



### ***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 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.” [15]

Marx and Engels fleshed out their “science of socialism” during the same time frame as Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio’s “social justice.” And [The Communist Manifesto](#) was published the same year that the Society of Fraternal Democrats called for social justice. 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 injustices 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 to Communism**.

To make this work something else was needed: A framework to give the masses a political voice. Marx and Engels looked to **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 organized 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..."[16]

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 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." [17]

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."[18] (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." [19]

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.” [20]

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.” [21]

In 1898, Eugene V. Debs – later dubbed “America’s greatest Marxist” – equated a collective society, industrial freedom, and social justice.[22] 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.” [23] A new 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.” [24] 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.” [25]

The result was 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.” [26]

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.” [27] Che Guevara couched his bloody revolution as an “armed struggle for freedom of rights and social justice.” [28] This crude theme 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: Marxism, world peace, social revolution, 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 socialist revolution in permanent combat. **Workers of the World, Unite!**” [29]

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. 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.” [30]

“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 *a la* 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 cooperation of free men.”[31]

### ***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 supporting 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, and 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 ruling 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.”[32]

Dr. Hendrickson further 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)."[33]

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 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**.

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

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Carl Teichrib is editor of Forcing Change, a monthly online publication detailing the changes and challenges impacting the Western world.

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