

Dead Men at War: The Ideological Battle Between Karl Marx and Adam Smith

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2020

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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April 11, 2020

Abstract

This thesis's foremost purpose is to illustrate the nature of the intellectual battle waged between Karl Marx and Adam Smith. A detailed summary of each philosopher's respective ideology is given, as well as an explanation for how such ideologies arose. Furthermore, an illustration of how the writings of Marx and Smith impacted historical events is provided. Ultimately, this thesis seeks to explain the core differences between Marxism and the free market system, and why such differences exhibit a great need for the preservation of liberty.

Keywords: individual sovereignty, communism, capitalism, liberty

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Introduction

What is a man? Is he merely a trivial collection of atoms, or is he composed of something else? Is there something that separates him from the lowly beasts of the field, or is he an entirely corporal being resigned to rely on impulsive pleasure, while submitting himself to the enslavement of his carnal needs? Ultimately, when man looks inward, does he see his own untrammelled soul, or does he instead peer only into the finite workings of a machine?

One of the greatest literary geniuses of all time, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, attempted to answer these essential questions. In his illuminating work, *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky (2012) writes:

Shower upon him every earthly blessing, drown him in a sea of happiness, so that nothing but bubbles of bliss are to be seen on the surface; give him economic prosperity, so that he should have nothing else to do but sleep, eat cakes and busy himself with the continuation of his species, and even then out of sheer ingratitude, sheer spite, man would play you some nasty trick. He would even risk his cakes, and would deliberately desire the most fatal rubbish, the most uneconomical absurdity, simply to introduce into all this positive good sense his fatal fantastic element. It is just his fantastic dreams, his vulgar folly that he will desire to retain, simply in order to prove to himself (as though that were so necessary) that men are still men and not the keys of a piano, which the laws of nature threaten to control so completely that soon one will be able to desire nothing but by the calendar. (p. 21)

What Dostoevsky is saying here is that if you try to predict all of man's desires or if you try to satiate his carnal needs in order to control him, he will purposely choose that which is against his

own interests. He will do this to remind himself that he is a man, and thus he will resist being played like the keys of a piano. Perhaps what is most unique about man is that during the brevity of his time on earth, he seeks not only to survive and procreate, but also to introduce into the world his own “fatal fantastic element”. Perhaps what is most unique about man is that he would rather give up safety and security in order to maintain his own individual sovereignty. Perhaps this is the clearest display of the spark of divinity within him.

Dostoevsky was not the only great mind to consider such pressing questions about the nature of mankind. These questions were also pondered by two of the most influential ideologues in human history: Karl Marx and Adam Smith. Most people view the battle between Karl Marx and Adam Smith as an economic one, but this is not truly the case. Marx and Smith were both moral philosophers at their core, not economists, and thus the battle that they waged was philosophical in nature, not economic. Indeed communism, the economic system that Karl Marx advocated, is naturally contrasted by capitalism, the economic system that Adam Smith advocated, but they are only in opposition to one another because they are the political manifestations of two divergent philosophical substructures.

Each philosopher developed two signature works that outlined their respective philosophies; or perhaps a better term would be “ideologies.” Adam Smith penned *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* in 1759 and *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. Karl Marx fired back with *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848 as well as *Das Kapital* published in three separate volumes from 1867 to 1883. Both men painted a very different picture about how the world is and even how it ought to be. Despite living decades removed from one another they were able to engage in fervent intellectual warfare from the grave. Adam Smith spent his entire life during the 18th century, and Karl Marx spent his during the 19th century. The 20th century, however, would be

the stage upon which these two playwright's competing scripts would be exhibited, and when the curtain was pulled back it was soaked with the blood of millions of innocent actors.

Despite the carnage of the 20th century, the world is still a battleground for the competing ideas of Marx and Smith. When Adam Smith penned *The Wealth of Nations*, he would fundamentally restructure how humanity viewed its own labor and the distribution of the wealth produced from said labor. He outlined the "invisible hand", or the natural, invisible market force that guides the demand and supply of goods in a free market towards equilibrium. The beauty of the "invisible hand" is that it creates a self-regulating economy based upon individuals pursuing their own self interests. Smith believed that the "invisible hand" is what would ensure that every man received a fair and equitable return in relation to the value of his labor in the free market.

A few hundred years later, much of the world is living in abundance thanks in large part to the capitalist ideals of Adam Smith. This has created a false sense of unlimited resources, as well as the idea that "all we have to do now is worry about dividing up the pie instead of trying to bake a larger one."

Millennials in particular have grown up in a bubble of unprecedented opulence and security, and naturally they have turned towards the ideals of equity and redistribution rather than relying on Adam Smith's "invisible hand" to disburse the fruits of humanity's labor. The question that must be asked is whether they will continue to follow the communal path of redistribution which inevitably leads to scarcity and suffering, or if they will instead return to the free market ideals of Smith and leave a prosperous future for their descendants.

The answer to this question centers around the same concept that lies at the core of the divide between Karl Marx and Adam Smith. It is individual sovereignty. Every policy, idea, and

theory stipulated by Marx and Smith disagrees on this pivotal issue. Their disagreement gives rise to a dichotomy of ideals, and it lays the foundation for a pantheon of economic and legislative theories. This dichotomy of ideals also presents some important questions about who controls society; individuals or the collective. Does the individual have the right to conduct himself as he sees fit, or is it instead of the responsibility of the State to determine the course of his actions? Does he have the right to hold and consume the fruits of his own labor, or is instead the right of the State to distribute such wealth? Are the words that he utters the result of his own free will and unique thought, or are they simply the meaningless projection of a biochemical entity?

The Sovereignty of the Individual

The wise military strategist Sun Tzu once posited that every battle is won before it is ever fought (Tzu, 2006). He believed that in any conflict, physical or intellectual, the victor's triumph is the direct result of the quality of his planning. If we are to trust Sun Tzu's analysis, then the battle between Marx and Smith relies heavily on the veracity of their opposing literature. In other words, the morality of the economic systems that they prescribed relies on how closely their observations align with the truth. Of course, this begs a simple question, the same question that Pilate laid before Christ, "What is truth?" (John 18:38, KJV). Perhaps an even more important question might be "What is moral?" In order to answer this, an unlikely diversion into the record books of the American Kennel Club might be necessary.

The English bulldog has humble origins. The breed was created during the reign of King John in 13th century England, for the purposes of bullbaiting (The History of the Bulldog, 2020). "Bullbaiting" was a vicious sport in which a full grown bull was placed into a pit and prodded with a hot iron. The enraged bull would storm around the bottom of the pit until a lone canine

gladiator was dropped into the mud alongside it. These dogs faced immeasurable odds, and normally it would not be long before they were sqewered by the thrusting horns of the bull. Breed after breed of dog was tried in the pit, and each successive attempt was met with the same bloody conclusion. It had become almost resolved that there could be no contest; the bull would always vanquish the inferior species. Crowds soon became tired of these events, as they knew that they were only watching the inevitable defeat of the dog. But one day a new breed entered the pit, a stout animal with thick jowls and a short snout. Instead of succumbing to the immeasurable challenge of being faced with a raging bull, this breed of canine refused to turn tail and run, and stood in stubborn defiance despite its predicament. The bull, inebriated by its presumption of dominance, would wildly charge the dog hoping to deliver a fateful blow. The dog would refuse to back down, and as the bull charged it would leap up underneath it and sink its teeth into the soft underbelly of the bull. This would maim the bull significantly enough that its ultimate defeat would be easy work for the dog. The crowds loved this new breed, and its valor garnered cheers of support and adoration. Eventually this dog was named for the sport that popularized its breeding, and it was given the title “bulldog”. The bulldog’s stubbornness and determination against whatever challenge was set before it earned its respect among the English people, so much so that they began to adopt the English bulldog as somewhat of a national symbol.

Six centuries later, another English bulldog was faced with a much more malignant danger than an enraged bull. Winston Churchill was given power as Prime Minister of England during the throes of World War II. His adversary, Adolf Hitler, had invaded Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and France; and he had done so in less than half a year (Schweikart & Allen, 2014). The only free European power left standing was

Churchill's England, and its entire army was stranded across the English channel at Dunkirk. Weak-kneed bureaucrats in parliament had already sought out peace talks with Hitler, hoping to negotiate a more appealing form of servitude to the "Führer." Churchill had every reason to forfeit the cause, as the German Luftwaffe had already begun bombing London, forcing Londoners to retreat to underground railways. Instead of dishonoring king and country, Churchill chose to address parliament, and in doing so he consoled a frightened and grieving nation. His words in this climactic moment were broadcast across the British Isles, but they would echo for decades to come:

We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this Island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British Fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old. (Churchill, 1940, p. 1)

Churchill's broadcast would rouse the English people to fight back against the threat of the Nazi regime, and his words would one day be recognized as the spark that burned down the swastika banners strewn across Europe.

An inquisitive reader may wonder what Churchill's story and the story of the English bulldog have to do with the definition of morality, or the battle between Karl Marx and Adam Smith. These stories deal with the separation of utility and morality, and the defense of free will. Ultimately, the bulldog knew that the easier choice might have been to succumb to the gravity of its predicament. If, like the many breeds that came before it, it chose to cower in defeat, then

perhaps it would have suffered only a quick death. The uniqueness of the animal was its stubbornness in refusing to allow its dire circumstances to define the course of its actions. Likewise, the beauty in Churchill's story resides in his refusal to be "played like the keys of a piano", as Dostoyevsky would have put it. Churchill knew that ultimately it was better to die than to be controlled to such an extent that one simply becomes utilitarian like a piano key. Churchill seemed to be asking the same question of the British people in 1940 that Patrick Henry asked of the American colonists in 1775: "Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery?" (Henry, 1775, p. 1).

Such a question highlights a deep schism between the philosophies of Marx and Smith. While Smith sides with the free willed spirit of the bulldog, Marx sides with the bloody utility of the bull. While Smith's ideals gave way to the fervent spirit of individualism espoused by Churchill, Marx's ideals gave way to the tyrannical force of the collective espoused by Hitler.

The fight between the bulldog and the bull also speaks deeply to what man deems moral, virtuous, and true. If man found virtue in pure utility, pure strength, then the cheers of the crowd would be for the bull. But this is not the case. The roar of the crowd was solicited by the little bulldog instead. It is this display that gives us insight into human nature, and what humanity sees as a moral good. Perhaps it is not the ability to conquer that is moral, but the ability to choose to fight in the first place. If morality was determined by utilitarian victory, then in 1940 Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party would have had moral superiority over the English army struggling to end their oppressive rule. Real virtue is found, however, in the grand exhibition of human will displayed by Winston Churchill, in his ability to face seemingly insurmountable odds with unwavering determination. As poet Dylan Thomas (1952) would have put it, the common

virtue found in both Churchill and the bulldog is their willingness to “rage against the dying of the light” (p. 122).

Therefore, one must distinguish between utility and morality, especially when discussing the battle between Karl Marx and Adam Smith. Many supporters of Adam Smith turn to the utility of his ideas as the basis for their subscription to them. They argue that capitalism has afforded greater economic prosperity to more people than any other economic system in the history of mankind. And of course, they would be correct. Capitalism has sometimes created more wealth than the benefactors even know what to do with (Burgin, 2016). This occurs because the incentive of self-interest often leads producers to produce a surplus. Communism, on the other hand, has always led to scarcity and starvation when implemented (Domenico, 2003). Only a few pages of history must be turned to reveal this bitter truth. One would be remiss if they failed to mention the destitution of those who lived under the sadistic hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union, or the brutality of Mao’s regime in China. It would be incorrect, however, to simply state that the morality of capitalism is found in the bounty resulting from its implementation. This would simply be relying on utilitarian ethics, which, while effective in a secular analysis, fail under the scrutiny of a moral analysis. The morality of capitalism rests upon its protection of the rights of the individual. Capitalism is the most moral economic system because it ensures that the fruits of one's labor are given to him and him alone, not simply because of its ability to create the most wealth for the most people. The uniform squawking of many “Bush-crowd elitists” in the Republican party may protest this, as they would gladly cede the individual liberties the free market provides if it meant that they might maintain their wealth. This paper would be an utter failure if its readers were to come away believing that the ideology of Adam Smith was superior to that of Karl Marx simply because it led to increased production.

If the utilitarian value of increased production is of paramount concern, then the Gestapo run concentration camps or the Soviet Gulags might be seen as equal to the industrial factories that arose from Smith's writings. Hopefully the analysis laid out in the following pages illustrates a much more important result of the implementation of Smith's ideas; the preservation of liberty.

A Dichotomy of Ideals

While Smith's notoriety is largely the result of his work in *The Wealth of Nations*, his views regarding moral philosophy are more extensively documented in an earlier work of his, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. It was first published in 1759, and within its pages Smith lays the philosophical foundation upon which he will build his economic theories in *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776.

Smith begins *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* with a strong defense of human empathy and the ability of one man to truly care for the welfare of another. He does this in the very first paragraph of the very first chapter, a chapter fittingly entitled "Of Sympathy." Smith (1759) writes:

However selfish man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature which interest him in the fortune of others and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. (p. 6)

In this way Smith separates morality from utility. He highlights the fact that human beings will often display principles in their nature which move them to act against their own interests in favor of their fellow man. The utility of such actions is nonexistent; there is often no real material benefit of rendering someone else's happiness necessary to one's own. The only benefit that may be obtained from such action is that of an abstract, moral nature. Because of this, it is seemingly a miracle that any man might sacrifice his own welfare for that of another, yet it

happens every day. If this proves anything, it proves that there is something significant dwelling within man that is neither corporal nor chemical. Such virtuous selflessness flies in the face of the secular Darwinian dogma that fills academia. If the elongated ascent of mankind was simply the result of a godless accident, then there would be no pleasure garnered from seeing the success of others. Such occurrences would neither be socially relevant nor morally significant.

Smith's appreciation for mankind's capacity for empathy leads directly into his observations regarding the necessity of justice. Smith (1759) writes:

If justice is removed, the great, the immense fabric of human society, that fabric which to raise and support seems in this world, if I may say so, to have been the peculiar and darling care of Nature, must in a moment crumble into atoms. (p. 60)

Smith contends that society cannot prosper and endure without the establishment of justice. Without the fair and equitable treatment of all, society would cease to exist. It is here where Smith highlights the importance of both empathy and self-interest. The enforcement of justice stems from man's empathy, as most people can empathise with both sides of a dispute. Such empathy stems largely from self-interest, as most members of society would like to be treated "fairly" no matter what side they were on. Therefore in order for a prosperous society to exist, each member must believe that they would be treated with equal respect and dignity no matter what position in society they find themselves in. In outlining such concepts, Smith has laid out a causal chain. Self-interest undergirds human empathy, human empathy undergirds justice, and justice undergirds society. Therefore in order for society to be run effectively, human beings must act in their own self-interest.

After laying out his presuppositions regarding empathy and justice, Smith turns to his most pivotal and prolific argument; the existence of the invisible hand. In the fourth section of

The Theory Of Moral Sentiments, Smith describes how wealth will naturally accumulate in the hands of those who manage it well. He also describes how this is neither unjust nor inefficient, because market forces will ultimately determine how wealth is distributed in a free market system. Smith (1759) writes:

[The rich] are led by an invisible hand to make nearly the same distribution of the necessaries of life, which would have been made, had the earth been divided into equal portions among its inhabitants, and thus without intending it, without knowing it, advance the interest of the society, and afford means for the multiplication of the species. (p. 129)

This quotation is preceded by a discussion of how ultimately the rich can only consume a small fraction of their wealth. With this being the case, it is only natural that the future of their wealth will ultimately rely on the strength of their investments. If they invest wisely, then their wealth will grow. If they invest poorly, then their wealth will shrink. Is there a more fair and equitable system than that which garners such results? Would a fairer system reward those who invest poorly, and punish those who invest wisely? Of course, the answer is no, there is no system more equitable and just than the free market. The operative word here is “free.” In such a system, man is free to do with his wealth what he pleases. He also “lives or dies” by the results of his actions. Fundamentally, the free-market system allows each individual to act in their own self-interest, and such a system promotes the just disbursement of wealth and resources because it gives to each man the fruits of his own labor. Despite the plethora of empathy that mankind exhibits, Smith recognizes that there is not enough empathy to support a system where one group is unjustly tasked with providing for the other.

Smith’s defense of the morality of self-interest led him to pen one of the most influential economic works in human history, *The Wealth of Nations*. In it, Smith outlines how the

philosophical principles exhibited in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* might lead to a just and successful economy.

The first principle that Smith highlights in *The Wealth of Nations* is the utility of the division of labor. Smith argues that the division of labor is the natural result of an economy that rewards efficiency. For most of human history, man was tasked with learning a multitude of skills in order to survive. According to Smith, such a learning curve was a waste of valuable time and energy. This is because it is more efficient for individuals to specialize in the production of a single product and use the extra “units” to trade for other necessities. The division of labor would therefore lead to excess not scarcity, and this excess would lead to greater prosperity for everyone in society. Smith (1776) writes, “It is the great multiplication of the productions of all the different arts, in consequence of the division of labour, which occasions, in a well-governed society, that universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people” (p. 12). The key phrase here is “universal opulence.” In a system where labor is divided, each member of society has the opportunity to find something that they are good at and capitalize on it. Smith notes that this opportunity even extends itself to “the lowest ranks of people.” If someone has a skill or trade that benefits others in society, they can use it to acquire wealth no matter where they fall in the social hierarchy. Unlike caste systems or feudal systems, the free market allows for each individual to reap what they sow, because their income will be the direct result of the value they add to the market, not their social status.

This division of labor leads Smith once again to the importance of the invisible hand. More specifically, Smith focuses on the importance of self-interest in any economic exchange. He writes, “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their

humanity but to their self-love” (Smith, 1776, p. 15). It is here that Smith points out the fairness of voluntary exchange. The butcher, acting in his own interest, sells his meat for a specified amount. The buyer, acting in his own interest, is tasked with determining whether or not the price is a fair one. The dynamics of such an exchange in a free market system are quite simple, but their implementation leads to a profoundly just economy. This is because in a free market system the power is given to the consumer, not the state. As it turns out, most consumers know how to run their lives better than any king, dictator, or government agency.

One may question whether mankind has the innate ability to self-govern and self-regulate. Allowing each man to live or die by his own volition could prove fatal to society. After all, such a system affords the government little to no power over the individual, and therefore some “concerned people in high places” may fret and worry about how they might protect the “little man” from the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, as it were. Once again Adam Smith seeks to unchain the individual from the shackles of the collective, and he speaks to the great societal benefit of allowing man to chart his own course without being maligned by the impediments of the state. Smith (1776) writes:

The natural effort of every individual to better his own condition, when suffered to exert itself with freedom and security, is so powerful a principle, that it is alone, and without any assistance, not only capable of carrying on the society to wealth and prosperity, but of surmounting a hundred impertinent obstructions with which the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations; though the effects of these obstructions is always more or less either to encroach upon its freedom, or to diminish its security. (p. 581)

Such a quote exhibits the profound trust that Smith has in the resilience and determination of mankind. Smith highlights how the innate, natural willpower that man possesses is so strong a

force that when allowed to breathe it is able to carry the weight of society. Even when strangled by the arms of the state, when “the folly of human laws too often encumbers its operations,” it is still often able to overcome such intrusions. The second point that Smith makes is even more pivotal. Smith concludes that the objective of obstructive laws is almost always to contain the freedom of the individual or to threaten his security. Such a claim foreshadows any “well meaning” efforts to impose government control over the market. In this way, Smith is laying down literary armaments for the future Marxist critique of his ideas. While Smith of course would never read Marx’s work, he evidently predicted it.

Decades after Adam Smith penned his final sentence, the world would be met with a philosopher that was altogether antithetical to him. This philosopher would, however, become equally renowned. Karl Marx, alongside his good and honorable comrade Frederick Engels, decided that he might challenge the capitalist theories of Adam Smith. Marx presumed that he was destined to free the working man from the chains that bound him, and thus he sat himself down in his luxurious London apartment and began to write.

Karl Marx completed his most significant work, *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Within its pages he laid out a detailed argument about the nature of human society. He also put forth a bold plan for how to change it. Marx began his analysis of society by making an anthropological claim. He stated that, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, p. 34). With one sentence, Marx lays the foundation for his ideology. Anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of history would have to concur with Marx that human history has indeed been a struggle. The vast majority of history books are not filled with stories of peace and prosperity, but with stories of conflict and conquest. For most of human history, people labored without the aid of electricity

or any motorized form of transportation (de Vocht, 2019). In addition, lack of sufficient medical knowledge made the world a dangerous gauntlet of bacteria and diseases (Rosenburg & Silverman, 2013). The only employment prospects for most people were that of laborer, farmer, or soldier. The lucky few were able to become a doctor, lawyer, or politician, but the vast majority had to scratch and claw a living out of self-sufficient farming, risk their neck in battle, or sell their labor for a meager compensation. So Marx is correct; human history has been a struggle. He did, however, make a very specific claim regarding this struggle; he stipulated that it was a “class struggle.”

To highlight such a class struggle, Marx once again turns to a historical analysis. In depicting the type of class struggles that have occurred in societies past and present, Marx lays out several groups that he believes have been historically placed in opposition to one another. He writes:

Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and the oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, p. 35)

The beginning of this quotation is constructed with artful deception. With each preceding dichotomy the nature of the relationship is less dire, but Marx presents them together as if they represent equal levels of oppression. He starts with the dichotomy of the freeman and the slave, which is of course a totally corrupt and immoral relationship. Marx then mentions the dichotomy of the patrician and the plebian, as well as that of the lord and the serf. These relationships are political, so there is a slight element of tyranny built into them as well. The final

dichotomy that Marx mentions is that of the guild-master and the journeyman. To posit that such a relationship between a tradesman and his worker is on par with that of a master and his slave is an utterly ridiculous claim. It is, however, the foundation for Marxist thought. In the eyes of Marx and Engels, the world is only composed of two classes of people, the oppressor and the oppressed. Marx (1848) explains this when he writes, “Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: bourgeoisie and proletariat” (p. 35). Bourgeoisie is the term Marx uses to identify the “oppressor” class, the class that he believes uses its power to subjugate and control the “oppressed” class, which he denotes as the proletariat. In Marx’s other signature work, *Das Kapital*, he constructs a caricature of a member of the bourgeoisie class. Marx (1867) writes, “work, saving, and avarice are his three cardinal virtues” (p. 51). This mockery of the “greedy capitalist” is an attempt by Marx to portray business owners as those who take advantage of others. Instead of being motivated by the individual spirit of entrepreneurship, Marx stipulates that those who “control the means of production” have been corrupted by avarice. He and his comrades believe that man should not bear the fruits of his own labor. Instead, the collective should live or die as a whole. In order to do this, however, the very concept of private property must be done away with, and thrown to the side like a dirty rag. Marx (1848) makes this his pivotal claim, writing, “In this sense, the theory of communists may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property” (*The Communist Manifesto*, p. 52). Marx does not try to “hide the ball” on this issue at all. In order for the proletariat to be freed from the tyrannical grip of the bourgeoisie class, the freedom to privately hold and maintain anything material must be abolished.

Just as Adam Smith predicted, such infringements are specifically performed as a means to strip the individual of his freedom and security. Once again, Marx admits this plainly. He

writes, “We communists have been reproached with the desire of abolishing the right of personally acquiring property as the fruit of a man’s own labor, which property is alleged to be the groundwork for all personal freedom, activity, and independence” (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, p. 52). The hypocrisy in this statement is unavoidably evident. After pages upon pages of discussing how the immorality of private property stems from the loathsome greed perpetuated by the bourgeoisie class, Marx reverses course completely and admits that the real reason he wishes to eliminate private ownership of property is to strip the common man of his personal freedom, activity, and independence.

An excellent example of how Marx subversively attempts to hide his true motives is found in his discussion of women and labor. Marx stipulates that he believes in the equality of men and women, and he even goes as far as to claim that women could perhaps be the leaders of the proletariat revolution. He is unable to hide, however, the real reason that he seeks the “liberation of women”, when he writes:

The less the skill and exertion of strength implied in manual labor, in other words, the more modern industry becomes developed, the more is the labor of men superseded by that of women. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex. (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, p. 44)

What Marx implies in the above paragraph is that as modern machinery alleviates part of the burden of manual labor, the proletariat might be better served by women who are now able to handle the less strenuous tasks associated with production. After all, Marx notes sedistically, “all are instruments of labor” when the workers own the means of production. There could be perhaps no more destructive notion than to tear a woman away from the home in order to

subjugate her to the inglorious work found in a communist factory. Parallels might be easily drawn between the Marxist interpretation of the emancipation of women and the current state of western industry. There is constant posturing by corporate America to become more “inclusive” to women in the workplace (Holger, 2019). It seems that both the communist dictator and corporate plutocrat have something in common; an unyielding desire for more “instruments of labor.”

Marx also does not fail to mention how he hopes to achieve his utopian triumph of the collective. He writes:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. (Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848)

Ultimately Marx recognizes that his goals cannot be obtained without a violent reordering of society. If the proletariat is to rise up, eliminate private property, and seize the means of production, then the bourgeoisie must be eliminated by force. As Marx’s ardent disciple Joseph Stalin put it, “You cannot make an omlette without breaking a few eggs” (Goodman, 1999, para. 4). While marxists today conceal their true motives behind a veil of platitudes, they still harbour the same lust for the blood of the bourgeoisie. They claim to be the champions of the working class, but in reality it is hatred that drives them.

The Motivation of a Marxist

The motivation behind Marxist theory can be illustrated quite effectively by a board game metaphor. Two brothers are playing a board game. They start off civil and optimistic, but

as one brother starts to win the other brother begins to discount the importance of the game. He might even claim the game is rigged against him, that it is not his own strategic failures but instead it is the game that is insufficient. "It's not me," he says, "the system is corrupt." Just before his brother is about to win, he flips the board in the air and the pieces go flying. His logic is clear. If he is not the winner, then the game must be rigged. But if the game is clearly not rigged, then he must destroy the game, because it is an evil device that has denigrated him as a loser while elevating his brother as a winner.

In some ways, the free market is like a chess game. As the game progresses, the disparity between the number of pieces each player has becomes greater and greater. This disparity is the direct result of one player's superior performance, just as a superior income under a free market system is evident of a superior contribution to the marketplace. In this way, the free market creates winners and losers just like a chess game creates winners and losers. Perhaps the writings of Marx should serve as a warning, because the losers in the free market might feel just hopeless enough to try to topple something a lot more important than a chess board.

Sadly, the motivation behind Marxist theory finds its roots in a common distaste for competence. People do not tend to hate lottery winners. Why would they? Who could hate someone who was by pure chance elevated to a position of great wealth, especially considering the fact that they could easily see themselves in the same position? Those who might align with Marxist theory, however, do exhibit a certain distaste for competent businessmen. This is because deep down some people hate to see meritorious success, as it creates an ideal that becomes a judge of their own inadequacies.

What is wrong with a little distaste for competence? Everyone knows someone who seems to have everything going for them, someone who knows it and perhaps is even openly

cocky about it. Of course, they are sometimes annoying. Of course, they are sometimes obnoxiously arrogant. What would be wrong with a little bop on the nose, just to knock them down a peg and remind them that they are not God's gift to the world? That is what the Soviet proletariat thought in 1929. Ukrainian farming oligarchs had been too successful in their grain production, and in doing so they had become extremely wealthy by supplying the entire northern Caucus region with grain. The Communist Party in Moscow disapproved of this, labeling them as greedy members of the bourgeoisie class. In response, Joseph Stalin sent some of his Red Army up to Ukraine, and they slaughtered thousands of men, women, and children in the Ukrainian farming elite (Revelations from the Russian Archives, 2016). In order to ensure that such a capitalist bourgeoisie class would never be able to rise up again, the Soviet Government took control of grain production. There was, however, just one little problem. They had killed everyone who had ever had any competence in farming. As a result, millions of Ukrainians starved to death in one of the largest and devastating famines in human history (Pobjoy, Clark, & Parry, 1998).

There is perhaps no greater example of the duality of a Marxist's words and his actions. The Soviets came to power under the pretense of eliminating starvation and human want through the distribution of wealth. They demanded of the Russian people the same thing that every socialist demands of his or her "comrades". They demanded that the individual "sacrifice for the community's needs or for the greater good when individual and collective interests are in conflict" (Otteson, 2014, p. 4). They demanded that the individual sacrifice his own sovereignty for the wellbeing of the collective. When the Soviets did indeed seize control, they focused more on the slaughter and rape of the social elite. Such actions are not representative of an ideology built upon equality and justice. Instead, they are grounded in hatred and anarchy.

In Defense of Individual Liberty

Suppose a “political revolutionary” issues a decree that limits work for everyone in his country to eight hours a day. Suppose he issues a decree that guarantees free education for all people, and state-run healthcare that does not cost the patient a dime. He goes further with his social reform, arguing strongly for women’s rights and the rights of the poor and the oppressed. Upon gaining power he federalizes the nation’s banking system, claiming he will soon begin to redistribute its enormous centralized wealth to the people. He nationalizes agriculture, claiming that an equal distribution of crops will leave no citizen hungry. He nationalizes control of public utilities such as railways, roads, sewers and energy. He forms powerful trade unions for textiles, wood-working, metallurgy, and mining. All of this he does under the banner of national unity and common values. This may sound like the ideology of Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, or perhaps some progressive reformer of the future looking to “increase equality and happiness” for all people. While Senator Sanders and Senator Warren most likely agree with the policies described, they are not their own. These policies are, or more accurately they were, part of the agenda of Vladimir Lenin in October of 1917; an agenda that, as previously stated, resulted in the oppression of millions of people under the cruel fist of the Soviet Union.

The implementation of this ideology is the direct result of Marxist theory. And, as Marxist theory dictates, the implementation of such policies can only occur when all opposition to them has been systemically wiped out.

As cliché as it sounds, the only true impediments to Marxist theory are freedom and democracy. There are a multitude of forces in the past and present that have sought to slow or perhaps reverse the spread of freedom and democracy, and it is important to evaluate and understand them. The most prevalent force today is a misinformed public. Many people do not

understand what freedom and democracy truly are. Freedom, by definition, is “the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved; without bondage” (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1961, p. 111). Therefore freedom, or being “free,” means to simply be unrestrained by force. Democracy, by definition, is “a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body” (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1961, p. 76). Therefore democracy, or a democratic form of government, is a system of governance under which the people rule, whether directly or indirectly. These words, freedom and democracy, represent powerful ideas. They are, however, only words, and those with political power can espouse words indefinitely to create false perceptions. For example, any rational person could see that the “People’s Republic of North Korea” is neither a republic nor a government of the people. Freedom and democracy are understood as noble ideals to be pursued, but they are rarely achieved because those who desire them do not understand that there is a more foundational ideal that must be achieved before any other. It is the ideal that was penned boldly by the founders of this nation, it is the ideal that gave birth to the most prosperous republic in human history, and it is the ideal that inspired the founding of the very institution enjoining this paper. It is liberty.

Liberty is a word with two definitions, both of which are relevant to the preservation of freedom and democracy. Liberty in philosophy, “involves free will as contrasted with determinism” (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1961, p. 204). Thus liberty, defined philosophically, means that each individual has the ability to act by their own volition. Liberty in relation to society is “the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior, or political views” (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 1961, p. 204). Therefore, liberty is also the ability to exercise one’s own will

without government intervention; in essence liberty is the restriction of government. Attempts to promote freedom and democracy often fail because liberty is not secured first. Politicians always deify themselves as champions of democracy, but in order to have a democratic government the people must first be free. And in order to be free, one must have liberty. True freedom is not freedom from hunger, freedom from pain, or freedom from fear. True freedom is freedom from government, which is only found in a culture where individual liberty is of paramount importance.

Liberty throughout history has been taken away through military force and might, in times when one man or group of men seizes power through the hostile takeover of a region's government. This, however, is not the most dangerous method of stripping a people of their individual freedoms, and it is not the most prevalent danger to liberty today. Liberty is being threatened today by the same ideology that inspired Karl Marx to formulate his *Communist Manifesto*. It is the same ideology that poisoned the mind of Adolf Hitler as his Nazi Socialist Party burned through Germany, and the same ideology that induced Vladimir Lenin to form the most oppressive coalition in the human history, the Soviet Union. Such an ideology is simple. It is the belief in the ultimate sovereignty of the state. It is the belief that every problem in society has a remedy for it found in increased government control. This is seen today in the agenda of the political left. It is an agenda that promotes single-payer healthcare systems under the pretense that no man, woman, or child will be left uninsured. It promotes increased gun control under the pretense that no one will have to feel threatened by "military-style weapons." It promotes the regulation of industry under the pretense of stopping corporate greed. It promotes the regulation of speech under the pretense that the populace will be protected from unsafe and hateful rhetoric. These policies may sound appealing to some, but that is all they are meant to

do; sound appealing. Only a fool fishes with a hook alone; if one wants to lure a fish, he must use bait. It is only after he has swallowed the bait that the fish realizes his jaw has been ensnared by iron. And it is only after society has submitted to government control that the people realize they have been stripped of their individual liberty.

Conclusion

What might be done to prevent the rise of a global Marxist regime? Will the continued preservation of liberty protect mankind from Marx's dystopian vision for the world? If Karl Marx was right, then society has already been placed on an inevitable path towards global communism. If Adam Smith was right, then man's only hope lies in the sovereignty of the individual striving to free itself from the tyranny of the collective. There may be a day where one ideology is indeed victorious, and the spectre of its opposition has been eliminated from the face of the earth. Perhaps it is more likely, however, that mankind is destined to continue the battle between Karl Marx and Adam Smith, eternally caught between two dead men at war.

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