rights of inheritance. [Estate taxes in U.S.]
4. Confiscate the property of all immigrants and rebels. [1997 Crime/Terrorist bill, called “forfeiture” in U.S.]
5. Centralize all credit to the hands of the State, by means of a national bank, with State capital and an exclusive monopoly. [Federal Reserve Act, 1913]
6. Centralize all communication and transportation in the hands of the State. [FCC, Fed. Interstates (ICC), Fed. Aviation Adm. (FAA), Post Office, AMTRAK, CONRAIL]
7. All factories and implements of production must be owned by the State. [Farms/businesses are controlled by Department of Agriculture/Commerce and others]
8. Create an equal liability of all to labor by instituting industrial armies [Social Security Act, Dept. of Labor, two-income families, labor unions, fed. work programs]
9. Combine agriculture with manufacturing industries, gradually abolishing the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of population. [1949 Planning Reorganization Act, zoning regulations]

10. Provide free education for all children in public schools and combine education with industrial production. [Dept. of Education, NEA, outcome-based education]

“It is a terrible and awesome thing when a man sets out to create all other men in his image. Such became the goal and all-consuming ambition of Karl Marx. Marx surveyed the world and dreamed of the day when the whole body of humanity could be forced into a gigantic social image conformed completely into Marx’s dream of a perfect society” (Cleon Skousen, *The Naked Communist*).

Karl Marx did not invent new ideas but repackaged old ones. His goals are satanic in nature. Satan has always perverted God’s ways. Since his fall, Satan has desired to centralize all earthly power under one ruler and his control – like Nimrod at Babel (*Gen. 11:4*), the ancient empires, the modern dictators, and the United Nations – socialism on a global scale, the building of a one-world government.

However, the history of all-powerful rulers has been deadly. When power is in the hands of one or a few, the record shows that there soon follows an abuse of the rights of others, killing of the unwanted and the unnecessary. Liberty and socialism cannot coexist.

Communism in the Bible?

Modern socialists attempt to use the Bible to support their ideas. They point to three descriptions of the early church.

“⁴⁴And all those who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”
Acts 2:44, 45

“³²And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but that all things were common property to them.³⁴For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the

sales and lay them at the apostles’ feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.”
Acts 4:32, 34

¹“But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property ²and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet. ³But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴While it remained unsold did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.’ ⁵And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came over all who heard it.” *Acts 5:1-5*

Socialists like to point out that the Bible says that they had “all things in common” (*Acts 2:44*) and “not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but that all things were common property to them” (*Acts 4:34*). They also point to Ananias. He died because he kept some of the profit and did not give it all to those in need.

Did the early church practice socialism or communism? Not at all. Marx’s idea of communal property is mandated by the State to force equality (sameness). The early Church practiced *voluntary* charity, giving freely of their wealth to help those in need. Christian charity happens because of *love* not force.

Also notice that the Bible promotes the idea of private property. The believers “began selling *their* property and possessions...” (*Acts 2:45*) and “all who were *owners* of land or houses would sell them...” (*4:34*). Peter even said to Ananias, “When [the land] remained unsold, did it not remain *your own*? And after it was sold, was it not *under your control*?” (*Acts 5:4*). These believers were people with private property, freely selling it in order to make a profit and, then, voluntarily giving that profit to provide for the needs of others.

Finally, Ananias did not die because he refused to give his money to the poor. He died because he lied to God about the money he made. The socialist use of Scripture is a deception.

Missing the Marx

Marx's ideas may look good on paper, but when viewed in light of Scripture, they fall short.

Abolition of Private Property

Marx observed history and deduced that property is the source of man's troubles. Therefore, in his mind, eliminating property was the solution. However, sin is the source of all man's troubles, not property. God gave man the ability and desire to work to meet his needs. The reward for his labor is property. Thus, property is sacred and should be protected. God promotes the principle of private property (*Gen. 1:28; 2:15; Eccl. 5:18, 19; Ex. 20:15, 17; 2 Sam. 12:1-9*).

The State Is God

Marx's manifesto gives all control to the State, as if the State were god, and man exists for the State. But we know that man exists for God's glory, not the State's. He created people as equals, with purpose and value. People have rights, and God instituted civil government to protect those rights. Thus, man does not exist for the State, but the State exists for man (*Gen. 9:6; Ex. 20:13; Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Kings 21*).

Elimination of the Family and Its Inheritance

God created the family unit to reproduce mankind, to train children in the way they should go, and to provide care for its members. Scripture supports the principle of inheritances (*Gen. 24:35, 36; Prov. 13:22; 2 Cor. 12:14; 1 Tim. 5:8*). However, Marx despised the family unit and promoted the abolition of the family and its inheritances as a way to redistribute wealth and keep families dependent on the State.

Heavy, Progressive Income Tax

Civil government has a legitimate purpose and must be funded to accomplish its responsibilities. However, a progressive income tax is immoral. It is legalized theft for the purpose of redistribution of wealth. The system does not reward diligence or protect property.

It promotes laziness, irresponsibility, and dependence (*Ex. 20:15; Prov. 10:4; 2 Cor. 9:7; 2 Thess. 3:1-16*).

Government-Run Education

Marx's manifesto promotes the idea of "free" schools so that the State could indoctrinate children with his doctrines. However, parents are the God-ordained stewards of children, not the State. As such, parents are given the responsibility of overseeing every facet of their education. The school should fall under parental authority (*Deut. 6:1-9; Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6*).

Abolition of Religion, Morality, Truth, and History

Marx believed that religion was an institution created by the rich to keep the poor in their place. He also believed his ideas would work despite the pushback they might receive from moral, factual, or historical arguments. But God knows best how life, law, and government should work. Therefore, we adhere to His wisdom for peace and prosperity (*Prov. 2:6; 9:10; John 14:6; 18:33-38; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17*).

Capitalism Is an Evil System

Socialists must convince people that capitalism is outdated, inadequate, and evil. Thus, their propaganda colors capitalists as greedy, selfish, and only interested in wealth. But these accusations are only deceptions. Because of sin, greed and selfishness will be part of any system (*Rom. 3:10, 23; Jer. 16:9*). Socialism or Communism is no exception.

Profit (self-interest) is an incentive for labor (*Eccl. 5:18, 19*). Who wants to work for no profit? But the beauty of capitalism is that it is a win-win for the producer and consumer. The laborer profits only if he produces something that meets the needs of others. Also, capitalism rewards ingenuity, diligence, and excellence, and it has proven to reduce poverty.

Utopia Is Achievable by a Classless Society

Marx assumed that the elimination of property and classes would create a paradise. He also assumes that the State will not be corrupt. He is wrong. Corruption does not come with property or class but with people. On earth, sinners will never achieve perfection. We are "perfected" by salvation through Christ alone, and only He will achieve Utopia when He returns.