

THE DEVIL AND KARL MARX

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**COMMUNISM'S LONG MARCH OF DEATH,
DECEPTION, AND INFILTRATION**

PAUL KENGOR, PHD

**TAN BOOKS
GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Devil and Karl Marx: Communism's Long March of Death, Deception, and Infiltration © 2020 Paul Kengor

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Cover design by Caroline Green

Cover image: Karl Marx by Alevtina_Vyacheslav/Shutterstock

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020936885

ISBN: 978-1-5051-1444-7

Published in the United States by
TAN Books
PO Box 269
Gastonia, NC 28053
www.TANBooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

*Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.
 . . . For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the
 principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present
 darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

Ephesians 5:11; 6:12

*“Thus Heaven I’ve forfeited,
I know it full well.
My soul, once true to God,
Is chosen for Hell.”*

—Karl Marx, *“The Pale Maiden,”* 1837

*“Look now, my blood-dark sword shall stab
Unerringly within thy soul. . . .
The hellish vapors rise and fill the brain,
Till I go mad and my heart is utterly changed.
See the sword—the Prince of Darkness sold it to me.
For he beats the time and gives the signs.
Ever more boldly I play the dance of death.”*

—Karl Marx, *“The Player,”* 1841

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FOREWORD

Ronald Reagan described a communist as one who reads Karl Marx and an anti-communist as one who understands Karl Marx. Pithy and true, at least at the time, but conservatives in the decades since Reagan won the Cold War have begun to forget just what makes Marxism so wrong, and their failure to articulate Marx's fatal flaw has left an entire generation prey to the deadliest ideology in history, imperiling not only minds but also souls.

The majority of young Americans today hold a favorable view of socialism, according to a 2018 Gallup poll. Socialism is on the rise more than three decades after conservatives thought it had died in the rubble of the Berlin Wall. In just the past few years, admitted socialists have won elected office throughout the country, from the local to the national level. They have succeeded because, while conservatives have blabbered themselves hoarse denouncing the economic effects of socialism, they have ignored the deeper spiritual questions that actually move men's souls. That is why this book could not be published at a more opportune time.

Karl Marx envisioned a merely material world in which religion is "the opium of the people" and nothing matters but matter. Rather than question this false vision—indeed, our ability to question anything at all dispels it—many conservatives have contented themselves to debate Marx on his own materialist terms. "Socialism destroys economies," they observe. Then, "Socialism distorts markets." And finally, "Socialism just doesn't work."

But whether or not a political system "works" depends on what it's working toward. Socialism strives to tear down traditional society.

At that task, socialism has succeeded everywhere it has been tried, at least for a time. The problem with socialism isn't the inefficiency; it's the evil. Marx did not set out to tinker with markets and redistribute some wealth. He sought to radically transform society by changing human nature. He hated religion because he opposed God, the author of human nature. He sided with Satan, as he confessed in letters and ghoulish poetry quoted in these pages. Ex-communists such as Arthur Koestler and Richard Wright came to call Marxism "the god that failed." Karl Marx erred not through mere miscalculation but through sin and heresy.

Unfortunately, the same softening on Marxism that took place in the realm of politics infected the Church as well, at times through misunderstanding and at others through outright infiltration. The Church has condemned Marxism since the mid-nineteenth century. Yet in 2019 the leading Jesuit periodical in the United States published "The Catholic Case for Communism." Around the same time, the Holy Father made common cause with communists, according to the left-wing Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*. "If anything," Pope Francis reportedly told the paper's founder Eugenio Scalfari, "it is the communists who think like Christians." One wonders if Karl Marx could hear the Pope's compliment amid the wailing and gnashing of teeth in Marx's eternal abode.

Still, Pope Francis has refused to count himself among Marx's followers. "Marxist ideology is wrong," he affirmed flatly in 2013. Francis's predecessors spoke even more forcefully against communism in years past. "Religious socialism, Christian socialism, are contradictory terms; no one can be at the same time a good Catholic and a true socialist," declared Pope Pius XI, who considered socialism "irreconcilable with Christianity." His predecessor Pope Leo XIII condemned socialists as "a wicked confederacy," "a pest," a plague," "a hideous monster . . . that threatens civil society with destruction," and "an evil growth" that attempts to "steal the very Gospel itself with a view to deceive more easily the unwary." Bl. Pope Pius IX, writing even

before Marx, decried communism and socialism with the same vigor.

Communists read Marx, anti-communists understand Marx, and no one understands Marx better than Paul Kengor. His was the unhappy task of wading through such diabolically inspired drivel, and for that we owe him a debt of gratitude. Kengor knows, like few others writing today, that terms such as “collectivism” and “individualism” only take the debate so far. Quibbles over marginal tax rates have never inspired a soul, least of all Karl Marx. Ultimately the fight comes down to spiritual warfare: good versus evil.

In his most famous Cold War speech, Ronald Reagan, quoting Winston Churchill, warned, “The destiny of man is not measured by material computations. When great forces are on the move in the world, we learn we’re spirits, not animals.” And spirits must choose a side.

Euphoria at the fall of the Berlin Wall made utopians of otherwise hard-nosed conservatives, who declared “the end of history as such,” ironically echoing the grandiose rhetoric and barmy theories of the ideologue they claimed to have defeated. But history did not end. If anything, it has begun to repeat itself, “first as tragedy, then as farce,” just as Marx predicted in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. The Evil Empire collapsed, but evil spirits continue to prowl about the earth seeking the ruin of souls because we contend in the end not against flesh and blood but “against the spirits of wickedness in the high places,” which will endure until the end of the world. In the meantime, we must know our enemy. In *The Devil and Karl Marx*, Paul Kengor masterfully helps us to do so.

Michael Knowles
Los Angeles, CA

NOTES ON STYLE

Style guides differ on the usage of upper- or lowercase for the word “communist.” Some use exclusively uppercase (a bad choice). This book uses uppercase if describing a person who was a formal member of the Communist Party vs. lowercase for someone who was a communist ideologically but not a party member. The distinction is very important. Everyone throughout the history of the communist movement knows that an uppercase “Communist” is a major distinction from a lowercase “communist.” The vast majority of communists ideologically refused to go so far as to join the Communist Party and become uppercase “Communists” because doing so required them to take a formal sworn loyalty oath to Stalin’s USSR, to the Kremlin, to the Soviet Comintern, and to Communist Party USA. They were unwilling to do that. Those Communists who did swear the oath took a huge step beyond those communists who refused to take the leap. (Public education pioneer John Dewey, to cite just one example, objected to “Communism, official Communism, spelt with a capital letter.” He had been a lowercase communist.) Thus, regardless of what rigid style guidelines might demand, we must be careful to make this crucial distinction. Likewise, this book employs an uppercase *P* for “Communist Party” (and a lowercase *p* when “party” is alone).

PREFACE

“THE DANCE OF DEATH”

THE COMMUNIST KILLING MACHINE

The purpose of a preface is to briefly set the table for what is to follow. In a book on the evil that is communism, that is a tall order. The blood banquet that is communist ideology could not be sufficiently laid out in a vast hall of volumes let alone a mere preface. To adequately convey the array of victims of communism is humanly impossible. I will restrict these opening observations to a few pages sketching only generally “the dance of death” (to borrow from Marx’s strange poetry) orchestrated by the handmaidens of this killer ideology.

It is important to start with a presentation of the numbers—the estimated number of victims. They speak for themselves—that is, for communism. Any ideology with a trail of rot like this is not of God but of the forces against God. It is not of God’s creation but a fallen angel’s anti-creation. It is not of the light but of the dark.

No other political ideology has produced as much wretched poverty, rank repression, and sheer violence. In country after country, implemented in varying forms across wide-ranging nationalities, traditions, backgrounds, faiths, and ethnicities, communism coldly and consistently violated the full sweep of most basic human rights, from property to press, from speech to assembly, from conscience to religion. So restrictive was communism in the twentieth century that its implementers routinely refused to allow citizens the right to exit (that is, escape) the destructive systems imposed within their borders.

In some cases, they erected walls to herd and fence in the “masses” they claimed to champion.

That bears repeating: so restrictive was communism that its advocates had to build walls—poured with cement, topped with barbed wire, patrolled 24/7 by secret police with automatic weapons turned on their own citizenry—to keep their people from fleeing. The ultimate symbols of that repression were the Berlin Wall and the frozen people-zoo that was the Soviet Gulag. Even then, those are just two symbols of the repression. We could point to so many more: the killing fields of Cambodia, Romania’s Pitesti prison, the NKVD’s Lubyanka basement, Fidel’s and Che’s La Cabana execution house, and modern concentration camps such as North Korea’s Camp 22 or China’s Laogai. Where to start, where to end?

Communism’s most successful form of redistribution was not wealth, which the ridiculous system fails to produce, but government-orchestrated crime. Everything was so nationalized and so centralized that it was as if the government seized crime too. And really, there were few more proficient political gangsters than communist leaders. Al Capone looks like Mister Rogers compared to a Pol Pot or Nicolai Ceausescu. It is no exaggeration to say that a Jeffrey Dahmer or Jack the Ripper could not begin to compare to a Felix Zherzhinsky or serial rapist Lavrenti Beria in sheer scale of victims. Not even close.

Communism committed a “multitude of crimes not only against individual human beings but also against world civilization and national cultures,” wrote Stephane Courtois, editor of the classic Harvard University Press work *The Black Book of Communism*. “Communist regimes turned mass crime into a full-blown system of government.”¹

In both theoretical and practical form, communism deprives individuals of their unalienable rights. It is a totalitarian, atheistic ideology. Communism’s chief form of redistribution is repression, crime, and murder.

Under communism, there was no profession of self-evident,

inherent “unalienable” rights—that is, absolute rights endowed by the Creator to humans to begin with, and thus protected by a just government. Governments were not “instituted among men” to help secure such rights, as Thomas Jefferson put it. No, communist governments took away those rights, depriving them, robbing them, absconding with them, in the name of a totalitarian system that, at some point, promised to usher in utopia.

“Communist regimes did not just commit criminal acts,” observed Martin Malia, a Harvard PhD and professor at the University of California-Berkeley, noting that there have been non-communist states that likewise committed criminal acts, “but they were criminal enterprises in their very essence: on principle, so to speak, they all ruled lawlessly, by violence, and without regard for human life.”²

The communist culture of death has been prolific. Whether by bullet, by starvation, by exposure to the elements, by war and terror against internal citizens and “enemies” of the state, or by whatever means. How many victims? Truly only God knows.

In 1999, *The Black Book of Communism* endeavored to attempt the impossible task of tabulating a Marxist-Leninist death toll in the twentieth century. It came up with a figure approaching 100 million.³ Here is the breakdown:

- USSR: 20 million deaths
- China: 65 million deaths
- Vietnam: 1 million deaths
- North Korea: 2 million deaths
- Cambodia: 2 million deaths
- Eastern Europe: 1 million deaths
- Latin America: 150,000 deaths
- Africa: 1.7 million deaths
- Afghanistan: 1.5 million deaths
- The international communist movement and Communist parties not in power: about 10,000 deaths

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, the preeminent US-based center for detailing communist crimes, cites the figure of 100 million deaths.⁴ Numerous others agree and could be listed here. Dr. Malia aptly noted that the communist record offers the “most colossal case of political carnage in history.”⁵

And even then, here is something still more shocking: These frightening numbers are quite conservative.

Take the figure relating to the Soviet Union, where the *Black Book* recorded *merely* 20 million dead.⁶ Alexander Yakovlev, a high-level Soviet official who became one of Mikhail Gorbachev’s chief reformers, and who, in the 1990s, was given the official task of trying to add up the victims, estimates that Stalin alone “annihilated . . . sixty to seventy million people.” His figures are consistent with those long estimated by the likes of Nobel dissident Alexander Solzhenitsyn, among others.⁷

Most accounts of the overall Soviet death toll (Stalin plus other leaders) exceed 33 million, some twice that. Cold War historian Dr. Lee Edwards, citing the epic work on “democide” by political scientist R. J. Rummel,⁸ as well as the research of Solzhenitsyn, of the great Soviet scholar Robert Conquest, and of still others, estimates that Soviet governments were responsible for the death of 61.9 million of their own from 1917 to 1987.⁹ And yet, the Bolsheviks would be matched if not outdone by China’s Mao Zedong, who, by numerous estimates, was responsible for the deaths of at least 60 million in China, and more likely over 70 million, according to the latest biographical-historical research.¹⁰ And then there were the killing fields of North Korea, Cambodia, Cuba, Ethiopia, Eastern Europe, Africa, and more. Among them, North Korea’s pile of body bags unquestionably stack higher than the two million listed in the *Black Book’s* bullet points.¹¹

Really, the death generated by communist governments in the twentieth century, and, primarily, in a more concentrated period from roughly 1917 to 1979, is surely closer to 140 million.

This would equate to a rate of multiple thousands dead per day over the course of a century. Even Adolph Hitler got nowhere close to that. In fact, neither did the two deadliest wars in history, World Wars I and II, which need to be combined and doubled to get near communism’s butcher’s bill. The highest estimates of the death produced during the entirety of the Spanish Inquisition (a period of some sixty years) come nowhere near the level of death in Stalin’s military purge or even Lenin’s first year in power.¹²

Anonymous wise-guys randomly surfacing and disappearing on the internet (many of them Millennials born after the fall of the Berlin Wall) emerge to dispute or nit-pick these numbers. Fine. Go for it, guys. Again, truly only God knows the real number. The devil might know too. Besides, the devil is in the details.

This much we do know beyond dispute: this was and remains a lethal ideology of boundless destruction and stupidity. One needs to think of viruses, bacteria, plagues, disease, to approximate this level of man-made death. Even then, a malicious modern virus such as COVID-19, which placed a world on lockdown in the year 2020, comes nowhere close to communism’s fatality rate. “Mankind has survived all manner of evil diseases and plagues,” said Ronald Reagan, “but can it survive Communism?” Reagan called communism a “vicious” “disease.” For good measure, he added that “Communism is neither an economic or a political system—it is a form of insanity.”¹³

What sort of warped idea could unleash such agony? Conventional explanations simply do not suffice. The fullest answer resides in the realm of the spirit, a spiritual explanation. The dogged, hell-bent pursuit by many of such a perverse ideology—immediately evident as idiotic and unworkable from a cursory skim of the *Communist Manifesto*—is an utter mystery not explainable by mere rational understanding. This was and is, flatly, a diabolical ideology, with an inexplicable attraction to its adherents. It possesses a bizarre seductive quality to its ideological cultists.

And yet—and yet—those same cult-like adherents denounce

religion as the “opiate of the masses.” They have denounced it with a passionate hatred.

This book deals with the grim, disturbing, militant atheism and intense anti-religious elements of Marx and other founders and practitioners of communism. It is not a full-blown biography of Karl Marx, though it is partly a spiritual biography of the man (covered at length in parts 1 and 2).¹⁴ It contains many pages on his views on religion and, even, his words on the devil. This book tackles Marx spiritually but ultimately goes well beyond that to the wider matter of his communism and its various manifestations. This book might be better called *The Devil and Communism*; still, the literal manifesto began with Marx (and Engels), and Marx had things to say about the devil—things not pretty. The book starts with Marx, with the other communist disciples following. Many of these men were messing with some nasty stuff. This was not a routine atheism.

For the record, I will state upfront that I have not encountered nor do I present evidence of Karl Marx, say, conducting seances or engaging in black Masses or Satanic rituals, even as other writers on Marx have speculated on that stark possibility.¹⁵ Regardless, there was a fanatically deep hatred of religion and flirtation with the dark side that is undeniable and chilling, especially in Marx’s poetry. It also gives pause, as we shall see in these pages, to repeatedly encounter in the life of Marx family members and close friends referring to him with words like “governed by a demon” (his father), “my dear devil” (his son),¹⁶ “monster of ten thousand devils” (Engels), “wicked knave” (his wife), or the striking number of intimates and associates who did not hesitate to compare him to *Faust* or Mephistopheles, or use words like “possessed” to describe his demeanor, and on and on. One friend, journalist Karl Heinzen, was not unique among contemporaries and biographers who observed or recorded Marx shouting or “chanting the words from *Faust*,” and described him as “mocking,” trying to take under a “spell,” and possessing eyes “like a wet goblin.” To be sure, this is very much a short list, and some of these were

likely in jest or expressed with a weird playfulness, though that is not always entirely clear.¹⁷ The frequency of such observations of and by Marx really is quite bracing and far too frequent to shrug off. Readers will see that there are way too many of these to blithely ignore. And no figure that I have ever studied or pursued in a biography was described in language like this.¹⁸ I am sure that every biographer reading this now (other than those of Marx) will nod in agreement.

"There were times when Marx seemed to be possessed by demons," recorded Robert Payne in his chapter "The Demons," in his groundbreaking, seminal 1968 biography of Marx. A prolific academic biographer of Marx, and a respected scholar and academic not expected to level such a shocking charge lightly, Payne asserted of Marx, "He had the devil's view of the world, and the devil's malignity. Sometimes he seemed to know that he was accomplishing works of evil."¹⁹

How evil? Well, I certainly have no proof that Karl Marx was a Satanist, nor can I confirm whether he was possessed. I would not dare hazard such a charge. I can affirm that he was an atheist. That is easy. No one denies that. Marx did not deny that. Some will say that an atheist would not be a Satanist because of an atheist's non-belief in the supernatural. More likely, what some mean to say or would like to say about Marx is that he was an atheist doing the work of the devil, whether he was fully cognizant of it or not. Some would be more inclined to say that Marx was possessed rather than a Satanist, as Payne even speculates. Perhaps. Again, these are things I cannot venture to attempt to authenticate.

And again, what is undeniable is the evil associated with and wrought by Marxist-communist ideology. It is a malignant track record that could only please the denizens of a darker world.

Most sentient human beings have at least a flickering notion of the immense suffering caused by communist ideology in the aftermath of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* penned two centuries ago. Far too many people, however, separate Marx the man from the evils ushered in by Marxism. That is a grave mistake. Not only are the results of

Marxism very much the result of Marx's ideas and his very pen, but Marx himself penned some downright devilish things. Karl Marx wrote not only about the hell that was communism but about hell itself. In some such cases, Marx portrayed himself as chosen for hell, or chose hell for himself; in still other cases, he, in the role of the master of hell, consigned others to it.

"Thus Heaven I've forfeited, I know it full well," wrote Marx in an 1837 poem, one of many explored at length in the pages ahead. "My soul, once true to God, is chosen for Hell." That certainly seemed the perverse destiny for Marx's ideology. That statement also seems at least partly autobiographical, given that Marx, once a believer, once a Christian, had once been true to God. In another poem, Marx wrote, "The hellish vapors rise and fill the brain, Till I go mad and my heart is utterly changed. See the sword—the Prince of Darkness sold it to me." Here, too, seems an ironic metaphor for the bloody sword of communist ideology, surely favored if not wielded by the Prince of Darkness. And it, too, seems partly autobiographical, given how Marx's own heart had been utterly changed.

Alas, this book offers a close, careful look at the genuinely hellacious side of the ideology of Marx, of Engels, of Lenin, of Stalin, of Mao, of Pol Pot, of Fidel Castro—of communism. In part, it is a tragic portrait of a man but, still more broadly so, an ideology, a chilling retrospective on an unclean spirit that should have never been let out of its pit.

We see here in this book a long march of destruction, deceit, manipulation, and infiltration. It does not stop with Karl Marx, who was only the beginning. It merely starts with Marx. He was the launching point for an assault on religion that eventually included a penetration of churches worldwide and possibly even seminaries, including within the Catholic Church, and most certainly within Protestant denominations. That infiltration had terrible success in communist countries, of course, but its tentacles also reached into free nations, including the United States of America.

“You may be interested in knowing that we have preachers, preachers active in churches, who are members of the Communist Party,” candidly admitted Earl Browder, general secretary of Communist Party USA, to students at Union Theological Seminary on February 15, 1935.²⁰ He and his party initiated an aggressive push to create a “united front” led by communists and socialists attracting a broader coalition of liberals and fellow travelers. The goal was to expand the party’s support, its membership base, and above all its agenda, which was always an agenda that saw religion as a menace. Nonetheless, communists and socialists would happily accept the support of the gullible religious left, knowing that they had many sympathizers in the mainline Protestant churches in particular, especially among certain clergy. Browder boasted that he and his comrades “could recite a thousand local examples of the successful application of the united front tactic, initiated by the Communist Party,” looking for “new recruits” to spread this united front “throughout the country and among all strata of the population.”²¹

This included recruitment among the religious and flat-out infiltration of churches. Communists would even seek out Catholics—their hardest nut to crack because of the intense, institutionalized, vehemently anti-communist counterforce of the universal Roman Catholic Church anchored at the Vatican. Browder warmly albeit deceptively offered, “We extend the hand of fellowship to our Catholic brothers.”

One of Browder’s erstwhile buddies, ex-communist J. B. Matthews, who had spearheaded the “united front” strategy, noted that, consistent with the party’s and Moscow’s and Lenin’s “communist code of ethics,” religion was to be exploited for advancement of the revolution, even if that involved blatant deception. “It is not surprising to find the Communist Party in the United States engaged in a systematic effort to lure the churches,” averred Matthews, “especially the Catholic Church, into the net of the party’s united fronts.” And though Matthews here singled out the Catholic Church, the

communist efforts were far more vigorous and successful in Protestant churches. The Catholic Church was protected and preserved by leadership in Rome and savvy clergy at home, from the likes of Popes Pius XI and Pius XII to Fulton Sheen and Cardinal Spellman, among so many others. But that does not mean that all was kept pure and untouched and unscathed. The smoke of Satan, to borrow from Pope Paul VI, did manage to seep under cathedral doors. Nonetheless, whatever the level of infiltration, Catholics and Protestants alike were in communist crosshairs, as were Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, and so many other believers. Communists sowed the seeds deep and wide, and the harvest was harsh, with bitter fruits that would grow throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, and continue today. Many of today's naively self-described socialists and "democratic socialists" have no idea of the rancid roots of this poisoned tree.

Drawing on documents that have been archived or shelved for decades, some of them being published or quoted at length here for the first time, what is included in this book will shock readers but also alert them to a destructive force not merely historical and ideological but spiritual and diabolical. Remarks like these from Browder and Matthews and Marx are just the tip of the Siberian iceberg. Many such alarming words will be shared here from Soviet Comintern archives, from Communist Party USA documents, from sworn testimony by ex-communist leaders, from a disquieting assortment of minions and pagans and weirdos and radicals, and still more.

Readers no doubt will be taken aback by the devil in the details.