

## Marx and Engels about religion

Marx and Engels quite often turned to the theme of religion and it is not at all accidental. They were convinced that criticism of society begins with criticism of religion, as the most vivid reflection of the essence of society itself. Already in the earliest works, they attacked venerable philosophers for their religious positions. First of all, it needs to draw attention to three essential things before analyzing their work. In previous works I paid much attention to prominent philosophers on three issues: the origin of Christ, in which some of them questioned its existence in principle, others prove the existence of God, others denied this being. Neither Marx nor Engels dealt with such questions in details. I suppose, for the following reasons.

By the middle of the 19th century, the theme of the "existence" of God has ceased to be relevant in the sense that after the century of the Enlightenment (the 18th century) few of the educated people believed in this legend. In regard to Jesus Christ as a historical personality, there arose a difference of opinion: some believed that there was no such person in the physical sense, but a generalized image, others – perhaps, but not as a god. These themes were detailed in the works of David Strauss, Ernest Renan and most convincingly in Bruno Bauer's. For Marx and Engels, the historicity of Christ in itself did not have much significance, since they analyzed not the person, but *Christianity* itself, its origin and influence on the course of social development. From this point of view, in principle, it did not matter whether Christ existed or not.

The second feature of the works of Marx and Engels on Christianity, unlike other philosophers, even atheistic orientation, was that they paid much more attention to the economic and historical reasons for the emergence and existence of Christianity than psychological or other chance factors, although the latter were not discarded.

Most non-religious scholars, not to mention theologians, have tried to explain social development based on religion. The peculiarity of the works of Marx and Engels is that they explained religion, proceeding from the direction of social development. Not religion creates a society, but society breeds religion. God did not create man, but man created God.

The idea of the interaction of religion and social development permeated most of the works of the classics of Marxism in relation to religion.

Finally, the third feature. The reader should have noticed that the majority of theologians, and idealist philosophers framed their judgments and thoughts with pseudo-philosophical expressions and verbal freaks with ballast, the meaning of which, I am sure, they often themselves could not explain. In contrast, the language of Marx and Engels is understandable and clear for any educated person.

In the previous books I have often had to refer to the work of Marx and Engels. Here I want to draw attention to those moments that are usually ignored by many critics of religion. And also on some of their views that remain relevant to our time.

### Engels about religion

I want to note right away that Engels was engaged in religious problems more than Marx, most likely because, unlike his friend, he was born in an extremely religious family in which revered *pietism was*, one of the trends in Lutheranism, which literally recognized the Bible, was negative about science and was noted for insincerity and hypocrisy. From a believer to an atheist, he did not turn immediately, gradually, and above all under the influence of David Strauss's book *The Life of Jesus*. This process reflects his correspondence with school friends – the brothers Graebers, who later became clergymen. While still religious, he asks such questions to one of the brothers, Friedrich Graeber:

I cannot understand how the orthodox preachers can be so orthodox since there are some quite obvious contradictions in the Bible. How can you square the two genealogies of Joseph, Mary's husband, the different accounts of the institution of the Eucharist ('this is my blood' this is 'the new testament in my blood' [Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20]), of the men possessed by the devil (one says simply that the devil left him, the other that he entered into the swine), the statement that the mother of Jesus went out to look for her son, whom she believed to be mad, although she

had conceived him miraculously, etc., with the authenticity, the literal authenticity of the Evangelists?"<sup>1</sup>

Similar questions he asks in other letters, to which none of the brothers can give a distinct answer. At that time young Engels was under the influence of Strauss, whom he valued in the most high-flown terms, calling him even a "genius." To another Gaerber, Wilhelm, he writes, "Nobody else writes so penetratingly, clearly and interestingly as Strauss. By the way, he is not at all infallible; even if his entire *Leben Jesu* should be discovered to be a collection of sheer sophistries, still the first thing that makes this work so important is its basic idea of the mythical in Christianity...."<sup>2</sup> And although before leaving for Berlin, Engels still remained a believer, or at least tried to appear as such before his relatives and surroundings, but the foundations of faith were already destroyed, and the biblical authorities were discarded.

The same Strauss pushed the young Engels to Hegel. When he arrived in Berlin, there was a "Hegelian atmosphere" in which religious topics occupied almost the main place. In the circle of the Bauer brothers, this topic was discussed most often, the eldest of whom Bruno generally specialized in Christianity. In addition, at this time, Engels attended lectures of Friedrich Schelling, who, under old age, was strongly inclined to religiosity. And, as I said about this in the section on Kierkegaard, if they did not like Kierkegaard because of Schelling's "insufficiency" of religiosity, then Engels – because of excessive declension to religion. And just the first work on this subject, Engels (at the age of 22!) wrote against Schelling. In it, he parodies not only Schelling himself but also the texts of the Bible. By the way, in this article, he draws attention to the artificially complicated language of the interpretation of the Bible by theologians and philosophers, including Schelling himself, and also at such a remarkable moment as: "Many churches have been built for all the apostles, but relatively very few for St. John."<sup>3</sup> Really, why so? No one paid attention to this, although the reason should have been.

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<sup>1</sup> Engels to F. Graeber. April 23-May 1, 1839.

<sup>2</sup> Engels to W. Graeber. 13 November 1839.

<sup>3</sup> Engels, *Schelling, Philosopher In Christ*.

Together with Edgar Bauer he wrote a witty poem-parody, apparently, also as a response to Schelling's lecture. Here is a small piece demonstrating the ironic position of the Young Hegelians, the circle of which at that time was the young Engels.

"O Lord, O hear, hear Lord, O hear our desperate cry!  
How long wilt Thou let Faith endure such agony?  
How long before Thou wilt avenge the Faithful blood  
So long spilt by the insulting and blaspheming brood?  
Oh, shall the boasts of overweening arrogance  
Prosper down there on Earth in all magnificence?  
Shall each philosopher insist that 'I am I'?  
Shall the free-thinking mob Thy very Name deny?  
Their arrogant jeering still more wantonly resounds.  
O call the judgment Day, O let the Last Trump sound!"  
The Lord placated them: "The measure is not full.  
Wait till the carrion stink blows even still more foul.  
My soldiers I have yet to train in verve and dash,  
So that they flee not Satan in the final clash."<sup>1</sup>

And here's another piece, the topic of which will be developed in the subsequent articles in much greater detail.

Do you see how the high Police determinedly  
Abolish everywhere one little word – that's free?  
And now the Lamb of God joins the Gendarmerie,  
And is about to sink to bestiality.

In his brilliant review of one of Thomas Carlyle's books, in which he critically analyzed the pantheistic Englishman's view of religion, Engels revealed his discoveries,

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<sup>1</sup> Engels (and E. Bauer), *The Insolently Threatened Yet Miraculously Rescued Bible*.

"We have once and for all declared war on religion and religious ideas and care little whether we are called atheists or anything else."<sup>1</sup> Engels did not stop this war all his life.

Engels's theme of religion arose frequently; it was discussed in letters to Marx and in his own works (*Anti-Duhring*, *Dialectics of Nature*), and also in joint works with Marx (*The Holy Family*, *German Ideology* and etc.).

In the popular form, the origin of religions and their essence, he explained in *Anti-Duhring*, stressing that "All religion, however, is nothing but the fantastic reflection in men's minds of those external forces which control their daily life, a reflection in which the terrestrial forces assume the form of supernatural forces."<sup>2</sup>

Since many works are written on the origin of religions, Engels, like Marx, did not pay much attention to it, mainly concentrating on Christianity.

It is known that many scholars constantly ask the question: "How it came about that the popular masses in the Roman Empire so far preferred this nonsense – which was preached, into the bargain, by slaves and oppressed – to all other religions, that the ambitious Constantine finally saw in the adoption of this religion of nonsense the best means of exalting himself to the position of autocrat of the Roman world."<sup>3</sup>

In fact, the reasons were completely earthy and natural. Before the Roman rule, each nation of the future empire had its own national gods. The forced entry of these peoples into the empire destroyed not only their social systems, their independence, but also local religions. This, naturally, caused ferment in their society. Finding some way out was necessary. And there was a way out, but not in this world. Naturally, for those times such a comforter could only be religion, a single religion that would be understandable to the masses.

Moreover, the most suffering of such a religion was the most defenseless, which in those days were slaves. If the outside world was hostile to them, then at least the inner world could give them some consolation. In a somewhat better, but also in a crisis situation were the peasants, as well as the poorest layers of the urban population. In other words, during the general economic, political, intellectual and especially moral decomposition, the

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *The Condition of England. Past and present* by Thomas Carlyle.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Anti-Duhring*.

<sup>3</sup> Engels, *Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity*.

unification was Christianity, which was in tune with the moods of the then-popular masses.

"The need to complement the world empire by means of a world religion was clearly revealed in the attempts made to recognize all foreign gods that were the least bit respectable and provide altars for them in Rome alongside the native gods. But a new world religion is not to be made in this fashion, by imperial decree. The new world religion, Christianity, had already quietly come into being, out of a mixture of generalized Oriental, particularly Jewish, theology, and vulgarized Greek, particularly Stoic, philosophy," Engels rightly points out in his famous work.<sup>1</sup>

In the [previous book](#), I already emphasized that for the ruling circles of the empire Christianity was the very brace that allowed to keep the empire from its disintegration for almost another 500 years.

More detailed and detailed this topic was reflected in special articles by Engels, one of which was devoted to Bruno Bauer, who wrote a series of critical works on Christianity.

In his books, Bauer proved that the actual creator of the Gospels was the Alexandrian historian Jew Filon, who rightly could be called the father of Christianity, and the Roman stoic Seneca – the uncle of Christianity. Engels writes that Bauer proved that "The Epistles often copy the latter word-for-word from Seneca."<sup>2</sup> In connection with Seneca, who seemed to me a sage, his characterization given by Engels, probably re-telling Bauer, is curious. It turns out:

This stoic, preached virtue and temperance, was the first intriguer at the court of Nero, and the case did not do without groveling; he sought from Nero gifts with money, estates, gardens, palaces and, preaching the poverty of the evangelical Lazarus, himself was really a rich man from the same parable. Only when Nero was about to grab him by the throat, he asked the emperor to take back all the presents from him, since, he says, his philosophy is enough (ibid.).

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Bruno Bauer and Early Christianity*. It is true that theologians claimed that Seneca had written down his thoughts from the New Testament, which in fact was not written in his lifetime.

Let us leave his peccancy to the historians. The main thing for us is its impact on the formation of Christianity. Here we must bear in mind not only the works of one Seneca but in general the so-called Greco-Roman vulgar philosophy – the Platonic and especially the Stoic philosophy – all together and constituted a massive core of evangelical texts.

In another special work written a year later, Engels focuses on *the Book of Revelation*, which was written in 68 or January 69, the date he derived from the works of B. Bauer<sup>1</sup>. In it, he again points to the founding fathers of the Christianity of Philo from Alexandria and Seneca. Engels also draws attention to the fact that the Trinity is not mentioned in the Revelation, that the "lamb" is subordinated to God, instead of one spirit there are seven spirits, etc. These "biblical realities" are described in more detail in another work, to which we still approach. It only makes sense to mention the name of the author of Revelation, who calls himself John. There is a curious remark about him:

He does not even pretend to be the 'apostle' John, for in the foundations of the 'new Jerusalem' are 'the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb' (XXI, 14). They therefore must have been dead when he wrote. That he was a Jew is clear from the Hebraisms abounding in his Greek, which exceeds in bad grammar, by far, even the other books of the New Testament. That the so-called Gospel of John, the epistles of John, and this book have at least three different authors, their language clearly proves, if the doctrines they contain, completely clashing one with another, did not prove it (ibid.).

Yes, there is still mentioned the origin of the number 666, which encrypts the "persecutor" of Christians, the terrible anti-christ of Nero. And although Nero perished in the year of his violent death, nevertheless, he must again come to life, reign for another forty-two months, that is 1260 days, and only after that, the rebellious god will conquer him and take him for a thousand years. I think Nero would not object to extending his life for another thousand years, albeit chained. This, of course, if everything is taken literally, on which the church, as we must remember, insists. This article concludes with the following conclusion: "But

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *The Book of Revelation*.

as an authentic picture of almost primitive Christianity, drawn by one of themselves, the book is worth more than all the rest of the New Testament put together" (ibid.).

This conclusion is worth remembering for comparison with another conclusion on the same plot.

In a much later and complete article, *On the History of Early Christianity*, Engels analyzes in more detail the origins of his rise on the basis not only of Bauer's works but also of other historians of religion. In particular, he mentions Lucian of Samosata, so to speak, Voltaire of "classical antiquity," who, without bias and even skeptical of all religions, described the initial stage of the emergence of Christian communities. At the same time, Engels ironically evaluated the work of Renan, whom he called "This French man of letters, who by mutilating German criticism of the Bible in a manner unprecedented even in modern journalism composed the novel on church history *Origines du Christianisme*."<sup>1</sup>

The German criticism of religion was once famous for the works of the Tübingen School, to which David Strauss also belonged. Of course, their criticism could not go beyond the *theological* directions; nevertheless, it was it who recognized that "The four Gospels are not eyewitness accounts but only later adaptations of writings that have been lost; that no more than four of the Epistles attributed to the apostle Paul are authentic, etc." (ibid.)

Another school, which consisted of one man, was mentioned B. Bauer, who "overreached his aim in this work." Engels was referring to his conviction that the places of origin of the new religion were not Galilee and Jerusalem, but Alexandria and Rome.

Now again about the *Book of Revelation* of John the Divine. Although I wrote about this Revelation in the context of identifying the true face of Jesus Christ, but Engels has another perspective and other points to which he drew attention.

First, as a result of Bauer's research, it became clear that this part of the New Testament was written: "probably between 67 and January or April 68." That is, this part is the earliest of all the other parts of the Gospel. So, only thanks to the mentioned studies of German philosophers, this vaguest part of the Bible has become most understandable.

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *On the History of Early Christianity*.



By the way, besides the mentioned Strauss, Engels also calls Georg Heinrich Ewald, Gottfried Christian Friedrich Lucke and Franz Ferdinand Benary.

Whoever read *the Revelation*, he must know that it depicts some monsters in which being in their right mind is difficult to believe. But for the time of his writing, Engels emphasizes, "Miracles, ecstasies, visions, apparitions, divining, gold-making, cabbala and other secret magic played a primary role" (ibid.).

By the way, critics did not rule out that the Apostle John, for whom the author of the Revelation presents himself, could indeed be a historical person ("not completely certain, but quite likely").

There is a whole bunch of discrepancies, which Engels drew attention to:

The Trinity is not only unknown, it is even impossible. Instead of the one Holy Ghost of later we here have the '*seven spirits of God*' construed by the Rabbis from Isaiah XI, 2. Christ is the son of God, the first and the last, the *alpha* and the *omega*, by no means God himself or equal to God, but on the contrary, 'the beginning of the *creation* of God,' hence an emanation of God, existing from all eternity but subordinate to God, like the above-mentioned seven spirits. In Chapter XV, 3 the martyrs in heaven sing 'the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb' glorifying God. Hence Christ here appears not only as subordinate to God but even, in a certain respect, on an equal footing with Moses. Christ is crucified in Jerusalem (XI, 8) but rises again (I, 5, 18); he is 'the Lamb' that has been sacrificed for the sins of the world and with whose blood the faithful of all tongues and nations have been redeemed to God (ibid.).<sup>1</sup>

It turns out that John Christ is not yet a god. And not one of the incarnations of the Trinity. This Revelation fundamentally contradicts not only the Gospels but Paul's letters, which, according to the German critics, were written: "no less than 60 years younger than the Revelation" (ibid.).

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<sup>1</sup> References to the Bible are given in the format of the original texts of Engels and Marx.

So, no Trinity yet exists. Yahweh himself reigns, by the time of the national deity of the Jews, has become one of the highest gods of earth and sky. And on the day of the Last Judgment he sits as a judge, and Christ only "sat on the right hand of God." Although it was Jesus who sat in the Gospels and Epistles written later. But as in the Persian doctrines of emanation that the Jews assimilated, the Lamb-Christ was descended from God, as well as the "seven spirits of God" mentioned. But since the Lamb sacrifices himself for the sins of the world, he "for that it is considerably promoted in heathen, for its voluntary death is credited as an extraordinary feat throughout the book, not as something which proceeds necessarily from its intrinsic nature" (ibid.).

A believing person, one should be wary that in *Revelation* there is no mention of baptism at all, but often about "sealing." So to say, not a word "about the water of the river." Consequently, John did not know about this Christian institution either.

Also, the believer should also be horrified at the call of John: "How long, O Lord, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (ibid.) The Lord reacted, and the Lamb took revenge:  $\frac{3}{4}$  of humanity as never happened.

Here is the "religion of love" for you! So, "love your enemies!" And Engels unexpectedly answers: "Here undiluted revenge is preached, sound, honest revenge on the persecutors of the Christians. So it is in the whole of the book" (ibid). Apparently, the author of *Revelation*, despite the fact that it is placed at the very end of the Gospel, did not read the previous chapters. Since they by that time were either not written, or not collected in one major manuscript of Christianity.

I already had to pay attention at the appropriate place to the phrase: "These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women, in fact, they are virgins." Engels interprets this heavenly trick thus: "And in fact, in our John's heaven there is not a single woman. He therefore belongs to the trend, which also often appears in other early Christian writings, that considers sexual relations generally as sinful" (ibid.). Not that modern Christians.

Here is the unfulfilled prophecy of Christ and his apostle John, which their admirers could bring as a charge. Engels quotes:

"Christ: 'I come quickly.' In many places 'quickly.'"

John describes his book at the very beginning as the revelation of "things which must shortly come to pass; an immediately afterwards, I, 3, he declares "Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy ... for the time is at hand."

To the church in Philadelphia Christ sends the message: "Behold, I come quickly." And in the last chapter the angel says he has shown John "things which must shortly be done" and gives him the order:

"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand." And Christ himself says twice (XXII, 12, 20): "I come quickly." The sequel will show us how soon this coming was expected (ibid.).

One can only marvel at the patience of Christians; because they are still waiting for this "quickly."

The book describes all the visions of John, which, as stated by the critics, were borrowed from various sources. This gives Engels an excuse to say: "John not only shows great poverty of mind but even himself proves that he never experienced, even in imagination the alleged ecstasies and visions which he describes" (ibid.).

I will return to the so-called mystical figure 666, the origin of which was repeatedly pointed out by Engels, including in the above-mentioned article. Let me remind you:

This solution was given by Ferdinand Benary of Berlin. The name is Nero. The number is based on נֶרֹן קֶסָר Neron Kesar, the Hebrew spelling of the Greek Nerôn Kaisar, Emperor Nero, authenticated by means of the Talmud and Palmyrian inscriptions. This inscription was found on coins of Nero's time minted in the eastern half of the empire. And so – n (nun)=50; r (resh)=200; v (vau) for o=6; n (nun)=50; k (kaph)=100; s (samech)=60; r (resh)=200. Total 666. If we take as a basis the Latin spelling Nero Caesar the second nun=50 disappears and we get 666 - 50 = 616, which is Irenaeus's reading (ibid.).

In general, Engels gives such a verdict to the Revelation:

There can be no doubt that this book, with its date so originally authenticated as the year 68 or 69, is the oldest of all Christian literature. No other is written in such barbaric language, so full of Hebraisms, impossible constructions and mistakes in grammar (ibid.).

Among the arguments about the origin of the Bible, a small letter from Engels to Marx deserves attention, in which he shares the contents of the book of C. Forster *The Historical Geography of Arabia or the Testimonies of the Fathers of the Church on the Religion of Revelation* (1844). In it, the author shows that "The genealogy given in Genesis, purporting to be that of Noah, Abraham, etc., is a fairly exact enumeration of the Bedouin tribes of that time, according to their greater or smaller degree of dialectical kinship, etc." <sup>1</sup> The book describes in some detail the resettlement and life of Bedouin tribes, one of which was the Jewish tribe, not unlike other Bedouin tribes. This study made it possible to understand that "The Jewish so-called Holy Scripture is nothing more than a record of the old-Arabian religious and tribal tradition, modified by the early separation of the Jews from their consanguineous but nomadic neighbors" (ibid.). In this case, this is yet another confirmation that the Bible was written not only on the basis of fancies and fantasies, but also on real historical events, albeit in a distorted sense, but necessary for the clergy.

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*Religion and Reformation.* Engels's reasoning on the development of Christianity in Europe in the middle of the Middle Ages is interesting when it split into two branches: Catholicism and Protestantism. The most detailed topic was revealed to him in the book *Peasant War in Germany*, some excerpts from which I already mentioned in the chapter on Luther. This topic was raised in his other works, including the work on Feuerbach.<sup>2</sup> I here miss the criticism of Engels by Feuerbach's idea of replacing the Christian religion

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<sup>1</sup> Engels to Marx, before 28 May.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German philosophy*.

with the religion of love, since it was already given in a section directly devoted to the German philosopher. Here we are interested in purely religious subjects.

Engels writes that in the Middle Ages when theology became the dominant ideology that absorbed all other forms of social thought: philosophy, politics, jurisprudence, then any social movements had to take a religious form. Therefore, in response to feudal Catholicism, the burghers adopted Protestantism, which, however, became divided into "a burgher-moderate heresy and a plebeian-revolutionary one, the latter an abomination to the burgher heretics themselves." However, the most revolutionary reform of Christianity, according to Engels, was carried out not by Luther, but by the Frenchman John Calvin, who republicanized and democratized the Church. "While the Lutheran Reformation in Germany," wrote Engels, "degenerated and reduced the country to rack and ruin, the Calvinist Reformation served as a banner for the republicans in Geneva, in Holland, and in Scotland, freed Holland from Spain and from the German Empire, and provided the ideological costume for the second act of the bourgeois revolution, which was taking place in England." And although in England itself (after the revolution of 1689) she was compelled to compromise with the local nobility (the supporters of Catholicism), however, the bourgeoisie derived its divine inspiration from Calvinism. Engels believed that in this sense, an important role was also played by one of the ideas of Calvin's doctrine of "predestination," which was "the religious expression of the fact that in the commercial world of competition success or failure does not depend upon a man's activity or cleverness, but upon circumstances uncontrollable by him. It is not of him that willeth or of him that runneth, but of the mercy of unknown superior economic powers."<sup>1</sup> The very idea of *predestination*, although it has its origins as a religion, but indirectly calls into question the omnipotence of God, hinting at the fact that many things happen in addition to his will on the basis of some other laws or phenomena. Therefore, it is best to study these laws and rely on yourself, at least in the organization of own business.

Engels draws attention to the fact that Calvin's church constitution was "thoroughly democratic and republican." (Ibid.) Perhaps he was referring to the modest decoration of the churches, in which no images were allowed on the walls, except for crosses, and that a

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Introduction to the English Edition (1892) of Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

priest is only a person performing duties by profession. The sacraments, mysticism, monasticism and a number of other attributes that have been preserved in Lutheranism, not to mention Catholicism, have been rejected. At the same time, one must bear in mind that Calvinism provides for the merging of the state and the church (as opposed to Lutheranism, which insists on separating the church from the state), with the leading and rigid hand of the church. Calvinism is becoming even more rigid and totalitarian institution of power than other versions of the church and the state itself, which allows and burning heretics, which was carried out in practice.

Engels, however, in another work, mentions, "Protestants outdid Catholics in persecuting the free investigation of nature. Calvin had Servetus burnt at the stake when the latter was on the point of discovering the circulation of the blood, and indeed he kept him roasting alive during two hours; for the Inquisition at least it sufficed to have Giordano Bruno simply burnt alive."<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, in its initial stage, the advantages of Calvinism to Lutheranism and Catholicism outweighed its negativism, why Engels estimated it higher than Lutheranism.

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*Religion and Science.* I believe that Engels' analysis of the topic of the relationship between science and religion is very valuable. This topic continues to be relevant against the background of the desire of theologians and even part of scientists to substantiate the reconciliation of science and religion on the basis of their alleged complementarity.

For a start, a little about deism and agnosticism. The understanding of deism, as well as of all phenomena, should be treated historically. If in our time for an enlightened person I would regard deism as a concession to religion, then for the Middle Ages, as I have already noted above, this was a kind of a form if not saving a life, at least in a way to preserve or not lose work. For Engels "At all events, for practical materialists, Deism is but an easy-going way of getting rid of religion."<sup>2</sup> At the same time, he wondered why, nevertheless, some scientists, like the geologists Buckland and Mantell, continued to

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Introduction to the English Edition (1892) of Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

believe in the incredible miracles described in the Bible. And only the "great unwashed crowd" as they were called, "the working people, especially the Owenite Socialists who dared to use own intellectual faculties with regard to religious matters" (ibid.). True, Engels points out, after the famous exhibition in 1851 England "civilized."<sup>1</sup> Instead of deism, agnosticism came into fashion.

It is known that the agnostic is a materialist by nature, he recognizes the laws of nature. But, argue the agnostics, to prove or not to prove the existence of a "higher being outside the world known to us" is impossible. This is, so to speak, an axiom in the Kantian style. Such a position, according to Engels, would still be excusable in the days of Kant or Laplace. The last, as is known, to Napoleon's question, why in the great astronomer's *Treatise on Celestial Mechanics*, the Creator was not even mentioned, replied: "Je n'avais pas besoin de cette hypothese" ("I had no need of this hypothesis). Since that time, science has passed a rather large and rapid path, having made many open in physics, chemistry, cosmogony. And although the obvious scientific facts constantly disprove the evasive reply of the agnostics about the "Supreme Being," however, in the opinion of Engels, the pragmatic bourgeoisie remains on the basis of real materialism, which, in my opinion, is a clear exaggeration, bearing in mind, moreover, of the bourgeoisie itself to religion, which Engels himself wrote in the same article.

The topic of science and religion was discussed in much greater detail by Engels in the famous book *Dialectics of Nature*. In it, he argues that natural science began to separate from theology from the time Copernicus published his work. "The emancipation of natural science from theology dates from this act, although the fighting out of the particular antagonistic claims has dragged out up to our day and in many minds is still far from completion."<sup>2</sup> I have to admit that these "days" stretched to the days of the 21st century.

In spite of this, even when science began to make itself known, there were many believers in mysticism, miracles and other nonsense, beginning with Newton, who in his old age began to interpret *the Revelation of John*. I have already written about him and will have to return to him again in the future. In *Dialectics*, Engels analyzes in detail the "far

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the first world trade and industrial exhibition in London, which took place in May-October 1851.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*.

from the worst" representatives of English empiricism, who "seem to have fallen a hopeless victim to the spirit-rapping and spirit-seeing imported from America" (ibid.). Among the spiritists was Albert Russell Wallace, who was very well known at the time, who simultaneously with Darwin substantiated the theory of natural selection. In detail, Engels dissects another distinguished adept of spiritualism – Mr. William Crookes, also known in his time as a physicist and chemist.

In this regard, Engels mentioned the Commission, created at the University of St. Petersburg, which was supposed to give answers to the spiritualistic phenomena actively pushed by the writer A.N. Aksakov and chemist A.M. Butlerov. The Commission included D.I. Mendeleev and other well-known scientists in Russia. The Commission came to the conclusion that "spiritualistic phenomena come from unconscious movements or conscious deception, and spiritualistic doctrine is superstition," and published its findings in the newspaper *Golos (Voice)* on March 25, 1876.<sup>1</sup>

Engels explains such a belief in this nonsense on the part of some scholars "disdain for dialectics", as a result of which "some of the most sober empiricists is punished by their being led into the most barren of all superstitions, into modern spiritualism" (ibid.).

The example of spiritualism shows that the scientific facts in themselves are not sufficient to correctly evaluate the phenomena and their essence. In addition to the materialist approach, dialectical thinking is also necessary, which at the intersection reflects the scientific truth. As practice shows, not all people of science possess this thinking, which was confirmed later by Lenin's book *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

And yet, despite the promising and pro-religious inclinations of these or those scientists, even they severely limited the power of God. Even Newton, Engels writes, "still allowed Him the 'first impulse' but forbade Him any further interference in his solar system" (ibid.). Engels also mentions other well-known scientists who brought out the will of the "creator" beyond the field of his research, assigning him a place that does not violate the laws that they discovered. Among these are the Italian astronomer Pater Secchi, the English physicist John Tyndall and even the opponent of Darwinism the Swiss biologist

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<sup>1</sup> The materials of the commission were published by D.I. Mendeleev in the form of a book *Materials for the Judgment of Spiritism* (St. Petersburg, 1876).



Louis Jean Rudolph Agassiz, who, however, attributed to God the creation of not only existing animals, but also abstract, for example, fish as such.

It is clear that such a science of religion is clearly not needed. All this, as God Yahweh would say, "is not good."

\* \* \*

*Religion and Society.* As it was noted at the very beginning, religious subjects constantly arose in connection with the analysis of political or economic processes in the societies of that time. Marx and Engels wrote about their interrelations repeatedly, including in the joint work of *the Holy Family*, where it was said: "Religious questions of the day have at the present a social significance. It is no longer a question of religious interests as such. Only the theologian can believe it is a question of religion as religion."<sup>1</sup> (In brackets I can note that *so* they think so far.)

In the early years of his scientific work, Engels dedicated England, of which he wrote many works. In one of them, he expressed a surprising judgment: "The English nation is characterized by this unresolved contradiction and the mingling of the sharpest contrasts. The English are the most religious nation on earth and at the same time the most irreligious; they worry more about the next world than any other nation, and at the same time they live as though this world were all that mattered to them; their expectation of heaven does not hinder them in the slightest from believing equally firmly in the 'hell of making no money'."<sup>2</sup> It seems that this is written about modern Americans. And further, in the article, the thought develops, how such a contradiction is resolved by the Englishmen, how religious and pragmatism combine, how science and faith get along. This topic was elaborated in more detail already in the context of the English Constitution and the reality of life in a subsequent article that concludes with a description of the facts that, under the influence of the propaganda of atheists and British socialists, especially Richard Carlyle, religious tinsel in England is gradually falling apart, and how England as a whole as a "Christian state already tends to decline."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels, *The Holy Family*.

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *The Condition of England. The Eighteenth Century*.

<sup>3</sup> Engels, *The Condition of England. The English Constitution*.

In a joint work, Marx and Engels pay attention to the interesting detail of the link between the "upper and lower" on religious grounds. They write: "In England Catholicism has its few supporters in the two extremes of society, the aristocracy and the lumpen proletariat. The lumpen proletariat, the mob, which is either Irish or of Irish ancestry, is Catholic by descent."<sup>1</sup> It must be said that the lumpen proletariat, not only in England, but in all other countries in which revolutionary events took place, has always been used by the ruling circles against the revolutionary movements of the industrial proletariat.

With regard to England, Marx's remark is interesting, although written on another occasion: "Cromwell and the English people have borrowed speech, passions and illusions from the Old Testament for their bourgeois revolution. When the real aim had been achieved, when the bourgeois transformation of English society had been accomplished, Locke supplanted Habakkuk."<sup>2</sup>

All revolutionaries need to remember: in all revolutionary movements for the liberation of the people, one must speak in the language of the people, and not in the language of a refined tolerant intelligentsia. And since in the mass of its "people" is religious, one must own religious terminology.

But back to Engels. Writing about England, he did not forget his homeland – Germany. One of the articles about Germany is extremely interesting. I refer to the article about the Prussian king Friedrich-Wilhelm IV, which surprisingly evokes the analogy with the situation in modern Russia, where, as is known, the current president did not simply resurrect Orthodoxy in its imperial version, but moreover, in effect carried out the fusion of church and state. That is, what Engels wrote about Germany happened: "In the last years of the previous king [Frederick William III], reaction in the state administration began to join forces with clerical reaction. Owing to the development of opposition to absolute freedom, the orthodox state, like the orthodox church, found itself compelled to return to its initial premises and assert the Christian principle with all its consequences."<sup>3</sup>

It was such a Christian state that the current president of Russia approved, reversing the development of the country centuries ago. Moreover, he used the methods, as if copied

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, Engels. Review: May-October 1850.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*.

<sup>3</sup> Engels, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia*.

from the practice of Frederick William IV. Judge for yourself:

First of all, in order to realise the Christian state, he has to imbue the rationalist, bureaucratic state, which has become almost heathen, with Christian ideas, give the cult a higher status, and seek to promote participation in it. Nor has he neglected to do so. Here we find the measures to increase church attendance in general and by officials in particular, stricter observance of Sunday, the planned tightening of the laws on divorce, the purging of the theological faculties which has already partially begun, the priority given at theology examinations to firm belief even if coupled with poor knowledge, the appointment primarily of believers to many official positions, and many other generally known facts. They may serve as proof of how intensely Frederick William IV is striving to re-introduce Christianity directly into the state, and to institute state legislation on the basis of the precepts of biblical morality (ibid.).

If the name of the Prussian king were not mentioned in the text, I would be 100% sure that this is the present Russian "tsar." Engels had some special gift to "predict" historical events. Thus, with 100% accuracy, Engels foresaw the future events long before the end of the tsarist epoch in Russia and the socialist revolution.

### Marx about religion

As noted above, Marx wrote less about religion than Engels. This does not mean that "little." In most of his works, including *das Kapital*, one way or another, this topic is affected at least because virtually all social phenomena, including the economy, have penetrated religious metastases. In the section on Hegel, I already cited the arguments of Marx in the context of the ontological proof of the existence of God. Marx quite unambiguously objected to Hegel, reversing the thinking of the great philosopher about religion. What is striking, this judgment was set out in his doctoral dissertation, which he

wrote at the age of 20.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Engels, who was interested in all aspects of religion, Marx mainly concentrated on the influence of religion on the course of social development, and vice versa, on religion itself. Usually, an educated person comes to be rumored by his words about "opium" and "oppressed creature", which became famous, and which differed as aphorisms. They were expressed in his famous work on Hegel, in which he argued that not religion explains society, but on the contrary, a state, a society produce religion, «an inverted consciousness of the world, because they are an inverted world."<sup>2</sup> And further on, Marx accurately captures the meaning of religion as a reflection of the objective conditions of human existence in the world.

Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritual point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, and its universal basis of consolation and justification. It is the fantastic realization of the human essence since the human essence has not acquired any true reality. The struggle against religion is, therefore, indirectly the struggle against that world whose spiritual aroma is religion (ibid.).

Here is another important thought that has not occurred to all other critics of religion, mocking believers, ironically about their stupidity. Indeed, stupidity and ignorance – the demonic power that was the cause of many tragedies – is inherent in man and even in the whole of society. But ... "Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people" (ibid.).

Indeed, "opium" can reduce a person's pain, create the illusion of well-being for a while and even the illusion of happiness, but like any drug, in the end, it destroys a person

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, *Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*.

<sup>2</sup> Marx. *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction*.

and destroys the entire society if it keeps on it. And therefore, ~~in order~~ to survive, to develop and prosper first of all, the abolition of religion. "The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people, says Marx, is the demand for their real happiness. To call on them to give up their illusions about their condition is to call on them to give up a condition that requires illusions. The criticism of religion is, therefore, in embryo, the criticism of that vale of tears of which religion is the halo" (ibid.). But this is only the first step, more precisely the step before which another act of public significance must proceed. Namely: "The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that man is the highest essence for man – hence, with the categorical imperative to overthrow all relations in which man is a debased, enslaved, abandoned, despicable essence...» (ibid.). In other words, it is a boon to overthrow the system, which is based on social relations that engender religious squalor. What is it for? In order to put an end to the Christian principles that drive people into slavery and servility:

The social principles of Christianity have now had eighteen hundred years to be developed, and need no further development by Prussian Consistorial Counsellors.

The social principles of Christianity justified the slavery of antiquity, glorifies the serfdom of the Middle Ages and are capable, in case of need, of defending the oppression of the proletariat, with somewhat doleful grimaces.

The social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and an oppressed class, and for the latter all they have to offer is the pious wish that the former may be charitable.

The social principles of Christianity place the Consistorial Counsellor's compensation for all infamies in heaven, and thereby justify the continuation of these infamies on earth.

The social principles of Christianity declare all the vile acts of the oppressors against the oppressed to be either a just punishment for original sin and other sins, or trials which the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, ordains for the redeemed.

The social principles of Christianity preach cowardice, self-contempt, abasement, submissiveness and humbleness, in short, all the qualities of the rabble, and the proletariat, which will not permit itself to be treated as rabble, needs its courage, its self-confidence, its pride and its sense of independence even more than its bread.

The social principles of Christianity are sneaking and hypocritical, and the proletariat is revolutionary.

So much for the social principles of Christianity.<sup>1</sup>

A completely natural response to these Christian principles – and the whole history of Christianity constantly confirms them – there can only be a need for their destruction. More precisely, the overthrow of the foundation on which the religious worldview rests, whether it be feudalism or capitalism. In a letter to Arnold Ruge, Marx emphasized: "...for religion in itself is without content, it owes its being not to heaven but to the earth, and with the abolition of distorted reality, of which it is the theory, it will collapse of itself."<sup>2</sup> It was such a noble action to "destroy perverted reality" in its time and carried out the Bolsheviks in Russia.

And in this connection. Some theologians and advocates of religion, such as the editor of *Kölnische Zeitung*, with the name Hermes, often claim that since religion exists for so many millennia, then it makes sense, it means it did not happen but continues to exist. Atheists, including Marx and Engels, never denied the "meaning" of the existence of religion. "But," asks Marx, "has not philosophy also existed from Thales down to the present day?"<sup>3</sup> And this philosophy originated before Christianity in more than 600 years.

Christophiles also claim that at a time when religion was in power, states flourished, culture flourished, and so on. Here is the answer of Marx and to this their statement:

Greece flourished at its best internally in the time of Pericles, externally in the time of Alexander. In the age of Pericles the Sophists, and Socrates, who could be called

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<sup>1</sup> Marx. *The Communism of the Rheinischer Beobachter*.

<sup>2</sup> Marx to Arnold Ruge. November 30, 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Marx. *The Editorial Article in № 179 of the Kölnische Zeitung*.

the embodiment of philosophy, art and rhetoric supplanted religion. The age of Alexander was the age of Aristotle, who rejected the eternity of the "individual" spirit and the God of positive religions. And as for Rome! Read Cicero! The Epicurean, Stoic or Sceptic philosophies were the religions of cultured Romans when Rome had reached the zenith of its development. That with the downfall of the ancient states their religions also disappeared requires no further explanation, for the "true religion" of the ancients was the cult of "their nationality", of their "state". It was not the downfall of the old religions that caused the downfall of the ancient states, but the downfall of the ancient states that caused the downfall of the old religions (ibid.)

And in the same connection, Marx recalls: "The Byzantine state was the real religious state, for in it dogmas were questions of state, but the Byzantine state was the worst of states." (ibid.) Russians often boast of kinship with some of the kings of this state and that they took religion from the Byzantines. They could not think of anything worse. Marxism was destroyed and forgotten, but capitalism was not built. So they got stuck in the inter-social structure, having gotten into Christianity to the ears.

The above statements and in general the whole defense of religion are possible only with mass ignorance, which has been and continues to be the cause of many tragedies of mankind. And Marx quite rightly recalls: "Ignorance is a demon, we fear that it will yet be the cause of many a tragedy; the greatest Greek poets rightly depicted it as tragic fate in the soul-shattering dramas of the royal houses of Mycenae and Thebes." (ibid.)

In one of the most famous works of mankind, in *das Kapital*, Marx often turns to a religious theme, closely linking it with the economic processes of society. Here is the obvious connection between "heaven and sinful earth." Already in the Preface to the first edition, Marx sarcastically observes: "The English Established Church, e.g., will more readily pardon an attack on 38 of its 39 articles than on 1/39 of its income. Now-a-days atheism is *culpa levis* [a relatively slight sin, c.f. mortal sin], as compared with criticism of

existing property relations."<sup>1</sup> (I will return to the topic of modern business and religion in the corresponding section.)

Inside the work in an extensive footnote, Marx tells how in the rural areas of England the laws that punish parishioners for deviating from visiting the church on Sunday survive. These punishments were carried out not only by large fines, but also by imprisonment. However, such an insult to "holiness" was forgiven by the orthodox parliament, if it was done in the "process of increasing the cost of capital", in other words, on a Sunday at some factory (ibid.).

In the context of "religion and science" Marx notices a curious fact. As it is you known, the author of the "law of population" was Malthus, a representative of the so-called "the English State Church." Despite this, he gave a monastic vow of celibacy, perhaps not without intent, since one of the conditions for membership at Cambridge University was just the obligatory celibacy. But here something else is important, which is not without sarcastic humor, says Marx. It turns out that the proponents and developers of this law were mostly Protestant parsons: Bruckner, "then Parson Wallace, Parson Townsend, Parson Malthus and his pupil, the arch-Parson Thomas Chalmers, to say nothing of lesser reverend scribblers in this line" (ibid.). Among the Malthusians Chalmers occupies a special place due to his fanaticism, which the worker advised not to be wasteful, but to be thrifty, while demanding "abundant grub" for "higher and unproductive workers, priests, etc."

Marx also gives abundant material about the kind of attack Adam Smith was subjected to by this populist public. One of them, the Anglican bishop Dr. Horne attacked him for the fact that Smith "embalmed his friend David" (ie Hume – AB.) And in general: "Upon the whole, Doctor, your meaning is good; but I think you will not succeed this time. You would persuade us, by the example of David Hume Esq., that atheism is the only cordial for low spirits, and the proper antidote against the fear of death ... You may smile over Babylon in ruins and congratulate the hardened Pharaoh on his overthrow in the Red Sea" (ibid.).

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx. *Capital*. (An Introduction by Mark G. Spencer) (London: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 2013).



Reading such attacks of theologians, one should pay attention to the fact that usually these theologians criticize not the concrete conclusions or conclusions of scientists, but their "moral appearance," or tie them up under subjects that the critic does not recognize or simply does not know about them. I think that Smith never had a chance to laugh at "Babylon" and "villain Pharaoh", whom he hardly took seriously. Mentioned Parson Chalmers, Marx writes, has his suspicions as to Adam Smith «having invented category of 'unproductive laborer's', solely for the Protestant parsons, in spite of their blessed work in the vineyard of the Lord" (ibid.). I think that this is from the same series.

However, this applies not only to priests and theologians. To a similar tactic, the defenders of religion from among philosophers also resort. Even in his earliest works, Marx fought mercilessly against such philosophers. At the age of 24, he wrote a short review of the brochure of a certain Dr. O.F. The group, which entered into a controversy with Bruno Bauer<sup>1</sup>. In this short article, Marx severely criticized the Christophilists, such as Dr. Group, who distort the texts of their opponents (in this case Bauer), attributing to them what they did not write, and distort the very text of the Gospel in order to obscure or hide the contradictions in German. And this concerns not only the doctor mentioned by Marx. Almost all theologians and defenders of religion resort to this deception and distortion. This practice is still alive. And I think that otherwise they just cannot. Since in principle religion is built on deception.

## Socialist movement and religion

Struggling against religious obscurantism, Marx and Engels naturally watched the way religion was perceived within the revolutionary movement in what was then Europe. The fact is that although communism, as Marx wrote, "Communism begins from the outset (Owen) with atheism; but atheism is at first far from being communism; indeed, that atheism is still mostly an abstraction."<sup>2</sup> Modern reality confirms this assertion of Marx

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, *Yet Another Word on Bruno Bauer und die Akademische Lehrfreiheit by Dr. O.F. Gruppe*, Berlin, 1842.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

when among atheists there are many opponents of socialism or communist ideas. So, Engels carefully followed anti-religious literature and how it is perceived by the population of a particular country, mainly those in which anti-bourgeois sentiments and movements were strong. This is how he describes the situation in England in *Letters from London* at the beginning of his revolutionary "career." He writes that Strauss's *Das Leben Jesu*, once influenced by him, was translated into English, but "Not a single 'respectable' book publisher wanted to print it; finally, it appeared in separate parts, 3d. per part, and that was done by the publishing house of a minor but energetic antiquarian. The same thing occurred with translations of Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, etc.?" It is remarkable: "Byron and Shelley are read almost exclusively by the lower classes; no 'respectable' person could have the works of the latter on his desk without his coming into the most terrible disrepute."<sup>1</sup>

Engels is admired by the English socialists, who, along with political struggle, are waging an open struggle against the churches. Among them there are theorists, "full atheists" – this is Charles Southwell from Bristol, who published the magazine *The Oracle of Reason* (1841-1843). Despite the persecution of the authorities for blasphemy (prison and fines), he after all persecution created new newspapers "Atheist" and "Atheist and Republican." At the same time, another newspaper appeared – *Blasphemer* under the editorship of the active propagandist of atheism John Watts – both followers of Owen.

Robert Owen, the famous Utopian socialist, was not accidentally mentioned by Engels in the context of religion, as he in numerous brochures criticized the church and religion. According to Owen, "marriage, religion and property are the sole causes of all the calamity that has existed since the world began" (!), all his writings teem with outbursts of rage against the theologians, lawyers and doctors, all of whom he lumps together. "The law-courts are the seat of a class of people which is still completely theological and *therefore prejudiced*; the laws also are imbued with theology and must therefore be abolished together with the jury" (ibid.).

Be that as it may, the results of such anti-religious propaganda are as follows: "...in England alone five millions had become wholly alienated not only from the Church but

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Letters from London*.

from Christianity altogether."<sup>1</sup> (With a total population of about 18 million at that time.)

Unlike the British, the French socialists, despite their unbelief, remain Christians. For them, Christianity is communism, and the French argue this with the life of the first Christians, their community, etc. This argument has been, and still is, used by Christian socialists. But, as Engels writes, "that these good people are not the best Christians, although they style themselves so; because if they were, they would know the bible better, and find that, if some few passages of the bible may be favorable to Communism, the general spirit of its doctrines is, nevertheless, totally opposed to it, as well as to every rational measure."<sup>2</sup>

In Germany at that time, atheistic sentiments were more developed than in other European countries, possibly under the influence of many books of anti-religious content. Nevertheless, the most "creative" atheists of the pro-communist stance tried to build their faith, which later became known as "Christian socialism." One of such attempts was debunked by Marx and Engels in a joint article<sup>3</sup>, which, surprisingly, is extremely relevant for the current communist movement in Russia. Let me remind you that in modern Russia there is the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), whose leaders actively exploit Orthodoxy on the basis that the teaching of Christ is like a teaching of love between people, that is, a doctrine that coincides with the teachings of communism. The leaders of this party, indulging in the game "in God," either do not know, or deliberately ignore the position of the classics of Marxism on this topic. It was explicitly stated in the above-mentioned article, which from the very beginning stated: "Kriege is preaching *in the name of communism* the old fantasy of religion and German philosophy which is the *direct antithesis of communism*. Faith, more specifically, faith in the 'holy rit of community' is the last thing required for the achievement of communism." (ibid) I will give only two points of the goal of the "communist struggle" according to Kriege and the reaction to them from the authors of the article:

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<sup>1</sup> Marx, *Anti-Church Movement. – Demonstration in Hyde Park.*

<sup>2</sup> Engels, *Progress of Social Reform on the Continent.*

<sup>3</sup> Marx, Engels, *Circular Against Kriege.* German Kriege is a German journalist who led in the second half of the 1840s a group of German "true socialists" in New York.

1) "To make a truth of the *religion of love* and a reality of the long yearned-for community of the blessed denizens of heaven." Kriege merely overlooks the fact that these obsessions of Christianity are only the fantastic expression of the existing world and that their "reality" therefore *already exists* in the evil conditions of this existing world.

2) "We demand in the name of that *religion of love* that the hungry should be given food, the thirsty be given drink and the naked clothed." – A demand which has been reiterated ad nauseam for 1,800 years already, without the slightest success (ibid.).

And further in the same spirit. By such postulates some of the naive communist figures, obviously not knowing themselves, turned atheistic socialism into priestly socialism, turned a revolutionary ideology into an ideology of resigned humility, or as one of the chapters of this article is called, in *How Communism Became Love-Sick*. In the famous *Manifesto of the Communist Party* such "socialism" is placed under the heading "Reactionary Socialism" with the heading "Feudal Socialism". It says:

As the parson has ever gone hand in hand with the landlord, so has Clerical Socialism with Feudal Socialism.

Nothing is easier than to give Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge. Has not Christianity declaimed against private property, against marriage, against the State? Has it not preached in the place of these, charity and poverty, celibacy and mortification of the flesh, monastic life and Mother Church? Christian Socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat.<sup>1</sup>

Despite such turbulence among some of the workers and their leaders, as a whole among the majority of German Social-Democratic workers, atheism not only took root theoretically, it became, as it were, a passed stage, Engels writes. And specifies: "this purely negative word no longer has any application as far as they are concerned inasmuch as their opposition to faith in God is no longer one of theory but one of practice; they

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<sup>1</sup> Marx and Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*.

have *purely and simply finished with God*, they live and think in the world of reality and are therefore materialists. This seems to be the case in France too."<sup>1</sup>

The last phrase Engels touched on an extremely interesting question, which is worthy of being a subject of a separate analysis. I mean the connection or the relationship between atheism and materialism. Is it so clear that materialism leads to atheism and vice versa? In this case, I mean *worldview mutual influence*, and not pragmatism, interpreting materialism as a spiritual preference for material values. Although this topic was not specifically addressed by Marx or Engels, an indirect hint of their close relationship can be found in their joint work, which I already mentioned – *The Holy Family*.

In one place it says: "Materialism's opposition to Descartes was personified by *Gassendi*, the restorer of *Epicurean* materialism. French and English materialism was always closely related to *Democritus* and *Epicurus*. Cartesian metaphysics had another opponent in the *English* materialist *Hobbes*. *Gassendi* and *Hobbes* triumphed over their opponent long after their death at the very time when metaphysics was already officially dominant in all French schools."<sup>2</sup>

*Gassendi*, reached out to the atheist *Epicurus*, *Hobbes* the atheist, *Beyle*, who "heralded the atheistic society", mentioned in the same context – they were all atheists or deists. Even the scholastic *Dunes Scott* tortured himself with the question: "Is not matter able to think?" Generally speaking, "Materialism is the *natural-born* son of *Great Britain*" (ibid.). In *F. Bacon* its first creator, "materialism still holds back within itself in a naive way the germs of a many-sided development." (ibid.). Next, *Hobbes*, *Locke*. And then the French:

*Locke's immediate* pupil, *Condillac*, who translated him into *French*, at once applied *Locke's* sensualism against seventeenth-century *metaphysics*.

In *Helvétius*, who also based himself on *Locke*, materialism assumed a really French character. *Helvétius* conceived it immediately in its application to social life.

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<sup>1</sup> Engels, *Refugee Literature*.

<sup>2</sup> Marx, Engels, *The Holy Family*.

In *Lamettrie's* works we find a synthesis of Cartesian and English materialism (ibid.).

No, Marx and Engels here do not affirm the direct interdependence between atheism and materialism, but the given number of names pushes to the idea of this interdependence.

And then there is another chain, which for some, too, may seem ambiguous. If you are an atheistic materialist, does this necessarily lead to the adoption of a communist ideology? The authors give an unambiguous answer to this question (see above). Therefore, in my opinion, in the same work, it is no coincidence that the Frenchman Kabet, expelled to England, was mentioned, where he experienced the influence of "the communist ideas there." And returning to France became a champion of communism. French communists Dezami, Gay and other materialists and atheists develop the doctrine of "*real humanism and logical basis of communism*" (ibid).

And although both classics of Marxism did not set themselves a special task to answer the above questions, in my opinion, they are obvious. Atheism and materialism are two sides of the same coin. Both are reflections of objective reality embodied in Marxism as a scientific discipline. Communism, on the other hand, is based on Marxism, the methodology of which is dialectical materialism. Accordingly, the *genuine communist is necessarily a materialist and an atheist*.

The anti-communists deliberately distort and propagate the idea of the violent destruction of religion in the transition to socialism, or in the embodiment of the ideals of communism. Usually, they resort to falsification of events in this sphere in the USSR. Here I want to quote the statement of Marx, published in a single newspaper, the essence of which was steadily adhered to by the Soviet state. In an interview with a correspondent for the American newspaper *Chicago Tribune* in December of 1879, Marx said:

We know that violent measures against religion are nonsense; but this is an opinion: as socialism grows, *Religion Will Disappear*. ...Its disappearance must be done by social development, in which education must play a part.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cit. by: *K. Marx and F. Engels about atheism, religion and the church* (Moscow: Thought, 1986. From Interview with Karl Marx. In *Chicago Tribune*, January 5 1879.

Comments are superfluous.

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Here I touched on only some aspects of religious themes that were in the field of view of Marx and Engels. In fact, their interests were much broader. In the context of religion, they reflected on family and marriage, analyzed the impact on the development of a society of Eastern religions, in particular Hinduism and Buddhism, they described in some detail the influence of the Orthodox religion on the situation in the Balkans, etc. How vast the religious theme in the work of the two geniuses is represented by a collection of 670 pages, which was compiled by Soviet scientists G.S. Lyalina, M.M. Persits, Yu.B. Pishchik (the author of the introductory article to the collection)<sup>1</sup>.

The works of the classics of Marxism on religious subjects, their convincing argument for the great harm to religion for the development of society had a tremendous impact not only on the adherents of socialism and communism but also on their opponents, especially in the second half of the 19th century. and in the 20th century. Even in the 21st century. the thoughts of these great scholars on religion remain relevant, and perhaps even more in demand, because religion received a kind of second wind against the backdrop of compromising other public bourgeois ideologies, and also in connection with the increased militancy of Islam against Christianity.

Alex Battler

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<sup>1</sup> *K. Marx and F. Engels on Atheism, Religion, and the Church.*