

Two Argumentative Papers

E. M. Recio

Applied Sociological Research
Drexel University, Philadelphia PA 19104

June 13, 2000

1 Marx's Idealism

The biggest problem with Marx's communism was his idealistic forecast of what was to come. He made some basic assumptions about the working class; more so he underestimated the bourgeoisie. He pleaded in his writing that the proletariat should focus their energies together. That as the bourgeoisie gather more and more capital, the number of proletariat increases exponentially. Marx stated that eventually the oppression from the bourgeoisie would be so great that the proletariat would eventually get so angered that they would band together and overthrow the bourgeoisie.

Throughout the communist manifesto you have certain statements of fact that, even though it was written 100 years ago, are very relevant today. Marx noted the exploitation of developing nations as an aspect (or arm) of capitalism. He stated that capitalism will attempt to exploit every worker on earth; spreading their goods to every corner of the Earth (what is now known as globalisation.) The bourgeoisie will attempt to move from place to place in a never ending search to seek cheap human labour. Again this was all stated 100 years ago; much of what was stated is very relevant and applicable today.

So, *what* exactly went wrong? Why hasn't the proletariat revolution occurred? Marx overlooked one of the very issues which he purported as part of his dialectic: the action/re-action of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. As the bourgeoisie got more aggressive they needed a method of keeping the proletariat at bay. They ended up spreading an ideology which seemed appealing to the proletariat. The ideology was actually rather simple: *if you work hard and faithfully you will be successful*. In America this was coined "the american dream." In this way the bourgeoisie could "dupe" everyone into believing that they could become something given enough hard work.

Another way the bourgeoisie have been able to prevent a proletariat revolution is through the granting of small number of gains. For example, we can form unions; in unions we may ask for wage increases, amenities, benefits, &c. All of these gains by the proletariat have been useful in keeping them at bay.

Since Marx had an idealist point of view of the future: with communism and the proletariat revolution, and it has not occurred, he has erred in this way. Personally, I do not believe that a proletariat revolution will ever come. The two forces involved will give more and more gains to the working class (but hardly enough to balance the scales between the class conflict) and

the ideology will press harder and harder against a revolt and more towards “anyone can make it” view.

2 Auguste Comte’s Fallacious Positivism

Comte went wrong in several ways as far as his positivist theories are concerned; Specifically, in his plans for the future, and largely due to his isolation from the general public (in an attempt to keep his thoughts pure.) His plans also consisted of unfounded premises. I will outline several of his ideas and why they fail (and pretty much discredit himself through such an agenda.)

The first thing that he would do is create a thirteen month calendar, each with 28 days, along with new holidays to honour the secular heroes of the positivistic future. A part of this would be to design new positivistic temples. He went so far as to denote the exact number of priests necessary for each “temple”. Moreover, 42 priests would be chosen as priests for humanity. Comte was arrogant enough to place himself at the head of this new positivist religion. Furthermore he was very worried that there was no one to fill in for his position after him. All of these priests would have to be absolved of all material needs, so the bankers would support them financially. He calculated everything! This included the very amount that many of these priests would make, along with most of society’s actors!

Comte was also an anti-intellectualist. He believed that there was no room for other anti-positivist reading materials. There should only be about 100 titles in a library. He favoured eugenics, and artificial insemination, believing that sex was detrimental to humanity.

For all of this talk on positivism, he did very little empirical studies to support itself. Furthermore, most of his positivist views were based on gross generalisations. He never confirmed the existence of these “invariant laws.” He made no *real* contributions sociology. The social changes outlined above were to say the least ludicrous, and the new religion structured after catholicism (so much for leaving the old ways behind.) Most important were the implications of all he “preached.” Most of his writings pointed to a totalitarian sort of state. Where every aspect of the individual’s life would be controlled. For example, his plans even extended to the family and each member’s role there. If this were the case today, you could kiss single parent families goodbye, along with homosexual relationships, and people who live together out of marriage!