

THE POPE WAS DEAD-ON RIGHT ABOUT SOCIALISM, POPE
LEO XIII, THAT IS.

The following are excerpts from *War Comes to God's House* expounding on factors leading to the rise of the Nazi Third Reich and all its attendant evils:

Marx was a highly literate, talented, and passionate writer, and he found an eager following in the turmoil of the Industrial Revolution. As is often the case with authors of political movements, he was far more talented in conveying his passion than in anticipating consequences. The upshot of Marxism was a series of bloody, anti-Christian despotisms not easily discernible from Hitler's. Too much has already been written about Marx, so I will add only that his importance to our story lies mostly in the reaction against him which we will see culminate in the Nazi era. There was a long lead up to that culmination however with some very prescient warnings.

Father Bodelschwingh preached against the dangers of socialism and Bismark set the German state on alert against it; but I think the most astute warnings came from Pope Leo XIII. In 1878, the first year of his papacy, he issued *Quod Apostolici Muneris* which contains a truly prophetic description of the looming modern world well worth a read today. As an American and as a Protestant, I can't agree with all that he says but he was dead on accurate in warning that there were conspiracies afoot that "*assail the right of property sanctioned by natural law*", and as might well be expected from what we see today, "*debase the natural union of man and woman*".

He asserts that, yes, Marx was right, faith in God and His coming kingdom was comforting the working masses ("opiate of the masses"), and he noted that the decline in faith experienced by many increased materialism, and consequently, discontent. His prescription was not material or political but spiritual – certainly the best prescription, but perhaps not one that should be taken alone.

Again, in 1891, Leo spoke to the rising threat of Marxist ideology in *Rerum Novarum*, On Capital and Labor. He assures the faithful that "*private ownership is in accordance with the law of nature*", and he makes a powerful case that socialism defrauds men of the fruits of their labor. That fact could be foreseen, by those who wanted to, in Rousseau's treatise*, and has been borne out in every socialist dictatorship since.

And again he makes a strong defense of marriage and family against the encroachment of the state which seems to always attend socialist enterprises. Unfortunately, the Pope's wisdom was lost on his people, at least in great part.

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**The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself saying, 'This is mine' and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars, and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes, might not anyone have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch and saying to his fellows: 'Beware of listening to this impostor, you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody'.*

One has to consider this statement only briefly to find the flaws in it. For one, nature does not give up her treasures without hard work (someone's hard work, that is, not Rousseau's obviously). Contrast that with Hobbes' view of the state of nature, and John Locke's philosophy that nature gives bounty only in opportunity, labor makes it property. The American Revolution Providentially occurred when the English mind was still enamored with Hobbes and Locke, and John Milton's ideal of a Christian moral paradise; else it probably would have gone the way of the French Revolution.

Rousseau's philosophy deforms Christian humanism into a justification for theft, as we see all about us in modern socialistic societies. Hybrias (an ancient Greek warrior and poet introduced earlier in the story) didn't feel the need for justification to take what he wanted; modern western man, still suffering from the after-effects of Christianity, feels some slight embarrassment at the theft of others' property unless covered in such fig-leaf fancies as Rousseau's.