

College Unbound!: The MRC's Liberty Learning Program

"Saving Liberty Requires Knowledge of Its Enemy"



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Series 1: Marxism-Collectivism

Episode 03: On Morals, Materialism, and Dialectical Materialism

Teaching Text

The MRC *College Unbound!* series has provided some valuable facts about Karl Marx and collectivism. We've seen Marx's inversion of merit-based fairness, his turn away from Natural Rights and self-ownership, and his embrace of identity politics and perpetual predation.

But perhaps one can pity Marx and collectivists. After all, Marx was a fallible human soul, and by making the choices he did, he led many others to follow his disastrous path.

First, let's look at Marxism's spiritual emptiness.

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As one might expect from an envy-based collectivist, the philosophy Marx constructed as a way to smash the “propertied class” focused on material goods. His was a dark world bereft of God, focused on the physical, *material* realm and on the material *differentials* between people.

The core of the idea was called “Dialectical Materialism,” and it was based on 18th Century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s corruption of ancient Greek dialectic debate.

That, itself, was the Greek concept of pitting two opposing theories, called the “thesis” and “antithesis,” against each other in a debate to see which was most valid or achieve an understanding called “synthesis.”

And it can be useful – up to a point. But the idea of “synthesis” contains certain dangerous assumptions, and Hegel applied the dialectical process to *worldviews*, incorrectly assuming that the nature of man was ever-changing, and that every worldview contained inherent contradictions and could be combined with other philosophies.

This, in turn, was adopted by evolutionists and materialists like Marx to claim that *history itself* was evolutionary, and was a series of dialectical battles over *material power*.

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But man’s nature is NOT evolutionary or changeable, history isn’t the struggle of classes, and not all opposing ideas should or *can* be synthesized into some overarching new form of “synthesis.” And if one accepts this silly dialectic notion, one can be led to conclusions dictated by *those who control the two assumptions of the debate.*

If one accepts the idea that history can be viewed as the evolutionary process of “Dialectical Materialism,” one binds himself to two poisonous presuppositions:

First, that the corporeal soul is an irrelevant illusion, and...

Second, that history is the march of an “underclass” material struggle against the “upper-class.”

And this is what Marxists claim. They even claim that the class concept applies to America, even though America never had classes, since, like the word “bourgeoisie,” the term is based on royal peerage and the U.S. never operated under a royal peerage model.

But, hold on... could it be that, despite being toweringly wrong about the spirit, the Industrial revolution, private property, free trade, and individual will, Marx had the kernel of a point about exploitation that resonated with many folks of his time, folks who had some justified gripes against even many private business owners mistakenly labeled “bourgeoisie?”

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In fact, to a very limited extent, he did. But he didn't pinpoint the real problem, his use of the label “bourgeoisie” was inappropriate, and his so-called solution to the problem was worse than the problem itself.

So, how was Marx close to making a valid point?

Well, during the decline of the feudal system and rise of competitive market capitalism, there *were* many old royal lords — burghers, dukes, lords, and other feudal elite — who began using political privilege to secure for themselves more solid positions in the new, royalty-challenging paradigm of market competition. This was particularly evident in 18th and 19th Century England, where old lords were getting what were called “Private Acts” of Parliament passed just for them. The politically-connected were getting tracts of land given to them by Parliament, were getting power to enclose grazing lands, were having special corporations created for them by Parliament, or were cornering the markets at docks, thanks to — you got it — Parliament.

But that's not capitalism. In fact, in his landmark 1776 treatise, “The Wealth of Nations,” Scottish economist and philosopher Adam Smith correctly showed the difference between politically-connected profiteering and *real* capitalism, calling that political-profiteering “mercantilism.”

Today, economists call it Crony Capitalism, or “Rent Seeking” — the act of a business getting special political favors from the government to gain advantage over competitors

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and extract wealth from consumers — wealth that the consumers should be able to save or spend elsewhere.

It's actually a form of collectivism. But Marx misled people and called it “capitalism,” and if one were to ask many leftist Americans, they would eagerly call it “capitalism” too, and cry for so-called “reform” mandates from the government — the very entity that creates the crony problem in the first place.

We have to remember this important Marxist misdirection. One doesn't fix a problem of special favors handed out through political privilege by mislabeling it and expanding the power of the polis to... hand out political privilege. And one doesn't improve people's lives by misdiagnosing the problem, calling real, honest free marketeers the “bourgeoisie” and putting further shackles on free trade.

And how DOES Marxism-collectivism shackle free trade?

We'll lay it out – next time, in Episode 04, as we explore the economic fallacies of the system, and see the seeds of economic destruction that have brought about the deaths of millions!

Right now? [Check out this quiz, and see what you can learn to tell friends](#). Become an expert on Marxism-collectivism — because we need you in the fight for wisdom and freedom.