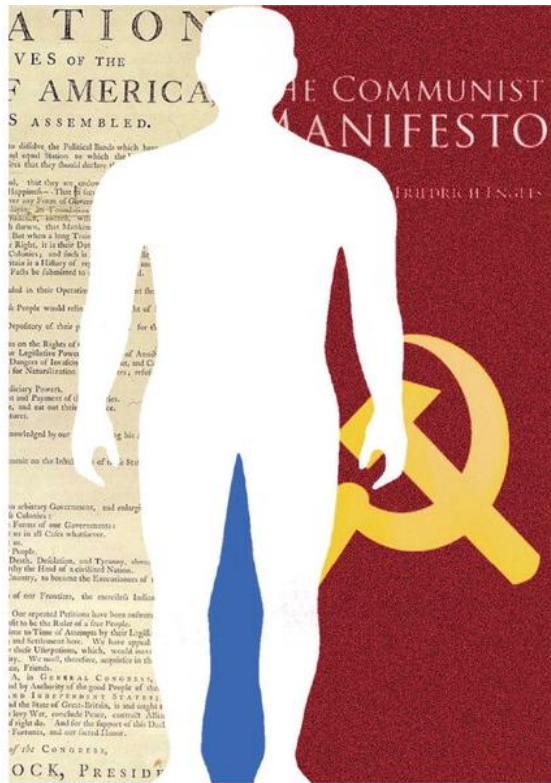


1776 or 1848; there is no middle ground

Declaration and 'Communist Manifesto' are mutually exclusive

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We have a choice between two conflicting worldviews: one of freedom and dignity, the other of a regimented society based on submission to the ideology of a ruling elite.

One liberates, the other enslaves. One points the way toward a new dawn for humanity, the other toward the dark night of collectivism.

These visions were set forth in two of the most important documents in history, written just 72 years apart: The Declaration of Independence, adopted in 1776, and “The Communist Manifesto,” published in 1848. The struggle, which is going on all around us, is a manifestation of these two mutually exclusive worldviews.

The Declaration reflected the thinking of the most brilliant minds ever assembled in one place. These included merchants, planters, lawyers, inventors, a physician and a member of the clergy. Most were distinguished in their individual fields. They did not need a cause, but they believed in one.

“The Communist Manifesto” was written largely by Karl Marx, a miserable failure, an angry, bitter crank who sought greatness by attacking a system he did not understand. He called for the abolition of capitalism without ever setting foot on a factory floor. He was also a racist and an antisemite.

The Declaration of Independence is only 1,320 words, and most of that is taken up with a list of the Colonists' grievances against King George III. The preamble, which contains the essence of the document's political philosophy, is 133 words.

“The Communist Manifesto” is roughly 12,000 words. Later, Marx and his collaborator, Friedrich Engels, expanded on this in “Das Kapital,” a stultifying three volume work of 2,500 pages. Like “Mein Kampf,” it is best used as a doorstop.

Compare the records of these two worldviews.

The vision of the Founders took America from a colonial backwater to the nation that dominated the 20th century. From our factories and workshops has flowed an endless stream of inventions that have shaped the modern world and eased the burden of humanity, including the incandescent light bulb, airplane, telephone, television, refrigerator, microchip and internet.

Our prosperity lifted all boats. After World War II, we rebuilt the economies of our enemies. Our Constitution served as a model of representative government for emerging nations.

The record of communism is drenched in blood and reeks of human suffering. Since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, communism has been responsible for 65 million to 100 million deaths worldwide.

Marxism-Leninism has enriched our vocabulary with words and phrases such as gulags, killing fields, planned famines, death camps and purges.

A large part of humanity is trapped in communist countries such as Cuba, China and North Korea. The Berlin Wall was not built to keep West Germans from fleeing to East Germany. Cuba has not taken in 2 million refugees from the United States.

In America, communism, repackaged as democratic socialism, is making alarming inroads. Our largest city and America's financial hub has a Marxist mayor. Our capital city, the District of Columbia, will soon have one too.

Marxists just won Democratic primaries for two congressional seats in New York, one in Pennsylvania and one in Colorado. One of the winners in New York wants to abolish private property, borders and prisons. At Columbia, she led a pro-Hamas occupation.

History has come down to a life-and-death struggle between Americanism and communism.

Communism is monolithic. Americanism is individualistic. Communism demands obedience. Americanism seeks to persuade. Americanism says rights come from God. Under communism, rights come from the state.

Americanism embraces human nature. Communism fights it at every turn, attempting to pound square pegs into round holes. That is why it fails every time.

Americanism welcomes debate. Communism tries to crush it. Still, intellectuals flock to its banner. The less someone is in touch with reality, the more communism appeals to

them. A sociology major is more susceptible to communism than an engineering student. Intellectuals want to be the commissars of the new order.

I have a fantasy about Karl Marx coming back to life. In it, the prophet of communism looks at the world his ideology created. He looks at the lights of the night sky in South Korea and the darkness in North Korea. He compares the repression in communist China with the freedom in Taiwan.

He surveys the rubble of what was once the Berlin Wall. He looks at the suffering in Cuba. He compares the gross domestic product of the United States and Russia.

After he digests all this, the father of communism says to himself, “Man, what was I thinking?”

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