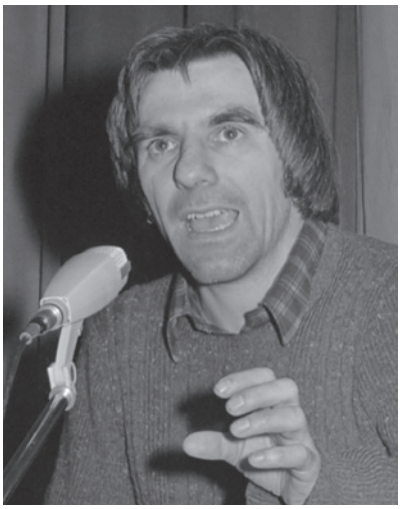
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Where is the long march through our institutions heading?

A PERSONAL, HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
BY CHARLES NEWINGTON

Those of us who have lived long enough with our eyes open will remember the Cold War, the end of colonialism and the consequences of Marxist education and resourcing of the leaders of post-colonial states. We remember the student movements of the 1960s that were unmistakably Marxist. We observed the growth of influence of both Russian and Chinese Communism and that in the 1960s the future of the West and the world seemed perilous as the nuclear arms race gathered pace.

We remember the extreme persecution of Christians in the USSR, China and their satellite states – the millions who died or were imprisoned for their faith. There was no doubt that whatever the case for rebalancing global wealth and power, communism was a ruthless and self-interested party.



The famous phrase 'the long march through the institutions' is attributed to Rudi Dutschke (Photo by Hans Peters)

In spite of the dangers, the increase of democracy (and capitalism) globally has meant greater freedom, opportunity and choice not only in the West. There is a better distribution of wealth and more recognition of universal human rights and the equality of peoples and nations.

Democracy continues to extend the range of opportunities for minorities and while the wealthy elites continue to concentrate wealth, the middle classes have grown considerably globally. And that is one of necessities of capitalism – for the global market for goods and services to increase. Even Marxist nations like China rely heavily upon the success of democracy and capitalism.

The floods of refugees and migrants from the remaining oppressive and unjust societies to the West, and not to Communist countries, is evidence of where the poor think their future lies.

The Berlin Wall is a powerful symbol of this triumph of democracy – built to keep the citizens of communism in, as people resorted to desperate methods of escape. It was finally and bravely removed in order to let democracy and capitalism in.

So one asks, "What place is there for Marxism in today's world and why is it so influential in our society?"

The long march of Marxism through our institutions

We have become familiar recently with the phrase 'the long march through the institutions'. It refers to the long-term strategy of the new Marxists to re-frame Western (colonial) history as allegedly using unjust systems of gaining and controlling wealth – a bottom up perspective. The declared intent was to advance socialism internationally in accord with Marx's theory at the expense of capitalism – and democracy.

Current use of the phrase is attributed to Rudi Dutschke who was a leader of the East German Student Movement in the 1960s. Despite the historical fact that the long march occurred as communism retreated as a party-political force, the phrase has come to signify the long and steady advance of Marxism – through the institutions of Western democracies.

Marxists infiltrated key institutions, especially universities in order to reframe or revise their historical narrative in terms of injustice and oppression to make people feel ashamed of their past and doubtful about the integrity of their institutions.

It seems hysterical to blame Marxists for all social evils such as abortion or the Safe Schools programs. And yet as an example in support of this, journalist Rebecca Urban described Safe Schools Coalition cofounder Roz Ward as "an academic with a degree in gender studies, (who) has become the controversial face of the Safe Schools movement, largely due to her extreme Left political views; including publicly linking the program to a broader Marxist push to liberate society from "gender constructs""[1]

Her appointment in 2016 by the Victorian Government to a high-level group advising on educational issues (either knowingly or unwittingly) involved adopting her strong political agenda for liberation.

(Notably, the Marxist phrase for liberalising legislation is "liberating society".[2])

The long march's historical pedigree

According to Britannica, the Long March (1934-35) properly refers to the epic retreat of the Chinese communists from the attacks of the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek – some 6,000 kilometres over 18 mountain ranges and 25 rivers to the safety of the Northwest province of Shaanxi.[3]

One consequence of the long march was that it established Mao Zedong as a party leader with a power base he would use ruthlessly in the years to come. He would eliminate rivals and intellectuals who criticised his form of communism and would institute the perspective of the workers as the spirit of the party to justify the purges and policies of the Cultural Revolution.[4]

Britannica's article on Mao and his legacy puts it this way: "It is, perhaps, possible to accept the official verdict that, despite the "errors of his later years," Mao's merits outweighed his faults, while underscoring the fact that the account is very finely

balanced." How easily the official verdict dismisses the millions of lives taken and the immense suffering. The world does not need such political amorality.

Pol Pot was to follow Mao's path later in Cambodia with terrible effect.

The Frankfurt School

The Frankfurt School is a school of Marxist social theory and critical philosophy associated with the Goethe University Frankfurt. The school relocated to the US before WW2 and returned to Germany in the 1960s.

The link between Dutschke's reference to the long march and the Frankfurt School is through his correspondence with Herbert Marcuse who is one of the most well-known representatives of the Frankfurt School. In his 1972 book, *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, Marcuse wrote:

> *To extend the base of the student movement, Rudi Dutschke has proposed the strategy of the* ***long march through the institutions****: working against the established institutions while working within them, but not simply by 'boring from within', rather by 'doing the job', learning (how to program and read computers, how to teach at all levels of education, how to use the mass media, how to organize production, how to recognize and eschew planned obsolescence, how to design, et cetera), and at the same time preserving one's own consciousness in working with others.* [5]

The call by Dutschke and Marcuse for student Marxists to never lose their own consciousness of the fundamental character and purpose of Marxism is reminiscent of Mao's great cry at a party conference in 1962 "Never forget the class struggle!" which would lead ultimately to the Cultural Revolution and the murder and oppression of millions.[6]

The phrase 'the long march through the institutions' has become like a footprint marking the influence of the Frankfurt School and New Marxism generally in the current political discourse and process. It carries the idea of class struggle to break the hegemony – the social, cultural, ideological and economic influence exerted by Western democratic elites[7] – those who control global society and its economic production.

Dutschke's words "preserving one's consciousness in working with others" remind us that the destination of the long march is the triumph of Marxist totalitarianism, not the sharing of power with the minority interest fellow-travellers. The strategy of championing the interests of all oppressed minorities is political and insincere. We remember the ruthlessness of Marxism – how without conscience Marxists have suppressed their internal rivals and critics and how all minority interests are subsumed in communism's internationalist objective.



Philosopher and radical political theorist from the FrankFurt School, Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979)

The long march rhetoric sees universities as the major institutions to be captured because they are the gateway to the other institutions of power. Historically, only the wealthy could afford higher education and thus gain access to power and influence in society. According to the Marxist narrative this is how the unjust 'cultural hegemony' in democratic societies has been perpetuated and where it must be overcome.

This provides background to recent calls for the 'decolonization' of Western democratic institutions. In effect this means reducing the influence of the historical culture builders – predominantly dead white men who set up the cultural hegemony. The new narrative is that Western colonial history is toxic and the architects of it do not deserve national acclaim. Instead, we must pull down their monuments and retell the story from the perspective of those whose lands and goods they are said to have taken.

The judgement of history by today's standards, if it is to be applied, should be applied equally to everyone. And if it is, no one will come out looking good. All history is crammed with cruelties and injustices. But democracy's legacies include attempts to stem the tide of injustice, to hold power accountable and to make redress where possible. It's not perfect, but compared to the other systems of government it looks good.

Materialism and the decline of faith

Each political party relies upon some philosophical basis or paradigm and Marxism is built upon a foundation of materialism – that matter is the sum of all things.

Among other things, what emerges from materialism (and Marxism as a political philosophy sits squarely in this camp) is the view that 'minds are physical' – there is no difference between the brain and the mind. If there is no distinction between brain and mind, there is no basis for thinking of people as anything more than a complex of organic matter. If this is the case then effectively the way is cleared for our society to chart its own secular course, as we see happening in our time.

A problem with materialism is that public morality will slip and slide wherever the currents of opinion erode the Christian faith and its settled, timeless positions about human dignity, the sanctity of life, the importance of marriage and family, et cetera. Materialistic, secular society, has dismissed such things and reframes them as matters of policy not principle. It sounds very progressive until it has run its course. We have ample record of what happens over time in society without higher principle. We know about the children's homes of the Soviet era, the prisons[8], the lack of care for the infirm and those with mental illness.[9]

This reframing is happening before our eyes and the more it intensifies the more people drift to either ends of the continuum. It is in Marxism's interest to feed this growing divergence as it destabilises the nation making government increasingly difficult.

Australia is flirting with the New Marxism as reflected in a Centre for Independent Studies survey about Millennials: 63% of university educated Millennials view socialism favourably. "Overall, 59% of Australian Millennials believe that capitalism has failed and that the government must play a greater role in regulating the economy."[10] We may think that this reflects poorly on our educational processes. The evidence suggests it has been deliberately cultivated in our schools and universities.

Tony Abbott wrote that recently some Liberal students had asked him what might they do to protect themselves against their left-wing lecturers. His response was: "familiarise yourselves with the bigger story of which we Australians are but part. And a good place to begin is to read and regularly re-read the New Testament (it's our core document) and

to read cover to cover Churchill's ***History of the English-Speaking Peoples***, because you can't understand us without knowing that".[11]

The great democratic freedoms

It is fundamental to democracy that government respect and protect the right of its citizens to form and hold beliefs and opinions with the least possible state interference. In spite of the strong commitment to human rights expressed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, human rights are not a primary concern of many nations that are party to these documents.

Moreover, the freedom to seek truth and to hold religious faith is fundamental to our humanity, as confirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 18:

> *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.*[12]

Article 18 is of general relevance – to adopt a position and then also to change it is recognised as essential in all of life – in every field of thought including science and politics. It recognises that we must theorise and form strong views based upon the evidence, but we must also have the freedom to change our position in the light of improved knowledge.

Article 18 assumes also the critical responsibility of institutions like universities, governments and religious bodies to protect the integrity of evidence and the transparent process of research.

Freedom of speech

The inalienable right to free speech is based upon the right to think and explore wider published or expressed opinion. It implies the right to publish or communicate one's opinions with the greatest possible freedom. Article 18 of the UDHR supposes that we may express an opinion or even a conviction to the best of our ability without fear of punishment. It does not demand that we are always well researched and precise in our speech. It assumes the necessity for a culture of tolerance and understanding.

Some activists who 'deplatform' speakers, particularly at universities, seem to have no understanding of freedom of speech. This is surprising, since universities should be places of open inquiry.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia Professor Dawn Freshwater responding to the cancellation of an event of the Australian Family Association said that activist groups, using oppression and "silencing" to fight perceived oppression, were "perpetuating the very behaviours and thinking that they are opposing."

"The paradox is that they're doing that to get a message across about how offensive other people are," she said. "It's important for us not to succumb to threats of violence and the sort of fear that's instilled by not tolerating difference."[13]

Professor Freshwater called for something like the Chicago University Statement[14] to make more explicit the nature of freedom of speech. It reiterates the obvious: that persons are permitted to speak freely on any subject with limitation only upon "expression that violates the law, that falsely defames a specific individual, that constitutes a genuine threat or harassment, that unjustifiably invades substantial privacy or confidentiality interests, or that is otherwise directly incompatible with the functioning of the University".[15]

A further contraction of freedom occurred recently in the State of Victoria which billed a conservative speaker for the cost of managing a crowd of anti-free speech activists rather than exercise proper restraint on a disruptive crowd.[16]

Freedom of religion

It is not politically correct to give religious freedom a primary place in the catalogue of great human freedoms. However, David Platt speaks of it as an essential part of the human experience to ask and answer questions like 'Where did I come from? Why am I here? And, How should I live my life?'[17] These fundamental questions are questions of origins, purpose and moral responsibility.

By democratic standards no government should impose its view on these matters, whether directly or through the agency of education. Yet Marxism has not hesitated to do so historically. Its control of education and the media as the primary means of building the public position on all matters is well known.

Article 18 presciently included special reference to freedom of religion, recognising that the personal, religious convictions of individuals and societies would be at the most risk over time. The concern was for those who were comparatively powerless – for minorities.

The assumption of those who do not believe in anything or anyone supernatural, is that the convictions of the religious are as shallow as rain in a tyre-track. However, people at some point in their lives may for some reason embark on a deep but unconventional search for the meaning of their existence. They may settle on certain values and beliefs about what it means to be human, regardless of the trite philosophy of materialism that says: "When you're dead, you're dead.' No-one truly wants that to be the case.

Coming to sincere faith in God is serious business and requires much of a person. A mature society respects this and protects the rights of its citizens to live by their faith and good conscience. It does not expect them to be plaster saints that never put a foot wrong. Mature society understands that to err is human, but to live without moral principle is far worse.

The Christian conscience

Materialists have little patience for the Christian conscience. For them, at best, the conscience reflects the current norms of society and in the case of the parliamentary conscience vote it is often seen as a failure to operate as a team player or as the mouthpiece for majority opinion in the electorate. But parties can get things terribly wrong, as can popular opinion.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy states that "conscience is a ***pluralistic*** notion… To use a metaphor, conscience is like an empty box that can be filled with any type of moral content".[18] This view is precisely what devalues the importance of conscience generally.

It is no wonder then that some assume that Christians and other people of faith think of the conscience as of little importance. Generally the Christian view is that the conscience while not infallible is sufficiently able to alert a person when there is a moral element to an action they are considering.

The conscience needs to be strengthened and advised, and in the Christian faith, the Scripture is the principle source of moral instruction. The apostle Paul spoke of the role of conscience in the business of speaking with others about life and faith that we renounce deceit or manipulation and "by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God."[19]

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS, 2016

	Religious Affiliation	Population ('000)	Population (%)
Christian	Catholic	5 291.8	22.6
	Anglican	3 101.2	13.3
	Other Christian	3 808.6	16.3
	Total	**12 201.6**	**52.1**
Other Religions	Islam	604.2	2.6
	Buddhism	563.7	2.4
	Hinduism	440.3	1.9
	Sikhism	125.9	0.5
	Judaism	91.0	0.4
	Other	95.7	0.4
	Total	**1 920.8**	**8.2**
No Religion [a]		**7 040.7**	**30.1**
Australia [b]		**23 401.9**	**100**

a No religion includes secular and other spiritual beliefs.

b As religion was an optional question, the total for Australia will not equal the sum of the items above it.

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016

The Christian conscience then includes an awareness that our words and deeds take place 'in the sight of God.' Paul also noted that while others may not acknowledge their conscience, it was sufficiently functional for him to rely upon its witness to his hearers.

By way of reminder, the wider Christian Church has two thousand years of history in every continent and thousands of cultures and languages. In Australia according to the ABS Census 2016, 52% of Australians identify themselves as Christians. According to McCrindle Research, 33% consider themselves Christian in a more considered sense (8 million people). And 9% actively participate in a church or community of faith (1.6 million people) – far more than go to sporting events that require a gate fee.[20]

By comparison with all other religions and non-religionists, Christianity is still a major bloc in Australian society.

This sizable majority has a right to be heard. While it is not a homogeneous bloc and there are many differences, there is also considerable agreement on fundamentals such as the belief in God, the sanctity of life, the dignity of humanity, the importance of the family and a sense of right and wrong.

Christians are not alone in seeking to strengthen the role of conscience in society rather than weaken it. Cultures far and wide and over long ages have recognised the moral inclination – the innate sense of right and wrong. They may differ on what is right or wrong but they recognise its existence.

The vital question is, 'What will happen to a society if it denies and neglects the innate sense of right and wrong?'

Conscience has been described as the person we are when no one is watching. Society relies upon a strong commitment to self-directed moral responsibility in basic issues like traffic rules, respect for property both public and private, and a thousand other matters of the common good that are promoted by conscience.

Already the terrible neglect of moral responsibility is reflected in the data on abuse (46,448 children in out-of-home-care in 2015/26)[21], or cheating in academic work, particularly plagiarism. Dr Zena O'Connor of the University of Sydney said "she was staggered at the increase in plagiarism. In her experience it was a very small proportion but now she would peg it at well over 50%."[22]

This finding reflects a diminution of honesty and integrity, against conscience, that casts an unwelcome shadow over academic standards and the integrity of research.

The answer is not more rules but for government to respect the importance of conscience and to encourage institutions of civil society that nurture it like the family and the church.

Conscience will be nuanced in different civil and religious sectors – but a society that neglects its role is turning out the lights.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to link the threats to our great freedoms of speech, faith and conscience with the long march of Marxism through our institutions. I suggest that the long march through the institutions is an attempt to capture these great freedoms rather than the institutions themselves. It is these freedoms – these evidences of our humanity in the image of God, these fundamentals of a free and democratic society that stand in the way of any totalitarian influence including the New Marxism.

This is a call then, to protect these freedoms - by prayer, by courageous and free speech, by moral action for the common good, by a good conscience and a sincere faith.

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