

DIALECTICAL AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

Marx is the personification of revolution. After his early conversion to communism, he never swerved from his devotion to the revolutionary cause... Because of his intransigent attitude and unrivaled influence, he is the pre-eminent symbol of the revolutionist. Only Lenin rivals him in this respect.¹

Leszek Kolakowski begins his comprehensive study, *Main Currents of Marxism*, by stating that Karl Marx was a German philosopher. It would seem that this is a simple fact which cannot be argued, but actually it is very misleading. We will not be able to understand Marx if we try to think of him only as a philosopher. Marxism is not so much a method of increasing our understanding as it is a concerted attempt to bring about what Karl Marx felt had to occur: a revolution that would destroy the entire society in which he lived. From the point that this conclusion became fixed in the mind of Marx, we might say that he ceased to be a philosopher, German or otherwise, and he became instead an engineer of ideas, an architect of an ideology.

Marx summed up his view of philosophy as practice when he wrote, as one of his theses on Feuerbach, "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it."

In this section, we will examine the fundamental concepts of Marxist philosophical materialism as well as the materialist view of history, historical materialism. Our treatment of this extensive subject will be brief, but we hope to show how a simple model of development was applied to society and history to produce a powerful pseudo-religion, which, for all its shortcomings and inconsistencies, is having a tremendous impact on our world.

Dialectical and Historical Materialism

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Marx
Theses on Feuerbach

The metaphysics of Marxism have come to be known as dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism is the way Marxists view the world. Although Marx and Engels did not coin this term, they did lay down the essential principles which are held today. The term "dialectical materialism" was erroneously attributed to Marx and Engels by Lenin, but was probably first used to describe the Marxist world view by the Russian Menshevik Georgy Plekhanov in 1891. Engels did initiate the term "historical materialism" to refer to the Marxist view of society and history, also known as the materialist view of history.

I. Materialism and idealism

A. "Two great camps"

The great basic question of all philosophy, especially of modern philosophy, is that concerning the relation of thinking and being... that question, in relation to the Church, was sharpened into this: "Did God create the world or has the world been in existence eternally?" The answers which the philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps.

Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach* (1888)²

According to Engels, there are two great camps in philosophy. Every philosopher must fall into one or the other. One is idealism. The school of idealism, according to Engels, holds that the mind or idea is essence, and that matter is derived from that.

On the other hand, said Engels, the school of materialism holds that matter is the essential substance, and the phenomenon of mind comes from and is a reflection of matter. According to Engels, a thinker must belong to one camp or the other, and this division has characterized the history of philosophy.

Furthermore, in the Marxist view, idealists are those who defend the status quo, whereas the materialist philosophers are in the vanguard of revolutionary change. They constitute the camp of progress, which is trying to alter, change and improve the human situation. Marxists see themselves within this camp.

We will return to the doctrine of "two great camps" at the conclusion of this chapter.



B. Materialism as a trend in philosophy

Dialectical materialism is one particular species of materialism. There are two main contentions held by materialism:

a. The world consists of material particles (or more generally, physical entities) that interact.

b. Regarding immaterial or apparently immaterial entities, such as the human mind, either: (i) these do not exist; (ii) these are in fact material things, or the motions of material things; or, (iii) as Marxism contends, these cannot exist independently but are wholly dependent upon material processes. That is, they are by-products of matter and they cannot exist apart from matter. Matter is primary to "spirit." "Mind" is a by-product of the brain.

C. Materialism before Marx

Dialectical materialism developed from the criticism of other trends in materialism, particularly mechanistic materialism and Feuerbach's materialism.

1. *Mechanistic materialism*

Renaissance and post-Renaissance science conceived of the universe as an extremely elaborate machine. Once this machine was set in motion, all future circumstances were determined. The dynamics and mechanics of that age were reflected in its dominant philosophy, mechanistic materialism, which originated during the Renaissance of the 14th century and reached its height during the 17th and 18th centuries. In the deistic view pioneered by Newton and Descartes, once God set a certain process in motion, there could be nothing but change of pace, or increase and/or decrease, in regularly determined cycles.

Because it characterized each person as an essential part of the whole, mechanistic materialism was employed by thinkers of the French Revolution to argue in favor of the rights of the individual. For Marx's purposes, however, strictly mechanistic materialism would prove unsuitable. He criticized it for not being rigorously materialistic. Ultimately it leads back to idealism because it fails to provide an atheistic explanation for the origin of the universe. If the universe is like a complex "machine," its existence seems to suggest that there is a Creator, a First Cause, who created the universe and set it in motion.



Furthermore, this materialism fails to explain the appearance and development of new beings and new qualities in the universe. It offers only a static view.³

(In general, Marxist materialists today follow the pattern of Lenin and do not deal with a scientific description of matter. They hold instead the philosophical definition, that matter is objective reality, and has motion as its attribute. This, they feel, exempts them from dealing with the scientific reality of matter, although it may be argued that it really only evades the question.)

2. Feuerbach and the origin of God

Religious practices have been part of human life since well before recorded history. Nevertheless, the Renaissance brought with it a great wave of rebellion against Church authority. This worked to discredit belief in God as well.

Strong expressions of anti-religious rebellion are found throughout Marx's work. In particular, he seems to have been greatly influenced by the work of the German philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach.

Feuerbach speculated as to how religion or belief in God had come about. He asserted that God is a projection of what human beings themselves would like to be. We would like to be all-powerful; we would like to be totally good; we would like to be omniscient. We have projected these desires into an imaginary being which he called "God." For Feuerbach, the divine being is nothing more than a projection of the human being into a concept. Ironically, this concept has come to oppress its own creator, man. Feuerbach believed that human liberation would result from destroying the concept of God and destroying religion, thus recovering the human nature.

Although at first inspired by Feuerbach's humanism, Marx later found fault with it. He said that Feuerbach lapsed back into idealism in calling for a human-centered religious solution. Feuerbach felt that the solution to man's problems would come through exalting human love and human virtues. This was not satisfactory for Marx, because it did not promote a solution on a strictly material level. He criticized Feuerbach, calling him "a materialist below, but an idealist above."

Marx thus had to continue in his efforts to create an absolute materialism, a materialism that made no recourse to idealism or to God. As we noted in Chapter 2, Marx found the philosophical device to make his materialism absolute in the idealistic philosophy of Georg Hegel. This device is the dialectic.

It is the dialectic which distinguishes Marxist materialism from all others and gives ideological power to the call for revolution, class struggle and the inevitability of communism. For the most part, this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of the dialectic.

II. The dialectic

A. The dialectic of Hegel

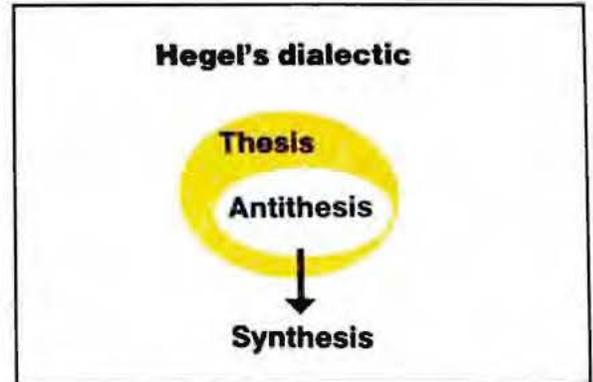
Although the roots of the dialectic lie in antiquity, it was Johann Fichte (1762-1814) who set forth the general scheme of what has come to be known as the Hegelian dialectic. Fichte identified three basic propositions of philosophy in the positions of thesis, antithesis and synthesis which resolved themselves dialectically. Apparent contradictions, he held, are resolved by making mutual compatibility become evident. "All contradictions are reconciled by determining more clearly the contradictory propositions."⁴

Hegel carried the dialectical method even further. He envisioned the dialectic as the general law penetrating the entire world. He formulated it as the law of development of thinking and applied it also to the development of nature and society, envisioning the synthesis of all opposites as the culmination of history. This mechanism was of tremendous interest to Marx. When removed from its idealistic framework, the dialectic seemed to represent a process through which the *simple* could proceed to the *complex* without any higher cause. That is, it seemed to be a self-energizing principle.

Hegel was concerned with the development of the Mind. He used the German word "Geist" which is sometimes translated as Mind or Spirit but can probably best be understood as God. He was concerned with how and why God created, and he put great emphasis on human intellectual development.

Marx severely criticized Hegel's philosophy in general, but one part that he utilized was the dialectic itself. He took the Hegelian dialectic and transferred it to his materialistic framework. In this way, he believed that he had constructed a rigorous materialism that needed no reference or recourse to God.

The Hegelian dialectic describes every entity as a thesis which contains within itself its own opposite or contradiction, the antithesis. Through the contradictory relationship between thesis and antithesis, new development occurs. The synthesis is formed, and a step forward is taken in development and in history.





Marx made certain crucial modifications in the Hegelian dialectic and then used it in his analysis of capitalistic society. He later expanded that analysis to examine all of history.

B. The Marxist dialectic

Marx himself did not elaborate his metaphysics. It was Engels who articulated exactly what the Marxist dialectic is and exactly what are its rules. In his texts, *Anti-Dühring* and *Dialectics of Nature*, we find three laws of the Marxist dialectic.

1. Three laws

a. The first law concerns relationship. This is the law of interpenetration of opposites. This law is listed second in Engels' text, but we treat it first because it is most fundamental. Marxists usually describe the interpenetration of opposites as the most important of the three main laws. According to Lenin it is the "kernel" of dialectics.

According to this law, every entity is composed of two sub-entities which are fundamentally contradictory to one another. In the Marxist dialectic, cooperation is something transitory; contradiction is fundamental. Every entity in the universe is formed through a temporary union of fundamentally opposite and contradictory elements. "It is contradiction, the conflict of opposites that is the main source of development of matter and consciousness."⁵

b. The second law concerns the process of development. This is the law of transformation of quantity into quality and vice versa. The law states that every kind of change in the universe—every process of development—is first of all a change in quantity. At some point that change in quantity transforms itself into a change in quality. In other words, there is first a change in amount or degree (quantity), and then a transformation, usually abrupt, which produces a change in shape or form (quality).

A Soviet handbook on Marxist philosophy describes it as follows:

As soon as these limits are overstepped...the seemingly inessential quantitative changes inevitably bring about a radical qualitative transformation: quantity passes into quality.⁶

Quantitative changes are relatively slow and continuous, while qualitative transformations are discontinuous.⁷

c. The third law is the negation of the negation. According to this law, every entity exists first of all as an affirmation, then

is negated (produces its own negation), and the negation is negated again. This yields the affirmation, multiplied many-fold, on a higher plane of development.⁸

The term "negation" was introduced in philosophy by Hegel, but he invested it with an idealist meaning. . . . Marx and Engels preserved the term "negation" but interpreted it in a materialist way.⁹

2. How the laws are used

As far as Marxists are concerned, these laws are not just for the purpose of theoretical discussion. Each law is making a point, and is used to justify a certain practice.

The interpenetration of opposites is used as a justification and explanation for continuous class struggle. It holds that society is composed of contradictory classes, and that only through their struggle can progress come about.

The law of transformation of quantity into quality is used to reinforce the notion that revolution is essential. There can be no gradual change. There can be no gradual socialization through democratic means. There must be revolution and the destruction of society.

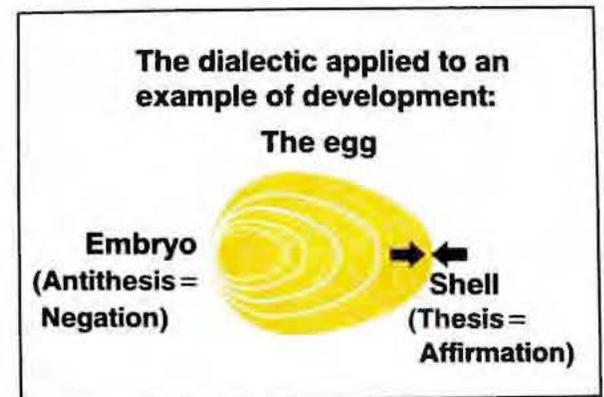
The negation of negation becomes the backbone of the Marxist view of history. This view holds that just as primitive man lived communally, the negation of the negation will cause man to return to communism at the close of a long process of historical development.

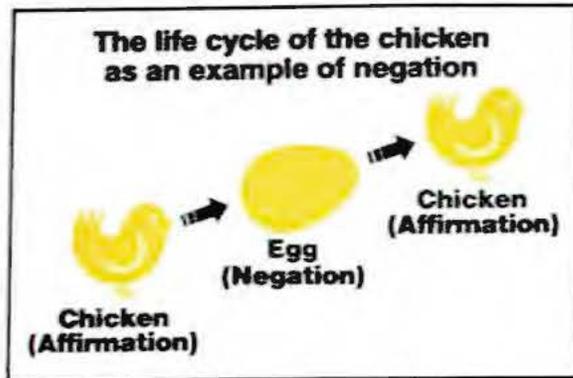
3. An example of the three laws in operation: the egg

To illustrate these laws, we can apply them to something in nature. The chicken egg is used in the Soviet school system to teach dialectical materialism, and appears also in communist literature distributed in the United States.

The chicken egg may be said to consist of two components: the shell and the embryo. The shell would be the thesis (in Hegel's terminology) or the affirmation (in Marx's terminology), and the embryo contained within the shell would be the antithesis or negation. According to Marxist dialectic, these two elements exist in contradiction. They experience a temporary union, but they are fundamentally contradictory to one another and cannot coexist indefinitely.

Development begins as a change in quantity: the size of the embryo increases. The embryo grows until a point is reached where the contradiction between it and the shell





becomes acute. At this point the embryo violently breaks the shell apart and destroys it. Something qualitatively different then emerges, a chick. The change in quantity has been transformed into a change in quality.

Furthermore, if we look at the life cycle of the chicken, it would seem to provide an example of how the negation of the negation operates. In this case, the chicken itself is the affirmation. At some point in its life cycle it is negated to produce the egg, and the egg is once again negated to produce again the affirmation, presumably on a higher level of evolutionary development. In other words, the process keeps repeating, and as it does, progress occurs. In this case, the species is continuously evolving and advancing.

C. The application of the laws of the dialectic to society

Though our treatment of the chicken egg may appear elementary, Marx applied this type of analysis to society. This is most extensively described in *The German Ideology*, written by Marx and Engels.

1. The general Marxist view of social change

According to Marx, society is like the egg. The larger whole is the society itself, but within that society, in the position of the embryo, is an *oppressed* class which eventually becomes the majority class. In the case of the capitalist society, the oppressed class is the working class, or the proletariat.

How does development occur? How is the situation brought to the point of revolution? Marx spoke about the development of productive forces. Briefly, productive forces are the tools, techniques and raw materials used in production, as well as the workers' labor power itself. Marx said that the tools and skills of the laborers are constantly developing. The development of productive forces is like the motor power behind historical social development. The development of these productive forces is analogous to the growth of the embryo within the egg.

The point is reached, however, where production relations become a "fetter" or barrier to the continued development of the productive forces. The capitalist society itself becomes a barrier to the continued development of productive forces. Revolution must then take place.

In the words of one Marxist writer:

The shell of the egg is destroyed and replaced by its opposite, the chicken; the shell of the capitalist soci-



ety is ruptured by the proletarian revolution and a new society begins to be created.

An egg, while containing a developing chicken, remains an egg—a hard, white shell surrounding an embryo. Capitalist society, while containing elements of future socialist society . . . which continually struggle within and against the dominant capitalist framework, is still nevertheless capitalist society.¹⁰

Marx argued that the conditions of the proletariat would become increasingly intolerable, and this class would be driven to revolution. We have noted in chapter two that Marx was willing to ignore the improvement in the workers' situation within his own lifetime.

It is clear, however, that Marx was determined to find in capitalism a relentless tendency to degrade the worker, and that he resisted facts which indicated that the worker was getting better off. Bertram Wolfe has pointed out that in the first edition of *Capital* various statistics are brought down to 1865 or 1866, but those for the movement of wages stop at 1850; in the second edition (1873) the statistics are brought up to date, again with the exception of those on wages, which had failed to bear out the impoverishment theory.¹¹

In defiance of the facts, Marx claimed that the misery of the working class would increase to intolerable levels. In obedience to dialectical laws, a quantitative change would be occurring. The quantitative increase of the working class occurs in the sense that as the number of workers increases, the percentage of people in society who are workers increases, and the misery and poverty of the workers increase. The contradiction between the working class and the capitalist society becomes acute, and affirmation and negation no longer can coexist.

D. Socialist revolution

From that situation of acute contradiction, socialism is born. In order for socialism to emerge and be consolidated, capitalism must be destroyed. According to dialectical analysis, if progress is to occur, there must be violence. The nature of the human being, the worker, is contradictory to the capitalist system. Since the capitalist system cannot be changed, it must be destroyed.

In Marx's model, socialist revolution destroys the capitalist society and socialism is born.



Critique of the Marxist dialectic

III. The process of development: critique of the Marxist dialectic

The Marxist view stresses conflicts between the interests of various groups. We have discussed the results of the practice of this view in a previous chapter. In contrast, the CAUSA view stresses the possibilities of mutual benefit in the relations between the various groups within society, including social or economic classes. We will review the three laws of the Marxist dialectic and criticize them in the light of the CAUSA Worldview.

A. Law 1: Relationship

Marxism

The first law has to do with the nature of relationships. According to the Marxist view, thesis and antithesis oppose one another and generate the synthesis.

1. There is no mention of purpose to bring elements into a relationship.

2. This relationship may be characterized as a subject-subject relationship. Subject refers to the part which initiates and object to the part which responds. In the Marxist view, there is no initiation-response, there is struggle. Two subject elements are each trying to dominate the other. This may be called a zero-sum struggle. There is no mutual benefit possible. One has to destroy the other in order to progress.

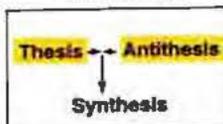
3. Contradiction is the essence of this relationship. According to this concept, progress is brought about when one party of the relationship destroys the other party. Biologically, for an individual to be successful, it must dominate and hopefully destroy other individuals. For one species to succeed, it must destroy competing species. In human life, if there is a dispute between a labor union and the management, for example, the management must be destroyed. If there is a dispute between the people and government of some particular nation, one party has to destroy the other. This is the practical application of the dialectic. The only way for progress to occur is when one party forces its will or its program on the other and destroys that party.

Godism

Marxism presents an explanation of conflict, but does not examine the process of development itself. The CAUSA

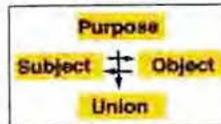
Law 1 Relationship

Marxism



1. No Purpose
2. Subject \leftrightarrow Subject
3. Contradiction
Destruction

Godism



1. Purpose
2. Subject \leftrightarrow Object
3. Correlation
Construction

Worldview is an alternative view of progress. Because it is a God-centered worldview, it may be called Godism in contrast to Marxism.

1. We begin by asserting that beings do not come into relationship at all unless there is a common purpose to bring them together.

2. The primary interaction necessary to bring about development and progress is not the subject/subject interaction. Rather, it is subject/object interaction: mutual exchange between subject and object elements centered on a common purpose. This can also be called the action of giving and receiving. A common purpose (perceived mutual benefit) brings the two elements into relationship, giving and receiving brings them into unity, and when they unite, the purpose is fulfilled (mutual benefit is realized). The purpose may be simply the enrichment of the relationship or it may be a new creation.

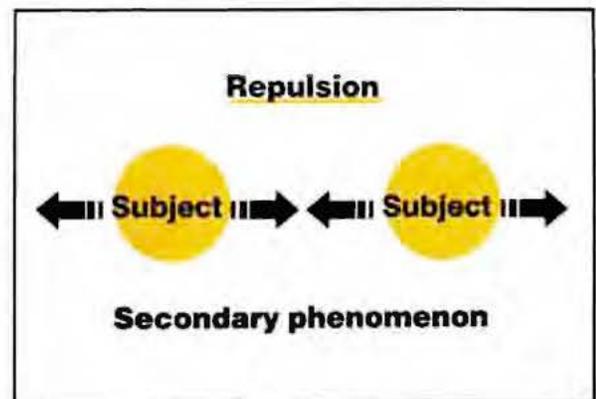
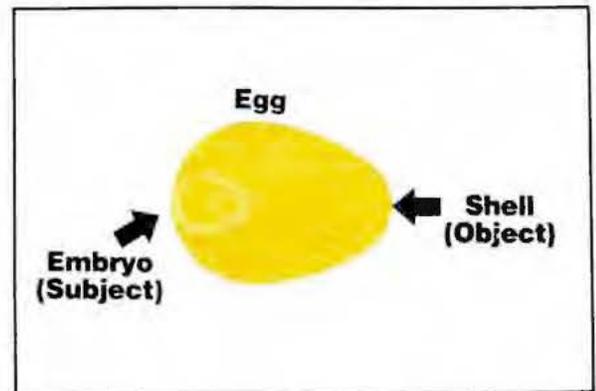
This general law holds on all levels. Proton and electron come together to form atoms; pistil and stamen come together to form a seed. We see that this law is even in operation in a CAUSA conference. Unless we have some common purpose, we cannot hold a conference. As much as we share common concerns for freedom and democracy, that is how productive our conference can be.

Even the egg which we referred to earlier is an example of this relationship. In the case of the egg, the purpose is the development of the chick. All of the elements will function together to serve this purpose. The embryo is in the subject position, and the shell is in the object position to the embryo. The shell is actually serving the embryo. It protects the embryo until development is completed and the chick is ready to emerge. At that point it offers almost no resistance, and it is very easy for the chick to peck its way out of the shell.

Repulsion

When there is no common purpose, repulsion occurs. Repulsion is associated with subject/subject interactions. When two subjects approach each other, two protons for example, they tend to experience a force of repulsion. This is a secondary phenomenon which occurs to support the primary phenomenon of interaction. By repelling each other, the protons are able to attract electrons and form atoms.

On a physical level, if all matter attracted itself, we might imagine that the universe would condense to a "point" and space would not exist as we know it. On the level of plants



and animals, we can easily see that repulsion behavior is necessary to ensure optimum distribution of individuals for survival and reproduction. Male deer will fight and relocate themselves in order that each is able to secure a mate and territory for feeding.

On a human level, it is quite apparent that individuals are not attracted by mutual relationships if they do not feel that some mutual benefit will come about.

3. The essence of relationship in this model is correlation, a basis for construction.

Summary

The Marxist model can be called a three-position model. The important first position of purpose is excluded. It is natural that Marx wanted to exclude the position of purpose, because the question of purpose must ultimately lead to the question of God, and God's overall purpose of creation. In order to formulate an atheistic model, Marx had to exclude considerations of purpose.

The model of Godism can be called a four-position model, with the topmost position being that of purpose and ultimately of God.

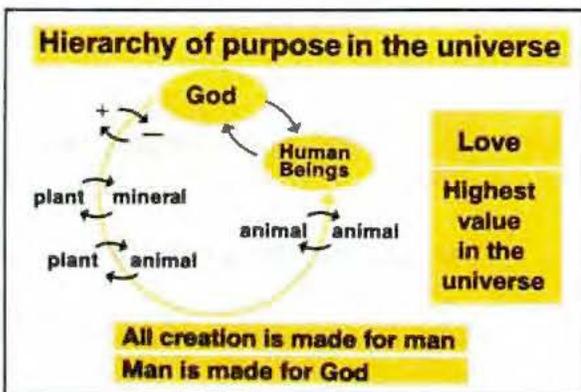
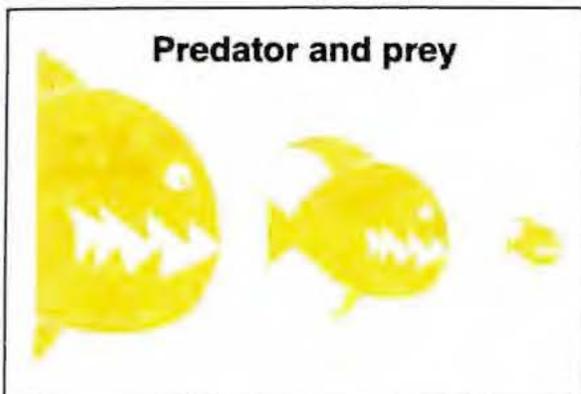
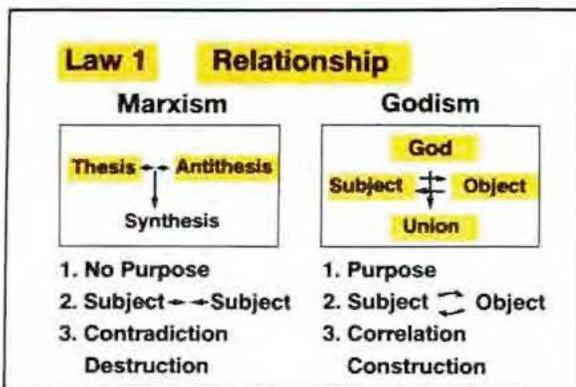
Predator and prey: Hierarchy of purpose in the universe

One may think at this point, "That is very nice, but I am familiar with another kind of world out there. There is the question of predator and prey." The world of nature seems to be the world where one little fish gets eaten by a bigger fish, and that bigger fish gets eaten by a bigger fish. How can we explain the phenomenon of predator and prey?

This is certainly not a trivial question. Darwin himself declared that it was the existence of suffering in the animal realm which caused him to deny the existence of God. A God-affirming view must deal with this particular question.

In general, the CAUSA Worldview speaks of a hierarchy of purpose in the universe. The highest creation of God is the human being. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, human beings are identified as the *children* of God. The most essential purpose of creation is for the creator to express His character into human beings, His children, with whom He is able to enjoy a relationship of love. The entire universe, then, exists in order to support this fundamental and central relationship.

A variety of interactions occur in the physical world in order to support human life. We know that plants consume



minerals. Animals consume plants. Animals consume other animals. These are all necessary in order to sustain a physical realm for the purpose of maintaining human life. All of creation exists for human beings, and human beings exist for God.

The highest value in the universe is love. People exist in order to have a loving relationship with God and with one another. They can also share their love with the created world. Satisfaction and joy are experienced on all levels of creation when human beings fulfill their purpose and enter into loving relationship with God.

B. Law 2: Change

The second law of dialectical materialism treats the process of change. This law holds that change is first of all change in quantity, which later becomes change in quality. This usually takes place through an abrupt transformation.

The error in this law is twofold. First, quantity and quality themselves cannot be clearly distinguished.

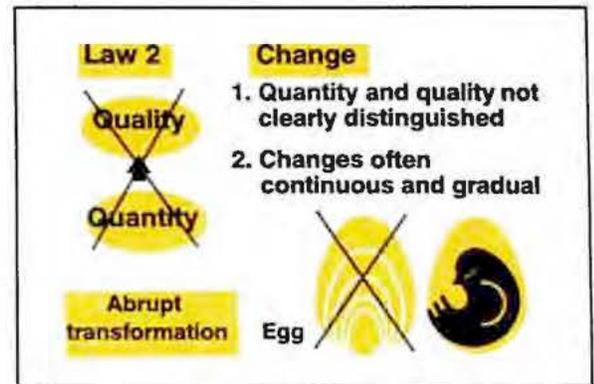
Secondly, changes are often continuous and gradual, not necessarily abrupt.

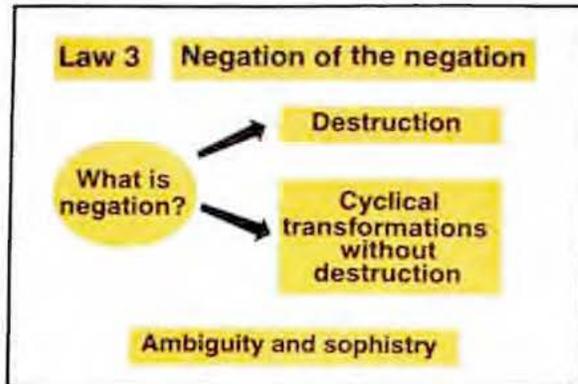
In the example of the chicken, if quantity changed first, then we would expect the embryo to merely get bigger and bigger until it finally breaks the shell. As the shell is being broken, the embryo would transform into a chick. In fact, what is happening inside the egg is a *simultaneous* change of quality and quantity. There is a complex series of chemical and biological interactions occurring within the egg as the embryo develops into the chick. After 21 days incubation, a developed chick exists within the shell.

In the same way, social reforms may occur gradually. There have been many labor reform laws enacted since the time of Marx which have produced a working environment far different from that which he described.

Interpreted less rigidly than the Soviet version, this law becomes meaningless. If a thing keeps changing in one direction, it will eventually become something different than what it was to begin with. This is hardly a useful insight. Even this assertion is neutralized by some Marxist texts which hedge by saying, "quantitative and qualitative are thus interconnected and influence one another."¹²

Although Marxist literature is replete with dialectical jargon, Marxists have never effectively resolved any issue with the help of dialectical laws.





C. Law 3: Negation of the negation

Finally, we can consider the negation of the negation. Let us ask first for a definition of terms. Does negation mean *destruction* of one element by the other, or does negation refer to *cyclical transformations* in which destruction is not necessary?

When Marx writes about the negation of the capitalist system, he definitely means *destruction* and not reform or transformation. However, when Engels supports him with his numerous examples of the “dialectic” operating in nature, he is giving examples of *non-destructive cyclical transformations*.¹³ The same word is used in two different senses without making clear distinctions.

A process taking place “everywhere and everyday” is, according to Engels, so simple “that any child can understand.” A grain of barley:

... germinates; the grain as such ceases to exist, it is negated, and in its place there appears the plant which has arisen from it.¹⁴

Although Engels may have believed his example to be simple enough for a child, a great many thinkers, including Marxist theoreticians, have apparently been unable to understand it. Karl Kautsky, for example, pointed out that to describe germination as the negation of the grain was tantamount to saying that a child was being negated by growing up to be an adult, although he remained the same person.

If one looks hard enough, aided by terminological inexactitude, one can be persuaded that history is full of examples of negation of the negation. Because of ambiguity in the dialectical formula, almost any event can be called a negation of something prior to it.

The term negation is used to encourage people to think in terms of violence, contradiction and revolution. It is definitely true that cyclical transformations take place in nature, but to call these processes “negations” can be misleading. When the plant produces the seed or the chicken lays an egg, the plant or chicken is not destroyed. In fact, the plant or chicken may remain for many years producing fruit and seeds or eggs every year.

D. Conclusion: the use of Marxist “laws”

Compared to genuine empirical laws such as “energy can be neither created nor destroyed,” or “gravitational force

Marxist “laws”

Meaningless or Not universal

They function to:

Confuse issues

Justify repressive measures

Explain failures of theory

decreases inversely with distance," etc., the Marxist laws of the dialectic lack clarity and validity. Even rules or generalizations which do not apply without exceptions can have great practical significance when they are explicitly clear: "a glut of commodities leads to lower prices," "the human heart is on the left side of the chest cavity." These "laws" are not valid without exception, but they do tell us what is likely to happen or to be encountered in given circumstances, and they enable those concerned to make predictions and act accordingly. What use, however, is a "law" which tells us that, for example, an initiative in the political arena will be countered by opposition of an unspecified kind, and through the struggle between the two, a new initiative, also unspecified, will be enacted?¹⁵

Marxist laws are not clear, and if they are clarified, they certainly cease to be universal.

Marxist dialectics is tautological, unintelligible, and vague. It has no value in the search for knowledge and truth. Yet, it plays an important role in the hands of today's communists. It serves to confuse issues and sidetrack arguments. It helps to justify repressive and undemocratic measures taken by Marxist regimes, as well as their expansionist foreign policies. It also furnishes explanations for the persistent refusal of history to conform to the Marxist scheme of things.

IV. Historical materialism

Marx expanded his materialist analysis to all of history to try to show how history developed from earliest times, and how it would continue to develop in the future. This is known as the materialist view of history, or historical materialism.

Eduardo del Rio in *Marx for Beginners* tells us that, "the purpose of Marx's theory of historical materialism is to show us that history is made by man, not by 'destiny' or the so-called 'hand of God.'"¹⁶

Base and superstructure

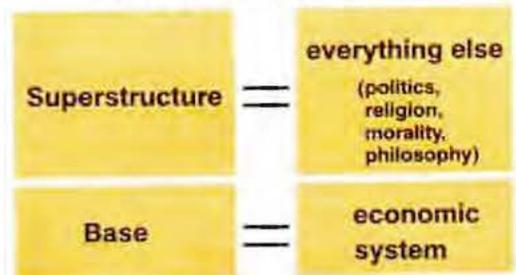
Historical materialism is based on the belief that society consists of a superstructure and a base. Marx wrote, in the frequently quoted preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*,

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of

**The expansion of this analysis
to all of history**

Historical materialism

Marxist Framework



these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life.¹⁷

The base is composed of the economic structure, and the superstructure consists of everything else — ideologies and institutions. This includes politics, religion, morality and philosophy. Progress begins in the base, and the forward movement of the base “pulls” the superstructure along. Thus, there are specific political and religious forms of organization which correspond to stages in the progress of the substructure. (Marx writes that the substructure “conditions” the superstructure. He is then able to apply a strong or weak usage to the word “conditions,” as the circumstances require.)

This materialist perspective of human life and history colors the entire outlook of Marxists. For example, Marxists always refer to the conflict between the free world and the communist world as the struggle between two economic systems, capitalism (or imperialism) and socialism. They never regard it as a struggle between a God-affirming and a God-denying outlook. They never cast it as totalitarianism versus participatory government. They never make reference to the fundamentally different understandings of morality and ethics of the two “worlds.” For the Marxist historian, these are secondary. The primary concern in the Marxist framework is economic structure.

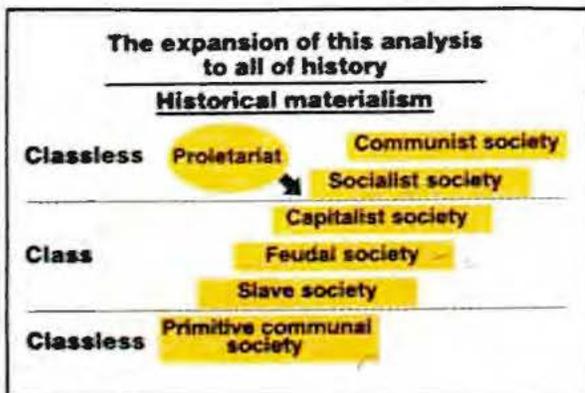
Western conservatives who regard the Western world as first and foremost the “capitalist” world, have already stepped into the Marxist framework, and are adopting the Marxist method of analysis to a greater or lesser extent. The CAUSA Worldview will not accept the viewpoint that the economic structure is fundamental. The CAUSA Worldview regards moral values as fundamental, and the economic system as secondary.

Historical materialism, then, outlines a progression of economic structures. These changing economic structures give rise to the march of history.

A. Stages of history

1. *Primitive communal society (primitive communism)*

The primitive communal society is a postulated idyllic state where everyone shares everything and no one owns any



private property.¹⁸ Nevertheless, exploitation of man by man is present in embryonic form in the *family* relationship itself. Marx and Engels write:

... hence property: the nucleus, the first form of which lies in the family, where wife and children are the slaves of the husband. This latent slavery in the family, though still very crude, is the first property, but even at this early stage it corresponds perfectly to the definition of modern economists who call it the power of disposing of the labour-power of others.¹⁹

2. *Slave society*

According to historical materialism, as the development of productive forces continued, labor became more specialized and people began to privately own their tools. They also accumulated surpluses, which they owned. In time, they began to own each other as well. The first type of class society was thus born, the slave society. The slave society is patterned after the family, where, Marx said, the husband and father is the slavemaster over his wife and children.

In addition, according to Marx, the birth of the state occurs along with the birth of the first class society. The state in Marxism is an instrument that the ruling class uses to oppress the ruled class.

Religion, which according to Marx is the result of primitive man trying to understand natural phenomena, can also now be used by the ruling class to oppress the ruled class. Through religion, the poor are taught to be submissive to authority. Philosophies can be developed and manipulated in the same way. These are said to be nothing more than a way of justifying the socio-economic status quo. All of these new elements of the "superstructure" correspond to the appearance of the slave society.

3. *Feudal society*

The slave masters would like to preserve this society forever, but they cannot because the dialectic is in operation. The number of slaves and their misery grows until the slaves carry out a revolution and the feudal society is established.

In feudalism there are a number of classes: feudal lords, merchants, guild artisans and serfs. The feudal lords utilize the state, religion and philosophy to control the other classes, but the dialectic is inexorably operating. The merchants and

guild artisans form a new class, the bourgeoisie, and eventually a revolution, such as the French Revolution, takes place. This bourgeois revolution ushers in the age of capitalist society. Marx and Engels write in the *Communist Manifesto*:

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in feudal society. At a certain stage in (their) development . . . the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder.²⁰

4. Capitalist society

In the capitalist society there are two major classes, the capitalists (who own everything) and the workers (who own nothing). Possessing nothing but their own bodies, the workers are forced to sell their labor power to the capitalists, who use it as a source of profit. The capitalists do everything in their power to perpetuate this society, but again the dialectic is operating. The working class grows in numbers and in misery. Eventually there will be a revolution, and a socialist society will be established.

5. Socialist society

According to Marx, socialist society represents the first point at which the majority class owns the means of production. It is therefore a transition stage toward the abolition of classes altogether. In socialism, the norm of economic distribution is "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his *work*." Socialism will be such an efficient system, however, that soon distribution will be based only on need, and the norm will become, as Marx predicted, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his *need*."

Although it is nothing more than a transition phase leading to the communist society, the socialist society is very important. In a socialist state, large armed forces must be maintained for defense against capitalist neighbors. In this way, for example, the Sandinista rulers of Nicaragua have justified an increase in military strength from 12,000 to 250,000 persons-in-arms.²¹

In addition, strong police forces are required to dismantle all religions, philosophies, and reactionary activities. Lenin proclaimed that "terror" would be used by the state to defend itself from class enemies and reactionaries, and began a system of prison and labor camps. Lenin wrote:

The courts must not ban terror—to promise that would be deception or self-deception—but must formulate the motives underlying it, legalize it as a principle, plainly, without any make-believe or embellishment.²²

6. Communist society

Eventually the state itself will wither away. In a communist society there is no more need for a state—no state, no religion, no philosophy. The communist society is the communal society re-established on a more advanced plane.

The progression from primitive classless society to advanced classless society is held to be an example of an affirmation-negation-affirmation phenomenon. The primitive classless communal society is negated to give a series of class structures, and finally these are negated once again to return to the natural state of the human species, the communal society.²³

B. Marxism as a pseudo-religion

We note here the characteristics of a pseudo-religion. The components of a religious doctrine are all present; only God is missing. The Garden of Eden is present in the form of the primitive communal society. The fall of man is the point where people accumulate surpluses to own property. We have a history of sin and tribulation in the form of a succession of class societies, and finally we even have salvation—salvation from tribulation into paradise.

If there is going to be salvation, there must be a savior, and in Marxism the savior is

... a class of civil society which... cannot emancipate itself without emancipating all other spheres of society, which, in a word, is the complete loss of man and hence can win itself only through the complete re-winning of man. This dissolution of society as a particular estate is the proletariat.²⁴

We see here two usages of the word proletariat. Proletariat in the role of savior is not simply the working class. The proletariat is the group of workers who have been molded by tribulation and oppression into a class which is not a class and which has nothing to lose. They have become a revolutionary weapon. They are the enlightened workers. Only the proletariat can transform this world of tribulation into the ideal world. The proletariat has no concept of nationalism or racism. They feel only class solidarity. There is no selfishness within



In Marxist ideology the "new communist man" emerges from the proletariat.

the proletariat, because being stripped of everything has rid them of selfishness itself. It is the perfect unified, selfless class, and until the proletariat appears, there is no way to escape from the succession of class societies.

The proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class... The proletarian is without property; his relation to his wife and children has no longer anything in common with the bourgeois family relations; modern industrial labour, modern subjection to capital, the same in England as in France, in America as in Germany, has stripped him of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, are to him so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests.

All the preceding classes that got the upper hand, sought to fortify their already acquired status by subjecting society at large to their conditions of appropriation. The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and thereby also every other previous mode of appropriation. They have nothing of their own to secure and fortify; their mission is to destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property.²⁵

V. Critique of historical materialism

It is reasonable to say that if men and women were completely rational beings, they would reject historical materialism. It may be observed, however, that historical materialism is expanding its influence throughout the world. This is possible because of the appeal which Marxism makes to the emotional aspect of people, as well as the religious nature of men and women.

People are embracing the materialist view of history without reflecting on whether it corresponds to the historical record.

A. Historical materialism does not correspond to the historical record

1. *Religious principles are timeless*

In general, the Marxist view holds that the economic system is the base, and the superstructure is erected upon that. Changes occur first in the base, and changes in the

Historical materialism does not correspond to the historical record

1. Religious principles are timeless

superstructure result from and follow these. According to this concept, as the economic relations are progressing through stages, the religious ideas should change. A new religion should develop for each age. What we find, however, is that the fundamental religious principles are timeless.

The principles laid down in the Old Testament age, for example, are not denied in the New Testament age. They are not altered with the passage of time. Religious principles have a timeless appeal to human beings.

In general, we can say that Marx suffered from a gross misunderstanding of the origin and purpose of religion. Certainly Marx had a right to critique the ecclesiastical abuses of his day. There have been a great number of abuses carried out in the name of religion. It is our contention, however, that these are in fact violations of the true purpose of religion. It is this genuine function of religion which is of interest to us.

Marxism holds that religion is a reflection of the external world into the minds of human beings. The external phenomena become fantasies in the human mind. This is religion. Marx and Engels clearly had a tremendous contempt for religion.

An exchange of letters between Marx and Engels in 1853 examined the origin of "the Jewish so-called Holy Scripture" and the fact that the history of the East "appears as a history of religions." Marx and Engels concur that the Bible "is nothing more than a record of the old Arabian religious and tribal tradition," and the seeming religious nature of the East is due to the fact that there is "no private property in land." Engels concludes, "The absence of property in land is indeed the key to the whole of the East. Herein lies its political and religious history."²⁶

Marx certainly felt that atheism was inseparable from communism. He and Engels wrote in *The Holy Family*:

Just as Cartesian materialism passes into natural science proper, the other trend of French materialism leads directly to socialism and communism.

There is no need for any great penetration to see . . . how necessarily materialism is connected with communism and socialism. . . Like Owen, the more scientific French communists, Dezamy, Gay and others, developed the teaching of materialism as the teaching of real humanism and the logical basis of communism.²⁷

Marxism: the origin of religion



A reflection of the external world
into the mind of human beings

Marxism: the role and purpose of religion

An instrument of manipulation
and oppression

"Opium of the masses"

"combat every kind of spiritual
oppression, including religion"

Marxist Philosophy

Similarly, in *Critique of the Gotha Program* we find:

... bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience, and that for its part it (the worker's party) endeavors rather to liberate the conscience from the witchery of religion.²⁸

In fact, it is clear that Marx thought that Christianity had already been buried by materialism, "When Christian ideas succumbed in the 18th century to rationalist ideas..."²⁹

The persistence of religion is a source of concern to communists today, particularly within the Soviet Union. Books such as the handbook of *Marxist Philosophy* by Afanasayev, call upon party members to "combat all forms of spiritual oppression, including religion." Lenin wrote, "Religion is not a private affair in the eyes of the party... We demand the complete disestablishment of the church."³⁰

Within the Soviet Union today, communists have had to reconcile themselves to the fact that religion is not disappearing. Official Soviet ideologues have now softened their positions and foresee that religion may persist indefinitely even under communism. They have therefore adopted a strategy which allows certain religions to function, but requires them to keep their religious ideas and practices *strictly within the four walls of the church*. It is indeed alarming to see this same strategy being adopted in the United States.³¹

The whole notion that religion is nothing more than superstition taken advantage of by the ruling class is for us extremely unsatisfactory. Such a view does not begin to explain the fundamental drive experienced by each human being to reconcile him or herself with the Creator. This is a totally inadequate explanation for the universal emergence and continuation of religion.

The true spirit of religion which Marx failed to comprehend is twofold. *One*, God seeks after human beings, His lost children. The New Testament tells of the prodigal son who leaves his loving father. The father is not indifferent; he feels tremendous anguish. In the same way, the Creator yearns after His children. He created everything for them. *Two*, human beings seek after God. There is the religious quest of man for God.

In any case, religion is not an opium nor a drug. Religion does not exist to make people feel good. Serious religionists have often been driven to great suffering. Religion is more properly described as "the most difficult path."

The role of religion

God seeking man

Man seeking God

The most difficult human path



Religion has always and universally been a guiding light and a source of strength in human life.

From the point of view of Godism, the purpose of religion can be summarized as:

1. Resolve the alienation of man.
2. Comfort and give joy to God.
3. Elevate the human perspective towards an absolute perspective of value.

Clearly Marx had regrettable personal experiences with religion, and therefore he rejected God and failed to understand the most powerful stream in human cultural history, interpreting it in the most superficial language of economic analysis.

2. No primitive communal society

Furthermore, there is no evidence that it is against the original nature of man to own property, including the means of production. There is a great deal of evidence that it is a very essential part of human nature to want to possess property. In the view of the world's great religions, what is contradictory to man's original nature is to be small-minded and selfish with one's property. Certainly there is no archeological evidence that there was ever a primitive communal society devoid of private possessions. Quite the contrary, it appears that even animals are able to delineate certain properties as their own, and from all evidence, individuals have always owned property.

3. No resemblance to non-European history

While the general pattern of progression asserted by Marx can be seen in the history of Western Europe, the stages of historical materialism do not resemble non-European histories. Africa, Asia and pre-Columbian America have unique histories not described or explained by historical materialism.

4. No pure examples of any stage

In fact, there are no pure examples of any of the stages which Marx mentioned.¹² Marx characterized Rome as an absolute slave society, but many people consider that the Roman empire could be better characterized by calling it democratic. Rome was certainly not toppled by slave revolts. The last major slave revolt occurred centuries earlier, and slavery was not a particularly important institution when Rome collapsed from internal corruption and external invasion.

The feudal society of Europe was composed of many economic and social strata.

Marxists admit that Marx shed very little light on the nature of pre-capitalist societies other than feudal society.

Godism: the purpose of religion

- 1. Resolve the alienation of man**
- 2. Comfort and give joy to God**
- 3. Elevate the human perspective towards an absolute perspective of value**

Historical materialism does not correspond to the historical record

- 1. Religious principles are timeless**
- 2. No primitive communal society**
- 3. No resemblance to non-European history**
- 4. No pure examples of any stage**
- 5. No "capitalism"**

William Shaw notes, "Even though Marx describes the pre-conditions of capitalist production and some of the factors responsible for introducing and consolidating capitalism, he does not provide a theory of the transition from feudalism to capitalism—at least, not in the sense in which he tendered a theory underwriting the arrival of socialism."³³

In bald Marxist propaganda, the absence of discussion on pre-feudalist societies is glossed over. In *Marx for Beginners*, for example, Eduardo del Rio writes, "Primitive community and the slave state are known and clear to everyone..." without making any further explanation.³⁴



The economy of the Free World today bears little resemblance to the "capitalism" described by Marx.

5. No "capitalism"

Similarly, there is no "capitalism" as Marx described it. The word "capitalism" is extremely misleading. The word comes from Marx, and it describes a system which cannot be found anywhere.

In Marx's idea of capitalism, the capitalist owns everything and contributes nothing to the process of production. The worker has nothing and does all the work. If we look at a modern free economy, it does not fit that description. The ownership of the means of production is distributed among millions of people, most of whom are participating in the process of production. The prosperity of the owners of businesses can only occur *with* the prosperity of the consumers in general. If the "working class" is condemned to poverty, no class of producers or merchants can prosper.

6. No proletariat

Finally, the most devastating critique of the whole scheme of historical materialism is that the anticipated "savior" has never come. The proletariat has never appeared. There is no unified body of workers who possess only class consciousness, who are unselfish, and who have no nationalism.³⁵

A proletarian revolution has never occurred as Marx predicted. Marxian proletarian revolutions should occur in the most advanced capitalist countries, but such a revolution has never taken place.

Vladimir Lenin was faced with this awkward fact when he wanted to make the Russian revolution in 1917. There were those, like Karl Kautsky, who said that it was necessary to wait until the proletariat emerged. Lenin held that it was vital to make the revolution and let the proletariat appear later.³⁶ Lenin and the Bolsheviks prevailed. Lenin carried out a revolution with an alliance of intellectuals and disgruntled peasants and soldiers. Lenin believed that the proletariat would

Historical materialism does not correspond to the historical record

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5. No "capitalism"
6. No proletariat



When the proletariat failed to emerge, Lenin used an alliance of intellectuals, peasants and disgruntled soldiers to seize power in Russia.

emerge immediately after the revolution, but it never did. In fact, almost seven decades have now passed and the proletariat is nowhere in sight.

B. Marxism makes false assumptions

In order to point out the fundamental misconceptions of the Marxist method of historical analysis, it is necessary to unmask the hidden assumptions of Marx's positivistic approach.

1. *Economic relationships are not the base of society*

Marx writes that it is plainly evident that the *authentic* and *unique* human activity is production. Other so-called human activities may indeed be attributed to human beings, but they are just secondary results of the primary activity which is production.

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion, or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence...³⁷

In one sense, this is just one man's opinion, yet we see that Marx and Engels would certainly like to sell the idea that they deal with obvious truths, while other thinkers deal in "dogmatic" and "arbitrary" premises.

The premises from which we begin are not arbitrary ones, not dogmas, but real premises... They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live.³⁸

The Marxist "truth," as we have said, is that productive activity determines all other sorts of activity. In other words, productive activity represents the foundation or basis of human life, and other activities, known as institutions and ideologies, are the superstructure which rises above and upon this basis.

Why would Marx, or anyone for that matter, adopt such an extreme view? It appears that Marx adopted this view in reaction to the absolute idealism of Hegel and others. For Hegel, consciousness determines being, and in a reactionary way, for Marx, being determines consciousness. That is, production relations determine ideologies and institutions. From the perspective of the CAUSA Worldview, both "idealism" and "materialism" seem to be inadequate views.

Marxism makes false assumptions

1. **Economic relationships are not the base of society**
2. **Struggle is not always between classes**
3. **Violence is not always necessary to bring about change**
4. **The Marxist belief that communism is the goal of history, that it will be permanent, and that it will not be destroyed dialectically is not rational.**

In the CAUSA view, all beings exhibit the dual characteristics of internal character (mind) and external form (body). (Aristotle's *eidos* and *hyle* correspond approximately to these dual characteristics.) No entity can exist without both aspects.

Thus, a human being has mind and body, as do animals and even plants. Molecules, atoms, particles and sub-particles are formed from energy (external form) according to certain laws (internal character). Similarly, human relations involve internal and external components. Production relations, in other words, are relations which have a material and a spiritual component. For example, the exchange of goods is carried out based on certain moral and ethical principles. At the same time, these moral and ethical principles have no meaning until they are practiced, and material exchange is required for that practice.

A largely irrational reaction to absolute idealism is pervasive in Marxism and conditions Marx's view of man and history, but to view man first and foremost as "producer" is simply not adequate.

In the CAUSA Worldview we have a broad view of man under the general concept of "child of God." In addition, man is potentially "lord of creation." This is increasingly evident as technology progresses. Man is the only being which can experience the entire universe and the only one capable of extending God's love to all creatures.

As British philosopher Bertrand Russell observed, "Economic causes operate through men's desire for possessions, and would be supreme if this desire were supreme."³⁹

2. Violence is not always necessary to bring about change

Perhaps in the course of creation, survival of the fittest was a necessary mechanism, but the concept is inappropriate in human social relations. The Creator may intend that in his role of steward to the universe, man should help to alleviate animal suffering, or perhaps what we view as suffering only appears to be suffering. We cannot think that destruction of our enemies is justified simply because it seems to be the mechanism of evolution. Yet, in Marxism, it is thought that the class struggle has brought progress to mankind.

3. Struggle is not always between classes

Indeed, it must be remarked that the most significant and determinant struggles in history have not necessarily been class struggles nor even inter-capitalist rivalry motivated by greed. Struggles have often been waged for ideals. Wars in this century have been fought to preserve freedom.

To cite Russell again, "He (Marx) regards conflicts as always conflicts between classes, whereas the majority of them have been between races or nations."⁴⁰

4. The Marxist belief that communism is the goal of history, that it will be permanent, and that it will not be destroyed dialectically is not rational.

Where is this history, this succession of struggles headed toward? This raises a most intriguing question. Is it going nowhere? Or is it going toward a goal determined by man's "species-essence"? If the latter is true, then the origin of that species-essence is highly significant.

For the Marxist, the species-essence, wherever it comes from, dictates that history will move toward the goal of communism. This will be achieved by the functioning of the dialectic. However, if the dialectic is the law of history, why does the dialectic stop functioning when communism has been attained?

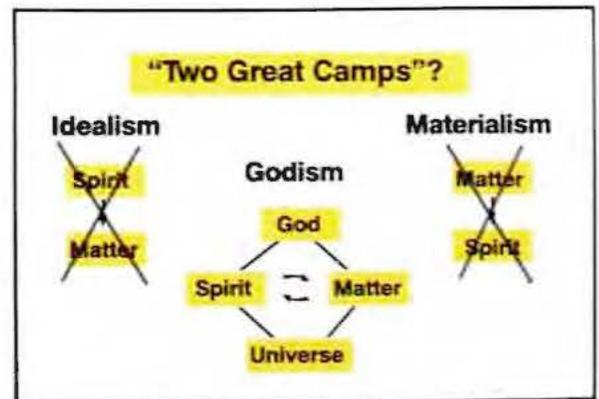
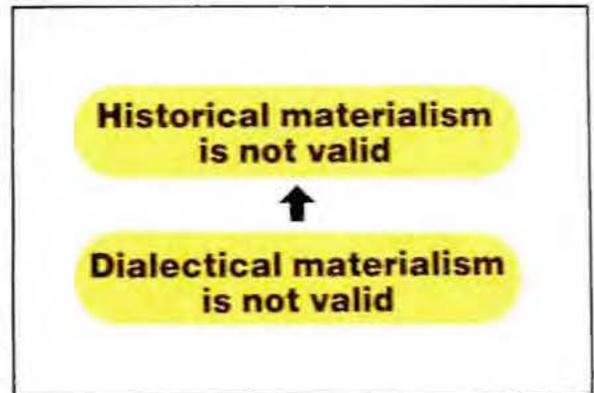
In the CAUSA view, God had a purpose when He initiated the creation. Since God is an unchanging and perfect being, His original purpose of creation must be unchanging and perfect. Thus, He is guiding human history toward the fulfillment of that original goal. As we have already said, the fulfillment of that goal depends on God's work *and* man's response, and it is the failure of man to make the proper response to God which has produced tremendous suffering in history.

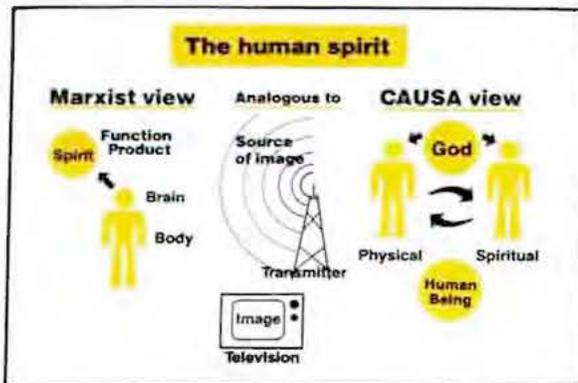
Although this is not an exhaustive list of the errors of Marx, it does permit us to reach the conclusion that historical materialism is not a valid analysis or description of history. It cannot be, because it is based on the tenets of dialectical materialism which is not a valid metaphysical outlook and does not explain the nature of relationship and the nature of development.

VI. Critique of the "two great camps"

Engels held that one must be either an idealist or a materialist. By discrediting idealism, he felt that he had shown materialism to be correct. In the CAUSA Worldview, however, we find it unnecessary to claim that matter comes from spirit or that spirit comes from matter.

The CAUSA Worldview, Godism, views spirit and matter as existing in a subject-object relationship. Both come from the creator, and both have a purpose. The purposeful, loving creator is God.





The "two great camps" framework is designed to reinforce the belief in materialism. Both materialism and idealism are inadequate. The view of Godism has implications in social practice. Both spiritual and material values must be highly regarded, but the spiritual aspect must always be regarded as subject.

One area where this view can be applied is in regard to the human spirit. In the Marxist view, spirit exists. It is, however, the operation of the human brain. It is human consciousness, a function or product of the human brain.

Certain Marxist propagandists have argued that the fact that physically damaging the brain by injury or drugs causes a change in human consciousness is evidence that spirit is object to the brain. We can dispense with this weak argumentation with a simple analogy. An image appears on the screen of the television set. Destroying the screen will cause the image to disappear, yet the screen is not the source of the image. The image comes from a transmitting station, and is broadcast by means of electromagnetic waves to the television receiver.

In the same way, the physical body need not be the source of mind or spirit. God is ultimately the source of both body and spirit, and the human individual formed through the dynamic relationship of body and spirit is the creation of God. A more detailed explanation of the important relationship between spirit and body will be made in Chapter Seven of this text.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

1. Melvin Rader, *Marx's Interpretation of History*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1979, p.179.
2. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach*, from *Reader in Marxist Philosophy*, New York, International Publishers, 1963, pp.47-48.
3. *Ibid.*, p.51.
4. Frederick Copleston, S.J., *A History of Philosophy*, Garden City, New York, Image Books, Vol.7, Part I, pp.65-67.
5. V. G. Afanasyev, *Marxist Philosophy*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1980, p.82.
6. Afanasyev, p.98.
7. Afanasyev, p.100.
8. F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, New York, International Publishers, 1940, p.26.
9. Afanasyev, p.109.
10. Lenny Wolff, *The Science of Revolution*, Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, 1983, p.29.
11. L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, Vol. I, p.290.
12. Afanasyev, p.100.
13. F. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1976, p.180.
14. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, pp.172-3.
15. S.F.Kissen, *Farewell To Revolution*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1978, p.109.
16. Eduardo del Rio, *Marx for Beginners*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1976, p.142.
17. *Marx and Engels, Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, Lewis Feuer, ed., Garden City, New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1959, p.43.

18. Marx and Engels wrote about several specific variations of the primitive communal society. William Shaw holds that Marx describes three basic types of primitive communism in the *Grundrisse*. These are (1) Asiatic, (2) ancient classical, and (3) Germanic. According to Melvin Rader, the stages of history in Marxism are (1) primitive communism, (2) Asiatic society, (3) ancient or classical society, (4) feudal society, (5) modern capitalist society, and (6) communism. Rader notes that in *The Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx distinguished between the first phase of communism, known as socialism, and the latter, communism. While we do not dispute these interpretations, we have chosen to abbreviate and simplify our treatment of the progression of social structures as described by Marx as (1) primitive communal society, (2) slave society, (3) feudal society, (4) capitalist society, (5) socialist society, and (6) communist society.
19. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, New York, International Publishers, 1947, p.52-53.
20. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, as quoted in William H. Shaw, *Marx's Theory of History*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1978, p.139.
21. J. Antonio Montes, "Military Buildup in Nicaragua," *West Watch*, Vol.6, No.6, July 1981.
22. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.33, p.358.
23. According to Engels, it is the destiny of matter to form a communist society. The entire process of historical materialism including each of the stages culminating in communism is a manifestation of the potential and necessity contained within matter. The qualities of matter themselves dictate that at some point a communist society has to be established.
24. Marx, *Contribution to a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law, Introduction*, *Collected Works*, Vol.3, p.186.
25. Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Collected Works*, New York, International Publishers, 1976, Vol.6, pp.494-5.
26. *On Religion*, USSR, Progress Publishers, 1975, pp.104-109.
27. *Ibid.*, p.61.
28. *Ibid.*, p.125.
29. Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Collected Works*, New York, International Publishers, 1976, Vol. 6, p.503.
30. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 85-86.
31. For a review of the threat to religious freedom in the United States see *Assault on Religious Freedom*, Washington, D.C., Coalition for Religious Freedom, 1984, 120p.
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