The post-Christian humanism of Karl Marx
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THE enmity between Marxism and Christianity should be a thing of the past - that's the assertion of many outstanding leaders on **both sides of the old firing line.** The disciples of Christ and the followers of Marx should join hands in a common struggle for the liberation of mankind from oppression and poverty. This is the new attitude of many in western Europe, South America, and North America. Precisely at a time when Christianity itself is indeed In need of a fundamental renewal it is imperative to scrutinize the sources of that renewal and the new alliances to be formed in the shaping of a future society.

Must Christians and Marxists join forces in a new alliance? One positive answer to this question is presented by Joseph Petulla, a representative of the Roman Catholic New Left. He closes a recent book dealing with this matter with these words: "Both the Marxian and the Christian tradition possess trenchant complementary significances which relate to changing the world. We can no longer afford to neglect each other."[1] The argument for this conclusion is In effect the basis for the new alliance. Christianity, Petulla suggests, "has reason to look at the world in a manner compatible with a Marxian worldview."[2] "The traditions of both Marxism and Christianity begin with an acute vision of man's social predicament."[3] He finds a parallel, a coincidence of Marxism and Christianity which "comes at the commitment level, the onlook, in their common selective perception of alienating or liberating sides of society. Where Marxism sees alienation, Christianity finds demonic influences in the world. What Marxism sees as the seeds of liberation, Christianity views as redemption, glimpses of the coming kingdom, or the communal fellowship of men."[4]

Roger Garaudy, a French Marxist who has contributed profoundly to the current Christian-Marxist dialogue, arrives at a similar conclusion [363] from his standpoint, In Marxism to the Twentieth Century he writes: "One great hope remains, common to millions of Christians n the world and millions of communists: the building up of the future without losing anything of the heritages of human values that Christianity has been contributing for the last two thousand years."[5] The key value that Christianity brought with it is "love of the other." This is what most radically new in Christianity in distinction from the Greek and Roman heritage. Garaudy describes this distinction in these words: "It was its transition, through the central experience of the Incarnation, of the God-man and the man. God, from the love of love to the love of the other. It was that, through incarnate love, it gave an absolute value to the other man and to the world. In the fundamental (that is, Christo-centric) Christian tradition, to turn to God in no way implies turning away from the world,

1 Joseph Petulla: *Christian Political Theology: A Marxian Guide*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1972, p. 247.
2 Ibid., p. 3
3 Ibid., p. 93.
4 Ibid., p. 25.
5 Roger Garaudy: *Marxism in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Charles Scribner's Suns, 1970, p. 162f.

since the living God can be met in every being."[6] For Garaudy the recovery of this "love of the other" does not require God's existence. "God is no longer a being nor even the totality of being, since no such totality exists and being lies entirely open to the future which has to be created."[7]

How should one respond to this matter, to this proposed ceasefire between Marxists and Christians? I believe that this entire matter of the new alliance is placed on the wrong basis because in the exchange there is ample evidence of two misinterpretations. In the first place, Marxists tend to misinterpret the genius of Christianity. In the second place, Christians tend to misinterpret Karl Marx. In this article I plan to focus on the second misinterpretation by way of delineating certain fundamental traits of Marx's position which must be taken into account in any confrontation between Marxists and Christians.

Marx is post-Christian

We all know of Marx's comment about religion being the opiate of the people. Doesn't this comment clearly mean that Marx was finished with religion, with all religions, including Christianity?

Well, interpreters of Marx are not so sure about that today. The sentence appears in a very complicated essay which he wrote when he was twenty-five years old. Garaudy once remarked that this statement indeed was an utterance of the very young Marx which neither he nor Engels ever used again.[8] Others are of the opinion that the opiate comment was mainly an expression of Marx's attitude to the authoritarian and individualistic Christianity of his time which offered heaven as a final escape from present misery.[9]

Marx did indeed reject a Christendom that had cozily accommodated [364] itself to its social environment - the kind of Christianity he saw embodied in his father's "conversion" from Jewish tradition to German Protestantism.[10] But there is more to the matter. Marx rejected the Christian religion itself. Biblical Christianity believes in God the Father, the Creator of man and the world; in God the Son, the Redeemer of man and the world from sin; and in God the Holy Spirit, the Author and Giver of life. Marx radically, clearly, and in all honesty rejected this Biblical faith and the view of reality as creation that goes with it. In this sense Marx was radically both post-Christian and anti-Christian.

This doesn't mean that Marx didn't recognize that at certain stages of history religions could serve as channels of liberation from oppression.[11] But In his view mankind must grow up,

6 Ibid., p. 138.
7 Ibid., p. 160.
8 Garaudy: “Waardering van de religie in het marxisme”, in *Christendom en marxisme*, edited by Erich Kellner for the Paulus Gesellschaft. Utrecht: Amboboeken, 1968 p. 89.
9 Cf Robert Adolfs: “Church and Communism”, in *The Christian Marxist Dialogue*, edited by Paul Oestreicher. London: MacMillan, 1969, p. 35.
10 Cf Nicolas Lobkowiez: “Marx's Attitude toward Religion”, in Lobkowiez, ed*: Marx and the Western World* Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967 p 312-313 "Contrary to most Young Hegelians Marx never went through a period of religiouness … Marx, on the contrary, grew up among men to whom religion never was more than a question of propriety, indeed, of expediency. His father, though a descendant of a respected family of rabbis, seems to have been converted to Protestantism mainly in order to conform to the Prussian State in general and to Frederick the Great in particular."
11 The neomarxists Rober Garaudy ("Marxism and Religion", *op. cit.*) and Ernst Bloch (*Des Prinzip Hoffnung*, 3 vols., 1959) pick up this theme of Marx. The current revival of interest in Christianity on the part of neomarxists should not be interpreted as a return to religion but as the affirmation of man’s autonomy. Garaudy in particular twists the meaning of the Bible to fit his humanist anthropology, in which man’s selfhood is the result of self-

must come of age and it can do so only by moving beyond the religious channels of liberation. For religion, that is, man's relation to God, keeps man from finding himself. Religion Is "indeed man's self-consciousness and self-awareness so long as he has not found himself or has lost himself again."[12] When man has not found himself he will be satisfied with the illusory, opium-like happiness which religion offers. But mankind, come of age, having arrived at true self-consciousness, does not need religion, indeed, must abolish it. “The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of men, is a demand for their real happiness. The call to abandon their illusions about their conditions is a call to abandon a condition *which* requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, the embryonic criticism of this vale of tears of which religion is the halo.”[13]

Marx clearly was a post-Christian thinker; that's the way he wanted it. When I use the word "post-Christian" I do not mean to say that with Marx Christianity disappeared. I use it to describe a position which holds that Christianity should no longer be viewed as a way of life in terms of which man can be genuinely human, can find salvation. This was Marx's position. As long as you look to God for salvation you're looking the wrong way, you're wasting your time. Even atheism, as a denial of God's unreality, "is no longer meaningful, for atheism is a negation *of* God and seeks to assert by this negation the existence *of* man. Socialism no longer requires such a roundabout method."[14] The question about God's existence only takes us away from the real question, the question - and predicament - of man's existence.

Marx is a humanist

With the rejection of God and the resultant abolition of religion, Marx's theory and proposed practice circle around the two remaining [365] realities: man and nature as “essential beings.”[15] There is nothing else: man is alone in the universe. All theory and all practice are placed in the setting of the relationship between man and nature. This, in my view, is a basic tenet of Marx. I cannot conceive of any marxism worthy of that name that rejects the primordial character of this relationship. Marx's position here is distinctly unBiblical. For in the Bible the relationship between God and creation is primordial - that is, of the first “order” of matters to be considered in understanding man and the world.

Marx's view of the relationship between man and nature is that of a radical humanist. This means that primacy is attributed to man, not nature. Marx is therefore not a proponent of some sort of Asiatic universalism in which man is but a speck of dust in the vastness of the cosmos, a drop of water in the ocean of Nature. Nor is his humanism a reversion to classical Athenian culture which sought to protect man from the forces of nature by education (paideia) in the city-state (polis). Marx's conception here is that of *secular* humanism, that is, of that type *of* humanism which has absorbed certain-themes from the Scriptures into its own post-Christian view of things. In the Bible man is given primacy with reference to all creatures. In Marx this primacy is present in securalized form: man has taken the place attributed to God Himself in the Biblical frame of

creation. In this light he can write: “The new dimensions and significance given to love by Christianity are the richest contribution it has made *to the continued creation of man by man*." (*op. cit*., p. 137; emphasis added).

[12] Marx: “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right’" (1844). In *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, translated and edited by T. B. Bottomore. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963, p. 43.

[13] Ibid., p. 44.

[14] Marx “Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts” (1844). In *Early Writings*, p. 147.

[15] Idem.

reference. The denial of the reality of God does not lead Marx to despair. Instead, it leads to a sense of triumph in man's infinite potentials. Immediately after the passage about religion being the opiate of the people, Marx writes: "The criticism of religion disillusions man so that he will think, act and fashion his reality as a man who has lost his illusions and regained his reason; *so that he will revolve about himself as his own true sun.* Religion is the illusory sun about which man revolves so long as he does not revolve about himself.[16]16 The universe finds its focus and meaning in man - exclusively.

Marx is* a *Renaissance humanist

Marx's post-Christian position becomes still clearer when the Renaissance motifs of his humanism are uncovered. These motifs appeared in western culture only after Christianity had been on the scene. They were articulated by the spokesmen of the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance like Pico della Mirandola.[17] And these motifs reappear in Marx in a thoroughly radicalized manner. For instance, the Biblical revelation of man's creation by God reappears in Marx in the blasphemous notion of man's creation by man himself. Man Is divine not only because he is his own true sun" but also because [366] he is his own master in the act of *self-creation,* "whose own self--realization exists as an inner necessity, a *need"*[18]

Words like self-creation and self-realization are not merely technical terms within a philosophy. They are that too. But throughout they function as the theoretical articulation of a faith, a commitment, a position that is posited as the only alternative to Christianity. Marx himself described the difference between his radical humanism and the Biblical view of man:

> A being does not regard himself as independent unless he is his own master, and he is only his own master when he owes his existence to himself. A man who lives by the favour of another considers himself a dependent being. But I live completely by another person's favour when I owe to him not only the continuance of my life but also *its creation;* when he is its source. My life has necessarily such a cause outside itself if It is not my own creation.[19]

[16] *Ibid*. p. 44, emphasis added.

[17] In Pico della Mirandola's famous speech of 1487, "On the Dignity of Man", we find God addressing Adam in these words: "We have given to thee, Adam, no fixed seat, no form of the very own, no gift peculiarly thine, that thou mayest feel as thine own, have as thine own, possess as thine own the seat, the form, the gifts which thou thyself shalt desire ... thou art confined by no bounds; and thou wilt fix limits of nature for thyself." Jacob Burckhardt describes this speech as "one of the noblest bequests" of the age of the Renaissance (*The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, Harper Torchbook edition, vol. 2, p. 351f). K. J. Popma has paid considerable attention to the significance of Pico's "myth"; cf. his "Mythe en wijsbegeerte" and "Humanisme en renaissance" in *Philosophia Reformata* 1964 and 1968 resp. Philip Edgeumbe Hughes' study. "Pico della Mirandola: 1463-1494; A study of an Intellectual Pilgrimage", in *Philosophia Reformata*, 1958 and 1959, is also worthy of note. Nicholas lobkowicz links Pico's *Orati*o, Giambattista Vico's notion of man as *posse*, Kant's "myth of self-determination", Marx's notion of man as self-creator, and Heidegger's "claim that man is delivered over to his own freedom." He writes: "Kant's philosophy, later that of German Idealism, and, last but not least, the ideas of the young Marx are the last outcome of the peculiar self-confidence and the 'new practical humanism' so admirably formulated in Pico's oration, a summary of the whole Renaissance intent and, in fact, an expression of the basic intent of postmedieval man." Lobkowiez: *Theory and Practice: History of a Concept from Aristotle to Marx*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1967, p. 139.

[18] *Early Writings*, p. 165

[19] *Idem*.

I am not at this point concerned about arguing that Marx is dead wrong. I am, however, concerned about pointing out that the interpreter of Marx does him injustice when these fundamentals are overlooked.

Marx is an Enlightenment humanist

In the Renaissance the relation between man and nature was viewed in a variety of ways. For some nature was the object and stage of human art. For others It was the arena for man's political ambition. For a third group nature was the object of man's scientific pursuits.

With John Locke (1632-1704), one of the founders of the Enlightenment, the relationship between man and nature becomes primarily an economic one. This facet of the Enlightenment gave the post-Christian renaissance motif a specific direction, the elements of which are all present in Marx. These are the main elements: universal progress for mankind is possjble on the basis of an increase in materials goods. Marx translates this Enlightenment motif in his *conception of labour.* Locke had already pointed to labour as the avenue of man's appropriation of the fruits of nature.[20] In Marx, especially in his early phases, labour becomes the central link in the relationship of man to nature. As a matter of fact, labour is man's most important act of self-creation: "the significance which Marx ascribed to human labour became the basis of all his reflections:"[21] In labour man is genuinely human; he is homo Faber. The "religious" and redemptive character of labour Is expressed in a [367] typical passage: "Since, however for socialist man, the whole of what (it is called world history is nothing but the creation of man by human labour, and the emergence of nature for man, he, therefore, ha; the evident and irrefutable proof of his *self-creation,* of his own origins."[22]

Labour is the medium of man's mastery of nature because in labour the potentials of nature can be shaped to fill human needs. Nature does not fill human needs when man merely thinks about it or *reproduces it in art.* Philosophy and art are not sufficient links between man and nature. Nature must become the object of man's work. The farmer, the miner, the carpenter, the steel worker, the electrician - they are the persons who concretely interact with nature for the purpose of getting out of it whatever there is in *for* man. In this kind of labour man masters nature; that is, in labour nature becomes man's humbly obedient servant. Why is this important? Because only in this way can the total man overcome his finitude and begin to enjoy all of his human potentials in a limitless manner. Limitless - because man's subjective potentials and needs are limitless and nature's objective potentials and resources are also limitless. What must be done is to bring together infinite human needs and infinite natural potentials if man is to be truly man. This is accomplished in labour.

But it is not accomplished automatically - at least not yet! For man's labour can be crude and rough and stilted. Moreover, nature does not respond "naturally" to man's labour. It

[20] Locke: *Two Treatises of Government* (1889), Second Treatise, par. 27: “Though the Earth, and all inferior Creatures be common to all Men, yet every Man has a *Property* in his own *Person*. This no Body has any right to but himself. The Labour of his Body, and the Work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the State that Nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joyned to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his Property.” Peter Lasslett's edition (1963), p. 328f.

[21] *Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopedia*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1973, vol. V (article on “labour”), p. 41.

[22] *Eariler Writings*, p. 166.

may object to man's interference. Therefore we must find a way to conquer nature's objections before we can speak of progress. Clearly, in the relationship of struggle between man and nature, man can only come out on top if he proves to be stronger than nature. If that struggle is one of labour, then man can win only if his labour-power can be increased. On this basis Marx simply identifies "progress in civilization" with "any increase in socially productive forces, in the productive forces of labour itself."[23]

So the central issue in civilization boils down to this: How can the human forces of labour be increased so that nature will surrender itself to man's domination? The answer that Marx gives comes straight out of the Enlightenment origins of the industrial revolution: Science, applied in technology, gives us the machine. Marx is a typical representative of the Enlightenment conviction of self-salvation and self-liberation from the shackles of a dark age. For this reason he could speak of communism as "the definitive resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man ... [368] It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution."[24]

Science is the first step towards the increase of man's productive forces. "It has transformed human life and prepared the emancipation of humanity."[25] Science provides the basis for technology which, in turn, discloses man's mode of dealing with nature, by way of the machine. In this way man can conquer nature. Quite clearly, therefore, Marx accepted the industrial revolution as an indispensable stage in man's progress toward emancipation. For this reason, besides critique he had also had ample praise for bourgeois capitalism; for it provided rationalized technology and scientific production. "Nature does not construct machines, locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules, etc. These are the products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will to dominate nature or to realize itself therein. They are the organs or the human brain, created by human hands; the power of knowledge made into an object."[26]

Marx is a socialist humanist

Up to, this point Marx's *thought* hardly differs from the classical capitalist conception. Capitalism was the first major post-Christian "way of life" in western culture that actually changed the structure of society and thus the immediate life of men and women and families. Not Marxism but capitalism organized the peculiarly modern system of industrial production, based on science and technology and directed to the increase of material goods. The god of capitalism is economic man (homo economicus), either as producer or as consumer. Its theology is business management. Its catechism class is the public school. Its seminary is the university with its research laboratories. Its temple is the market, first the free market and later the controlled market, the department store, the shopping plaza, where salvation is administered every day, as in the medieval cathedral. Its priests and prophets are the advertising media. As a matter of fact, the spirit of western man has today become the dominant spirit of world history in the *form of* western capitalism.[27]

[23] Marx: *The Grundrisse* (1857/8), abridged translation by David McLellan. New York: Harper & Row, 1971, p. 82. A complete English translation of Marx's *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Okonomie* (first German publication in Moscow, 1939) has recently been issued in The Pelican Mar). Library (Harmondsworlh, 1973).
[24] *Early Writings*, p. 155.
[25] Ibid., p. 163.
[26] *The Grundrisse*, p. 143.
[27] 27 J. H. A. Hollak: *Von causa sui tot automatie*. Hilversum: Paul Brand, 1966. p, 40. This brief but profound study traces the development of the idea of God as causa sui to the fully automated machine and computer as causa sui.

How does Marx differ from the capitalism of his time? The difference lies mainly in a divergence that we have not yet mentioned. Economistic humanism can be either individualistic or socialistic. Capitalism, before the twentieth century development of monolithic corporate industrial structures, in symbiotic harmony with the modern state,[28] was essentially individualistic. It was based on an atomized conception of society in which the relation between man and nature was viewed as a relation between individual man and [369] nature. Locke was the first major spokesman of this conception. He argued that man's appropriation of the fruits of nature occurred in the way of individual privacy. Man shifts for himself in his acquisitive activity.[29] Hence progress - accumulation of wealth - In the first stages of capitalism is the secular parallel of John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, in which the sinner acquires soul salvation through an agonizing but solitary journey to heaven.[30] The prototype of the capitalist hero is Robinson Crusoe, the Horatio Alger of the eighteenth century, whose secular "Protestant" virtues are striving, working, owning - all by and for himself. Ralph Waldo Emerson's self-reliance is the avenue of justification in the "religion" of capitalism. Must man work in order to eat? Let his work then be one of private enterprise, unfettered by governmental interference. Must men barter and exchange the products of their labour? Let it occur - said Adam Smith - In the free market which, via competition, restores a blissful equilibrium between buyers and sellers in their individual pursuit of self-interest. Must there be government? Yes, there must. But, as Thomas Jefferson indicated, the least government is the best government. For men are the best judges in their own affairs. They are best off if left alone: laissez faire.

At this point Marx enters, and he demurs, having done his homework in the German school of Hegel and in the French school of Saint-Simon. The capitalist system of production, he asserts, though it has contributed immensely to an increase in the forces of labour, nevertheless still *alienates* labour. Marx first developed the theme of alienation intensely in the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, from which we have quoted frequently. There he pointed to four aspects of alienation in capitalism. First, man is alienated from the *product* of his labour. When the product comes off the assembly line, the worker cannot possess and use it. The owner of the means of production has control over the product; he sells it for money. Second, the worker is alienated in the very *process of production,* in which he engages not to express himself but to make money. Work is not an end but a means. Third, man is *alienated from himself,* which is a social self, with universal needs (including one's need of other persons) which are not met in capitalism. Finally, the worker is alienated from his *fellow-man*, who should be his partner in man's control over nature by production but who in effect becomes his competitor. Relations between men in capitalism have become impersonal: I can only reach my neighbor via things, or via money which expresses the exchange-value of things.[31]

S. U. Zuidema described Marx's conception of alienation in [370] these words: "Instead of appropriating his labor and labor product as his own. . . . he gives up his own labor and labor power, and thus himself and his labor product, as a saleable item. He sells himself and his own objectification for money. Money Is the incarnation of human self-alienation. It is

[28] See for this development the books by John Kenneth Galbraith: *The New Industrial State* and *Economics and the Public Purpose* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967 and 1973 resp.).
[29] Locke had stated the principle of individual acquisition and private property in these words: The fruit of the earth must be appropriated by man in- such a way "that another can no longer have any right to it, before it can do him any good for the support of his life." Second Treatise, par 26 (op. sit., p. 328).
[30] See B. Zylstra: "The Individual Gospel: Sources and Shortcomings", in *The Guide* (Organ of the Christian Labour Association of Canada), April/May 1972, p. 21f.
[31] 31 Cf. Marx: "Alienated Labour", in *Early Writings*, pp. 120-134.

precisely in and through labor that man creates himself. This self-creation he now alienates from himself."[32]

How can man be redeemed from self-alienation? By appropriating that which rightly belongs to him, viz. the product of his labour. This means that the expropriators, the owners of the means and results of production, must now in turn be expropriated, dispossessed of their possessions. At this point Marx introduces the class struggle, the battle between the operators and the owners of the machines. The operators must become the owners: "the history of industry and commerce is but the history of the revolt of modern productive forces against modern conditions of production, against the property relations that are the conditions for the existence of the bourgeoisie and Its rule."[33] Only after the working class has gained control over the means of production can the other facets of alienation be eliminated. The goal lies in the establishment of communist society in which each person can develop his creative and unlimited potentials.

In considering the relatively few passages which Marx devotes to the contours of the future communist society it becomes clear that for him man is more than a labouring creature. He is not only homo Faber, he is homo ludens, man-at-play. After man has mastered nature by means of socialized production - which fills his basic vital needs of food and shelter - we can expect "the development of social man." Marx describes that development in these words: "Individuals are then in a position to develop freely. It is no longer a question of reducing the necessary labour time in order to create surplus labour, but of reducing the necessary labour of society to a minimum. The counterpart of this reduction is that all members of society can develop their own education in the arts, sciences, etc., thanks to the free time and means available to all."[34] Elsewhere he writes that in communist society, "society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, to fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic."[35]

In Marx's very last stage, these two facets of culture - work and play - are defined in terms of the age-old dialectical unresolved conflict in humanism. It is the conflict between the realm of necessity [371] (labour) and the realm of freedom (creativity). Marx has not been able to transcend it. It Is best to let Marx speak for himself: In :act, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production ... Freedom in this field can only consist in socialized man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure or energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which,

[32] S. U. Zuidema: "Man in Self-Alienation", in *Communication and Confrontation*. Toronto: Wedge, 1972, p. 115.
[33] Marx and Engels: *Communist Manifesto* (1848). London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948, p. 126.
[34] *The Grundrisse*, p. 142.
[35] Marx: *The German Ideology*. London: 1965, p. 44.

however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite?[36]

The Infinity of God becomes a trait of human life after nature has been completely subjected to automated, rationalized production. This Faustian undercurrent of modern humanism is well described by Morton Schoolman of Brown University in a recent article: "Automation, using the least time society requires to produce necessities, would ideally allow man to be completely free from the world, from any exo,"enous considerations in the cultivation of his powers. Without tho necessity for response to the outside world, man is transformed into a completely independent and autonomous figure. He is no longer dependent upon nature or upon other men as in the process of production. His will and action have no specific goals or aims, and the ranges of human development would be, in principle, limitless."[37]

Conclusion

Karl Marx is one of the most radical proponents of the myth of self-determination. Man, in his view, cannot be-truly man unless every obstacle in the way of self-determination and self-creation is removed. Then nian can enter the realm of freedom, the realm of self-salvation. Here Marx expresses his faith in the infinity of man. It is a faith fundamentally at odds with the faith of the Christian who obediently listens to the Word of the Holy Scriptures.

Moreover, Marxism is a brother of capitalism in the sense that both conceptions look upon the unlimited expansion of material goods as the first step in the ordo salutis, the way of salvation. Marxism [372] and capitalism are but denominations of humanism in a stage of decadence.[38] For both proceed from the faulty premise that the unlimited fulfilment of man's

[36] Marx: *Capital*. New York: International Publishers, 1967, vol. III, p. 820. Perhaps the relationship between these two realms can be understood more clearly if, with D. H. T. Vollenhoven, we interpret Marx's ontological conception as that of a purely cosmological dualism. In Vollenhoven's historiography of philosophy, dualism relates primarily to the vertical structure of reality and proceeds from the correlation between (1) the nontranscendent realm and 12) the transcendent realm. If this dualism embraces a thinker's vicw of man we are confronted with a dichotomy in his anthropology. Vollenhoven then speaks of spiritualism when man's pneuma or spirit belongs to the transcendent realm. The question then arise, of course, how man can live as a “spiritual” being. A prime requisite appears to be to be mans selfsufficiency (*autarkeia*), in the lower nontransendent “prespiritual” realm. This selfsufficiency can be achieved either by a radical rcnunciation of material goods or by a limitlcss abundance of material goods. Vollenhoven suggests that the theories of communism, socialism and anarachism were in nuce present in the pre-socratic and post-socratic phases of Greek thought. They were revived in western thought during the early development of positivism in the last century because of a drastic change in economic life following the industrial revolution. Positivism rejected the apriori concepts' and judge-ments of human reason and instead accepted the aprioris of methods, accentuating the activity of reason. The industrial revolution, reflecting this change towards a rationalism-of-method, made possible the creation of an abundance of material goods which could fill human need at the . lower non-transcendent level - the material substratum - thus providing a basis for man's higher "spiritual" life ("play") in communist society, the society of spiritual equals. Vollenhoven traces the line of spiritualism from Epicharmos (ca. 475 B.C.), Hippias (a contemporary of Socrates and a member of the Sophist school), Phaleus (briefly mentioned in Aristotle's Politics), and Antisthenes (460-366 B.C.) to Rousseau, Fichte and Windelband. See Vollenhoven: *Kort overzicht* (Brief Survey of the History of Philosophy). Amsterdam: The Free University, 1956, pp. 9f and 37f; *Geschiedenis der wijsbegeerte* (History of Philosophy), vol. I. Franeker: Wever, 1948, pp. 169f; 219f; 532f; and 567f.

[37] Morton Schoolman: "Further Reflections on Work, Alienation, and Freedom in Marcuse and Marx", in *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, June 1973, p. 301.

[38] Zuidema detects signs of decadence in the development of Marx himself, evident in *Capital*. "The doctrine of surplus value is a serious weakening if not a deterioration of his doctrine of self-alienation and therefore also of his own humanistic religious dlan." Communication and Confrontation, p. 117. Humanism in our generation has lost a good deal of its vigour and idealism, but humanism is by no means dead. In 1973 the Humanist and Ethical Union published *Humanist Manifesto II* which begins with these words: "The next century can be and

biotic and physical needs by means of what today we call consumer goods is the necessary stepping stone to the "higher life" of culture and art. Apart now from this questionable premise, this conception of the basic ingredients of "progress" overlooks two problems. The first is structural. There are limits in nature that man in his technology and industry cannot transgress with impunity. Today we are beginning to realize, in the light of the ecological crisis and the energy crisis, that nature has creaturely limits and that man better be aware of these in this cultural advance. The second problem is anthropological and intensely "religious", that is, it goes to the heart of man's life on earth. We are discovering that when man is once reduced to the level of homo Faber, of anima! laborans, of work, it becomes extremely difficult to get him out of that rut. Hannah Arendt has formulated this problem thus: "A hundred years after Marx we know the fallacy of this reasoning; the spare time of the animal laborans is never spent in anything but consumption, and the more time left to him, the greedier and more craving his appetites. That these appetites become more sophisticated, so that consumption is no longer restricted to the necessities but, on the contrary, mainly concentrates on the superfluities of life, does not change the character of this society, but harbors the grave danger that eventually no object of the world will be safe from consumption and annihilation through consumption."[39]

During recent years various perceptive socialists have recognized this fundamental weakness of their own position. Charles Taylor, in an essay tellingly entitled "The Agony of Economic Man", admitted that socialism in its present definitions is closely tied up with the economic self-image which it has borrowed from capitalist civilization, viz. the self-image of "a productive association bent on transforming the surrounding natural world to meet the needs and fulfil the ends of man," Perhaps, he suggests, it would be truer to say that both visions spring from the same civilization, born of the Enlightenment and the growth of the industrial society. In this light he acknowledges that for the average man consumption is "the only universally available mode of participation in the cult of production."[40] One of his concluding evaluations, in my view, sums up the underlying problems of the entire political and economic order In western culture -- including the communist world. He writes:

> The drive to consumption is therefore no adventitious fad, no product of clever manipulation. It will not be easy to contain. It is tied up with the economic self-image of modern society, [373] and this in turn is linked to a set of powerfully entrenched cot ceptions of what the value of human life consists in. This is why it is not realistic to treat the infra-structure of technological society as an instrument which we can use at will for any ends we choose. Rather, as long as technological society is held together and given its legitimacy and cohesion by this economic self-image, it will tend to remain fixed on its presdnt goals, the perpetual increase in production and the

should be the humanistic century. Dramatic scientific, technological, and ever-accelerating social and political changes crowd our awareness. We have virtually conquered the planet, explored the moon, overcome the natural limits of travel and communication; we stand at the dawn of a new age, ready to move farther into space and perhaps inhabit other planets. Using techno!ogy wisely, we can control our environment, conquer poverty, markedly reduce disease, extend our life-span, significantly modify our behaviour, alter the course of human evolution and cultural development, unlock vast new powers, and provide humankind with unparalleled opportunity for achieving an abundant and meaningful life." *The Humanist*, September/ October 1973, p. ,5. The *Manifesto* is signed by many outstanding personalities, such as Paul Blanshard, Theodore Brsmeld, Herbert Feigl, Antony Flew, Sidney Hook, Chaim Perelman, John Herman Randall, Andrei Sakharov, B. F. Skinner and J. P. van Praag.

[39] Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition*. New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1959, p. 115. See also Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947). New York: Herder and Herder, 1972, especially the chapter entitled "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception".

[40] Charles Taylor: "The Agony of Economic Man", In *Essays on the Left. In Honour of T. C. Douglas*. Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1971, p. 232f

> ever-widening bonanza of consumption, If we are to build a society with radically different priorities, one which will not be driven by this mania of consumption, then we will have to evolve a different foundation for technological society, a quite different self-definition to serve as the basis of its cohesion. (*Essays on the Left: In Honour of T. C. Douglas*, Toronto, 1971, p. 232; emphasis added).

Charles Taylor, I am. convinced, is correct. In our attempt to find an alternative to capitalism, a move to the Marxist position will not do. We have to recover a conception of the value, structure and purpose of human life that is neither capitalist nor marxist. If that is recognized, the dialogue between Christians and Marxists and Christians and capitalists will be placed in a proper setting. That setting must be one where the Christian is not motivated by a spirit of accommodation to the underlying motifs of the partners whom he confronts. Instead, the Christian must be moved by the Word of the Master Himself, by Christ, whose redemption points the way to a radically different foundation for all societies, including technological society.