

“What has happened to my America?”

“...to capture the West, Marxists must first de-Christianize the West.”

The taproot of the revolution that captured the cultural institutions of the American republic goes back far beyond the 1960s to August 1914, the beginning of the Great War that historian Jacques Barzun called the “blow that hurled the modern world on its course of self-destruction.”

On August 4, 1914, the Social Democrats stood in the Reichstag and, to a man, voted the kaiser’s war credits, joining the orgy of patriotism as the armies of the Reich smashed into Belgium. Marxists were stunned. The long-anticipated European war was to be their time. “Workers of the world, unite!” Marx had thundered in the closing line of his *Communist Manifesto*. Marxists had confidently predicted that when war came, the workers would rise up and rebel against their rulers rather than fight fellow workers of neighboring nations. But it had not happened. The greatest socialist party in Europe had been converted into a war party, and the workers had thrown down their tools and gone off to fight with songs in their hearts. As historian Barbara Tuchman describes it,

When the call came, the worker, whom Marx declared to have no Fatherland, identified himself with country, not class. He turned out to be a member of the national family like anyone else. The force of his antagonism which was supposed to topple capitalism found a better target in the foreigner. The working class went to war willingly, even eagerly, like the middle class, like the upper class, like the species.

Marxists had been exposed as fools.

As the horrors of the western front unfolded, they waited. But even Ypres, Passchendaele, and the Somme, where hundreds of thousands of British soldiers went to their deaths over a few yards of mud, did not cause the workers to rise up in the homeland of the Industrial Revolution. Neither the French nor the German working class broke at Verdun. The 1917 mutiny in the French trenches was swiftly put down. New blows came at war’s end.

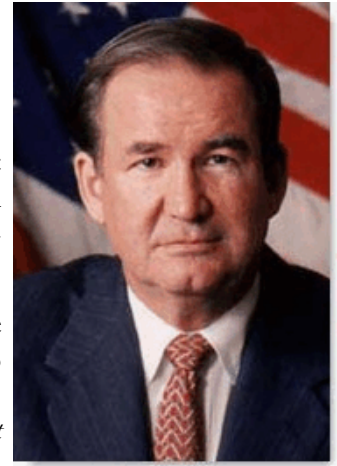
After the Russian Revolution, Communist coups were attempted in Budapest, Munich, and Berlin. The Bavarian Soviet was quickly crushed by German war veterans. Rosa Luxemburg, who had led the Spartacist uprising, and Karl Liebknecht were clubbed and shot to death in Berlin by *Freikorps*. The Budapest regime of Bela Kun lasted a few months. The workers failed to rally to the revolutions launched in their name.

Trotsky sought to make the Red Army the spear point of revolution. Invading Poland, he was hurled back at the Vistula by Polish patriots under Marshal Pilsudski. Nothing the Marxists had predicted had come to pass. Their hour had come and gone. The workers of the West, the mythical proletariat, had refused to play the role history had assigned them. How could Marx have been so wrong?

Two of Marx’s disciples now advanced an explanation. Yes, Marx had been wrong. Capitalism was not impoverishing the workers. Indeed, their lot was improving, and they had not risen in revolution because their souls had been saturated in two thousand years of Christianity, which blinded them to their true class interests. **Unless and until Christianity and Western culture, the immune system of capitalism, were uprooted from the soul of Western Man, Marxism could not take root,** and the revolution would be betrayed by the workers in whose name it was to be fought. In biblical terms, the word of Marx, seed of the revolution, had fallen on rock-hard Christian soil and died. Wagering everything on the working class, the Marxists had bet on the wrong horse.

The first dissenting disciple was the Hungarian Georg Lukacs, an agent of the Comintern, whose *History and Class Consciousness* had brought him recognition as a Marxist theorist to rival Marx himself. “I saw the revolutionary destruction of society as the one and only solution,” said Lukacs. **“A worldwide overturning of values cannot take place without the annihilation of the old values and the creation of new ones by the revolutionaries.”** As deputy commissar for culture in Bela Kun’s regime, Lukacs put his self-described “demonic” ideas into action in what came to be known as “cultural terrorism.”

As part of this terrorism he instituted a radical sex education program in Hungarian schools. Children were instructed in free love, sexual intercourse, the archaic nature of middle-class family codes, the outdatedness of monogamy, and the irrelevance of religion, which deprives man of all pleasures. Women, too, were called to rebel against the sexual mores of



the time.

Lukacs's purpose in promoting licentiousness among women and children was to destroy the family, the core institution of Christianity and Western culture. Five decades after Lukacs fled Hungary, his ideas would be enthusiastically embraced by baby boomers in the “sexual revolution.”

The second disciple was Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Communist who has lately begun to receive deserved recognition as the greatest Marxist strategist of the twentieth century. After Mussolini's march on Rome in 1922, Gramsci fled to Russia. But unlike the “useful idiots” and “infantile left” of Lenin's derision, such as American writer Lincoln Steffens — “I have been over into the future and it works!” — Gramsci was a sharp observer who saw that Bolshevism did not work. Only through terror could the regime compel obedience. Gramsci concluded that Leninism had failed. The Russian people had not been converted to communism; they loathed it. Their land, faith, families, icons, and Mother Russia all meant far more to the Russian people than any international workers' solidarity. The Soviets were deluding themselves, Gramsci concluded. The Russian people had not changed. They were obedient only because resistance meant a knock at the door at midnight and a bullet in the back of the neck in the basement of the Lubyanka. Even the czar had evoked more love and loyalty than the hated Bolsheviks.

Gramsci concluded it was their Christian souls that prevented the Russian people from embracing their Communist revolution. “The civilized world had been thoroughly saturated with Christianity for 2000 years,” Gramsci wrote; “and a regime grounded in Judeo-Christian beliefs and values could not be overthrown until those roots were cut.” If Christianity was the heat shield of capitalism, then, to capture the West, Marxists must first de-Christianize the West.

Disillusioned, terrified of Stalin, who had seized power on Lenin's death and who did not relish independent Marxist thinkers, Gramsci went home to lead the Italian Communist party. Mussolini had another idea. He locked Gramsci up and lost the key. Languishing in prison, near death from tuberculosis, Gramsci was finally freed, but died in 1937 at forty-six. But in his *Prison Notebooks* he left behind the blueprints for a successful Marxist revolution in the West. Our own cultural revolution could have come straight from its pages. “In the East,” Gramsci wrote of Russia,

the state was everything, civil society was primordial ... in the West there was a proper relation between the state and civil society, and when the state trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State [in the West] was only the outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks.

Rather than seize power first and impose a cultural revolution from above, Gramsci argued, Marxists in the West must first change the culture; then power would fall into their laps like ripened fruit. But to change the culture would require a “long march through the institutions” — the arts, cinema, theater, schools, colleges, seminaries, newspapers, magazines, and the new electronic medium, radio. One by one, each had to be captured and converted and politicized into an agency of revolution. Then the people could be slowly educated to understand and even welcome the revolution.

Gramsci urged his fellow Marxists to form popular fronts with Western intellectuals who shared contempt for Christianity and bourgeois culture and who shaped the minds of the young. Message to the comrades: “It's the culture, stupid!” Since Western culture had given birth to capitalism and sustained it, if that culture could be subverted, the system would fall of its own weight. On the cover of his 1970 runaway bestseller *The Greening of America*, the manifesto of the counterculture, author Charles Reich parroted Gramsci perfectly:

There is a revolution coming. It will not be like revolutions of the past. It will originate with the individual and with culture, and it will change the political structure only as its final act. It will not require violence to succeed, and it cannot be successfully resisted with violence. It is now spreading with amazing rapidity, and already our laws, institutions, and social structure are changing in consequence.... This is the revolution of the new generation.

Gramsci's idea on how to make a revolution in a Western society has been proven correct. Lenin's regime shook the world for seventy years, but ultimately his revolution failed, and his regime collapsed. In the end, the Communist party of Lenin and Stalin remained what it had been from the beginning, a conspiracy of political criminals who used Marxist ideas and rhetoric to disguise what they were really about: absolute power. Lenin's regime died detested and unmourned. But the Gramscian revolution rolls on, and, to this day, it continues to make converts.

— Pat Buchanan, *The Death of the West*, pp. 74-78
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