

FAITH & FREEDOM

LESSON 7: AMERICAN MARXISM

Introduction

We live in tumultuous and rapidly changing times. We might with King David ask the question, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3) I submit there are a number of things the righteous can do. We need a Biblical understanding of the events we are witnessing and the evolution of prevalent ideologies. We need to not be distracted from God's mission for us during these last days. We need to stand on the front lines and not sit on the sidelines in silence.

Marxism

Karl Marx publicly formulated what is now known as Marxism then proliferated in Europe and the United States as a journalist. Ultimately, he promoted revolution as the means to right the oppression between the rich and the poor. His theories were put into practice in the twentieth century in countries around the world. But was it successful? Did it end the existence of two classes where one exploited the other? What was the cost? Will it work in the United States?

1. **Marxism Background:** Karl Marx (1818-1883) publicly presented "Marxism" in an 1848 pamphlet called *The Communist Manifesto*. He also further criticized capitalism in *Das Kapital* published in 1867. A summary follows:

- Two classes: the **bourgeoisie** (business owners) who control the means of production and the **proletariat** (workers) whose labor turns raw commodities into valuable goods
- Oppression: the **bourgeoisie** employ the social institutions (e.g., government, media, religion, academia, banking) against the **proletariat** to maintain their power and privilege
- Revolution: the inequalities will inevitably lead to revolution where the workers take control and abolish capitalism.
- Outcome: private ownership of production replaced by collective ownership under socialism then communism
- HOW DOES THIS ATTACK **FOUNDATIONS?**

2. **Marxism in the 20th Century:** The solution to class imbalance was **revolution**. This was put to the test during the 20th century with Marxist-style revolutions in the Soviet Union, China, Cambodia, Cuba, and elsewhere, resulting in a body count of nearly 100 million people.

- Mid-1960's — leftist intellectuals acknowledging failures
- Marxist scholars in the West adapted Marxism to the social and racial unrest of the 1960's, substituting race for class.
- They lost out to the U.S. civil rights movement, then regrouped with critical race theory.

3. **Critical Race Theory (CRT):** An academic discipline of identity-based Marxism. Five major tenets are printed on the back of this sheet.

4. **Foundations:** Some thoughts on CRT vs. Bible.

- Legal cases should be decided based on identity instead of equality before the law (compare Gen. 1:26-28; Exodus 23:3)
- Biblical hierarchy is oppressive (compare Ephesians 5:22-6:9; Galatians 3:28)
- Children should pay for their parents' sins (compare Deuteronomy 24:16; John 9:1-3)
- Morally imperative to decenter majority cultures (compare Deuteronomy 15:15; Zephaniah 3:9; James 2:1-9)

CRT's ideological framework is comprised of five tenets.¹

- **Counter-Storytelling** – Counter-stories legitimize the racial and subordinate experiences of marginalized groups by exposing and critiquing the dominant (male, white, heterosexual) ideology, which perpetuates racial stereotypes. These are personal, composite stories or narratives of people of color.
- **Permanence of Racism** – Racism controls the political, social, and economic realms of U.S. society. Racism as an inherent part of American civilization, privileging white individuals over people of color in most areas of life.
- **Whiteness as Property** – This notion operates on different levels, such as the right of possession, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to disposition, and the right of exclusion. Historically, the idea of “whiteness” as property has been perpetuated as an asset that only white individuals can possess.
- **Interest Convergence** – White individuals are the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation, e.g., affirmative action, wherein the major recipients were white women who potentially support households where white men and children live.
- **Critique of Liberalism** – This stems from the ideas of color-blindness, the neutrality of the law, and equal opportunity for all. Colorblindness is a mechanism that allows people to ignore racist policies that perpetuate social inequality. Critical Race Theorists advocate not being colorblind or meritocratic. Instead, we must focus on race and racism at all times and prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in hiring and other opportunities.

James Lindsay, in his article entitled “Eight Big Reasons Critical Race Theory Is Terrible for Dealing with Racism,” lists these critiques:²

1. CRT believes racism is present in every aspect of life, every relationship, and every interaction and therefore has its advocates look for it everywhere.
2. CRT relies upon “interest convergence” (white people only give black people opportunities and freedoms when it is also in their own interests) and therefore doesn't trust any attempt to make racism better.
3. CRT is against free societies and wants to dismantle them and replace them with something its advocates control.
4. CRT only treats race issues as “socially constructed groups,” so there are no individuals in it.
5. CRT believes science, reason, and evidence are a “white” way of knowing and that storytelling and lived experience is a “black” alternative, which hurts everyone, especially black people.
6. CRT rejects all potential alternatives, like colorblindness, as forms of racism, making itself only the allowable game in town (which is totalitarian).
7. CRT acts like anyone who disagrees with it must do so for racist and white supremacist reasons, even if those people are black (which is also totalitarian).
8. CRT cannot be satisfied, so it becomes a kind of activist black hole that threatens to destroy everything it is introduced into.

¹ Payne Hiraldo, “The Role of Critical Race Theory in Higher Education,” University of Vermont, <https://www.uvm.edu/~vtconn/v31/Hiraldo.pdf>.

² James Lindsay, “Eight Big Reasons Critical Race Theory Is Terrible for Dealing with Racism,” June 12, 2020, New Discourses, <https://newdiscourses.com/2020/06/reasons-critical-race-theory-terrible-dealing-racism/>.