
A Reformed presuppositional critique of the worldview of the SACP

Paul Smit

Faculty of Theology

North-West University

Potchefstroom

spaulsmit@gmail.com

Opsomming

Cornelius van Til het die Voorveronderstellingsapologetiek-metode ontwerp om met onbybelse wêreldbeskouings om te gaan. Dit kan tot 'n twee-stap proses vereenvoudig word. Eerstens moet die apologete die ander se wêreldbeskouing eerlik, volgens die beskouing se eie logika en beginsels, assesser. Dit sal onthul dat enige wêreldbeskouing wat nie in die Skrif gebaseer is nie altyd self-weersprekend en onlogies is. Tweedens, moet die apologete die Bybelse antwoord op die verskeie aspekte van die wêreldbeskouing uitlig en daardeur aantoon dat daar alleen in die Skrif hoop en 'n samehangende verstaan van die wêreld kan wees. Hierdie proses gaan op die wêreldbeskouing van die SAKP toegepas word. Om dit te doen sal die party se wêreldbeskouing in die vyf aspekte, gebaseer op James Anderson se TAKES-metode – naamlik Teologie, Antropologie, Kennis, Etiek, en Verlossingsleer, opgedeel word. Deur hierdie metode te volg sal verskeie logiese en etiese probleme van die SAKP se wêreldbeskouing uitgelig word, asook die Christelike antwoord daarop.

Abstract

Cornelius van Til developed the Presuppositional Apologetic approach of engaging with non-biblical worldviews, that can be simplified in a two-step process. First, the apologist must assess the competing worldview honestly by using its own logic and principles. This will show that any worldview not based on Scripture will always be self-contradicting and logically incoherent. Second, the apologist must present the Biblical response to the different aspects of the worldview to show that one may find hope and a coherent understanding of the world. This process will be applied to the worldview of the SACP. To do this, its worldview will be divided into five aspects based on James Anderson's TAKES method – namely, Theology, Anthropology, Knowledge (epistemology), Ethics, and Salvation. Following this method, various logical and ethical problems of the SACP's worldview will be clear, as well as the Christian response to them.

The following article aims to give a Reformed presuppositional critique of the South African Communist Party's (SACP) worldview. The TAKES method of worldview analysis is used (Anderson, 2018), because it speaks to the most important aspects of a worldview, namely those of Theology, Anthropology, Knowledge (Epistemology), Ethics and Salvation. The twofold approach of the presuppositional method is used while considering these five aspects.

In his introduction to a new edition of Van Til's book, Christian Apologetics, William Edgar gives a helpful summary of the presuppositional method, breaking it down in two steps.

The heart of Van Til's apologetic approach is twofold. These are not meant to be sequential steps, but complementary moves. First, the apologist must get over onto the ground of the unbeliever for argument's sake and show him that his claims cannot succeed. This does not mean conceding ground, but, rather, patient exploration, as though a particular form of unbelief were true, in order to show how impossible it is. With confidence, the apologist will know that there is no sufficient basis for meaning and value (or "predication" as Van Til liked to put it) in his friend's view. Gently, but firmly, he will "remove the iron mask", or "take the roof off" the house of unbelief, to show how dark it is without the Lord ... Second, the apologist should invite the unbeliever over onto Christian ground, for argument's sake, and show him how meaning and value are established by the biblical worldview.

This is the equivalent of saying, with the psalmist, “O taste and see how good the Lord is.” In so many ways, this means preaching the gospel (Van Til, 2003:7).

Following this twofold approach, this article will first evaluate each of the five aspects of the SACP’s worldview to determine whether it is logically coherent and consistent. The internal contradictions within and between each of the five areas will be investigated. This can be done because “the natural man is never fully consistent” in his worldview, and the apologist should “seek to make men ever more epistemologically self-conscious” (Bahnsen, 1998:411, 416). Accordingly, the Christian apologist can and should show that any worldview not based on God’s revelation will never be consistent. By showing the contradictions inherent in a non-Christian worldview, the apologist seeks to prove how weak and incoherent these worldviews truly are – in this case, that of the SACP.

In the second place, this article seeks to provide the biblical alternative to what the SACP believes and show how this is more logically consistent and more in line with human flourishing. The apologist’s job is not only to point out the untenability of other worldviews, it is also to offer hope. This article assumes that the only sure source of hope is found in a consistent Christian worldview.

Sleuteltermes:

Kommunisme, Wêreldbeskouing, Apologetiek, SAKP, Voorveronderstellings, Sosialisme

Key terms:

Communism, Worldview, Apologetics, SACP, Presuppositional, Socialism

Summary of the SACP worldview

By studying official proclamations, speeches of leaders and articles in SACP journals, the following conclusions can be made regarding the different aspects of the SACP’s worldview:

Theology

The party moved away from the militant atheism of its ideological forebears Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. It instead saw religion as a useful tool for furthering revolutionary goals and actively encouraged its propagation (SACP, 1998; SACP, 2003). This is, however, not based on a belief in a supernatural deity of any sort, but merely pragmatic. The atheistic basis of its views can be seen in the belief that religion will fall away as the revolution progresses (Mdlalose, 1986:26).

Anthropology

The party maintains a binary view of humanity which is that there are only two types of people: the oppressed and oppressors. Instead of only focusing on economic class like Marx and Lenin however, it added (and continues to add) more areas of oppression. This included national, racial and gender oppression (SACP, 1998; Schreiner 2017:88). One person may in him- or herself be a mixture of oppressor and oppressed. Another aspect in its anthropology is its collectivism: a person's group identity (class, race, gender, etc.) is paramount, not them as individuals (SACP, 2012b).

Knowledge

With regards to epistemology, the SACP is clear and consistent. The basis of all truth is found in Marxist-Leninist ideology as interpreted by the party itself (SACP, 2012a).

Ethics

Ethics are based on the party's revolutionary agenda (SACP, 2012b). An action is ethical if it serves to advance the revolution as planned by the party. Individual or community well-being is not the basis of ethics. The advancement of the class-based struggle is what matters, even if this may harm people in the present (Cronin, 2018:39).

Salvation

As to ultimate salvation – the party looks forward to and strives to achieve a fully Communist society where all possible material and economic means of oppression are removed. This salvation can only be attained through the work of the party that will lead the country to this goal. Currently, the primary tool the party uses for this is the National Democratic Revolution (SACP, 2007).

1. Theology

SACP internal consistency

The SACP moved away from the militant atheism of their ideological forebears, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. While Marx (1843) saw religion as a delusion that helps numb the pain of the oppressed (“the opium of the people”), and Lenin violently tried to eradicate it after initially trying to co-opt churches in his revolutionary goals (Pipes, 1997:339-340), the SACP is more pragmatic in their approach. At times, they speak very highly of certain aspects of religion, they try to work with churches and they even open their meetings with prayer (SACP, 2003).

But in one crucial aspect they still have the same view of religion as Marx – it is an instrument to be used and then discarded. Just as the oppressors used religion to facilitate oppression in the past, the party believes that religion, and specifically organised religion, can and should be used for revolutionary goals. Eventually, as people are freed from oppression, the need for religion and the church that goes with it will fall away (Mdlalose, 1986:26). This means that the party does not see any metaphysical reality in religion. It is a human coping mechanism, that will fall away as life gets closer to their vision of the ideal future.

Moving on from organised religion to the party’s belief in a god or gods, it is helpful to use Roy Clouser’s (2005:23) definition of a religious belief – it is a belief in something that has its own “unconditional non-dependent reality”. The question then becomes: “What is the ultimate reality for the SACP, the thing that is not dependant on anything else?”

When analysed using this definition, the ultimate reality for the SACP is materialism. The party has not repudiated the materialistic worldview of Marx and Lenin. As the other aspects of their worldview are analysed, it is clear that the material reality is the beginning and end of what should be accomplished, making it clear that they see ultimate reality in the same way as their two forerunners. Nothing is more foundational to reality than economic activity as seen in material production (McLellan, 1993:361; SACP, 1998).

However, if religion is temporary, why go through with the farce of praying? Why pretend to speak to a deity if you do not believe in it? It seems as if the reason for this is that religion is useful for the party. The party quotes Marx’s criticism of the wealthy using religion as a front to oppress people, but it seems they behave similarly to what they accuse others of by misusing religion for their advantage – as a mask to draw in religious people.

This can be seen when they speak of Jesus as well. He is regarded as a model socialist. He is useful to them in some ways, so they emphasize those ways – communal living, human equality,¹ “liberatory hope” (Slovo, 1994:46-48).² However, no mention is made of his claims to deity or propitious death, he was merely a human revolutionary figure who should be imitated in the way he dealt with inequality.

It can be argued that the contradictions in the party’s beliefs in this matter shows both pragmatism and cynicism. The church is useful for its potential to further the revolution. The party has been happy to work with the church to further its goals (Slovo, 1994:49; Mdlalose, 1986:26). It means that they are basically using the church in the same way that Marx accused the oppressors of using it – to get the working class on its side and with its program.

The fact that they see religion as a force that will wither away, gives lie to the lip service they give to religion. Ultimately, they retain the materialistic worldview of orthodox Communism. In this view, there is no place for any supernatural actions working in on the world. Roy Bhaskar (1991:325) gives a helpful Marxist definition of materialism:

In its broadest sense, materialism contends that whatever exists just is, or at least depends upon, matter. (In its more general form it claims that all reality is essentially material; in its more specific form, that human reality is).

David McLellan (1993:361) adds an important clarification to this definition:

The materialism [in most forms of Marxism] consists not in any metaphysical doctrine about the world’s consisting only of matter, but in the idea that to understand human beings and their history it is essential to begin with their material conditions of production. This is not to deny the validity of philosophical, political, artistic, or even at the limit, religious activities, but only to insist that these activities are moulded by, and only intelligible in terms of, the prevailing forms of material production.

Taking these two descriptions together, one can see what the ultimate reality in a Marxist worldview is: it is material and matter, specifically, material production. For Communists, nothing is more foundational to reality than economic activity as seen in material production.

-
- 1 It will be shown that there is no real human equality in a Marxist worldview, even though they claim to seek it here.
 - 2 Van Til pointed out the danger that the church faced in this regard, that of being co-opted by non-Christians to further seemingly desirable goals:
Throughout the history of the church one of the greatest dangers, if not the greatest danger, threatening it has been the idea that there are high and noble forms of non-Christian thought that can stand ready to join a common expedition against secularism and materialism (quoted in Bahnsen, 1998:291).

The problem with a materialistic worldview is that it is merely assumed, it is not achieved through any logical argument. John Frame (1994:130) described it well:

These [Marxist] scholars offer no proof that their methodology is superior to that of historic Christian methods of Bible study. Instead, we are told dogmatically that man cannot believe in miraculous occurrences in the age of radios and airplanes. How the radio and the airplane refute, e.g., Jesus' feeding of the five thousand is rather unclear. The critics' own belief in their methods is not based on proof in any normal sense. It is a presupposition.

What this means is that the ultimate basis of reality for a Communist worldview is not based on any rational reason. It is an unquestioned assumption. Part of the role of the apologist would be to question this assumption and show how weak it is. This is what is meant by making people "epistemologically self-conscious" (Bahsen, 1998:416).

A Christian response

In opposition to this, the Christian worldview believes that the ultimate basis for reality is God revealed in the Christian Scriptures. God is above and distinct from all created reality. This attribute of God is called his aseity, he is totally independent of anything else; he does not need anything else (Frame, 2015:34). This God is also a personal God, that enters in a relationship with his creation. What this means is that humanity is not at the mercy of merely impersonal forces of economic logic, as they would be in a materialistic view. God, in his wisdom guides all human history according to a preordained plan. He has the "desire and ability to deal with his people in highly personal and bountiful ways" (Yarbrough, 2004:19). As John Frame (2015:36) puts it: "If personality is absolute, there is One who cares about what we do, who approves or disproves our conduct. And that person has some purpose for evil, too, mysterious as it might seem to us."

God has bound himself to humanity by creating us in his image. This means that "[t]he God who is in need of nothing is also the God who is 'with us' to move and act in the world, including to *reveal himself*, in order to carry out his perfect plan" (Oliphint, 2013:59).

Moving on to Marx's (1843) accusation of religion as an "opiate", or coping mechanism for the injustices of the world. There is some truth to this statement, as there is in any misrepresentation, and "some religious groups are no more than opiates providing transient highs based on individual feelings rather than on verifiable, ultimate truths" (Keith, 2017:23). The Christian faith does provide comfort to its adherents amid the suffering that is part of life, just like

an opiate may. However, unlike an opiate, it does not merely numb the pain, it deals with its root causes.³ The first question of the Reformed creed, the Heidelberg Catechism, addresses this issue directly:

Q. What is your only comfort in life and death?

A. That I am not my own, but belong with body and soul, both in life and in death, to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins with His precious blood and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also preserves me in such a way that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head; indeed, all things must work together for my salvation. Therefore, by His Holy Spirit He also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for Him.

Instead of being an opiate, true faith is a comfort brought to Christians by Him who is in Christ their heavenly Father (Mat. 6:8-9). This brings one back to the personality of God. For Christians, ultimate reality is not some impersonal material force or economic rule, but the Creator of everything that exists and every law that can be discovered. He is a just and caring God (Frame, 2015:40). He provides comfort to his people, not necessarily by removing the pain, but by being with them amidst it all and by assuring them that He is in control of the future (Van Til, 2008:42). God also does not merely comfort from a distance. He enters the suffering of this world through the incarnation of his Son, Jesus Christ (Oliphint, 2013:62). Christ experienced every form of oppression and suffering therefore, he can truly sympathise with those who suffer (Heb. 4:15).

2. Anthropology

2.1 *SACP's internal consistency*

As with its view on religion, the Marxist-Leninism of the SACP changed its teaching on human identity in a way that suits its agenda best at a particular time or place. Initially, in the early stages of Communist thought, the focus was economic – a person is identified primarily by their economic class (Smith, 2010:557). The Communist Manifesto shows this clearly:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various

³ This will be seen more clearly in the section on Salvation.

orders, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, knights, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, feudal lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses however, this distinct feature: it has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other — Bourgeoisie and Proletariat (Engels & Marx, 2000).

As it became clear that the hoped-for proletarian revolution would not take place, Lenin and others edited Marx's views. For Marx, national identity was of minimal importance, but Lenin saw this as a possible tool to further his revolutionary goals. For him, entire nations could be classed as oppressor or oppressed. He sought to create alliances between Communists and nationalist movements – even if these nationalist movements may contain bourgeois elements (who were the traditional enemy of the workers in Communist thought). His plan was first to fight for national revolution, and then use that as a basis for a Communist revolution (Smith, 2010:558). This command was then transmitted to the SACP, which they obeyed by allying with the ANC (SACP, 1998).

But with time, more and more levels of oppression were added, both within the SACP and other Communist movements (Trueman, 2018). The SACP showed this change in 2012 by adding to the opening lines of the Communist Manifesto, “The history of human societies has been one [...] of many variants of brutal patriarchal, colonial, racial, class and other oppressions.” (SACP, 2012b). Clearly, economic and class oppression was no longer their only or even primary focus.

But crucially, through all these pragmatic changes to its worldview, the binary of human identity remains, one is either oppressor or oppressed – there is no in-between (Lenin, 2005b). As will be shown, this leads to problems when the differing areas of oppression are expanded without limit.

In all of this, an individual is of little value according to a Communist worldview. A person or a group is of no importance as compared to the “collective good.”⁴ If this is the case, all manner of violence and shame can be done to an individual if it is determined that it would be best for the greater good (or better said – the accomplishment of the Communist ideal).

4 This will be shown more clearly in the section on Ethics, point 4.

This view of man is, however, not logical or coherent. Questions such as the following may indicate the untenability and unsustainability of the view:

- Is it not individuals who form a group? How then can they be of no significance?
- How many people must be part of a group for that group to have value?
- Is there a power other than the members of the group that determines what is in their favour and on which this power's authority rests?
- What must be done to a person who does not fall into any oppressed group? If the only hope for such a person is to join in the struggle by being part of the vanguard party, who has the authority to decide on the struggle or the aim of the vanguard party? Is it not again a small number of "leaders" who decide what should happen according to their own views?
- Is man not much more than just an economic being?

The idea of human identity primarily based on a person's place in oppressive hierarchies is for instance seen in the party's view of wives and mothers. The role of motherhood is referred to as "informal, unpaid reproductive labour" (SACP, 1998). They see a mother as being oppressed because she is not paid to bear and raise children. Because there is no economic benefit to her in that relationship, it is oppressive. Jenny Schreiner (2017:88) quotes Lenin in this regard:

One of the conditions for the social emancipation of women, and consequently one of the principles for solving this question was, in Lenin's view, the wide use of female labour in social production. He said that "to effect her complete emancipation and make her the equal of the man, it is necessary for the national economy to be socialised and for women to participate in common productive labour. Then women will occupy the same position as men.

Here one can see that the party (or more specifically, its leadership) decides what is best for individuals. It does not matter that a mother may experience joy and fulfilment in dedicating her life to raising her children. According to those in authority, she is oppressed.

These varying forms of oppression cannot be isolated. This leads to the party criticising black economic empowerment for merely dealing with race, and not taking the toll of class oppression and patriarchy into consideration (SACP, 2012b).

From the preceding exposition, a summary of the SACP anthropology can be made: Each person is reduced to a list of competing oppressions. The most important element of his or her identity is in which area he or she is

most oppressed. The list of ways in which a person can be oppressed is not limited, but the party's current foci are race, class and gender (SACP, 2012b).

The fact that these categories do not make any logical sense can be seen from the following: A black man may be defined by the SACP as oppressed because of his race, but if he is married and his wife raises the children, he is also her oppressor. If he is a heterosexual Christian man, he is also part of the group who oppresses homosexuals and minority religions, even if he does not actively take part in this oppression.

From this one can see that there is no way out of the contradiction inherent in every person. Every person is an oppressor in one way and oppressed in another. If all of history is class warfare, how can one choose sides? Which area of one's identity is paramount? If a black man is oppressed for his blackness while at the same time being an oppressor for his masculinity, how much is he acceptable to the party and to what extent does he deserve rejection?

2.2 A Christian response

Opposing this very conflicted and pained view of humanity, Christianity offers a more realistic and hopeful view of mankind. And in the end, shows true equality.

The first thing that must be said of mankind is that they were created in God's image. "He is therefore like God in everything in which a creature can be like God. He is like God in that he too is a personality [...]. [W]hen man was created, he had true knowledge, true righteousness, and true holiness." (Van Til, 2008:34) This is a person's primary identity, "it is this image of God that is the presupposition behind everything else we *are*" (Oliphint, 2013:93).

In stark opposition to the collectivism of a Communist worldview; each person matters as an individual. His or her class, race or gender add or subtract nothing to their worth. To use a cliché, each person is unique and special, each has his or her own "dignity and significance" (Allison, 2018:122). Each person has inherent value because each person is created in the image of God, even if this image is marred by sin (Berkhof, 1958:182-183).

To an extent, a Christian may agree with the idea quoted in the Communist Manifesto that the history of humanity is a history of strife. This goes back to the days of Cain and Able, where the first murder was committed between

the first brothers. But the reason for this strife is not merely economic (even though at times that may be the reason for it on the surface). It goes much deeper than mere actions or systems. The real reason for this is the sin that is part of every human's heart. This is explained through the doctrine of the Fall of man. In their misunderstanding of human nature, the SACP falls into the trap of all Utopian worldviews. Nancy Pearcey (2008:130) describes it as follows:

Utopians who deny Creation also deny the Fall, totally rejecting the idea that human nature is corrupt and prone to evil. Instead they redefine all social problems as temporary disorders that can be resolved through education and social engineering.

Understanding man's fallenness is as important as understanding his creation (Van Til, 2008:36). Mankind's fall affects both the image of God in them and the rest of creation. As for the image of God in mankind, it was not taken away, but it was defaced. When man was created, he had true knowledge, but his decision to sin has taken that away. Man has instead chosen to follow a lie. He turned his back on God and has forgotten that he is merely a creature (Van Til, 2008:36). Man has rejected both the truth and God. This doctrine finds one of its clearest expressions in Romans 1:18-25:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

But, since mankind was created to be lords over creation, his fall affected the rest of creation. All of creation suffered, and as a result mankind suffered even more. It was not only other people that may hurt him; all of creation was tainted, thorns and thistles sprung up (Gen. 2:17-19), making life much harder (Van Til, 2008:35; Oliphint, 2013:95).

From these two principles – man's creation in God's image and his fall into sin – one can see that a Christian view of mankind is one that sees people

as truly equal. All people are precious because they are created in the image of God, which is true of “the just and the unjust”. A person who is part of an “oppressive class” is not of less value than the “oppressed”. This equality goes the other way as well, all of mankind is responsible for suffering and injustice. No person is without fault, all mankind has fallen in sin, therefore all mankind is at fault for the injustices that are prevalent in the world. This does not allow a Christian to just sit back and accept the world for the unjust one it is, as will be shown in the section on Ethics (point 6). Scripture does deal with what believers must do in the face of injustice.

3. Knowledge

3.1 SACP's internal consistency

In the issue of epistemology, the linchpin of the SACP's worldview shows itself. Even though there are various aspects of epistemology, this study focuses on what the party sees as the ultimate authority in determining true knowledge. For the SACP, this is Marxist-Leninism as interpreted by the party itself. All members are expected to live and think in accordance with this.

Marxism today is a very fragmented ideology, according to Carl Truman (2018): “If there is one group in the world which can match Christians in its ability to fragment indefinitely and anathematize those who claim its label while deviating on fine points of dogma, it is the Marxists.” However, the SACP is seen by some as the most orthodox Marxist-Leninist party currently active, more closely adhering to the original ideology than other parties (Scholtz & Scholtz, 2008:123). While the party's interpretation of Marxist-Leninism may be orthodox, the crucial aspect of the SACP epistemology is their interpretation – not necessarily the ideology as promulgated by Marx and Lenin.

The following is part of a pledge that every party member must take:

I accept the aims and objectives of the SACP and agree to abide by its Constitution and loyally to carry out the decisions of the Party. I shall strive to live up to the ideals of Communism and shall selflessly serve the workers and the poor and the country, always placing the interests of the Party and the workers and the poor above personal interests (SACP, 2012a).

This view of the party as supreme epistemological authority is based on Lenin's idea of a vanguard party. This entails a group of dedicated professional revolutionaries who are well educated and can objectively see what needs to be done in the cause of revolution (Lenin, 2005a; Fetscher, 1991a:80). The workers and the oppressed cannot be trusted to see what their lot truly is.

The party states explicitly, “the workers and the poor can (and actually have) supported ideas, including very reactionary and anti-working class ideas, that are not in accordance with their material reality” (SACP, 2007). What this comes down to is that the party (in actuality its leadership-elite) knows best and demands obedience.

It is clear, this is a very demanding and even oppressive approach towards the party’s members. It can even be regarded as cultic, since a characteristic of every cult is a demand by the leadership of total obedience and control of its members’ thinking (Stoker & De Bruyn, 1995:564; Deikman, 1994:89). This is tied to its anthropology, where the individual is not of importance, but the collective is. However, “the collective” cannot decide for itself what is in its own best interests, only the party (that is, the leadership) can do this. It is hard not to see an immensely condescending view of the people they claim to fight for. The leadership of the party are privy to a special knowledge, has all authority and are untainted by the ideas of the oppressive class.

In this one can see how the various aspects of a worldview are connected. The ideas of the members of the vanguard party are worth more than the ideas of an ordinary working-class person. Not all people are equal. The party’s leadership knows best, and they claim to follow the ever important Marx and Lenin – but only as they see fit. While not going into the specific moral failings of these two men,⁵ or the SACP leadership, it is clear that none of them are perfect or omniscient, but all are fallen in sin (just like the rest of humanity). It cannot be wise to entrust one’s foundation for all knowledge on what they say or decide, with a pledge to “carry out the decisions of the party”, whatever these decisions may be according to the leadership-elite.

5 To name a few examples: Marx fathered an illegitimate son by the family maid and sent the son away to be raised by a poor family (Jones, 2016:324). This maid was also never paid for her work. This contradiction between Marx’s ideology of working-class salvation and his actions towards the working class in his household are shown by Paul Johnson (1988:79): In all his [Marx’s] researches into the iniquities of British capitalism, he came across many instances of low-paid workers, but he never succeeded in unearthing one who was paid literally no wages at all. Yet such a worker did exist, in his own household. When Marx took his family on their formal Sunday walks, bringing up the rear, carrying the picnic basket and other impedimenta, was a stumpy female figure. This was Helen Demuth [the life-long family maid]. She got her keep but was paid nothing [...]. She was a ferociously hard worker, not only cleaning and scrubbing, but managing the family budget [...] Marx never paid her a penny.

Lenin encouraged violence, murder and bank robbery to further his revolutionary goals (Service, 2000:177). While he was in power, he was also immensely cruel. Richard Pipes (1997:507) described him as follows:

Towards outsiders, people not belonging to his order of the elect – and that included 99.7 percent of his compatriots – Lenin showed no human feelings whatever, sending them to their death by tens of thousands, often to serve as an example to others.

The party's devotion to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the extremes they would go to defend it, is seen most clearly in its handling of the fall of the Soviet Union and the corresponding revelation of atrocities that were committed under the name of Communism. According to the leadership of the party, the real tragedy of the millions killed by the Communist regime in the Soviet Union is that they had to spend energy in defending the ideology, instead of furthering the revolution (SACP, 1998).⁶ Almost all suffering experienced under Communists is tolerated, since they claim that all of this is done in the interest of the greater good (Schmitz, 2019).

Part of the problem with having a manmade ideology as the basis of all knowledge, is that it will change as time and circumstances change. It was shown earlier how Lenin and the SACP changed aspects of the ideology of Marx (its emphasis only on class) to suit the practical needs of the time. The ideology that people must dedicate their lives to, is not eternal but changing. Therefore, it cannot be a solid foundation on which to build knowledge. What eventually happens is that the leadership of the party may change core issues in its worldview in order to further what it sees as most important or most beneficial at the time. Ordinary members are forced to entrust their thinking to the party and thus become ideological slaves of the party.⁷

3.2 A Christian response

The starting point for Christian epistemology is God himself. This implies acknowledging that God is the source of all truth. Only God has all truth. While man can attain truth, it is only with God's help. He is the one who gives insight. If we want to attain real truth, "we must seek to think his thoughts after him" (Frame, 2015:48).

If mankind wants to attain true knowledge, he needs God to give it to him and God does indeed do this through revelation. According to the Belgic Confession (art. 2) there are two sources of God's revelation: Nature and Scripture (Berkhof, 1958:36-37).

By nature, man knows that a personal God exists and that he is accountable to him. But, instead of submitting to this knowledge, sinful man suppresses it and follows his own desires (Rom. 1:19-21). This knowledge that God gives through creation is enough to leave all mankind without excuse. All people know instinctively that they are guilty, that they do not live a fully moral life. In the words of Romans 2:15 "They show that the work of the law is written on

⁶ This will be explained further under Ethics.

⁷ This is another example of cult-like behaviour (Stoker & De Bruyn, 1995:564; Deikman, 1994:89).

their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.” Because this knowledge is painful, mankind suppresses it, they try to deny the truth they know and attempt “to assert their own autonomy: to make themselves, or something other than the biblical God, the final standard of truth and right” (Frame, 2015: 48). In order to avoid the pain of their consciences accusing them, they turn to anything that may assuage it. Because of this, mankind needs more than the general revelation found in Creation.

The second source of revelation is found in Scripture. The knowledge found in creation is not sufficient for sinful mankind to find the answers he needs for all this life and the next. The only way for mankind to know what is true about God and the way to be reconciled to him is through his Word. In his Word, God shows the way to salvation and true freedom (Berkhof, 1958:37; Buice, 2019). God is the source of all truth, and if anyone wants to have access to that source, he needs Scripture. It is also important to note that the Bible is not only authoritative on religious matters, as some would claim, it is authoritative on all that it speaks of, and it deals with all of life and creation, because it is from the Creator of all things himself (2 Tim. 3:16; Van Til, 2008:29; Percy, 2008:93-95).

After acknowledging that God does indeed provide mankind with sufficient knowledge through the revelation of nature and Scripture, the apologist must also acknowledge another crucial factor in Christian epistemology, namely, the noetic effects of sin (Van Til, 1925:342, 619). What this means is that sin did not only scar man morally, but his mind and thinking processes were affected as well. He no longer thinks the way he should think. While he is not fully irrational, all his thinking is tainted, and therefore unaided human knowledge cannot be trusted (Van Til, 1925:311), and definitely cannot be blindly depended upon as demanded by the SACP.

Unlike the SACP’s view, true knowledge and understanding is not limited to a select group of special people whose thinking should be trusted above all else. The Christian worldview is vast and all-encompassing; no one can know all of it. But everything that a person needs to know to be saved and live a life that is pleasing to God, can be known by anyone who reads or hears Scripture. This is the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture. Greg Bahnsen (1979) defines it as follows:

Scriptural perspicuity meant that its literature was not so technical or peculiar that some kind of “expert” was required to mediate its message to common men whether that mediator was an expert in the opinions of the Roman magisterium,

allegorical fancies, historical subtleties, existential insight, demythologization, or what have you. The Reformers were convinced that freeing the Bible from authoritative interveners need not spell the end to finding any distance, specifiable, definite message in the Scripture, for it was God Himself who communicated His own special word therein without obscuring His intent.

Again, from this one can see true equality. Though there are teachers of Scripture who train others to use it well, these people do not have special access or authority over Scriptural interpretation. As William Tyndale, the first man to translate the Bible from Greek and Hebrew into vernacular English said to a Catholic leader who wanted to keep the Bible out of the common language, “If God spare my life ere many years, I will cause a boy that driveth the plow, shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost” (quoted from Piper, 2006). Christians believe that the poor and uneducated can be trusted to have a solid epistemology, unlike Communists who believe only the party and its cadres can be trusted.

4. Ethics

4.1 *SACP’s internal consistency*

The SACP’s ethics are guided by its epistemology and anthropology as interpreted by the party. This was the same for Lenin (2005b), who explained the reasons for it as follows:

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the proletariat’s class struggle. Our morality stems from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat [...to us there is no such thing as a morality that stands outside human society; that is a fraud. To us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat’s class struggle.

From this, two things are evident. Firstly, this is fully in line with the collectivist view of humanity, where individual wellbeing is not the thing sought for, but rather the so-called collective good. Secondly, when the party is the decider of what is in the best interest of the proletariat, any action is moral or immoral based on the decision of the leaders of the party.⁸ This may change with time, depending on the stage of the revolution. This meant that all manner of violence, torture or imprisonment will always be ethical if the leadership-elite decides that it is necessary, up until the few with authority in the party decides that the revolution is complete (Lukes, 1991:342; Gecys, 1955).

8 This is another aspect of the party that is typical of cults. According to Deikman (1994:78): “When a leader’s actions conflict with the group’s principles, standards, or values, followers may twist words and meanings to reduce cognitive dissonance and maintain the fantasy.”

During the Cold War and apartheid, the SACP stood by its support of the Soviet Union even amid the atrocities it committed. It was justified in doing this because it was “the first workers state” and it supported the ANC and SACP in its struggle efforts. (SACP, 1998) Because the Soviet Union was a Communist state (fighting against capitalist hegemony), its moral failings can and should be excused – actually, it should not even be considered as moral failings.

In the late 1990’s the SACP realised that it should have instead condemned some of these atrocities. Yet, they did not do so out of concern for the suffering of the people who lived under Communist regimes. Rather, the party believes that because it did not condemn Soviet atrocities earlier, for much of the 1990s “the SACP has had to devote considerable energies and time to collectively debating and developing a consistent socialist understanding of these questions” (SACP, 1998). The major problem it sees is not moral, it is ideological. There seems to be no real concern for human suffering, because in this worldview human suffering is subordinated to the larger goal of class warfare (Lenin, 2005b; Gecys, 1955). The real problem is the energy that had to be wasted in debating what happened in the past and having it fit in with a socialist understanding. This is confirmed by what the party sees as its role in the future: “The challenge to rescue socialism from the events of 1989-91 [the collapse of the Soviet Union] and to renew socialist confidence and optimism remains an important priority of the SACP” (SACP, 1998). Socialist ideology is the thing that needs to be guarded and saved from what happened. It is most important, more so than immediate human suffering.

Because the collective good (as determined by the party) is the basis of ethics, individuals and communities are discouraged from doing things that may help them improve their lot in life if this is not in line with the party’s idea of what is needed. Jeremy Cronin showed this in his view on the issue of land restitution. He encouraged black people to opt to take land instead of monetary compensation. Even though he acknowledged that families and communities have improved their lives by taking monetary compensation for land instead of the land itself, it would be better for them to instead take the land to further “the radical transformation of existing racialised patterns of land ownership” (Cronin, 2018:39). Even if a community or family may be helped by something, it is not good itself. It would be better to focus on the larger racial and class balance that must be addressed. As with the party’s handling of Soviet atrocities, it shows that it does not care for individual welfare, only that of what the leadership considers to be the collective good. Also, it cannot be stressed enough that only the party can decide what is the collective good. Basically, as was seen in the Soviet Union, individuals are

at the mercy of the Communist ideology as interpreted by the leadership of the party.

This Communist ethic has led to more suffering than any other ideology or dictatorship wherever and whenever it has been applied.

- Soviet Union, terror and forced starvation
- China: Mao Zedong's "Great Leap Forward" launched in 1959 led to the deaths of at least 45 million people (up to 3 million of these were executions, the rest died as a result of the famine Mao's policies caused). This makes Mao "one of the greatest mass-murderers in history" (Dikötter, 2010; Somin, 2016).
- Cuba: While not as lethal as the Soviet Union and China, [i]n the earliest days of the revolution, summary executions established a culture of fear that quickly eliminated most resistance. In the decades that followed, inhumane prison conditions often leading to death, unspeakable torture and privation were enough to keep Cubans cowed (O'Grady, 2005). All the while, the face and leader of the revolution, Fidel Castro, lived in opulence – at his death, his personal wealth was estimated to be \$900 million (Flamer, 2016).
- Venezuela: the most recent example. Nicholas Maduro and his forerunner, Hugo Chavez have taken this country from being the richest in South America to social and financial ruin (Fisher, 2017). They were and are praised for faithfully implementing socialism by Communists worldwide, including the SACP and ANC (Fabricius, 2019; Stephens, 2019). Starvation and violent political repression are rampant.

Other examples can be found in Cambodia (BBC, 2018), Ethiopia (Puddington, 1986), Vietnam (Menand, 2018),⁹ and many other countries.

Ilya Somin (2017) helpfully summarised Communism's impact on the countries it has been implemented in:

In each of these cases, communist rulers were well-aware that their policies were causing mass death, and in each they persisted nonetheless, often because they considered the extermination of "Kulak" peasants a feature rather than a bug.

While collectivization was the single biggest killer, communist regimes also engaged in other forms of mass murder on an epic scale. Millions died in slave labor camps, such as the USSR's Gulag system and its equivalents elsewhere. Many others were killed in more conventional mass executions, such as those of Stalin's Great Purge, and the "Killing Fields" of Cambodia.

⁹ I refer here to the forced collectivisation and resulting starvation that the Communist regime implemented after their victory against the Americans and South Vietnam, not to the war.

The injustices of communism were not limited to mass murder alone. Even those fortunate enough to survive still were subjected to severe repression, including violations of freedom, of speech, freedom of religion, loss of property rights, and the criminalization of ordinary economic activity. No previous tyranny sought such complete control over nearly every aspect of people's lives.

Although the communists promised a utopian society in which the working class would enjoy unprecedented prosperity, in reality they engendered massive poverty. Wherever communist and noncommunist states existed in close proximity, it was the communists who used walls and the threat of death to keep their people from fleeing to societies with greater opportunity.

In the face of all this factual evidence, it is evident that the SACP's devotion to Communism is not primarily guided by care for the people they claim to represent. If it were, they would not follow such a destructive ideology. Their primary concern is furthering the ideology, even at the cost of suffering.

4.2 A Christian response

Whereas for the communist the so-called collective good is ultimate, Christianity bases its interpersonal ethic on the value of each individual. It is predicated in the fact that all men are created in the image of God, which means that each individual, not a nebulous "collective" has to be seen as having worth.

An important summation of a Christian view of ethics is found in Jesus' words in Matthew 22: 37-40:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

A Christian view of ethics can therefore be divided into two parts: love for God, and love for our fellow man. This is what mankind was created for (Reeves, 2012: 65).

The love for neighbour stresses the contrast between a Christian and communist ethic. Even though a person may be part of the so-called oppressor class of whatever kind, they do not lose their inherent value as someone created in God's image. Whereas a communist ethic may allow for oppressive atrocities to be committed against those who they decided to be oppressors because of their group identity, this is not the case for a Christian. However, if a crime is committed, God has given the authorities power to punish, but this punishment is based on actions, not identity. This power to punish is given to the state, not to revolutionary parties, and with the purpose to punish the evildoer for his evil acts, not his beliefs or identity

(Frame, 1989: 224). Romans 13:1-6 makes this clear:

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

It must be emphasized that the state is only authorised to punish wrongful acts. Whereas a communist ethic may view a person as a criminal for being part of the oppressive class (even if he does nothing overtly criminal), this is not allowed for in the Christian worldview. One's so-called class identity does not determine whether one is right or wrong.

Christian ethics also handles mankind's responsibility to his Creator. God has created mankind, that gives him an absolute right to demand what he wants from them (Oliphint, 2013:93). Since He made man in his image, he made them to reflect and represent him in the rest of creation in a responsible way. God's standard for humanity is absolute perfection (Van Til, 2008:87). This perfection goes beyond merely the good deeds committed and evil deeds avoided, it goes much deeper. True good deeds for a Christian will have "three necessary ingredients: (1) a heart purified by faith, (2) obedience to God's Word, and (3) the right end, the glory of God" (Frame, 2008:28).

The next logical question links with the epistemology section, "How can we know exactly what God wants, what he sees as right and wrong?" Scripture talks of two ways. In the first place, because of being God's image, mankind knows intuitively what is right and wrong. They are born with as moral beings and with a conscience. However, because they know that they cannot attain to this standard, mankind suppresses this knowledge and hardens their consciences against God's standard (Frame, 2015:50). Because of this, mankind needs God's special revelation in Scripture. In Scripture God has given mankind access to his unchanging source of ethics in his Word. Man cannot be trusted to create his own standards for right and wrong, he is too tainted by sin. God has given mankind what they need in his Word, if they are willing to submit to and obey it (Frame, 2015:40; Van Til, 2008:74). Furthermore, returning to a point made under the section on Knowledge, a Christian ethic is not based on what is expedient at the time determined

by a group of party leaders. Because God and his word are eternal, it can be trusted to always be true. It will not change at the whims of leaders and expediency (Ascol, 2018).

5. Salvation

5.1 *SACP's internal consistency*

Taking the final part of the TAKES method and applying it to the SACP's worldview, their view on salvation, a good starting point can be found in an earlier draft of the Communist Manifesto. In it Friederich Engels (2000) gave a helpful summary of the Marxist ultimate aim and salvation hope:

What is the aim of the Communists? Answer: To organise society in such a way that every member of it can develop and use all his capabilities and powers in complete freedom and without thereby infringing the basic conditions of this society.

How do you wish to achieve this aim? Answer: By the elimination of private property and its replacement by community of property.

The first answer Engels gives is that Communists want complete freedom for the individual. However, this 'freedom' does not correspond in any way to their modus operandi of the party. Firstly, within the party itself it demands full obedience from their members and not allowing individual thinking. Secondly, according to them, the party must take control of the state. They must then use the coercive power of the state to further revolutionary goals, even to the direct disadvantage and survival of the individual or even whole communities. The SACP sees its role as using state power to further the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which is the second stage of the revolution (the first being the ending of apartheid). The NDR is the official plan to use the instruments of the government of South Africa to further the Communist revolution (SACP, 2012b).

An important question in this regard is who can define what 'freedom' is? Who can say that the revolution is complete? Who can decide when the party has used the powers of the state enough? The answer is always the same – the party does. The leadership of the SACP decides all of this. As was shown earlier in the section 5, 'Knowledge', individuals cannot be trusted to see what they really need according to the authoritarian leadership of the SACP. That is the responsibility of the vanguard party. In the same way, individuals cannot be trusted to define their freedom. The party will decide for them. But clearly, this is no freedom. This takes all agency away from individuals and puts all authority in the hands of a small elitist leadership group. They

will tell people when they are free. In the words of Matthew Schmitz (2019): “Men do not participate in a shared end as citizens. They are simply forced to submit.”¹⁰

Until the time of Communist freedom is at hand, the party must be trusted with more and more power to accomplish this. They will take over more aspects of the state, while at the same time making sure that the state increases its reach. So, one is expected to trust that the party will use its increased power in a trustworthy way, hoping that they would be the exception to Lord Acton’s famous dictum: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” (Oxford dictionary of quotations, 2014:1) All hope is placed in the party elite. They are the true saviours. This should be done in the face of all previous Communist regimes proving themselves to be an oppressive dictatorship, harming those who they rule to the benefit of a small elite – as can be seen in the USSR, the Eastern Bloc, China and Cuba, among others¹¹ (Brooker, 2000:81, 83, 160).

5.2 *A Christian response*

From a Christian perspective, the problems with the SACP’s view on salvation are innumerable, but two problems stand out. Firstly, it only focuses on external factors – they believe that once external economic injustices are removed, people will cease to be oppressed. But this does not take into account the corruption in each person’s heart. As was shown in the discussion on the Fall of man (see Anthropology, section 4), mankind’s problem is not primarily external, it is the sin within each person’s heart.

Secondly, and related to the first, one is forced to place all hope in the leadership of the party. One must trust that they will not abuse their authority and even trust them to decide when one is truly free. But these leaders are all humans with their own sinful desires and have all the means and justification to oppress. All men are fallen in sin. It is useless to put any trust in man to save.

10 This seems to be a clear illustration of what was said in the George Orwell (1977:5) novel *1984*. In the novel, the party sought to control all speech and even ideas. It succeeded in making people believe utterly absurd and contradictory statements, the most famous of these was “War is Peace. Freedom is Slavery. Ignorance is Strength”.

11 As to the critique of this fact that these regimes did not practise real Communism, Jordan Peterson (2017) makes the following statement: “When someone says that wasn’t real Communism, here is what it means: I am so narcissistic and arrogant and so convinced of the rightness of my ideology and my moral purity, that if I was the dictator of a Communist state, the utopia would have come in as promised.” Basically, in the face of all historical proof, one must be extremely self-righteous to still pursue this ideology, especially as a leader.

What answers can a Christian worldview provide to these problems mankind are facing? Christianity is clear that there is indeed a problem of injustice in the world, but for a Christian the problem is more serious than even mankind's oppression at the hands of others. The problem is that humanity is in rebellion against its Creator and enslave themselves to their own or others' desires (Ciampa, 2000:505). Because the ultimate reality of the universe is an absolute personality, they are accountable to him for what they do, since they are in a relationship with him. Humanity's sin against him and their fellow human beings awakens his righteous anger (Morris, 1988:732). Therefore, it is safe to say that for the Christian worldview, man's ultimate problem is God's wrath on him because of his sin.

Furthermore, man is totally incapable of saving himself. Other worldviews attempt to create its own saviour (in the case of the SACP, this is the vanguard party). Christianity alone adequately acknowledges man's inability to save himself. If mankind is the problem, how can they also be the solution (Frame, 2015:51)? Only a holistic biblical worldview can provide the requisite understanding of human nature and God's solution to its problems (Percy, 2008:131).

God took the initiative in man's salvation by providing a way for sins to be punished, which is in compliance with his justice. He did this by sending his Son to take the curse of sin and be punished in man's place. In that way both his righteousness and wrath are fulfilled. After his Son died, he rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. He then sent his Holy Spirit to indwell believers. The Holy Spirit then works in believers to live righteous and fight the sin and unrighteousness even in their own lives (Platt, 2017:14; Van Til, 2008:40).

Even after an individual is saved, he is not completely free from the effects of sin. He still lives in a fallen world, and although he battles sin, he is not yet completely free from it in his own life. Therefore, the Christian worldview lays emphasis on hope of the future. This is not a pie in the sky or opium for the people, but a wonderful certainty of a perfect life with our God and Saviour (Percy, 2008:364). Christ promised to renew all things. There will be a new heaven and a new earth (Rev 21), where God will be with his people and where there will no longer be any sin or suffering (Van Til, 2008:42). There will be peace, not just between people, but between God *and* people (Buys, 2013:77). The question could then be asked: "If Christians put their faith in a new world and future salvation, will this not dissuade them from pursuing justice and alleviating suffering in this world?" Scripture deals with this head-on. Micah 6:8 states, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and

what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" A Christian puts his hope in a future and eternal salvation that is yet to come, but while he waits for this, he and the church must be a force for good in this world. A truly holistic Reformed Christian worldview will mean that its adherents will pursue the earthly good and justice for others as well – this can be seen in its treatment of the poor (Buys, 2013:90), migrants (Platt, 2017:234; Medeiros, 2013:180), abused women (Langberg, 2013:146) and children (Tchividjan, 2013:172, and of orphans (Platt, 2017:108).

The major difference between this and the revolutionary focus of the SACP is that the Christian does not demand absolute power and trust from others to do this, but in fact, frees up individuals to be the persons that God created and called them to be (Pearcy, 2008:87), not what a select group of party leaders decides for them.

Conclusion

C.S. Lewis (1970:324) said the following, which seems to apply to the SACP and Marxist-Leninists in general:

Of all tyrannies, a tyranny sincerely exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It would be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. They may be more likely to go to Heaven yet at the same time likelier to make a Hell of earth. Their very kindness stings with intolerable insult. To be 'cured' against one's will and cured of states which we may not regard as disease is to be put on a level of those who have not yet reached the age of reason or those who never will; to be classed with infants, imbeciles, and domestic animals.

It is not possible to see the motives of every member of the SACP, but undoubtedly many of them pursue their revolutionary goals because they believe that is what would be best for society. However, even if one takes a very sympathetic view concerning the motives of Marx, Lenin and the SACP, the danger in their worldview remains. In order to pursue their goals, they need those who they claim to serve to give them their undivided trust, almost unlimited power, and if deemed necessary their very lives. And since the party is the one who decides who is right and wrong, oppressed and oppressor, they have a mandate to oppress – do whatever they wish to those

they describe as being the oppressors. The examples of the Soviet Union, Maoist China and the Khmer Rouge show clearly what this will lead to.

Despite the authoritarian nature of their worldview, the SACP has been extremely successful fulfilling Lenin's goal of working with a nationalist party (the ANC) to further a Communist revolution. It decided the ideological direction of the ANC, and its NDR is still being implemented (Trehwela, 2017; Nzimande, 2006).

Understanding the thinking and beliefs behind the worldview of the SACP and through them the NDR will be crucial if Christians want to offer effective counter arguments to it. And because of the dangers inherent in a Communist worldview, it is crucial for Christians to do this.

Bibliography

ALLISON, GREGG R. 2018. *50 Core Truths of the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

ANDERSON, JAMES. 2018. What It TAKES To Make A Worldview. <https://www.monergism.com/what-it-takes-make-worldview-0>. Date of access: 26 February 2018

ASCOL, TOM. 2018. Article 1—Scripture: Explanation by Tom Ascol. <https://statementonsocialjustice.com/articles/article-1-scripture-explanation-by-tom-ascol/> Date if access: 24 February 2020.

BAHSEN, GREG. 1979. Science, Subjectivity And Scripture (Is Biblical Interpretation "Scientific"?). <http://www.cmfnow.com/articles/pa044.htm> Date of access: 20 May 2019.

BAHNSEN, GREG L. 1998. *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis*. Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

BBC. 2018. Khmer Rouge: Cambodia's years of brutality. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-10684399> Date of access: 2 May 2020.

BERKHOF, LOUIS. 1958. *Systematic Theology*. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust.

BHASKAR, ROY. 1991. Materialism. (In: Bottomore, T.B., Ed., *A dictionary of Marxist thought*. Oxford, Oxfordshire : Blackwell Reference. p. 324-329)

BROOKER, PAUL. 2000. *Non-democratic Regimes*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

-
- BUICE, JOSH. 2019. Article 8 — The Church: Explanation by Josh Buice. <https://statementonsocialjustice.com/articles/article-8-the-church-josh-buice/> Date of access: 24 February 2020.
- BUYS, P.J. 2013. A Missional Response to Poverty and Social Justice (In: Logan, S.T. Ed., *Reformed and Missional: Following Jesus Into the World*. Greensboro: NC: New Growth Press. p. 67-96).
- CIAMPA, R.E. 2000. Freedom. (In: Alexander, et al, Eds., *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press. P. 503-506).
- CLOUSER, ROY, A. 2005. *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame.
- CRONIN, JEREMY. 2018. Towards a Marxist approach to land. *African Communist*, April 2018: 27-45.
- DEIKMAN, ARTHUR, J. 1994. *The Wrong Way Home: Uncovering Patterns of Cult Behavior in American Society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- DIKÖTTER, FRANK. 2010. Mao's Great Leap to Famine. *The New York Times*, 15 December. https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/16/opinion/16iht-eddikotter16.html?_r=2 Date of access: 2 May 2020.
- ENGELS, FRIEDRICH & MARX, KARL. 2000. Manifesto of the Communist Party. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm> Date of access: 23 October 2019.
- FABRICIUS, PETER. 2019. Ace Magashule to lead Tripartite Alliance's solidarity visit to Venezuela's president under siege, Nicolás Maduro. *Daily Maverick*, 1 March. <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-03-01-ace-magashule-to-lead-tripartite-alliances-solidarity-visit-to-venezuelas-president-under-siege-nicolas-maduro/> Date of access: 1 May 2020.
- FETSCHER, IRING. 1991a. Class Consciousness. (In: Bottomore, T.B., Ed., *A dictionary of Marxist thought*. Oxford, Oxfordshire: Blackwell Reference. p. 73-81).
- FISHER, MAX. 2017. How Venezuela went from the richest economy in South America to the brink of financial ruin. *Independent*, 21 May. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/how-venezuela-went-from-the-richest-economy-in-south-america-to-the-brink-of-financial-ruin-a7740616.htm Date of access: 1 May 2020.
- FLAMER, KEITH. 2016. 10 Surprises About Fidel Castro's Extravagant Life. *Forbes*, 26 November. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/keithflamer/2016/11/26/10-surprises-about-castros-extravagant-life/#1c8ac5006d76> Date of access: 2 May 2020.
-

- FRAME, JOHN M. 1989. Toward A Theology of The State. *Westminster Theological Journal*, 1989 (51):199-226.
- FRAME, JOHN M. 1994. *Apologetics to the glory of God: An introduction*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.
- FRAME, JOHN M. 2008. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company.
- FRAME, JOHN M. 2015. *Apologetics: A Justification of Christian Belief*. 2nd edn. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.
- GECYS, KAZYS. 1955. Communist Ethics. *Lituanus*. 3(4). http://www.lituanus.org/1955/55_23_03Gecys.htm Date of access: 22 October 2019
- JONES, GARETH. 2016. Karl Marx: *Greatness and Illusion*. London: Penguin Random House UK
- JOHNSON, PAUL. 1988. *Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.
- KEITH, SCOTT. 2017. Is Christianity an Opiate or a Truth Serum? *Modern Reformation*, 26(4): 23-31.
- LANGBERG, DIANE. 2013. A Missional Response to Global Violence Against Women. (In: Logan, S.T. Ed., *Reformed and Missional: Following Jesus Into the World*, Greensboro: NC: New Growth Press. p. 130-146).
- LENIN, VLADIMIR. 2005a. What is to be done? <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/download/what-itd.pdf> Date of access: 22 October 2019.
- LENIN, VLADIMIR. 2005b. The Tasks of the Youth Leagues: Speech Delivered At The Third All-Russia Congress of The Russian Young Communist League. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/oct/02.htm> Date of access: 22 October 2019.
- LEWIS, C.S. 1970. *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- LUKES, STEVEN. 1991. Class Consciousness. (In: Bottomore, T.B., Ed., *A dictionary of Marxist thought*. Oxford, Oxfordshire : Blackwell Reference. p. 341-342).
- MARX, KARL. 1843. A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm> Date of access: 5 October 2019
- MCLELLAN, DAVID. 1993. Marxism. (In: *The Blackwell encyclopaedia of modern Christian thought*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell. p. 360-361)
- MDLALOSE, THOKO. 1986. The place of the church in our liberation struggle. *African Communist* 104:18-27.

-
- MEDEIROS, ELIAS. 2013. God Scatters to Gather Through His People: A Missional Response to Migrant Churches. (In: Logan, S.T. Ed., *Reformed and Missional: Following Jesus Into the World*, Greensboro: NC: New Growth Press. p. 173-188).
- MENAND, LOUIS. 2018. What went wrong in Vietnam. *The New Yorker*, 19 February. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/26/what-went-wrong-in-vietnam> Date of access: 2 May 2020.
- MORRIS, L.L. 1988. Wrath of God. (In: Ferguson, S. B. et al, Eds., *New Dictionary of Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press. p. 732).
- NZIMANDE, B. 2006. What is the National Democratic Revolution? <http://www.sacp.org.za/main.php?ID=1850> Date of access: 24 September 2018
- O'GRADY, MARY ANASTASIA. 2005. Counting Castro's Victims. *The Wall Street Journal*, 30 December. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB113590852154334404> Date of access: 2 May 2020.
- OLIPHINT, K. Scott. 2013. *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles & Practices in Defense of Our Faith*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- ORWELL, GEORGE. 1977. 1984. *Orlando*, FL: Signet Classics.
- OXFORD DICTIONARY OF QUOTATIONS. 2014. 8th Ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- PEARCY, NANCY. 2008. *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from its Cultural Captivity*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.
- PETERSON, JORDAN. (2017, July 3) *Jordan Peterson On What The Left Means by 'Not Real Communism' (Part 7 of 7)* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4F0TQ8SEE80>
- PIPER, JOHN. 2006. Always Singing One Note—A Vernacular Bible: Why William Tyndale Lived and Died. <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/always-singing-one-note-a-vernacular-bible> Date of access: 27 January 2020.
- PIPES, RICHARD. 1997. *Russia Under the Bolshevik Regime, 1919-1924*. London: The Harvill Press.
- PLATT, DAVID. 2017. *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale.
- PUDDINGTON, ARCH. 1986. Ethiopia: The Communist Uses of Famine. *Commentary*, April. <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/arch-puddington-2/ethiopia-the-communist-uses-of-famine/> Date of access: 2 May 2020.
-