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**THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF
COMMUNISM**

JAMES E. JACKSON

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The Philosophy Of Communism

By James E. Jackson



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About the Author

JAMES E. JACKSON, presently the Editor of the newspaper, *The Worker*, and a leading Communist spokesman, has, since the early thirties been a prominent figure in the democratic struggles of the workers and Negro people.

This pamphlet contains the text of his presentation in a debate, at Colby College, Maine, with U.S. Senator Edmund S. Muskie, at which Robert E. L. Strider, president of Colby, presided. The debate, held in May of last year, attracted over 1400 students, faculty members and townfolk from nearby Waterville, who crowded into Wadsworth Field House to hear the Communist position on peaceful coexistence, disarmament, the liberation struggles of the Asian and African peoples and the fight against jim crow at home, the growing blight of unemployment, and the mounting struggle against the fascist-like McCarran Act which jeopardizes the liberties of all Americans.

Mr. Jackson is also the author of *The South's New Challenge*, and of numerous essays and articles which have appeared in *Political Affairs* and other periodicals.



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The theory and practical activity of the Communists helps the working class and popular masses "to take a conscious part in the historical process of the transformation of society that is going on under our eyes."

The goal of the Communists is not some abstract ideal to which reality must conform. Rather it is the scientific projection of that which will result from the resolution of the contradictions already existing in the present reality. "Marxism," said Lenin, "is not a dogma, but a guide to action."

For the purposes of study and exposition, Marxian theory, or Marxism-Leninism, may be presented in three component parts — philosophy, economics, and socialism — but they are three parts of a single whole, of one unitary system of social science that requires the combination of its theory with practice. For the laws of materialist dialectics—which is the essence, the fundamental theoretical tap root, "the living soul of Marxism"—are drawn from "the real world, both of nature and of history," to cite Frederick Engels' words.

Einstein, the great physicist, once said: "when I study philosophical works I feel that I am swallowing something which I don't have in my mouth." The young Karl Marx must have shared this feeling while at work on his doctoral thesis on the Philosophy of Jurisprudence. For he concluded his study with the cryptic judgment that "philosophy at best only explains the world; the point

is to change it.” And Marx himself subsequently worked out a new rational scientific philosophical system which both explained and indicated the direction and methodology to change the world.

Dialectical Materialism

Dialectical Materialism is the philosophy and method of Marxism-Leninism for studying and divining the laws of motion and actual force which transforms everything that exists. It is a dynamic materialist conception of the world and a method of scientific knowledge of the laws of its motion.

The word “dialectic” derives from the ancient Greek term for “debate.” Subsequently Hegel popularized the use of the term to mean all motion by means of contradiction. Hegel perceived that development in thought was a product of the negation of the old and the creation of new ideas and concepts. Indeed, motion and development are universally produced in this way.

Marx extended the Hegelian dialectic beyond the area of thoughts and ideas and employed it in the study of motion and development in the material world both in nature and in society.

Dialectical materialism, i.e., the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism, has been fashioned by men out of the necessity of mankind to have an instrument for their conscious guidance in the development of history.

Already in the sphere of the natural or physical sciences, man has advanced over nature in a significant number of particulars. Some of our laboratory machines and tools “are more sensitive than the senses which Nature gave man.” Peter Kapitza, the noted Soviet physicist, reminds us in his article in the April issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. And he goes on to illustrate “that the microphone hears better than the ear; photo cells see better and over a wider part of the spectrum than the eye; our feeling of balance is much less perfect than that of the scale. Only one sense—smell—is better than our devices.” But in the sphere of our relations in production and in political society in our country we still grovel on the primitive level of “laissez faire.”

Laws of Social Development

As physicists must learn the laws of nature, so Communists, as

scientists of society, strive to learn—and would have the working people learn—the laws of social development, of the historical motion of society.

Marxism-Leninism is the system of the views and teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In their totality they constitute that body of thought and generalized experience from which the guide lines of the ideology and theory of the modern Communist movement are drawn.

The philosophy of Marxism-Leninism rests on the fundamental concept of the primacy of matter, that is, of the prior existence of objective, material reality that is only subsequently revealed to man's consciousness through his sensations. Marxism is a materialist philosophy as distinguished from a spiritualist, metaphysical or idealist philosophy. "The great basic question of all philosophy," wrote Frederick Engels, "is which is primary, spirit or nature? And the answers which philosophers gave to this question split them into two great camps: those who asserted the primacy of spirit to nature and, therefore, in the last instance, assumed world creation in some form or other, comprise the camp of idealism. The others, who regarded nature as primary, belong to the various schools of materialism."

"The idea," wrote Marx, "is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." That is to say, that mind, consciousness, thought, ideas, spirit, ideals are the products and functioning of the human brain, of matter, even as "man himself is a product of nature, which has been developed in and along with its environment."

Matter in Motion

The materialist base of Marxist philosophy is to be distinguished from the old, mechanistic materialist concepts. To Marxists, there is nothing static in the material world, in matter. The very mode of existence of matter is motion. "Never, anywhere, has there been matter without motion, or motion without matter, nor can there be," wrote Marx.

The materiality of the real world is ever in motion, of coming into being, development, and passing away. Our conceptions of structure and characteristic of matter evolve with the progress of

science. Matter itself undergoes infinite changes—that is, of passage from one state to another: for example, the transformation of the positron and of the electron into photons and vice versa, or of the conversion of light into corpuscles. Yet, the materiality of the world remains, matter does not disappear though it undergoes many transformations (such as between mass and energy and space and time i. e. matter in motion), it can neither be created nor destroyed.

To this materialist conception of nature, Marx and Engels applied *dialectics*. “The great basic thought being,” in Engels’ words, “that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable. . . go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away.”

Karl Marx defined dialectics as “the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought.” “For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.”

“The dialectical outlook,” writes Waldeck-Rochet, outstanding French Marxist, “considers the world of which man is a part as a unified and coherent whole, where objects and phenomena are organically linked, react one upon the other and condition each other reciprocally; a world in a state of motion and perpetual change. . . the motor of this movement and incessant change which thus asserts itself in nature, in society, and in thought, is the *struggle of opposites*, or the contradiction which is inherent in things themselves and constitutes the fundamental law of dialectics.” As the “*struggle of opposites*” and its corrolary, “*the unity of opposites*,” can be represented as the first law of the dialectical process of development, so it is possible to identify other phenomena which fuel the motor of *the movement within things*—the second law of development being “negation of negation,” and the third law the “transformation of quantity into quality” and vice versa.

These so-called “three laws of dialectics” do not exhaust the representation of the many-sided character of the dialectical

process of development, however, as Lenin noted in his book, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*.

Historical Materialism

Dialectical materialism, then, is the philosophical foundation of Marxism-Leninism. Marx applied it to the study of society. This work of Marx and Engels, this "extension of dialectical materialism into the domain of social phenomena" was their creation of *historical materialism*, the materialist conception of history, or *the essence of society*.

Its essence is that just as materialism in general explains man's awareness as the consequence of man's existence, and not conversely, so materialism applied to the social life of mankind has to explain *social consciousness* as the outcome of *social being*.

The historical materialism of Marx pointed the way to an all-embracing and comprehensive study of the process of the rise, development, and decline of socio-economic formations. He showed that "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," that the class struggle is "the mainspring of events" in the social history of man, that it will find its resolution finally in a classless society following the ascension to power of the working class, and that the very processes of modern capitalist society operate to prepare and equip the working class to fulfill its historic destiny to resolve the basic contradictions of capitalist society—the alienation of the producers from the means of production and the returns on the products of their labor. As Marx prophesied in *Capital*, Vol. 1:

"The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralization of the means of production and socialization of labor at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."

The Communist Party's Program

Such are some mere fragments of the universal philosophical

and theoretical values of Marxism-Leninism which is the heritage, the acquisition, of the working people of hand and brain in all countries.

The Communists strive to master the use of this science of society—to bring this science into play, to fathom the way to solution of the most urgent problems and longer-term aspiration of the people of our nation in conformity with the best interests of all mankind.

Toward this end, the Marxists have constituted themselves into an organization—the Communist Party of the U.S.A. The Communist Party has a program that is responsive to all the major questions of our times which bear upon the interests of the working people and the nation.

What are the most urgent problems which our people confront, and what does the Communist Party of the U.S. advocate for their solution?

Peace or Nuclear War

I. The problem of problems of our nation and of our times is that of prevention of the outbreak of thermonuclear war. To secure the peace of the world is the primary task of all mankind, the indispensable enabling measure for the solution of all other questions on the agenda of history.

Last September, President Kennedy stated that the goal of disarmament is “no longer a dream—it is a practical matter of life or death. The risks inherent in disarmament pale in comparison to the risk inherent in an unlimited arms race.” Yet, in the teeth of this awareness that continuation of the arms race can only add to the risk of outbreak of thermonuclear war, the President added further stimulus to this mad race to the brink of world disaster by resuming the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons at the very time that negotiation toward disarmament was in progress in Geneva. He has not decreased the military budget; on the contrary he has upped the share of the military in the national budget.

In spite of such nobly expressed peace statements of the President, the present Administration presses doggedly along the path of the cold war laid out by Winston Churchill and John

Foster Dulles. The essence of this cold war policy in foreign affairs is to strive for a military position of strength sufficient to cow the Soviet Union and the community of Socialist states into accepting our terms for the solution of all disputed questions in world affairs. It is a continuation of the reliance upon war or the threat of war as an instrument of national policy.

This policy, or absence of policy, has been a total failure and has no prospects for success in the future. Fortunately for our country, millions of our citizens have become aware of this truth and are increasingly taking practical measures to make their criticism of the present bankrupt course in foreign policy articulate. Professors and scientists have placed full-page ads in leading newspapers; students have maintained steady peace vigils around the White House; hundreds of thousands of women and youth are marching and demonstrating with banners calling for the stopping of the bomb tests, for disarmament negotiations, for peaceful settlement of the Berlin question and a turn toward peace in our foreign policy. The movement of U.S. planes and troops in division strength into South Vietnam is a new flash point of danger on the cold war fronts. The danger of this civil war situation being escalated into another Korea is clear and ominous.

In the real world of today, the keystone for a peaceful foreign policy is an acceptance of the necessity for relations of peaceful coexistence with that other mighty nuclear power—the Soviet Union. It is in the most advanced self-interest of our nation to establish peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union as the bed-rock of our foreign policy. On such a foundation it will be relatively easy to arrive at negotiated settlements and agreements on all questions of dispute in the world arena, including the lifting of the armament burden from the shoulders of mankind, thereby releasing massive resources for satisfying the material and cultural needs of the peoples of all nations.

Liberation of Peoples Yet Unfree

II. Related to the first task of all mankind—the struggle for world peace—is the struggle of the colonial and unfree peoples for national sovereignty, freedom from alien domination and racial discrimination, for the right of peoples and nations to equal human

dignity, unfettered economic and cultural development, and political self-determination.

From Angola on the West to Capetown in the South, there still remain in Africa, in conditions of near slavery, some 70 million human beings. These super-exploited drones of imperialism must have their freedom and sovereign national rights.

As Lincoln said, "A people who denies freedom to others deserve it not for themselves." So it is that the people must prevent the narrow exploitative interests of U.S. monopolists from dictating government policy in our relations with the newly-formed nations and still unfree peoples struggling for their emancipation from the bonds of imperialism. In this regard, it is in our national interests to rectify our relations with the Republic of Cuba and accept the fact of the social system that her people have chosen in the exercise of their sovereign right of self-determination. Our Government's relations with all countries—small and large—should be on the basis of mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, on the basis of full equality and mutual respect.

In respect to peoples yet unfree, in this 100th year since the Emancipation Proclamation, the 20 million Negro citizens of our country still are compelled to wage unending struggle for their constitutionally-proclaimed, yet generally withheld, equal rights. All decent minded Americans must join in the fight of the valiant Negro people to secure their freedom from segregation, discrimination, and racial ostracism. The whole world measures the depths of the "free world's" hollow pretensions by the perfidy of the Senators' filibuster and the President's ineffectiveness in failing to secure the passage of even a tepid right-to-vote bill in the face of the general disfranchisement of more than 12 million Negroes in the southern states.

The People's Living Standards

III. There is the whole area of problems relating to securing the livelihood and advancing the living standards of the masses of our people.

Our big country with its bountiful natural resources and vast industrial plant ought to by right be, but verily is not, an "affluent society." The statistical averages of the living standards of our

people are impressive when compared to those of all other nations. But these "averages" mask the stark reality of the extreme polarization of the national wealth. On the one hand, there are the affluent few who project their opulence before the world as the well-advertised image of the "American way of life." On the other hand there are many millions of Americans living in poverty and in conditions of extreme deprivation in this, our land of plenty.

In the recent study by Leon H. Keyserling, produced by the Conference on Economic Progress, entitled *Poverty and Deprivation in the United States*, the true dimension of the economic plight of millions of our countrymen is graphically documented. This study records the fact that 20 percent of the total personal income went to the highest five percent of the nation's families, while the lower 40 percent of all families shared only 15½ percent of the national personal income total.

Two-fifths of the population, more than 77 million Americans, live in a state of poverty or extreme deprivation. And the authors of this study correctly observe that "the new technology makes persistent poverty intolerable by making it avoidable."

Yet "we tolerate large and chronically rising unemployment, consequently freezing millions in poverty or deprivation when we have the technology to prevent it."

Indeed, the percent of the unemployment to the total work force still hovers around the 5.5 mark.

Economic Measures

It is apparent that the nation cannot long tolerate this state of affairs. A number of immediate economic measures are called for to relieve the acute want of the deprived millions of our citizens. Among such measures that urgently need to be taken, we would list the following:

1. Curb the export of capital and encourage the export of capital-goods. This will require an end to the embargo on trade with the potentially vast markets of the socialist third of the world's population, with the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, etc. The export of capital liquidates jobs at home and produces a deficit in the balance of payments situation, but the export of capital goods would increase employment opportunities for our workmen.

2. Vastly increase the investment of social construction—low-income housing, hospitals, schools, etc. But this requires a reduction of the military budget and rerouting of the taxpayers' capital into constructive channels.

3. Reduce the working week to 30 hours without reduction of pay. Enact a government-financed retraining program with "G.I. benefits" or its equivalent for workers displaced by automation.

4. Establish public ownership with democratic administration and control over the chronically sick corporate industries, such as big steel, the railroads and coal mines.

5. Establish effective controls against the price-gouging practices of the monopoly corporations.

6. Reform the tax structure. Abolish all taxation of the two-fifths of our citizens who dwell in poverty and want, substantially decrease the tax burden on the middle income brackets, and increase the taxes of the wealthy and the big monopolists.

Socialist Transformation

Over a hundred years ago Karl Marx defined the objective, the goal of man in the economic sphere. Man strives to attain a relationship to the total economy in which "each will produce according to his ability and receive in accordance with his need."

But before such a lofty economic height can be really aspired to, the working people of our country, in alliance with other anti-monopoly sections of the people, must attain political power, displace the representatives of capital from the halls of Congress and the seats of government, and establish the base of a new social formation—Socialism.

Already, in the Soviet Union and other countries embracing a third of the earth's population, the working people have established socialist society. The Soviet Union, having completed in the main, the building of Socialism, is now launched on a vast construction program for the building of Communism, to be completed by 1980. Surely, our own working class and nation will derive much inspiration from the successes being attained by the Soviet people, and in due time, and after our own fashion, will also take the necessary steps to change our old-fashioned and hurtful capitalist system for a new, up-to-date, scientific and rational model—Socialism.

Defense of Democracy

IV. Communists are not national nihilists. We treasure the riches of our democratic heritage and alert the people to maintain vigilance against those who would destroy the democratic achievements of our people. Such a danger exists. Pro-fascist forces have arisen from the arch-reactionary and Right-wing political grouping in our national life.

From the Dixiecrat demagogues and the Goldwater conservatives, to the General Edwin Walkers, the John Birchers, the Minute Men conspirators and the avowed Nazi emulators of the Lincoln Rockwell stripe who comprise the spectrum of the ultra-Right, all have a common hatred for the democratic processes and are united in their attack upon civil liberties and the Bill of Rights heritage of our people. Likewise, they have a common cause in their general advocacy of policies of war in international disputes.

The rise of this ultra-Right on the political scene is a product of the continuing cold-war policies of the Government. In its turn, the ultra-Right seeks to pressure the Administration toward a reactionary course on both foreign and domestic issues.

The actions initiated by Attorney General Robert Kennedy to enforce the patently unconstitutional McCarran Act against the Communist Party is the most glaring example of a cowardly capitulation to the pressures of the pro-fascist Ultras on the part of the Kennedy Administration in this most sensitive area of civil liberties. Already, Gus Hall, the Party's foremost personality, and Benjamin Davis, formerly a New York City Councilman, have been arrested under this monstrous law. Also, proceedings have been initiated which could result in the suppression of the newspaper, *The Worker*. I have been arrested and sentenced to six months in prison and am now on bail pending appeal of sentence for daring to uphold the freedom-of-the-press privilege of the First Amendment.*

The McCarran Act is a fascist-type law which parallels the draconian terms of certain of Hitler's Nuremberg laws, including the provision of several concentration camps for its expected

* Subsequently the Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the ruling and the charges were quashed.

victims. For example, Gus Hall, or any Communist, could be subjected to five years in jail and a fine of \$10,000 for each day that he refused to register as a member of a so-called "Communist-action organization," which is defined in the law as a criminal conspiracy in the service of a foreign power.*

Of course, neither Gus Hall, or any Communist, will ever be witness to such a lie. The requirements for the preservation of the basic elements of constitutional government and those democratic safeguards represented in the Bill of Rights, command the citizens of our country to demand that Attorney General Robert Kennedy take the necessary measures to nullify it.

The People Will Decide

The Communists believe that the people are the great makers of history; that the masses of the people undertake and accomplish great deeds. Social necessity defines these tasks: the necessity to be free from poverty and ignorance, from material deprivation and cultural darkness. The necessity to strive toward a social relationship making for maximum happiness wherein the family of man would dwell together as brothers, freed from the oppression of man by man.

The Communists believe that in the course of the daily struggle to secure their urgent needs, the masses of the people will acquire a vista of the morrow's horizons as illuminated by the theory of scientific socialism, of Marxism-Leninism and the program of the Communist Party.

The adoption by masses of the socialist goal will be born out of the necessity and lessons of the struggle for their daily needs. And in due time, our countrymen, like the peoples of all nations, will act out of that necessity, do away with the old and dilapidated capitalist system, and replace it with that historically-determined modern social formation—socialism, the first stage toward Communist society.

* On December 17, 1962, a Federal jury convicted the Communist Party of failing to register as an agent of the Soviet Union. Judge Alexander Holtzoff imposed the maximum fine of \$120,000.00. Attorneys for the Party are appealing the conviction.

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