

WERE THE PROPHETS SOCIAL REFORMERS WHO WERE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING SOCIAL CONDITIONS?

Amos was the covenant conscience of an irresponsible social and religious order. . . . The God of Amos was the fierce protector of what we today would call "human rights," . . . Amos' fury knew no bounds. What he saw was a cultic adjunct of the state and of the ruling social caste. Karl Marx was not more blistering in his assaults on contemporary religion than Amos, a point to be remembered by those who feel that all criticisms of the status quo are "communist-inspired." Religion was indeed "the opiate of the people," (Gottwald, 288-289) ((Comment: Amos denounced apostate religion; Marx was against all religion including true Christianity))

The prophets are not merely politicians or statesmen or ethical idealists or social reformers. They would have disclaimed such tributes. They are messengers and spokesmen called by Yahweh to bring Israel back to true community with him. (Muilenburg, in Peake's, 477)

. . . prophecy was intimately associated with politics from the very first moment it appeared in Israel . . . the prophet was more suited to be the spokesman for Yahweh in a time of political crisis. . . . But the prophet, speaking under the influence of Yahweh's spirit, was able to interpret the meaning of events and to proclaim the will of God in concrete terms. This, of course, was not possible so long as the prophetic group was acting or singing in unison. So more and more we see individuals standing out from the prophetic band, even breaking from it, in order to proclaim the word of God for a particular crisis. (B.W. Anderson, 187) ②