

2. For Qur'ān 33:33 and female seclusion in the home, see the orientation by Barbara F. Stowasser, *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 97–9 and 172 n.79.
3. Aliyu (p. 20) cites *Total Woman* via a book by M. Wahiduddin Khan, *Women Between Islam and Western Society* (Karachi: Darul Ishaat, 2001), 77. This attitude is reminiscent of the polygamy-advocating 'Obedient Wives Club' which captured headlines in Malaysia in June 2011.

Reinhard Cardinal Marx, *Das Kapital: Ein Plädoyer für den Menschen* [Capital: a plea for the human being]

(Munich: Pattloch-Verlag, 2008; 1st ed.), 320 pp. ISBN: 978-3629021557.
€19.95

Christoph Marcinkowski *International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia*

The recent worldwide financial crisis¹ has initiated a global fundamental debate and raised questions about the capacity of contemporary economies to ensure the welfare of the world. In October 2008, Reinhard Marx launched *Das Kapital: Ein Plädoyer für den Menschen* with intentional reference to the work by his namesake Karl Marx – *Das Kapital: Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* – an extensive treatise on political economy, edited in part by Friedrich Engels, which critiques capitalism.

Reinhard Marx, the German author of the book under review, currently serves as the Catholic archbishop of Munich and Freising and very recently (in November 2010) was elevated to the cardinalate by Pope Benedict XVI, who himself had been at the head of that archdiocese (1977–81) before his own departure for Rome. As a matter of fact, Marx (b. 1953) is now the youngest member of the College of Cardinals. Before his call to Munich in 2007, Marx served as the bishop of Trier, Germany's oldest diocese whose origins date back to the Roman period when the city was one of the imperial residences – and the birthplace of his namesake Karl Marx (to whom he is not related).

Cardinal Marx is considered to be rather conservative in matters of Church discipline, but also a social scientist and whiz with the media. He is the head of the Committee for Social Issues at the German Bishop's Conference and, since 2010, also a member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. Described as 'outspoken' and a 'larger-than-life' character who has shown a flair for mixing it up in Germany's political and media circles, the sociologist-by-training – and longtime head of the episcopate's social justice efforts – Marx had largely been viewed as in line for the archbishopric of Berlin. After an unusually protracted yearlong vacancy, however, his dispatch instead to Pope Benedict's home archdiocese places an even more pointed stamp of papal approval on Marx. Marx is now even 'traded' by some observers as potentially *papabile* ('popeable'), an unofficial Italian term

used to describe a cardinal of whom it is thought likely or possible that he will be elected pope.

The conclusion of the work under review appears already on the cover: “A capitalism without humanity, solidarity, and justice has no morality and no future.” In spite of all this, however, Marx is not a tough critic of capitalism. On the contrary, more than once he breaks a lance for the responsible entrepreneurs and the capitalists. In the introduction, an ‘open letter’ to his (long dead) namesake, Karl Marx, he even asks himself whether capitalism in itself will perish: “I say it frankly: I hope not!”

Marx presents a book that is able to influence the political debate in Germany and beyond. Written just before the large global financial crisis which brought capitalism into serious disrepute, its publication coincided almost exactly with this crisis. His book aims on the one hand at the public, but even more it is an appeal to the Church to again turn to the social question and thus to rediscover a forgotten old tradition of Christianity.

Marx stresses the difference between ‘capitalism’ and ‘social market economy’. Capitalism is oriented on the ‘capital interests’ (this too we could observe and has cost small savers everywhere in the world their pensions), while ‘market economy’ considers wider issues: the various market participants, the marketplace, and the conditions of the market. But, according to Cardinal Marx, neither of them constitutes a ‘social order’. They are rather instruments which they should remain to be – instruments which had been discovered, developed, and proved as answers to the questions of how a maximum number of people could pursue their life aspirations by their own work, through training, and participation in social life. *Man must be at the centre* – but not only as mere participant of the market in order to make money with him but as a human being with all his strengths and weaknesses, its diseases, his disabilities, his aging and his death, his hope for a better, a successful, and ultimately *meaningful* life.

In the final chapter in particular it is clear that the author was able to include at least briefly the disastrous crash of the financial markets and comes because of that to the following conclusion: “I am writing to you [Karl Marx], because in recent times the question leaves me no rest whether at the end of the twentieth century it would not be too soon to break the final bar over you and your economic theories.” According to the author, even the current net of globalisation was already anticipated by Marx. Karl Marx even saw the situation of poverty within the context of rights and liberties which would be available only on paper if the economy prevents their implementation. From the perspective of the Christian view of man, Reinhard Marx emphasises an option in favour of the poor and opposes the economisation of all areas of life. The concept of the ‘invisible hand of the market’ (Adam Smith) is to be understood metaphorically whereas the term ‘homo economicus’ produces,

from the Christian point of view, a distortion. Again and again, it is clear that even globally there can be no economy without some kind of regulation or the guidelines of a legal system. In this context, he corrects the concept of ‘liberalism’ which is currently applied ideologically.

It is especially important that Reinhard Marx does not argue theoretically. He rather refers to numerous examples, such as the hedge funds which are based on financing by credit. Time and again and in different ways, Marx directs the attention on the phenomenon of poverty, which does not describe any social fringe group or lower-class, but a phenomenon right in the centre of society, which can hit everyone, for example by sudden job loss or personal crises. He takes up the need for comprehensive education and refers to it as “staple food” (*Grundnahrungsmittel*). He describes the achievement of entrepreneurship in its role to engage socially. However, in this context and with intended reference to Karl Marx, he criticises the priority orientation in capital – especially joint-stock companies – and highlights the precedence of work *before* capital.

The author holds that an intervention in the market on the part of the state is required if man is not anymore in the centre but only the capital as an end in itself. Before it happens that profits become ‘privatised’ and losses ‘socialised’ a regulation of the markets on the part of governments is needed. The state almost has the *duty* to carry this responsibility. Subsidising is one side, regulating the other. Only if the state limits – as currently the case in Germany, the United States, and other countries – predator mentality in business and finance at all costs and protects personal liberties and property, only then will communism *à la* Karl Marx have no chance in the future. Reinhard Marx pleads with all emphasis that this chance remains denied to communism in the long term when he finally writes: “We are facing a truly momentous task that challenges especially Europe. If we don’t become truly just, then – I am deeply convinced – Karl Marx will meet us again as a revenant of history. But he shouldn’t do so – for the sake of the people! He should rather rest in peace.”

In the context of the current economic system – and based on his namesake – Reinhard Marx questions the supremacy of merely capital-oriented thinking in the economy from the perspective of the Christian view of the inalienable dignity of man in front of God. This God-centred approach, however, could thus also be of value to people of other faiths. Moreover, Marx’s book also shows that the topic of ‘civilisational renewal’ is also of concern to leading figures in Europe. Perhaps the only thing one can bring forward against this book is that it develops no *concrete* political programme but describes merely problems.

In closing, however, Cardinal Marx’s book urgently warrants an English translation which would make this important contribution also available to adherents of other

faiths world-wide where it could have an impact on intercivilisational dialogue. Reinhard Marx will certainly be a man to keep an eye on in the years to come.

Note

1. In early 2010, a Special Issue of this journal – vol. 1, no. 2 (January 2010) – dealt with the then prevailing global financial and economic crisis under the title “The Global Financial Crisis: Economic Challenges and Prospects for Islamic Finance”.

Peter Watson, *The German Genius: Europe's Third Renaissance, the Second Scientific Revolution, and the Twentieth Century*

(New York: HarperCollins, 2010; 1st ed.), 992 pp. ISBN: 978-0060760229.

US\$23.10

Christoph Marcinkowski *International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia*

Before Hitler, Nobel Prize ceremonies were in large part a German affair. For over a century Germany led the world through its scientific, educational and cultural achievements. *The German Genius* reminds English-speaking readers that the world we live in today in so many ways is a creation of German technology and culture. While, on a purely geopolitical level, the Germans failed to become dominant they succeeded in virtually every other sphere.

The author, Peter Watson, who has published 13 books so far, is a British intellectual historian and former journalist and now perhaps best known for his work in the history of ideas and art. Watson was for four years a member of the *Insight* team of *The Sunday Times*. He was also New York correspondent of *The Times*. Since 1998, he has been a Research Associate at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, at the University of Cambridge.

Watson's colossal volume is a vast chronicle of ideas, humanists, scientists, and artists: Bach, Lessing, Herder and Winckelmann, Goethe, Kant and Schiller, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Gauss, and many more. Examining the contributions of literally hundreds of German thinkers and mapping the conceptual connections between them, the author demonstrates the breadth, volume, and influence of the German output in philosophy, science, industry, art, literature, and all forms of scholarly activity.

Without any attempt to minimise, dismiss, or overlook the evil of the Nazis and the Holocaust (for which Germany and her people *in toto* have been stigmatised), the narrative offers a reminder of great achievements that were not accidental, but rather a result of German culture and society. Quite correctly, there is nothing in