

DEVELOPING RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THE COMMUNIST WORLD

by Quincy Wright

The term "communist world" is ambiguous. In the *theoretical* sense it refers to those people who believe that the ideology of communism (Marxism-Leninism) provides guidelines for the best organization of society. In the *practical* sense it refers to those governments and parties that profess to pursue domestic and foreign policies to realize this ideology. In either sense, the political importance of communism, or of any other ideology or religion, is relative to the means employed by its devotees which usually vary with the *time* and *space* in which they expect it to be realized, and the degree of *flexibility* with which they interpret it. If either individuals or governments are ready to use whatever methods they deem necessary to realize a *fundamentalist* interpretation of any ideology within a *decade and throughout the world* that ideology is likely to be politically important. On the other hand if its adherents are willing to use only persuasion and expect to realize their ideology only in *one community* or *one country*, or only in a *thousand years*, or are *willing to interpret* it in adaptation to a great variety of beliefs, customs, and practices, as do most of the adherents of the great religions today, the ideology is not likely to be of great political importance. These differences in time and area of realization and in flexibility of interpretation are certain to be reflected in the policies, strategies, and tactics of the movement, distinguishing revolution from evolution, coercion from persuasion, politics from education, violence from peace.

Theoretical Communism. It is difficult to say how many people in the world believe in communism. The fourteen states that profess communism have a combined population of 1,106 million or over a third of the world's 3,172 million people. There are many people in these fourteen states who do not believe in communism and many outside of them who do, especially

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in India, Africa, and Latin America. Large Communist parties exist in France and Italy and small Communist parties in the United States and most other western countries. No census, however, has been taken of people who believe in communism.

The United States has no official relations with communism in this sense, anymore than it has with Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, science, liberalism, conservatism, or other ideologies. But the government's opinion about these beliefs may, of course, influence United States policy making.

The people of the United States generally dislike communism and many fear it. This opinion influences government policy; in fact it is behind the major United States policy of "containing communism," initiated by George Kennen in 1947, officially declared in the Truman doctrine of 1949 concerning Greece and Turkey, reasserted by President Eisenhower in connection with the Middle East and Taiwan and by President Johnson in connection with Vietnam. This dislike and fear of communism generally flows less from communism as a theory than from the nature of the activities of Communist states, parties, and persons. Americans tend to identify these violent and subversive activities in international relations and within the country with communism as a theory. It is significant that the article on "Communism" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1967) deals with the strategy and tactics of the Russian communist government and party utilizing Lenin's analysis of the proper strategy and tactics of violent revolution. In this article communism is differentiated from socialism, which also professes the Marxist ideology, but seeks to realize it, not by violent revolution, but gradually by the strategy and tactics of parliamentary democracy. For discussion of communism as a theory one must look in the *Britannica* to the article on "Socialism," which presents a historical survey of socialist writers, including Marx, and of socialist movements. Although the Communist Manifesto of 1848 suggested that violent revolution was necessary to realize communism, this has not been the opinion of all Marxists. Communism should not, therefore, be identified with the revolutionary activities of the Soviets any more than Catholicism should be identified with the Spanish inquisition, Islam with the persecutions of Aurungzebe, or democracy (liberty, equality, and fraternity) with the guillotine and the activities of Robespierre. Nevertheless the dislike of communism in some western countries, especially in the United States, often springs from this identification. They fear revolution, not communism. To India and other nonaligned countries, less apprehensive of revolution, communism is usually looked upon as a form of social organization which deserves study and perhaps application.

What is the theory of communism? It is a theory of the actual and the desirable relations of man to society. Historically and geographically there have been great variations in these relations manifested by both the degree

and the methods of social control over the individual. Examples can be found of extremely centralized and extremely coercive control as in Sparta and the Incas; of considerably centralized and moderately coercive control as among the Jesuits, and in the Amana, Oneida, and other communities in the United States; and of much individual freedom as in Athens (except for the slaves and helots) and in modern "free" societies. Anthropologists find all types among primitive peoples. In pioneering settlements, such as Jamestown, Plymouth, and Jewish villages in Palestine "communism" was at first adopted, but as the economy developed, they tended to move to "capitalism," the opposite of the tendency asserted by Marx.

When social control is very great, the system is called "socialism" in a broad sense and where little it is called "individualism." Either requires some central authority, but "socialism" has in practice required more because such authority must not only maintain law and order, as in individualistic societies, but must also administer economic production, social security, and welfare programs. Individuals usually like freedom and tend to resist central authority, increasingly as the society is large and the center distant. Adequate authority to maintain "socialism" may result from environmental conditions. Primitive peoples who believe themselves surrounded by hostile gods and spirits, pioneers in a strange land, all people in time of war or high political tension perceive their environment as hostile and dangerous, and are willing to submit to a powerful central authority, whether a tribal chief or priesthood, a village council, a king, a dictator, a national government, or a federal executive, to escape disaster.¹ Strong central authority may also be created by the government itself utilizing the power of the *sword* (military dictatorship), the power of the *word* (propaganda and religion), the power of *law* and custom (the normal source of government authority), or the power of the *purse* (property, taxation, and the control of economic production and distribution).

Marx thought that property which gives control of the economy was of primary importance and that other powers followed from it. Under *feudalism*, the ownership of land gave capacity to make laws protecting it and to defend it by military power. Under *capitalism*, the ownership of abstract property (capital), which developed as industry and trade succeeded agriculture as the dominant means of production, gave capacity to control the state with its monopoly of arms and capacity to make and enforce law. Under *socialism*, the ownership of the means of production by society as a whole would, according to Marx, give that society control of all the sources of power.

Marx developed his ideal of society from his historical analysis. Only with socialism could the masses enjoy the material and moral benefits of society, because, although they constituted the major part of society, only

if they controlled the means of production and distribution could they escape exploitation by the ruling class and manage the economy in their own interest. That interest was expressed by the formula: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."² Marx considered the virtue of this formula so obvious that after the Communist party, exercising the "dictatorship of the proletariat," had converted the masses of all countries to communism and eliminated the dangers of "capitalist encirclement," all would voluntarily follow the formula, coercion by central authority would be unnecessary, the "state would wither away," and communism would become identical with anarchism. All men would live freely and peacefully together like brothers.

Marx thought that this ideal would develop inevitably by "historical determinism." He accepted Hegel's evolutionary theory that progress results from a dialectic — a thesis generates an antithesis, conflict between them results in a synthesis, which becomes a new thesis generating in turn its own antithesis, and a higher synthesis, ad infinitum. Marx, however, applied the dialectic, not to ideas, as did Hegel, but to economic systems, the material factors of production, thus creating "dialectical materialism." The proletariat, convinced by the "Communist Manifesto" of Marx and Engels (1848), would recognize their class conflict with the ruling, property-owning bourgeoisie, and would espouse socialism as the antithesis of capitalism. As capitalism undermined itself by exploiting and impoverishing the workers (thus eliminating its market and destroying the society), the Communist party would take possession of productive property and establish a final synthesis in a communist society.

Marx considered this process inevitable as had been the bourgeoisie's recognition of their class conflict with the land-owning aristocracy, the ensuing conflict between feudalism and capitalism, and the eventual achievement of a synthesis in the nation-state controlled by the bourgeois capitalists.³ On the details of the process by which thesis and antithesis resulted in a synthesis, Marx was not entirely clear. He called for violent revolution in the Manifesto of 1848 but in some of his writings gave support to a more evolutionary process utilizing education and propaganda. His successors divided into the evolutionary socialists (represented by the German Social Democrats and the British Labor Party) who thought that the parliamentary process and social legislation would eventually establish socialism, and the revolutionary Communists — the Bolsheviks — led by Lenin, who wrote on the strategy of revolution involving much violence.

Practical Communism. It is the revolutionary process of realizing communism that has, as noted, aroused antagonism in conservative quarters. There has been little hostility in the United States to evolutionary socialism.

The United States has taken steps in this direction itself in the "New Deal" of Franklin Roosevelt and the "Great Society" of Lyndon B. Johnson, although the concept of free enterprise modified by social welfare legislation (Walter Lippmann's "agenda of liberalism") has been propagandized, rather than the goal of eventual social ownership of all productive property. American conservatives, it is true, stigmatize these programs as "creeping communism." The major opposition, however, has been to the revolutionary methods of Lenin and Stalin in Russia and of Mao in China. It is to be noted that this opposition has existed, not only in the western capitalist countries, but in less degree in the unaligned countries and in the communist countries themselves, as witnessed by Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin's "cult of personality" after the latter's death in 1953, and by the opposition to Mao, countered by the "red guard" movement, in China in 1966-67.

Adherence to a philosophy of revolutionary violence, and its practice internally and externally, has generally waned as time has passed after the inception of a revolution, and conservative opposition to revolutionary tactics has increased. In 1967 the Chinese revolution was 18 years old, the Soviet 50 years old, the French 178 years old, the American 191 years old, and the British 277 years old. As Nehru once said in New York, comparing the United States and Russia from a neutralist point of view, the major difference is the length of time since their respective revolutions. As time passes revolutionary enthusiasm subsides, more time is allowed for the achievement of revolutionary ideas, even ultimate achievement becomes limited to less than the entire human race,⁴ and greater flexibility of interpretation, called "revisionism" by the "fundamentalists," becomes permissible. It has been pointed out that every successful revolution must have a bible sufficiently large and ambiguous to have texts capable of sustaining any policy which the exigencies of the occasion seem to make expedient. The Old Testament, for example, gives support both to beating swords into plowshares and beating plowshares into swords,⁵ and Marxism supports both the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "withering away of the state."

This latitude of ideological interpretation permits, as Sorokin has pointed out,⁶ a convergence of practices under capitalism and communism, particularly in the practices of the United States and the Soviet Union, as their basic technologies become similar. To the same effect an editorial in the *Houston Post* of November 17, 1966 reads:

There is a deep gulf between theory and reality. . . . It is not surprising that Communism as it actually exists in the world today is a far cry from that envisioned by Marx. And there is just about as great a difference between capitalistic theory and fact. It is not beyond the realm of possibilities that, if the advocates of the Communist and capitalistic ideologies can keep from blowing each

other off the face of the earth, they all will end up eventually in some middle ground where the two systems will be hardly distinguishable. Even if this happens, however, it probably will not be admitted by zealots on either side But hard facts and realities will continue to prevail in the end. People generally are less concerned with ideology and theory than they are with having a system that works and serves their needs well.

Market gardens for each collective farmer, and free markets for distributing the products of these gardens exist all over Russia. Art, literature, even ideological interpretations are decreasingly censured in Russia. Competition exists between the managers of firms and of collective farms. The profit incentive is recognized. Interest is developing in sports, cosmetics, consumer goods, and travel. Common practices converge from opposite directions. Theoretical expressions remain diverse supported by different authoritative texts, but the real differences that remain are a consequence more of differences in national cultures and historical experiences than of differences in ideology. In similar manner the ideological conflicts, between Christendom and Islam, between Protestantism and Catholicism, between democracy and aristocracy, which formerly led to crusades, wars of religion, and revolutionary wars no longer prevent the convergence of practices best adapted to the increasingly similar technologies.

Communism and International Relations. What has been the relation of the United States with governments that profess communism? There has ceased to be a monolithic communist bloc exercising political power directed by the Kremlin. There was such a bloc in Stalin's time. European satellites, China, and other Far Eastern communist countries followed his lead, but even before Stalin's death, Tito broke away and muffled dissent occurred in other communist countries. Some Americans think this bloc still exists, but few Europeans, Asians, or Africans think so.

The United States government recognizes that this monolithic bloc no longer exists and pursues different policies toward each communist state, tailored to the particular situation. Of the fourteen communist states, it trades and gives economic assistance to Yugoslavia and Poland, and is developing similar relations with Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The relations of the United States with the Soviet Union have been improving since the death of Stalin in 1953, with considerable cooperation in nuclear control, exchange of persons, conclusion of a Consular treaty, and prospects of most-favored-nation trading relations. There have been setbacks, it is true, as in the Hungarian affair of 1956 and the Vietnam hostilities. The United States does not recognize the Mongolian, Cuban, or Albanian governments, but associates with them in the United Nations. It refuses to recognize Mainland China and East Germany and has kept them

out of the United Nations. It is virtually at war with North Korea and actually at war with North Vietnam, both of which it has kept out of the United Nations.

The differences in policy toward these states reflect differences in their policy toward the United States and these differences spring more from national interest than from ideological differences. The ideological cold war has been an element in creating mutual suspicion and inhibiting mutual trust, but actual relations with each communist state have been affected more by the principle that hostile acts invoke retaliation and friendly acts invoke reciprocity. Nationality and pride seem always to be more important than ideology in international relations as de Gaulle both declares and illustrates. To discover the values which underlie the actual policies and decisions of governments one must hunt beyond official ideology.

The enduring interests common to most sovereign states have been *security*, including territorial integrity, respect, and political independence; *freedom* in the exercise of domestic jurisdiction and development of distinctive culture; *influence*, including prestige, power position, status, spheres of influence, alliances; and *prosperity*, including technological development and access to trade, markets, and raw materials.⁷

Since conflicts in these interests have developed between states of similar ideology, and opportunities for fruitful cooperation have developed between states of different ideology, both ideological blocs have tended to break up. China, Yugoslavia, and Albania have broken from Soviet leadership, and other European satellites are tending to do so as they search for more trade with the West. A visitor to these states finds that official guides emphasize the national distinctiveness of the country and say nothing of communism, and often less than nothing of Kremlin leadership. In Russia people are interested in security and prosperity and worried by United States encirclement. Soviet pressure on the "satellites" has relaxed since the intervention in Hungary in 1956. There is doubt whether they would prove allies or enemies if the Soviet government tried to move through them to expand in the West, and one can detect no evidence of such a policy. Russia is worried by Chinese aggressiveness in regard to boundaries; by its play for leadership of the communist movement in Asia, Africa, and Latin America; and by its noncooperation in assistance to North Vietnam or in promoting a negotiated settlement of that conflict.

China, whose revolution is most recent among the communist states, seems to be the most interested in expanding communist ideology but its major aims appear to be national. China desires to end the humiliation it suffered from Western aggressions and interventions in the nineteenth century. It wants to gain full recognition as a great power and leadership of the communist movement, at least in Asia. It would like to recover the

boundaries in the Himalayas, Siberia, Southeast Asia, and Formosa which it had before the period of European and Japanese imperial expansion. It wants to modernize its technology and industry and to increase the standard of living of its people. It wants a Far Eastern Monroe doctrine to eliminate bases and spheres of influence of overseas powers in the Far East. Its conflict with Russia in several of these interests may be more important than its conflict on theoretical communism, with charges of Soviet "revisionism." While the struggle for leadership between Maoists and conservatives continues, it is difficult to predict the course of Chinese policy in detail, but it seems likely that the goals referred to will continue and the differences between the Chinese factions will be mainly on methods.

The Western bloc has also been breaking up. De Gaulle has left NATO and talks of a Europe to the Urals. SEATO has proved of little importance. The Manila meeting on Vietnam in the fall of 1966 did not include three of its members, Pakistan, France, and Britain, all of whom take a dim view of American policy there, but it did include two nonmembers, South Vietnam and Malaysia. Japan, also a theoretical ally of the United States, gives no support to the Vietnam policy and wants to trade with China. The United States policy of not recognizing Communist China is widely opposed by United States allies in Europe and Asia, many of whom recognize that country and support its admission to the United Nations.

Fear of United States encirclement was a major factor in maintaining the communist bloc, and fear of communist expansion was a major factor in maintaining NATO and other anti-Communist alliances. These fears have not been wholly dissipated, but they have been greatly reduced and both blocs have tended to disintegrate.

Unaligned states, wooed by both blocs, have exerted a greater influence in world politics than their military power would suggest. A third of the world's population, and over half of the members of the United Nations, are in this group. They have exerted great influence in eliminating colonialism, reducing racial prejudice, and opposing intervention in civil strife. To this end they have invoked United Nations principles supporting the self-determination of peoples, respect for human rights, and nonintervention in domestic questions. These countries generally wish to strengthen the United Nations and their attitudes have made the great powers hesitate to utilize the veto in the Security Council in a way which would offend them. This was illustrated in the Congo situation of 1961 which was dealt with by the Security Council. On all critical resolutions one or more of the great powers abstained but did not veto. Though the nonaligned powers tend to act together on a few matters, their votes in the United Nations indicate little more solidarity than does the "free world" group. In such votes there is still the greatest degree of solidarity in the communist group, due partly to the

absence of most of the Asian communist states. It would appear that the bipolar world of the cold war period is merging into a world of national states.

Future Prospects. It seems probable that nationalism moderated by internationalism will be the trend of the future, as the world continues to shrink, the capabilities of nuclear destruction increase, and governments acquire a more realistic comprehension of the requirements for survival in the nuclear age. Opposing this trend are the cold war images lingering in the minds of many, especially in the United States, and the imperialist ambition of great powers to exert a dominant influence on world affairs manifested especially by the inclination of the United States, the Soviet Union, and China to intervene in civil strife to "contain communism" or to "assist wars of liberation." Extreme nationalist sentiments opposing internationalism manifested especially in France, and widespread hesitancy to strengthen international law and the United Nations also oppose this trend. Adequate financing of United Nations peace-keeping forces, universalizing of United Nations membership, extending the compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court, improving the procedures for the peaceful settlement of political disputes, and disarmament are among steps to this end which have been long debated but not realized.

A trend toward a world of nation states, peacefully coexisting under the influence of international law and international organization has been the trend since the Peace of Westphalia (1648), which relegated ideological questions to the domestic jurisdiction of states, and especially since general international organization began to develop in the mid-nineteenth century, providing, with increasing efficiency, permanent machinery for the maintenance of international law, international cooperation, peaceful settlement of disputes, and prevention of hostilities. There have been lapses in this trend, but by their treaties, their declarations, their budgets, and their participation, states have increasingly manifested the conviction that effective international law and international institutions are necessary.

The principles of the United Nations Charter are an advance on the international law of the nineteenth century, but improved procedures are needed to assure their observance and to keep them up to date in a rapidly changing world. Rapid steps toward world federation are not to be expected, but gradual building on existing foundations may reconcile the needs for change and for stability, respect for human rights and for states rights, elimination of war and rectification of wrongs, nationalism and internationalism.

Governments should heed the experience registered in the progress of international law and international organization. If the interest of all is

"peaceful coexistence" in "a world safe for diversity" this experience is more likely to serve the national interest of each than is ad hoc calculation of power politics. Cold war rivalries have in recent times induced aggressions, interventions, and subversions in violation of international law and the principles of the Charter. It is to be hoped that the fading of the cold war, appreciation of the perils of power politics, and understanding of the trend of international relations will induce appreciation of the need for a world rule of law and energy in devising means to realize it.

NOTES

1. In a letter to Jefferson on May 13, 1798, Madison wrote: "Perhaps it is a universal truth that loss of liberty at home is to be charged to provision against danger, real or pretended, from abroad," quoted by Harold D. Lasswell, *National Security and Individual Freedom* (New York, 1950), p. 23. See also, *ibid.*, p. 47, and H. Lasswell, "The Garrison State," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI (1941), 455; Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago, 1942, 2nd ed., 1965), pp. 262ff., 306, 842, 1169ff.; Quincy Wright, *Problems of Stability and Progress in International Relations* (Berkeley, 1954), pp. 24, 274ff.

2. "The Criticism of the Gotha Program," in Max Eastman (ed.), *Capital, The Communist Manifesto, and Other Writings by Karl Marx* (New York, 1932), p. 7.

3. For classification and characterization of economic systems see Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 1157ff., and of ideologies, *ibid.*, pp. 169ff., 615ff., 622.

4. According to Harold Lasswell, all revolutions start as world revolutions. See "The Strategy of Revolution and War Propaganda" in Q. Wright (ed.), *Public Opinion and World Politics* (Chicago, 1933), pp. 187ff., and Wright, *A Study of War*, p. 1110.

5. Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Joel 3:10.

6. Pitirim Sorokin, "Mutual Convergence of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. to the Mixed Socio-Cultural Type," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, I (1960), 143ff.

7. Compare with the political, cultural, religious, and economic motives for modern war in Wright, *A Study of War*, pp. 278ff., and with W. I. Thomas' "great human wishes" for security, new experience, recognition, and response, as quoted, *ibid.*, pp. 286, 1344.