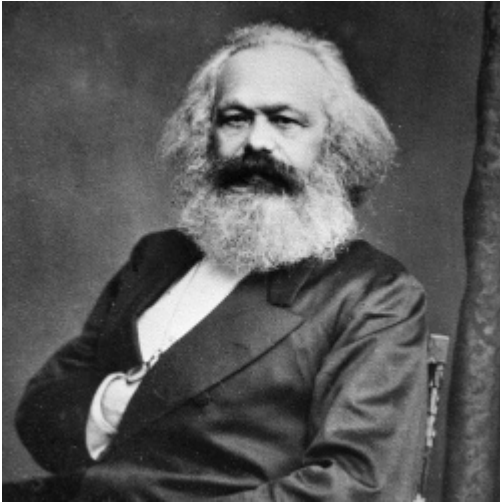


# 'The Lancet' Praises Karl Marx in Bizarre Editorial



By Alex Berezow, PhD — November 6, 2017



The doctor will see you now. (Credit: Public Domain/Wikipedia) [1]

Like a coffee stain on a new carpet, Karl Marx stubbornly refuses to go away. The appeal of his ideas seems to be rooted in some fanciful, whitewashed version of history, because almost without fail, Marx's biggest fans are those people who never had to live under the consequences of his political philosophy.

Attempts to rehabilitate Marx's image occur among left-wing academics, usually fringe economists and undergraduate philosophy majors. Marx is not a typical topic of conversation among biomedical scientists, which is why a recent [editorial](#) [2] by [Richard Horton](#) [3], editor-in-chief of *The Lancet*, is so incredibly bizarre.

The editorial is full of dubious commentary and unsubstantiated claims, such as, "Medicine and Marxism have entangled, intimate, and respectable histories." Dr. Horton writes that "Marxism isn't about violent world revolution, tyrannical dictatorships, or unachievable utopian fantasies," despite the empirical fact that Marxist societies are often built on violent revolutions, tyrannical dictatorships, and utopian fantasies.

He quotes *The Economist* out of context when he writes:

*The Economist, hardly a bastion of left-wing thought, wrote earlier this year, "there is an enormous amount to learn from Marx. Indeed, much of what Marx said seems to become more relevant by the day."*

Conveniently, Dr. Horton left out what *The Economist* [wrote](#) [4] a few paragraphs later: "The

problem with Marx is not that his analysis is nonsensical... but that his solution was far worse than the disease."

Furthermore, the editorial mentions a recent address given by Xi Jinping about healthcare in China, in which the Chinese president discusses the "the scientific truth of Marxism-Leninism." Part of that scientific truth, apparently, is the need for more Traditional Chinese Medicine, a [policy that Mr. Xi fully supports](#) [5] and will undoubtedly cost lives. Remarkably, Dr. Horton overlooks this.

### **The Lancet Manifesto**

*The Lancet* editorial is not only historically dubious but tone-deaf. Many Eastern Europeans, some of whom surely read *The Lancet*, have recent memories of life under communist totalitarian rule. Maybe Dr. Horton should have asked Poland's scientists and medical doctors their opinions of Karl Marx. Their insights, based on real-world experience, likely differ from his.

For instance, Eastern Europeans would have been quick to remind him that Marx laid the intellectual foundation for an economic and political system that cost the lives of tens of millions of their former comrades in the Soviet Union and tens of millions more in Asia. If my grandmother was alive today, she could have told Dr. Horton about how she survived the Holodomor -- Joseph Stalin's largely successful attempt to starve Ukraine to death. On the bright side, because she was preoccupied with finding food, my grandmother never had to worry about hospital bills, a tangible benefit of Marxist healthcare policy.

### **Horton Hears a Foo**

If Dr. Horton truly believes that Marx is an appropriate teacher, then why stop with him? Undoubtedly, there are plenty of insights we could learn from other unsavory historical figures. Perhaps in upcoming editorials, Dr. Horton will regale us with political pointers from Machiavelli, bioethics seminars from Jack Kevorkian, and anatomy lessons from Josef Mengele.

It is time to call out academia's fascination with Karl Marx for what it really is: a pernicious form of historical revisionism that is nearly identical to Holocaust denial. The fact that *The Lancet's* editor-in-chief hasn't the sense to understand that should be a cause for concern in the biomedical community.

Dr. Horton concludes his editorial with, "[M]edicine has a great deal to learn from Marx." The only way that argument is even remotely convincing is if he is referring to Groucho.

H/T John Hinderaker via [Powerline Blog](#) [6].

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[3] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard\\_Horton\\_\(editor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Horton_(editor))

[4] <https://www.economist.com/news/britain/21721916-shadow-chancellors-comment-provoked-scorn-yet-marx-becomes-more-relevant-day-labour>

[5] <https://www.economist.com/news/china/21727945-unproven-remedies-promoted-state-why-chinas-traditional-medicine-boom-dangerous>

[6] <http://www.powerlineblog.com/archives/2017/11/marxism-the-key-to-health.php>