

# Finally, the dark side of Karl Marx revealed

## *The Devil and Karl Marx*

Paul Kengor

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Karl Marx (1818–1883) is one of the most influential men of the last century. As a result, much has been written about him. OhioLINK (the Ohio Library and Information Network’s consortium of the State Library of Ohio, together with Ohio’s college and university libraries) alone, lists 723 books about Marx, most laudatory, some objective, and a few critical. As Kengor observes, in a typical book and college class, one will hear “all Marx is a good Marx” (p. 35). He also notes that a few excellent biographies of Marx have covered the “sordid side of Marx ... [a side that is] ignored by so many on the political left” (p. 35).

The biography by Paul Johnson (*Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky*) concluded that

“Savagery is a characteristic note of his verse, together with the intense pessimism of the human condition, hatred, a fascination with corruption and violence, [plus] suicide pacts and pacts with the devil” (quoted on p. 37).

Kengor then gives some examples which eloquently illustrate Johnson’s claim (pp. 37–53). From reading Marx’s works, evidence supports the claim that he was mentally unbalanced. This view contrasts with what I learned in college about what was claimed to be Marx’s brilliance, his concern for the exploited,

and his goal to make the world a better place for all humanity.

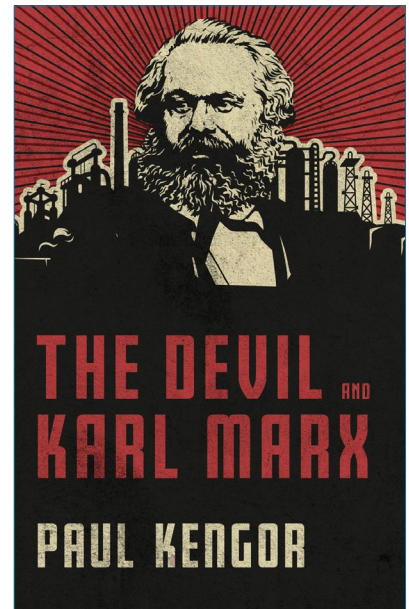
Kengor’s book is one of the few critical books that has carefully examined this sordid side of Marx. He found so much material, he had to condense it down to 462 pages. One focus was Marx’s active antagonism to organized religion, particularly the Roman Catholic Church. Kengor also discussed in some detail Marx’s acceptance of Darwinism as an important factor in his animus to Christianity.

Professor Paul Kengor documents that no thinker in the nineteenth century has had so powerful an influence on mankind as Karl Marx, and no other man had more influence on Marx than Friedrich Engels (1820–1895; figure 1). As Kengor documented, a third person important to the work of Marx and Engels was Charles Darwin (1809–1882).

Kengor begins the book with a review of the lives lost due to communism. Noting the difficulty of obtaining an accurate tally, Kengor concludes that a total of one half billion is not an unrealistic number. Then he listed the countries that tried communism and which have failed, including the USSR, Cambodia, Cuba, Venezuela, and North Korea.

## Marx’s progression from Christian to atheist

Marx was baptized at age six and kept the faith at least until his initial college years (p. 60). When he completed high school, on his graduation certificate was written: “His knowledge of the Christian faith and morals is fairly clear and well-grounded.”<sup>1</sup> Marx also penned literature praising



Christians and Christianity. Union with Christ, he wrote, gives us

“... an inner elevation, comfort in sorrow, calm trust, and a heart susceptible to human love, to everything noble and great, not for the sake of ambition and glory, but only for the sake of Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

Kengor writes that although Marx was raised in the richly religious soil of his home town he later “would stomp upon that religious bounty rather than feed upon it as nourishment for his troubled soul” (p. 60).

His radical shift in thinking occurred after only a few years of university life. At the university of Bonn, Marx became increasingly critical of Christianity. His theology professor, Bruno Bauer (1809–1882), vigorously attacked the New Testament, denying the “historicity of Christ and portraying the Gospels as fantasy, as mythical inventions” (p. 13). From Bauer, Marx came to regard the miracles of the New Testament, and Christianity itself, as myths. He was only 19 then, a teenager. No doubt he learned about the claims that atheists still use today to discredit Christianity, claims that have been effectively refuted by many modern Christian apologists. Bauer



**Figure 1.** Friedrich Engels was Marx's main co-worker and the co-author of many of his writings. Engels' family were wealthy factory owners, and he was an important source of financial support for Marx.

soon became Marx's closest friend at the University of Bonn, frequently visiting the home of Bauer and his brother, Edgar (p. 14). At the end of his university studies, Marx viewed the Christian religion as one of the most immoral and evil of all existing religions. He wrote, "This heaven I've forfeited, I know it full-well. My soul once true to God, Is chosen for Hell" (quoted on p. 51).

Another man who greatly influenced Marx was Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876). Bakunin was a Russian materialist and anarchist who viewed the myth of God as a belief effectively used to oppress others. As an evolutionist, he had a low view of Christianity, mocking God, writing "our first ancestors, our Adams and our Eves, if not gorillas, [were] very near relatives of gorillas" (p. 19). God was an "eternal egoistic solitude" creature who created Adam and Eve so that He "might have some new slaves" (p. 19).

### The influence of Darwinism

Marx's Darwinian worldview influenced many of Marx's ideas. For

example, the goal of communism was to evolve mankind to a level of full social and economic equality, when actually it was a totalitarian ideology committed to bringing about a massive change in humanity by altering human nature itself (p. 27).

Darwinism was an important ingredient that supported secularism, especially after 1859. And it was secularism that laid the foundation for atheism, then communism, that allowed it to flourish. Both Marx and Darwin sought to produce a unified science of mankind, which caused Marx to immediately realize the significance of Darwin's work. For Marx, the critical factor in his belief was secularism, which was rooted in religious skepticism. And a major pillar of religious skepticism was the writings of Charles Darwin. Marx especially admired Darwin for dealing a "grand blow for materialism and atheism" (p. 92).

Darwin undermined the major historical proof for God, the evidence for design in the natural world. Darwin's primary importance to Engels and Marx was to support materialism. In short, Darwin concluded that species were not immutable. Instead, all animals were descended from common ancestors going back to the original ancestor of all life. Different species were the result of gradual changes occurring over millions of years. Furthermore, God had nothing to do with this progression. The cause was natural selection.

Darwinism and rejection of the creation of Adam and Eve can lead to racism and, in Marx's case, extreme racism. As Kengor writes:

"Karl Marx was a racist who cast freely with choice epithets aimed at blacks and even Jews ... his awful statements about blacks and Jews ... ugly views by Marx [were] littered throughout his personal and professional writings" (p. 86).

A few examples included how Marx spoke of his own son-in-law, Paul Lafargue, the husband of his daughter Laura. Paul

"... came from Cuba, born in Santiago ... because Paul was Cuban, Marx viewed him as marred by 'Negro' blood in his veins, prompting Marx to denigrate him as 'Negrillo' and 'The Gorilla'" (p. 86).

Karl never let up his ridicule of Paul. In November 1882, 14 years after Lafargue and Laura married, Marx complained to Engels that Lafargue had all the flaws of Negroes including low intelligence. In November 1911, Marx's son-in-law, the 'Negrillo' Paul, died in a suicide pact with Marx's daughter, Laura. The importance of Marx in the communist movement is revealed by the fact that none other than Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) spoke at Paul and Laura's funeral (p. 94).

Particularly loathsome to Marx was anyone who was part Jewish or African. Marx referred to his fellow German socialist Ferdinand Lassalle as a 'greasy Jew', 'the little kike', 'water-polack Jew', 'Jew Braun', 'Yid', 'Izzy', 'Wily Ephraim', 'Baron Itzig', and 'the Jewish Nigger' (p. 86). In a July 1862 letter to Engels, Marx confidently observed that his conclusion about Lassalle was as follows: "It is now perfectly clear to me that, as the shape of his head and the growth of his hair indicates, he is descended from the Negroes" (p. 87).

Marx's personal life reflected his anger and intolerant racist views. Four of Marx's six children preceded him in death, and all had tragic ends. The two daughters who survived him later committed suicide (p. 85). When Marx's wife, the vivacious Jenny, died her husband did not bother to attend her funeral (p. 91). When Karl Marx died, his co-worker, Engels, "gave the eulogy, invoking not God but Darwin" (p. 92).

### Trotsky found his gods in Marx and Darwin

Born Lev Davidovich Bronstein to a wealthy Ukrainian-Jewish family in the Ukraine, leading communist Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) embraced Marxism in 1896 when he “found his gods in Marx and Darwin” (p. 118). Trotsky wrote, “Darwin destroyed the last of my ideological prejudices ... about the world, and life and its origins.” As a result, Trotsky rejected Genesis and accepted ‘evolutionary theory’, which he wrote:

“... took possession of me completely. Darwin stood for me like a mighty doorkeeper at the entrance to the temple of the universe. I was intoxicated with his [Darwin] thought” (p. 118).

Trotsky moved into London in 1903 and there befriended a fellow communist, Lenin. He spent ten years working for the communist cause in Britain, Austria, Switzerland, France, Spain, and the United States. When Trotsky returned to Russia he became chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and played a key role in the November 1917 revolution that overthrew the new provisional government. After the death of Lenin in January of 1924 and the rise of Joseph Stalin, Trotsky was removed from his government positions. He was expelled from the Soviet Union in 1929 and began writing books and articles very critical of Stalin. As a result, he was assassinated with an ice axe in Mexico in 1940 at age 60.

### The war against Christianity

The war against Christianity in Europe by the Nazis is well known, but less well known are the murderous results of communism in Russia. The path from Bauer, Darwin, and Marx led to the communist revolution in Russia and the massive slaughter of Christians. Respect for the Christian faith in the pre-communist Russia was

rich and vibrant, even among the leaders (p. 119). After the October 1917 revolution,

“... a full-throttle war on religion was underway ... an open campaign of terror was launched against all religions, particularly against the Russian Orthodox Church ... a policy of terror ... felt by every religious faith” (p. 119).

Marx’s friend and close co-worker Lenin’s actions “against religion and the Church are astonishing in their diabolical ferocity and immorality” (p. 119).

One of thousands of examples of the massive slaughter of Christians occurred in 1918. In one small diocese, 47 clergymen were shot, drowned, or axed to death. The state confiscated land and church property, including schools. Religious faith was replaced by a new faith, Marxist-Leninism, which “became the new state religion” (p. 120). Religious instruction was forbidden, and children were encouraged to turn in their parents if they taught them about God. Marriage became a state ceremony and the prohibition against divorce was lifted, wreaking havoc on the Russian family. Children belonged to the state. Parents were to provide for their physical needs, while the state worked to train their mind to accept atheism and communism.

Most Russian church buildings were dynamited or turned into storage rooms. The ones that remained were monitored by full-time, state-employed ‘church watchers’ (p. 121). From the 40,000 churches in Russia, 150,000 priests, monks, deans, and bishops were sent to frigid Siberia or worse parts of the country. One ex-seminarian, Joseph Stalin (1878–1953), after he read Darwin as a seminarian student, became an evolutionist and atheist and made things even worse for the Christians. Of the 657 churches in Moscow in 1917, only about 150 remained by 1976. Kengor

continues by documenting in sordid detail the communist attacks against the church in virtually every country they took over. Kengor includes a chapter on the persecution of the seminaries, churches, and clergy behind the Iron Curtain. The ideology of Karl Marx, Kengor explains, resulted in “sheer contempt for religion”, which has continued today in all the countries controlled by a communist party (p. 302).

### Summary

Materialism led to Marxism, which led to a holocaust that snuffed out the lives of some half a billion persons. All because of the work of one man, Karl Marx, whom many in academia venerate today. And a critical factor was the work of Friedrich Engels. Another critical factor was the writings of Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution, which, in the minds of many, negated the need for God to explain the origin of the physical creation.

### References

1. Marx, K. and Engels, F., *Karl Marx-Frederick Engels: Collected works*, vol. 1, p. 664, Lawrence & Wishart, Ltd, London, UK, p. 664, 1975.
2. Blumenberg, W., *Karl Marx: An illustrated history*, Verso Books, London, UK, p. 11, 2000.