



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 29, 2016

Boxing Barbara Boxer: Is “Inequality the Root of All Evil”?

“Inequality is the root of all evil,” said left-wing senator Barbara Boxer recently, while [lecturing](#) a Catholic priest about Catholicism. Boxer claimed to be quoting Pope Francis, referencing a tweet he sent in April 2014. Yet despite the fact she was reading prepared notes, she *misquoted the pope*, who actually said, “Inequality is the root of social evil.” Defenders such as Ramesh Ponnuru have [said](#) that Francis’ words must be placed in perspective, that they allude to the evil of prenatal infanticide, along with many other things. Whatever the case, Boxer’s formulation is certainly an authentic *Marxist* idea — and this is not hyperbole.



In fact, Boxer’s spun quotation is a central tenet of Marxism. Marx (who was mentally ill) taught that if economic inequality could be eliminated, people would live so harmoniously in a state of economic bliss that the government could just melt away, at which point civilization would have reached the culmination of the socialist revolution — communism (yes, under Marxist doctrine, communism is when there is no longer *any government*). This gives us a window into Marx’s psyche: He likely was a very greedy, envious, covetous man. For just as only a person who is hung-up on race could believe that eliminating racial differences would yield a blissful world, only a man who cannot tolerate others’ being wealthier than he — and who is thoroughly hung-up on the idea — could believe that eliminating such differences would create Heaven on Earth. As Pope Benedict XVI put it, Marx made the mistake of viewing man as merely an “economic being.”

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Speaking of mistakes, Boxer’s notion is the poorest of theology. *Sin* is the root of all evil, and inequality is not a sin. It’s simply a state of being and fact of life. Note that there is no mention of “equality” in the Bible, except in reference to weights and measures. Equality is a hang-up born of the “Enlightenment” and minted as a modernist faux virtue by socialists.

Moreover, equality simply is not a thing of this world. Do we see it in nature? There are alpha wolves and lesser wolves, silverback gorillas that run the show and lions that rule their prides. And there is great genetically-induced variation even within species, with some members being far better fit to survive than others. This, mind you, is another irony of the evolutionist Left: they view man as just another animal, but then suppose that somehow, some way he is the one species that should be the exception to the universal norm of inequality.

And does inequality tell us any more about the economic health of a people than it does about the athletic-skill “health” of a group? Consider: There are two tennis centers training children. In the first all the kids end up being low intermediates; but there is greater inequality in the second, with some being low intermediates, some advanced and some tournament caliber. Which center is better off skill-



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wise? Which is doing a better job teaching the game?

So it is in economics. Inequality tells us nothing about quality — or overall quality of life. *Nothing*. Pope Francis and others have bemoaned the supposed “growing inequality” in the world, but perhaps they should listen to left-wing site Think Progress. It [pointed out](#) in 2013 that the standard of living worldwide is now the *highest it has ever been in all of man’s history*.

What this indicates is that the truth is precisely the opposite of what Boxer implies. Growing inequality doesn’t cause misery, but can be attended by improving quality of life. How could this be? It isn’t a causal relationship but is a correlation, in that what creates billionaires — free enterprise — also creates a robust middle class. To provide just one example, economic freedom gave us Bill Gates, but it also gave us the thousands of nicely compensated people Microsoft employs as well as the countless millions who use its software to facilitate other economic endeavors.

If anyone wants economic equality, he would have loved the caveman days. With no monetary system, agriculture or industry and everyone being a hunter-gatherer, man’s state was as close to economic equality as you may find. Would Boxer, Pope Francis or anyone else like to travel back in time?

This also raises a question: how did the world transform from Stone Age poverty to Industrial Age abundance? Where did all the wealth come from?

It obviously was created. This occurs when people grow crops, raise livestock, and obtain raw materials, which are then combined in unique ways to create a multitude of things that further improve our quality of life. Just think about the value of refrigeration, canned foods, plumbing, life-saving medicines and all the labor-saving machines wealth creation has given us. And wealth breeds more wealth: tractors and other agricultural equipment have increased crop yields so profoundly as to make Malthusian starvation predictions seem silly.

Now here’s the question: why did people create this wealth? Were they mainly driven by charitable instincts? While charity is wonderful and generous people exist, do a little exercise: see how many goods and services you can think of, that you need or want, that were created via charitable endeavor. Does McDonald’s produce hamburgers and fries, Ford produce cars, Apple produce computers, Boeing produce airplanes and Pfizer produce drugs out of the goodness of their hearts? We can enter a supermarket and access thousands of food products from the world over at reasonable prices. How many of them exist due to charity?

Most everything we need and want exists because of financial incentive — people can make money by creating it. This may not sound good to some starry-eyed (and sometimes stoned) idealists, but it’s not just that [research has shown that those who protest money-hungry mindsets the most are themselves the most money-hungry](#) (indicating that it’s envy, not charity, motivating them). It’s that we deny reality at our own peril: Like it or not, most people will operate based on self-interest. Just ask yourself: Would I still work at my job were there no money to be had? Most people wouldn’t. And, yes, greed exists, too — everywhere. Greed is a sin, and you don’t eliminate sin by changing systems, but by changing hearts.

What you can do is devise a system that takes into account the realities, and frailties, of man’s nature. Enter economic freedom. As economist Dr. Walter Williams has put it, economic freedom and its financial incentive ensure that my fellow man will serve me even if he doesn’t give a darn about me. So I get the supermarket stocked with thousands of goods, all provided by people who otherwise wouldn’t give a thought to whether my belly was full.

I didn’t describe the above system as “capitalism,” mind you, because that term was originated by



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socialists *for the purpose of demonizing economic freedom*. And it has worked. Tragically, college-aged millennials have a positive view of “socialism” and favor “capitalism” by a smaller margin than other groups. They also, however, [generally have a very benign view of what socialism is](#).

Note that *The Communist Manifesto* would likely have been titled *The Socialist Manifesto*, but there was a problem: the term “socialist” not only had a very broad definition, but had already been tarnished by fools, frauds and failures. But as indicated earlier, under Marxist doctrine, socialism is the transitional phase between economic freedom and communism in which *government owns the means of production*. Thus did the U.S.S.R. stand for the Union of Soviet *Socialist* Republics.

One reason socialism had already been discredited was because it had been tried. For example, Welsh industrialist and social reformer Robert Owen bought the town of Harmony, Indiana, in 1825, renamed it New Harmony, and established a socialist commune.

It failed miserably after only about two years.

The problem? Unlike early Christian communes (Shakers, Oneida Community, etc.), some of which endured for a century or more and whose members often believed they were earning a place in Heaven, Owen’s godless “utopia” had neither financial nor spiritual incentive. And without incentive to act there is inaction, and inaction equals no wealth creation.

And that’s the result of emphasis on “equality.” It’s why Russia transitioned from being one of the world’s largest exporters of food under Tsar Nicholas II to one of its largest importers of food under the Soviets, why North Korea suffers similar woes today, and why oil-rich Venezuela can’t provide basic necessities for its people. As famed economist Milton Friedman put it, “The society that puts equality before freedom will end up with neither. The society that puts freedom before equality will end up with a great measure of both.”

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