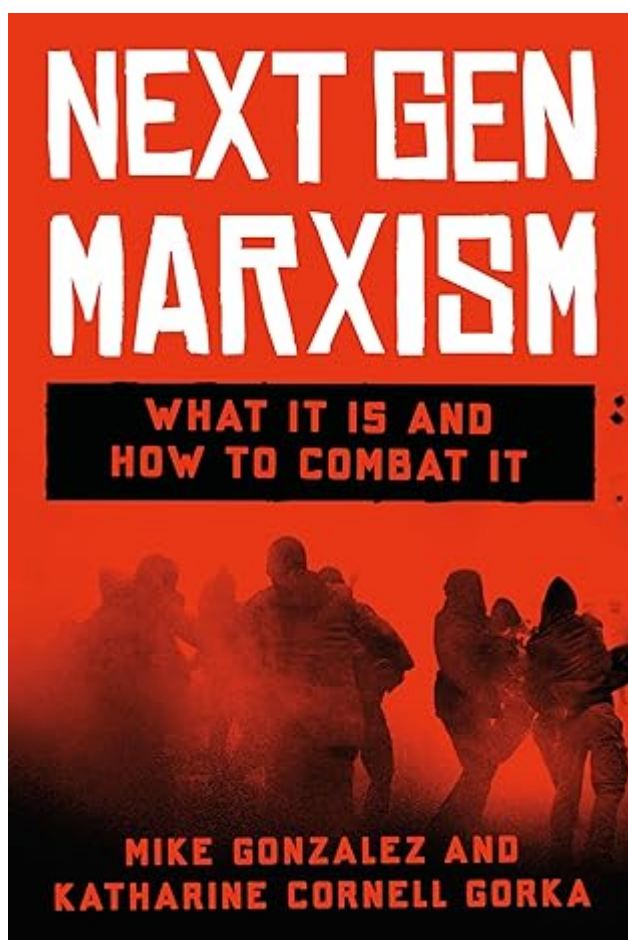


Marxism: the Next Generation



a review by Bruce Bawer

If more Americans had been familiar a couple of decades ago with the history recounted in the pages of [Next Gen Marxism](#) – a cogent, comprehensive [new book by Mike Gonzalez](#), a former *Wall Street Journal* reporter, and Katharine Gorka, an expert on the terrorist threat (and Sebastian Gorka's better half) – a lot would be different. For one thing, Barack Obama would almost certainly never have been elected president. Fewer people would've been suckered into the George Floyd hysteria. Parents would've been warned a lot sooner about the existential danger of sending their kids off to study in the Ivy League. And that's just for starters.

For the history told in [Next Gen Marxism](#) is the history of what we now know as wokeness – the leftist sociocultural

ascendancy manifested in (among much else) cancel culture, the Antifa and BLM riots, DEI, “judicial reform,” “squatter’s rights,” the near-ubiquitous promotion of transgender ideology, and (not least) the conspiracy of Hollywood, the media, the D.C. swamp, and Big Tech to destroy Donald Trump’s first term and deny him a second.

It can feel as if the woke madness slithered out of nowhere, like some poisonous snake, just a few years ago, only to be coiling itself tightly around our throats very soon afterward. But in fact, this toxic creature has a long lineage that leads back to Rousseau and the French Revolution in the 18th century, Marx and Engels in the 19th, and the Russian Revolution in the 20th. Then there’s Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), whose revolutionary writings – notably his theory of hegemony – have made him, in the authors’ words, “the unrivaled Marxist political theorist of the past half century.” (And guess who, of all people, is America’s “top Gramsci scholar”? None other than Pete Buttigieg’s father, Joseph. It’s one of a number of surprises here – surprises that, perhaps, shouldn’t be quite so surprising.)

Another key player in this story is Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979), father of the New Left of the 1960s and 70s. To be sure, by the time Marcuse bowed out, revolutionary leftist thought had undergone a sea change. For Marx, the revolution was all about class – about encouraging oppressed workers to overthrow their oppressors. But would-be Robespierres in America learned soon enough that in their country, that dog didn’t hunt. American workers didn’t want to revolt; far from being downtrodden Russian peasants desperate to throw off the yoke of serfdom, they were free, ambitious citizens of a constitutional Republic who knew that their hopes for economic betterment lay in capitalism, not communism. So American radicals changed their tune. Dropping class struggle, they shifted focus to categories like race and sex; and since workers were too streetwise to fall for their claptrap, they

sought recruits among the restless children of the privileged class – naive, wayward souls who lacked only one precious thing: a reason to feel that they weren't oppressors but oppressed.

The New Left ultimately crashed and burned. But the will to tear down America endured. Revolutionaries went underground, only to re-emerge as members – even pillars – of the establishment: college professors, politicians, journalists. In what came to be known as the “Long March through the Institutions,” they proceeded to proselytize broad swathes of the young and dumb. And who best “personifies the metamorphosis from 1960s radicalism to armed revolution to terrorism to chief Long Marcher through the Institutions”? Answer: Bill Ayers (b. 1944), who in 1969 founded the Weather Underground, a gang of terrorists who idolized Charles Manson, had “Cuban and Viet Cong advisers,” and held mass orgies, their ultimate goal being – what else? – America’s “violent overthrow...through all-out revolution.”

Ayers’s role in the Long March proved to be a significant one. Living in Chicago, his terrorist past apparently either forgiven or forgotten by all and sundry, he involved himself at the highest level in civic affairs, taught at the University of Illinois at Chicago – and mentored a young community organizer named Barack Obama. Now, I suspect that millions of Americans had never heard the term “community organizer” until we all became acquainted with Obama’s résumé (or, rather, his fanciful version thereof) during his first presidential run. How many Americans, if they’d understood what the term really meant, would have voted to put him in the White House? For community organizing, as outlined in *Rules for Radicals* by Saul Alinsky (1909-72) – who, incidentally, was the subject of Hillary Clinton’s college thesis (see how it all fits together?) – is not some benign form of public service but, rather, a coldblooded, calculating means of acquiring power.

Part of the task of the community organizer, advised Alinsky, is to “develop multiple issues.” It’s David Horowitz who has observed, on more than one occasion, that “the issue is never the issue. The issue is always the revolution.” Gonzalez and Gorka put it this way: “race, sex, sexual orientation, climate, social justice, gender, and animal rights” – among other issues – are all “fronts in a larger war.” Which is why, if you attend a climate summit, there’ll be sessions on gender issues and women’s rights; and if you go to a Women’s Studies Conference, you’ll find panels on race and queer identity. Gonzalez and Gorka note that when Communism fell in Europe, Americans who’d been active in explicitly pro-Soviet groups “started to move to climate work.” If you’re looking to topple the system, any old cause will do.

So it went on for years: behind the scenes, in the corridors of establishment institutions, radical leftists made their moves, and consolidated their power. Then, in 2013, halfway through Obama’s presidency, BLM was founded, inaugurating NextGen Marxism’s “revolutionary stage.” Donald Trump’s surprise win in 2016 – thanks to an electorate that was increasingly tuned in to the left’s skullduggery – threw a monkey wrench into the radicals’ plans, necessitating a DEFCON 1 response: the Russia collusion hoax, the 2020 election steal, the “insurrection” lie, the “threat to our democracy” mantra, the two impeachments, and the multitude of baseless lawsuits.

The year 2020 was pivotal. George Floyd, an obscure Minneapolis thug, was crucified and rose again from the dead. BLM staged hundreds of riots in his name, citing his death as proof of “systematic racism” and “the urgent need of systematic change” – charges that were embraced with unsettling alacrity by churches, corporations, the media, even the military. It was all lies – lies in the service of the revolution. And when Joe Biden moved into the Oval Office, the revolutionaries went with him: according to Gonzalez and

Gorka, his administration actually began “cowriting federal policy with the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation.” Sound incredible? Why? It makes total sense. It would explain a lot. And it was precisely what the Next Gen Marxists had been working toward for decades.

Needless to say, Gonzalez and Gorka’s book isn’t the first to map, in whole or in part, the route from Rousseau to Robespierre to the Red Army Faction to Rob Reiner. Twenty years after Roger Kimball’s landmark study [The Long March](#) (2000), a British writer named Marc Sidwell wrote another volume, also entitled [The Long March](#). Both my book [The Victims’ Revolution](#) (2012) and [James Lindsay’s The Marxification of Education](#) (2022) examined the radicalization of the academy. And just last year, Christopher Rufo published [America’s Cultural Revolution: How the Radical Left Conquered Everything](#).

Which is not to suggest that [Next Gen Marxism](#) is superfluous. Far from it: this story needs to be told and retold until everybody gets it. Like each of its predecessors, *Next Gen Marxism* has its own emphases and its own strengths. One of those strengths is its fluid, elegant prose. Another is its final chapter, “What to Do,” which catalogs at length some of the many things that readers can do to help take back America. “We chose not to be a nation ruled by a monarch or an all-powerful leader but to be a nation of self-governing citizens,” write Gonzalez and Gorka in their closing pages. “That takes work.” And their last sentence sums it all up admirably: “We have a country to save.” Indeed we do.

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