

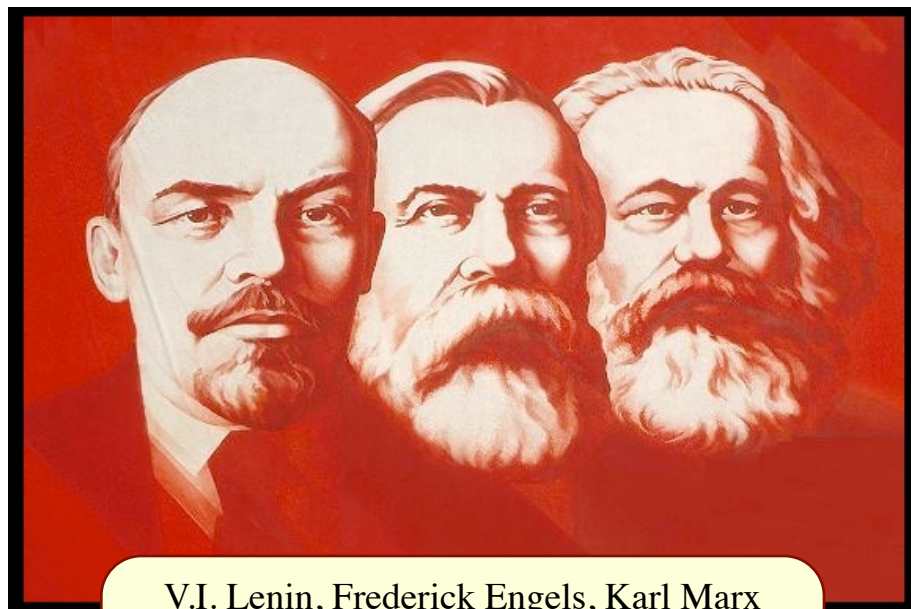
Forcing Change



The Fallacy of Social Justice: All for One, and Theft to All

By Carl Teichrib (www.forcingchange.org)

Author's Note: Volumes could be written on the different historical and philosophical applications of “social justice,” and we could easily find ourselves lost in a tangled maze of ideologies and nuances. Hence, this article seeks to examine the core element of social justice as a recent social-economical-political movement: An emotional appeal to Collectivism.



V.I. Lenin, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx

Index:

The Fallacy of Social
Justice, P.1



Carl Teichrib, Editor.

“...we must understand that the only road to peace and social justice is socialism... With the exploiting classes there will never be social justice; without social justice there will never be peace.” – Celia Hart. [1]

“...it is necessary to understand that every modern theory of social justice is ideological. No matter how reasonable or rational it may be, every modern theory of social justice is the rationalization of the interests of a particular group or class.” – William E. Murnion. [2]

“...all modern trends point to the specter of a terrifying, bigger and more pitiless conformity.” – Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn. [3]

A boiling, seething emotion rose from my chest into my throat. An avalanche of angry words tumbled from my small mouth. My indignation could not be quenched. A final declaration sounded with thick certainty.

“When I’m older, I’m going to do something about this.”

How old was I? Ten: maybe younger? But I had seen enough to *know*. Gross injustices had been observed.

I well remember the bitter experience. Me, a sensible farm boy – and my grandparents, owners of a small fabric shop in a sleepy prairie town – had traveled to the claustrophobic city of Winnipeg. The purpose: to visit textile outlets and make purchases of cloth. After two days of warehouses and shop floors, I knew this was the end of the world. Working conditions were deplorable: Too little sunshine, poorly chosen paint colors, smelly old merchantmen.

“Here’s some candy, kid.” It tasted stale.

At one critical point Grandma had to shush me. Didn’t she know? Didn’t anybody *care*? The lone Pepsi machine we had passed in the darkened hall wore a sign of prophetic importance: “Out of Order.” And I was dying of thirst.

Yes the textile industry, indeed the entire business world, was out of order. How could anybody work in these depressing places? Boredom alone *had* to be killing people; it was killing me!

As we loaded up with fabric and left this urban wasteland I caught a glimpse of something else. A brick-lined smokestack was silhouetted against the evening sky; and smoke – or steam, it didn’t matter – was belching forth to choke out nature’s life.

That’s when I lost it. Didn’t those people know what they were doing? Didn’t anybody in the government have a brain? Not only was the city a depressing place and the warehouses terrible for workers, but also the factories were going to kill *everything*! When I grew-up, I was going to put a stop to this madness. Others would join in this desire to change the world. We would save the worker from his intolerable slavery and rescue the environment from the hands of greedy merchantmen. Justice, or vengeance, would be served; whether at home or abroad.

Grandma soothingly patronized me. Grandpa, lips tights, said nothing.

He just drove faster.

Bending Minds

Looking back I marvel. As a young mind I had a keen sense of “social rights” and “justice.” And I was a prime candidate to have swung to the more extreme side of the leftist camp. In fact, my impressionable mind was already moving in that direction. Unaware that I was mimicking a Marxist approach, social revolution through mass action, I was emotionally convinced that radical surgery was the only recourse. Where had this come from?

My parents and grandparents were no-nonsense farmers and business owners. They worked very hard at their respective livelihoods, were quick to help anyone who needed assistance, and contributed to the local community in different ways – including, on my Mother’s part, teaching English to Laotian immigrants (those were the days of the Boat People). Both my parents and grandparents emphasized Christian ethics and values, to stand up for the underdog, and remain independent in the face of peer pressure; “You were born an original, don’t die a copy.”

The church I attended had Mennonite roots, but didn’t cater to leftist ideologies. In fact, it had separated itself from a Mennonite denomination in part because of a growing socialist-slant in the larger body. At heart we were probably the only non-pacifist Mennonite church in the district.

Television? No. At that time TV consisted of *Bugs Bunny* on Saturday evenings, and Dad trying to watch *The Lawrence Welk Show* while we kids faithfully re-enacted *Wile-E Coyote* cliff-falls from the top of the couch. There just wasn’t much time for television.

Benefits of a Forcing Change Membership

- Access to every issue of Forcing Change, our fully documented monthly publication.
- Membership-only admittance to source documents.
- Access to special reports such as *The Power Puzzle: A Compilation of Documents on Global Governance*.
- Direct access to media files, audio features, and more!

Your membership helps to keep the research going!

Public school? This was the late 1970s, and “environmental” curriculum was already in play. In the local high school *The Environmental Handbook* was used as a text, complete with overtly anti-Christian, anti-family, and anti-capitalist rhetoric (See *Forcing Change*, Volume 3, Issue 2). *The Environmental Handbook* for all practical purposes was a Marxist/Trotskyite call to radical “green” action – “nothing short of total transformation will do much good.” (*The Environmental Handbook*, 1970, p.330). Other school texts such as the *Prose of Relevance* and *Worlds in the Making*, shaped minds to accept quantum cultural shifts, including socialist and technocratic ideals. [4]

Elementary school and Junior High also witnessed a steady stream of transforming

curriculum. I remember hearing about the growing problems of over-population and the destruction of the ecosystem caused by human greed and pollution. Injustice was occurring in different parts of the world. Nuclear annihilation was around the corner.

Whether overt or subtle, the message was clear: The old ways of how society functioned could no longer be tolerated. Too much was at stake, and it was up to my generation to fix the world's problems. Whether the teachers knew it or not, we were being shaped to change the system. Thus, a variety of cultural and social alternatives entered the classroom – including Marxism. The mood of my childhood education was shaped by what had occurred less than a decade earlier.

The late 1960's and early 70's was a hinge time for Western society, and the ripple effect spread far and wide. This was the era of the New Left, with its vanguard techniques, and its challenge to cultural norms. Radicalism clashed with conventionalism, the drug culture blossomed, and Eastern forms of spirituality entered the mainstream. In America the welfare or "servile state" was greatly expanded, including experiments in community housing. All of this was coupled with the Vietnam War, which first demoralized France and then the United States. During this time, "peace" groups parroted Soviet propaganda; Capitalism was equated with "war mongering" while socialism reflected equity and peace.

The liberal-mined West embraced this trend, even though Frederick C. Barghoorn, a Yale professor who had been interned by the Soviet government in 1963, had warned America about the use of "peace" as a method in furthering Marxist ideology. Published one year after his arrest and release, his book *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* pro-

vided an important warning,

"It should be emphasized that all of the Soviet leaders, from Lenin and Trotsky through Stalin and Khrushchev, strove in their peace propaganda to appeal both to revolutionaries seeking the overthrow of constitutional democracy and to western businessmen, liberals, pacifists, and the general public whose non-dialectic conception of peace was limited to the simple absence of armed conflict." [5]

Liberals and pacifists of Western nations were viewed as important players in the cause of international Marxism. Their importance came not from an understanding of the Moscow-Hegelian-Marxist program, *but in their ignorance*. Convinced of holding the moral high ground and blinded by a sense of enlightenment, these individuals advanced the Communist agenda by acting on the *emotion of the ideal*. In other words, they were emotionally drawn to a Marxist-oriented "social justice" cause; the "plight of the worker," economic and social inequalities, the desire for class-based justice, and the "struggle for peace." These individuals would then become activists, educators, and cultural trendsetters. And they demanded social transformation that would, invariably, have an anti-Capitalist and anti-individualist tone. The boys in Moscow grinned.

The only way of "assuring lasting peace in the world" from the Marxist perspective, explained Barghoorn, is the "elimination of capitalism." [6] Peace, solidarity, and justice throbbed with a Leninist heartbeat throughout this turbulent time period. Capitalism, with its emphasis on private property and free enterprise, was considered the prime cause of social strife. Socialism, with its

emphasis on community and social order, was the path to progress.

This leftist ideology was solidly embedded in Canadian education during the 1970s, and from that point on its fingerprints can be observed in practically all major institutional systems, including schools and churches.

Retna Ghosh and Douglas Ray, in the preface to their 1987-book *Social Change and Education in Canada*, provide a short outline of social theories that shaped modern education. This included Herbert Spencer's Social Darwinism, the conflict theories of Karl Marx, modernization, and the concept of human capital with its emphasis on work-force development. Each impacted the Canadian school system, as has Technocracy and a host of other philosophies. And while the *system* may see distinctions in these, the classroom was far more blurred. Indeed, any of the above – or a mix of all – may have shaped the student's worldview. But rarely did the student understand the *ideal* behind the curriculum. As Ghosh and Ray explained,

“Social change, whether gradual or revolutionary, is inevitable and brings with it new patterns of social interaction. The place of education in this process is both complex and critical.” (*Social Change and Education in Canada*, p.vii).

For a young mind in the late 70s bombarded by a host of conflicting educational patterns, the *emotional tug* attached to exploited social issues seemed the most relevant. No wonder my trip to Winnipeg ended with a Trotskyite call for revolution.

What has any of this to do with “social justice”? Everything.

Catholic Social Justice

In today's Christian world – and Western culture in general – there's a myriad of changes taking place, and with it comes new language. “Social Justice” is certainly in the spotlight.

Jim Wallis of Sojourners uses this term repeatedly. Brain McLaren's book *Everything Must Change* seeks to reframe Christianity in a social justice context. The Christian Reformed Church has a social justice office, as does the Salvation Army; and the Mennonite Church USA, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Canada, and an endless list of other denominations and church bodies speak of “social justice.” Christian universities and Bible colleges too have adopted this language.

But where does this term come from, and what is its dominant history?

“Social justice” appears to have been first employed in the early 1840s by an Italian Catholic theologian and Jesuit, Luigi Taparelli D'Azeleglio. [7] As Daniel M. Bell points out in his book, *Liberation Theology After the End of History*, d'Azeleglio's concept was “justice as a general virtue that coordinated all activity with the common good.” [8]

The notion of virtue is important, for it brings a flavor of charity. Taparelli's vision circled around justice as a system of moral norms that included individual rights and the freedom to associate. The greater whole of the community – the “sum total of individual goods” [9] – would thus benefit. This form of “justice” was also known as economic justice, and looked upon *wealth redistribution* as a coordination of rights. Direct government administration should be avoided wherever possible, for Taparelli recognized the danger of centralization. [10]

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, which dealt with the conditions of the working class, the right to private property, and the workplace relationship. Leo XIII rejected Communism and the greed that arises from an amoral application of Capitalism, instead advocating that worker and employer should come to an honest agreement regarding labor and wages. At this point Catholicism rejected Marxist based socialism.

Decades later, Pope Pius XI penned his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. In it he denounced Communism and at the same time embraced wealth redistribution – the sharing of benefits – as a function of social justice (§57). “By this law of social justice, one class is forbidden to exclude the other from sharing in the benefits.”

While this idea started to stretch the earlier limits of Catholic social justice, he at least recognized that all sides of the class divide could be negative players: the rich withholding the wages due the worker, and the worker demanding all from the rich. That aside, the free market system wasn’t an acceptable means to build a civilization on social justice.

“Just as the unity of human society cannot be founded on an opposition of classes, so also the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces. For from this source, as from a poisoned spring, have originated and spread all the errors of individualist economic teaching... free competition, while justified and certainly useful provided it is kept within certain limits, clearly cannot direct economic life – a truth which the outcome of the application in practice of the tenets of this evil individualistic spirit has more than suf-

ficiently demonstrated. Therefore, it is most necessary that economic life be again subjected to and governed by a true and effective directing principle.” (§88)

In reading through the encyclical an unsettling doublespeak emerges. Communism is chastised, yet the free market is evil. In this dialectic the end result is that “certain kinds of property...ought to be reserved to the State.” The “public authority,” according to Pius XI, should maintain ownership of enterprises that advance the “general welfare.” (§114-115). A slide down the slippery slope had now begun in earnest; “social justice” would become the excuse par-excellence in calling for a global collectivist system.



Speaking on Pius XI’s views regarding economic justice, Pope John XXIII pointed out that “man’s aim must be to achieve in social justice a national and international juridical order, with its network of public and private institutions, in which all economic activity can be conducted not merely for private gain but also in the interests of the common

good.” [11] Furthermore, in 1963 John XXIII advocated a “universal authority” to ensure this “common good.” [12]

This was the era of Vatican II. Speaking of the changes that occurred during this period, Professor Philip C. Bom tells us; “It could be characterized as a shift from anti-Communism toward pro-*commonism* of a new world order.” [13] [*italics added*].

In 1965 Pope Paul VI made similar comments at the United Nations, recommending “the establishment of a world authority.” [14]

Why? Because a world authority is needed to establish and maintain an international “common good.”

That same year, Paul VI’s document *Gaudium et Spes – Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* – recognized that the Catholic church has an important role to play in constructing “a peaceful and fraternal community of nations.” (§90) In that vein, he recommended in Section II, titled “Setting Up An International Community,” the creation of a Catholic organ designed to promote “international social justice.” (§90). Individualism was upheld in the document, but it *must* support the greater good. Collectivism in production was considered erroneous, yet a form of *social collectivism* was deemed necessary. An excerpt from paragraph 65 demonstrates this social justice relationship,

“Citizens, on the other hand, should remember that it is their right and duty, which is also recognized by the civil authority, to contribute to the true progress of their own community according to their ability... those who hold back their unproductive resources or who deprive their community of the material or spiritual aid that it needs – save the

right of migration – gravely endanger the common good.”

Here we see a swing far past the earlier idea of a charitable virtue. The implication is forthright; *you will participate*. In the context of this particular document, that participation includes the demands of a global community and world civil authority.

Although Pope John Paul II was perceived as more conservative, he too espoused a globally-minded social justice agenda. This was evident in his endorsement of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which gravitate around wealth redistribution. [Note: While the Millennium Development Goals outwardly demonstrate some admirable targets – education, eradication of poverty and hunger, improved health – the methods are suspect [15]]. And as the most notable geo-political pope of the Twentieth Century, John Paul envisioned “a globalization of solidarity.” [16] In discussing globalization as a unifying factor, he said,

“For all its risks it offers exceptional and promising opportunities, precisely with a view to enabling humanity to become a single family, build on the values of justice, equity and solidarity.” [17]

Furthermore, the US Catholic Bishops, operating under John Paul’s reign, were open regarding social justice – “the common good” – in their 1986 letter, *Economic Justice For All*.

“The common good may sometimes demand that the right to own be limited by public involvement in the planning or ownership of certain sectors of the economy. Support of private ownership does not mean that anyone has the right to unlimited accumulation of wealth.” (§115)

Interestingly, Catholic commentators from all sides of the political spectrum described the Bishops' document as "pro-capitalist." However, a cursory read demonstrates that *Economic Justice For All* is pro-socialist. Yes, the responsibility of the individual is highlighted and private property is validated. However, it's the Bishops' *economic justice* that displays a different set of cards, with its call for collective, government-directed programs aimed at curing social ills. Individuals, therefore, are *obligated* to participate under government dictates. In other words, if you can contribute to the common good, then you *must* contribute. This is reminiscent of the Marxist maxim: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need."

Writing for the *Journal of Business Ethics*, William E. Murnion gives a straightforward assessment of the Bishop's text; "...the conception of justice it espouses is... clearly socialist, and communist at that." Murnion conceded that the Bishops were not "crypto-communists," just that their "conception of social justice is indeed identical with the communist principle of justice even though the bishops have arrived at it from a route entirely opposed to Marx's." [18]

Remember too that the 1980s was the era of Liberation Theology in Latin America, which combined revolutionary forms of Marxism with Catholic social teachings. And although the Vatican denounced certain aspects of Liberation Theology, this Roman Marxism was nevertheless a logical extension of "social justice."

Finally, from the Catholic perspective, Pope Benedict XVI has amply demonstrated his affinity to social justice through his encyclical *Caritas In Veritate* (NOTE: *Forcing Change* published a major review of this

document in Volume 3, Issue 8). Here, social justice is recognized as an issue of prime economic and political importance, one that goes beyond the free market approach. Like a broken record, the market system must be directed "towards the pursuit of the common good." (§36) "The political community," so explained Benedict XVI, "must also take responsibility."

Economic redistribution, according to this encyclical, *is justice*. The Pope also recommended that the United Nations be reformed, along with the global economy, so that that a "true world political authority" would emerge "with teeth." (§67) Why? To "seek to establish the common good." (§67).

Concluding this section: Although some older Papal teachings uphold private property and reject Marxist socialism, such as Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*, the Roman Catholic hierarchy over the past century has increasingly bridged "social justice" with economic and political *collectivism*. In this sense, the Holy See became a cheerleading squad for the United Nations' system of social management. As Professor Bom explains in his book, *The Coming Century of Commonism*,

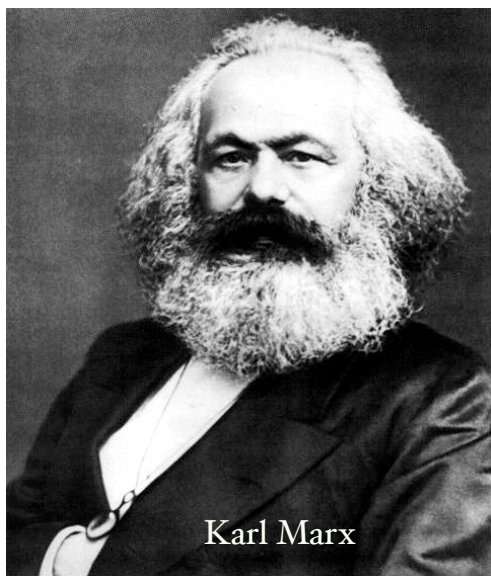
"Slowly, step-by-step, stage-by-stage, the Catholic church-state champions the U.N.'s agenda for a New International Economic Order." [19]

But another historical movement arose in parallel to the modern Catholic version of social justice, giving active energy to the phrase. And if the Papal idea of social justice found itself on the slippery slope to Collectivism, this parallel movement *intentionally aimed for the bottom of the hill*.

Marxist Social Justice

For generations there has been an *activist side* to the idea of wealth redistribution. This popular front, with a web of splinter groups, organizations and fellow travelers, used “social justice” as the rallying cry for cultural transformation. In fact, this movement is very much alive today, and continues to use the term as an effective banner. These social justice flag wavers have been the most vocal preachers of Collectivism; the followers of Karl Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Castro, and dozens of other socialist and communist leaders. Communists and social radicals have been, hands-down, the winners when it comes to employing this term. The Socialist International has always used it, as has Trotskyite organizations, Red factions, and a multitude of socialist political parties. It’s a favorite of the Green Party too, with little difference in meaning from that of its socialist sisters.

The idea of social justice within a more *political* context goes back a long way. In 1848 the Society of Fraternal Democrats, an international body that rubbed shoulders



Karl Marx

with Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, published a veiled threat against the British system; “Let the privileged classes renounce their unjust usurpations and establish political equality and social justice, and England will have nothing to fear against a world in arms.” [20]

Marx and Engels fleshed out their “science of socialism” during the same time frame as Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio’s “social justice.” This leads to an interesting speculation: Did lines of influence exist between the Jesuit and Marx?

Regardless if such lines exist or not, *The Communist Manifesto* was published the same year that the Society of Fraternal Democrats called for social justice. And under Communism, wealth redistribution was to be used for social ends. In this structure, private property for personal gain was viewed as the cornerstone of the class system, and was seen as the cause of social injustice and strife. Wealth redistribution, therefore, was aimed at producing a society where all people were economically equal. Hence, the abolition of bourgeois property (that of the capitalist class) was the key component of Communism. To this end Marx and Engels believed that the road to victory was *democracy*. Once the proletariat (working class) had attained political power, a more just social system could be birthed.

“...the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy.

The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, i.e., of the proletariat or-

ganized as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

Of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the rights of property..." [21]

This concept of social justice, the raising of an "oppressed" class through the degradation of another class, is a reactionary process based on the arousing of *envy*. At this base level, and in other respects, Communism is directly linked to the French Revolution – an event that had sparked worldwide revolutionary fervor, and one whose shots are still echoing today. Austrian philosopher and defender of freedom, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, provides historical context.

"If one were to take paper and pencil to make an estimate of how many people were murdered or killed in battle because of the ideas of the French Revolution in their various stages, guises, and evolutionary forms, because of the ideas of equality, ethnic or racist identity, a 'classless society,' a 'world safe for democracy,' a 'racially pure people,' 'true social justice achieved by social engineering' – one would arrive at simply staggering sums. Even the Jewish holocaust offered by the National Socialists with five or six million dead would seem almost a drop in the bucket." [22]

Weaving the thread of envy and social change, Kuehnelt-Leddihn reminds us,

"In the last 200 years the exploitation of envy, its mobilization among the masses, coupled with the denigration of individuals, but more frequently of classes, races, nations or religious communities has been the very key to political success. The

history of the Western World since the end of the eighteenth century cannot be written without this fact constantly in mind. All leftist 'isms' harp on this theme, i.e., on the privilege of groups, minority groups, to be sure, who are objects of envy and at the same time subjects of intellectual-moral inferiorities. They have no right to their exalted positions. They ought to conform to the rest, become identical with 'the people,' renounce their privileges, *conform*. If they speak another language, they ought to drop it and talk the lingo of the majority. If they are wealthy their riches should be taxed away or confiscated." [23] (*italics in original*).

This method of arousing envy, often disguised as virtue – "we're doing this for the poor and oppressed" – is built upon a sense of moral superiority and indignation, which then ferments into loathing and "social action." At this point the *emotion of the ideal* becomes the driver of transformation. Perched on this self-constructed high point, we quickly sanction Socialism (the theft of all for the "greater good"). Or not content by the slowness of Socialism, we pursue Communism through revolution (the gutting of one class for the "greater good"). Either way we institute Collectivism, the empowerment of those who claim to guide the general good. In all of this democracy comes to full form, taking on a purification role expressed as "Mob Rule." Whoever controls the biggest mob through the emotion of the ideal is the one who rules. Social change then occurs either through the ballot box or the barrel of a gun. It doesn't matter: the Mob has spoken, equality will be enforced, and we can bask in the "warm herd feeling of brotherhood." [24]

Literary critic and former Marxist, Herbert Read, well understood these connections.

“Communism is an extreme form of democracy, and it is totalitarian: but equally the totalitarian state in the form of fascism is an extreme form of democracy. All forms of socialism, whether state socialism of the Russian kind, or national socialism of the German kind, or democratic socialism of the British kind, are professedly democratic, that is to say, they all obtain popular assent by the manipulation of mass psychology.”

[25]

Over the years, Communist and socialist leaders have rallied the masses with the message of inequality (“oppression”) and the social justice solution: economic equality. “Communism was meant to have a universal liberating purpose. It was to bring the end of inequalities and establish real social justice.” [26]

In 1898, Eugene V. Debs – later dubbed “America’s greatest Marxist” – equated a collective society, industrial freedom, and social justice. [27] A few years later, during World War I, he noted that permanent peace based on social justice wouldn’t occur until “national industrial despotism” was replaced by “international industrial democracy.” Economic profit was anathema to peace, and the ending of war could only come with the ending of “profit and plunder among nations.” [28] A new world order was needed where one class was striped and replaced by a more progressive, humane, and international apparatus.

V.I. Lenin and his gang “came to power with an ambitious programme of measures designed to ensure social justice and improve the lot of the poor.” [29]

Maxim Gorky, a friend of Lenin’s couches this in glowing words of endearment.

“...It would be a difficult task to paint the portrait of Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin. His words were as much a part of his external appearance as scales are of fish. The simplicity and straightforwardness of everything he said were an essential part of his nature. The heroic deeds which he achieved are surrounded by no glittering halo. His was that heroism which Russia knows well – the unassuming, austere life of self-sacrifice of the true Russian revolutionary intellectual who, in his unshakable belief in the possibility of social justice on earth, renounces all the pleasures of life in order to toil for the happiness of mankind.”

[30]

The results were disastrous. Mervyn Matthews tells us, “The efforts to banish ‘capitalist exploitation’ had all but destroyed the wealthier classes without benefiting more than a tiny proportion of the poor.” [31]

But it did benefit Lenin and company. Never mind the mountain of corpses; progress always comes with a price.

“Since the French Revolution established a new high mark of political liberty in the world, there has been no other advance in democratic progress and social justice comparable to the Russian Revolution...” (Socialist Party of America news release, August 1918).

By 1922, the Russian Revolution had cost the lives of six to ten million.

Decades later in the Americas, Castro summed up the Cuban revolution “as an aspiration for social justice.” [32] Che Guevara couched his bloody revolution as an “armed



struggle for freedom of rights and social justice.” [33]

This crude theme of social justice is common to all leftist uprisings, because it rests in the heart of all leftist ideologies. The Will Miller Social Justice Lecture Series demonstrates this fact through the symbolism found on its banner, which show a line of shirts hanging to dry. The symbols speak volumes: Marxism, world peace, social revolution, Che Guevara, feminism, etc.

Celia Hart, an Internationalist, put it this way on December 2003.

“...we must understand that the only road to peace and social justice is socialism. Peaceful coexistence and all its fallacies have tragically lost their opportunity to triumph. With the exploiting classes there will never be social justice; without social justice there will never be peace... Let’s join the people under the banner of the International. Never before has the world needed, as now, to remember November seven [the anniversary of the October Revolution]. Never before must we understand that the banner of Bolshevism never died... And let us shout to our enemies, regardless of whether they call us terrorists, that we will not fight for the imperialist war, or for the miserable peace of injustices; we will fight together for the so-

cialist revolution in permanent combat. Workers of the World, Unite!” [34]

It’s a radical call. Today we see social justice linked to a myriad of radical movements, including environmentalism. Nice sounding, morally-high terms arise from this Marxist-green marriage; “Eco-justice,” “green justice,” and “climate justice.” How does this look?

In 1990, the Manitoba government in partnership with UNESCO convened the prestigious World Environment Energy and Economic Conference. The theme was provocative: “Sustainable Development Strategies and the New World Order.”

A report was released with the findings, titled *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda*. Chapter 2, “Towards A Global Green Constitution,” fleshed out a section with the subtitle “Social Justice.” Population control, green energy regulations and accounting systems that suggested “an official global policy of one child per family,” and the “principle of global economic equality” would be central to the “green government,” the text reported. Human rights would also be at the forefront, in the context of an accepted global ethic and international framework.

Here's how it would look; keep in mind that the following was deemed a *positive state of affairs*.

“Popular or not, green governments will oppose any culture if it proves to be prejudicial by reason of gender, age, colour, race, religion, belief, sexual orientation, mental or physical condition, marital status, family composition, source of income, political belief, nationality, language preference, or place of origin.” [35]

“Intolerable attitudes” wouldn't be tolerated, all in the name of protecting the oppressed. Now, real oppression is evil. Nobody in his or her right mind wants oppression to occur or flourish. But social justice *ala* Collectivism is the most dangerous form of oppression imaginable. Moreover, the truly downtrodden – like the peasants of the old Soviet Union – rarely have their load lightened under social justice. Instead, with the destruction of the creative capital inherent in a free market, the plight of the poor continues. Life becomes more difficult.

No wonder F.A. Hayek called Marxist-based social justice a “pseudo-ethics.” One that “fails every test which a system of moral rules must satisfy in order to secure a peace and voluntary co-operation of free men.” [36]

Getting Our Terms Right

“My church has a social justice mandate... This is something I support.”

Sounds nice, but can you tell me what you mean? The usual response I get, thankfully, centers on feeding the poor, helping at a homeless shelter or safe house, assisting the elderly, working with troubled teens, or sup-

porting an orphanage.

Sorry, that's not social justice. The dominant social justice concept for the past 150 years has been centered on the sliding slope of Papal-advocated wealth redistribution, alongside a Marxist version of Collectivism. Feeding the poor and assisting the helpless, from a Christian perspective, isn't social justice – its Biblical compassion, *a generous act of love*. Such acts of compassion engage individual lives, and are based on the Christian call of loving others more than self. This is the heart of compassion: An individual sees a need and operating out of love, reaches to meet that need. Churches too are to function in a similar manner. A need is evident, and moved by compassion, the congregation works to solve the dilemma. *Coercion never enters the picture, nor does a political agenda emerge, nor is a call for economic equality heard.*

The Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan demonstrates true compassion (Luke 10). A Jewish man has been beaten, robbed, and left to die on the road. Various people pass him by, including the religiously pious. However, a Samaritan traveler sees the individual, and although the Samaritan is culturally alienated from the beaten man, he recognizes the desperation and individually takes action – dressing his wounds and providing a place of rest and refuge. And the Samaritan pays for it himself without demanding remuneration or compensation, either from the victim, his family or community, or from the government or ruling class.

However, if the Samaritan were a supporter of the dominant theme in social justice, he would have acted with a different motive for different ends. The Samaritan

would have used the occasion to lobby for social transformation.

- 1) The robbers were really victims of an unjust economic system, and had acted in response to the oppression of the capital class.
- 2) In order to bring justice to this oppressed class, and to steer them back to a caring community, equitable wealth redistribution should take place. The rich must be taxed to fund necessary social programs. A more equitable society is needed.
- 3) Who will pay the victim's medical bills? The community or the rich.
- 4) This tragic event, the Samaritan would tell us, is a graphic reminder of the class struggle. We are all victims of an unjust economic order. Therefore, we must be the "voice of the voiceless" and advocate for radical social change.

In the social justice framework there is another agenda that lurks behind the tragic: A political/economic cause is piggybacked and leveraged – the cause of economic equality through wealth redistribution. This isn't about truly helping the victim; it's about *using the victim*.

Biblical justice, on the other hand, never seeks to dismantle class structures. Evil actions are condemned, but this isn't specific to a particular social strata. Consider the words of Leviticus 19:15.

"You shall do no injustice in judgment. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. But in righteousness you shall judge your neighbor."

Dr. Mark W. Hendrickson helps put things into perspective.

"[Biblical] Justice not only means that nobody is to be picked on because he is poor or favored because he is rich, but that (contrary to the doctrine of 'social justice') nobody is to be picked on because he is rich or favored because he is poor." [37]

Dr. Hendrickson elaborates,

"The fundamental error of today's 'social justice' practitioners is their hostility to economic inequality, per se. Social justice theory fails to distinguish between economic disparities that result from unjust deeds and those that are part of the natural order of things. All Christians oppose unjust deeds... [But] it isn't necessarily unjust for some people to be richer than others.

God made us different from each other. We are unequal in aptitude, talent, skill, work ethic, priorities, etc. Inevitably, these differences result in some individuals producing and earning far more wealth than others. To the extent that those in the 'social justice' crowd obsess about eliminating economic inequality, they are at war with the nature of the Creator's creation.

The Bible doesn't condemn economic inequality. You can't read Proverbs without seeing that some people are poor due to their own vices. There is nothing unjust about people reaping what they sow, whether wealth or poverty.

Jesus himself didn't condemn economic inequality. Yes, he repeatedly warned about the snares of material wealth; he exploded the comfortable

conventionality of the Pharisaical tendency to regard prosperity as a badge of honor and superiority; he commanded compassion toward the poor and suffering. But he also told his disciples, ‘ya have the poor always with you’ (Matthew 26:11), and in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:24-30) he condemned the failure to productively use one’s God-given talents – whether many or few, exceptional or ordinary – by having a lord take money from the one who had the least and give it to him who had the most, thereby increasing economic inequality.

The Lord’s mission was to redeem us from sin, not to redistribute our property or impose an economic equality on us. In fact, Jesus explicitly declined to undermine property rights or preach economic equality when he told the man who wanted Jesus to tell his brother to share an inheritance with him, ‘Man, who made me a judge or divider over you’ (Luke 12:14).” [38]

I must confess that it’s easy to fall into the social justice way of thinking. My childhood rant over what I perceived to be injustices showed me, in retrospect, the power of an emotional ideal. Yet if by some twist I had followed up on my self-righteous emotional outburst, and had become a social justice advocate in the true sense of the phrase, a sad irony would have occurred: In the name of “justice,” I would have promoted socially-sanctioned *theft*. All for one collective, and theft to all.

Dear Christians, let us act with compassion, be charitable, and pursue true justice; Let us be wise in our actions, clear in our language, and honest in our motives. *FC*

Carl Teichrib is editor of *Forcing Change*, a monthly journal documenting the various social, religious, political, and economic shifts that are challenging Christianity and transforming the Western world (www.forcingchange.org).

ENDNOTES:

1. Celia Hart, *The Flag of Coyoacan*, edited by Walter Lippmann in August 2004. Reprinted in *Marxist.org*.
2. William E. Murnion, “The Ideology of Social Justice in Economic Justice For All,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, p.848, 1989.
3. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse* (Arlington House, 1974), p.17.
4. *Prose of Relevance*, Volume 1 & 2 (Methuen, 1971); Maryjane Dunstan and Patricia W. Garland, *Worlds in the Making: Probes for Students of the Future* (Prentice-Hall, 1970).
5. Frederick C. Barghoorn, *Soviet Foreign Propaganda* (Princeton University Press, 1964), p.93-94.
6. Ibid. p.89.
7. Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movement* (Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), p.80-81. See also Daniel M. Bell, *Liberation Theology After the End of History* (Routledge, 2001), p.104.
8. Daniel M. Bell, *Liberation Theology After the End of History* (Routledge, 2001), p.104.
9. Ibid. p.104.
10. Thomas Behr, “Luigi Taparelli and Social Justice: Rediscovering the Origins of a Holy Concept,” *Social Justice in Context*, Volume, 1.
11. Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra*, paragraph 40.
12. Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, see section 4, paragraphs 130 to 141.
13. Pope Paul VI, Talk at the United Nations, October 4, 1965; section 3.
14. William E. Murnion, “The Ideology of Social Justice in Economic Justice For All,” *Journal of Business Ethics*, see pages 847-857, 1989.

15. The Chartist Movement: The Fraternal Democrats to the Working Classes of Great Britain and Ireland, January 10, 1848. As republished at Marxists.org.
16. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Penguin, 1967), p.104.
17. Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, *Leftism: From de Sade and Marx to Hitler and Marcuse* (Arlington House, 1974), p.419.
18. Ibid., p.18.
19. Ibid., p.17.
20. As quoted in *Leftism*, p.174.
21. Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe* (Vintage, 2007), p.10.
22. Eugene V. Debs, "The American Movement," published in *Debs: His Life Writings and Speeches*, and reprinted at Marxist.org.
23. E.V. Debs, "The Prospect for Peace," *American Socialist*, 1916, reprinted at Marxist.org.
24. Mervyn Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union: The Life-styles of the Underprivileged in Recent Years* (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p.7.
25. Maxim Gorky, "Days With Lenin," *Readings in Russian Civilization, Volume 3* (The University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp.517-518.
26. Matthews, *Poverty in the Soviet Union*, p.7-8.
27. Castro, "When the People Rule," speech on January 21, 1959, Havana, Cuba.
28. Che Guevara, interview, April 18, 1959. Two Chinese journalists, K'ung Mai and Ping An conducted the interview "on the 108th evening after the victory of the revolution."
29. Celia Hart, *ibid.*
30. Jim Bohlen, "Towards A Global Green Constitution," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda* (Proceeding, October 17-20, 1990), p.11.
31. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: The Political order of a Free People* (University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.135.
32. Mark W. Hendrickson, "The 'Social Justice' Fallacy? Wolves in Sheep's Clothing," April 7, 2010 (The Center for Vision & Values, Grove City College).
33. Ibid.
34. Celia Hart, *ibid.*
35. Jim Bohlen, "Towards A Global Green Constitution," *Sustainable Development for a New World Agenda* (Proceeding, October 17-20, 1990), p.11.
36. F. A. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty: The Political order of a Free People* (University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.135.
37. Mark W. Hendrickson, "The 'Social Justice' Fallacy? Wolves in Sheep's Clothing," April 7, 2010 (The Center for Vision & Values, Grove City College).
38. Ibid.

Forcing Change

FC is a monthly, online publication dedicated to documenting and analyzing the socio-religious transformations now sweeping our Western world.

Forcing Change is a membership subscription service, with an annual fee of \$54.95 US. Membership in *Forcing Change* allows access to the full range of FC publications, including special reports, audio and media presentations, FC back issues, expert documents, and more. FC receives neither government funding nor the financial backing of any other institutions; rather, FC operates solely on subscription/membership support. To learn more about *Forcing Change*, including member benefits, go to www.forcingchange.org.

Reprint Permissions

For Publications: Permission to republish articles in *Forcing Change* is granted, provided that FC credit is acknowledged (preferably with the *Forcing Change* URL attached), and that *Forcing Change* is notified of the article use.

For Private Individuals: Permission is granted for individuals to make copies of FC articles and distribute to family, friends, colleagues, and community leaders.