

COMMUNIST ETHICS

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Ethics of Western civilization are essentially based upon natural law which represents the ultimate constitutive element of positive and customary law. Since 1917 the ethics of civilized world, being the basis of human behavior, state's activity, and international relations, are challenged by the Communist ethics. There has been in the Soviet Union artificially and by force produced a new puzzling man with a specific conscience, ideas and ethics. Thus the old world had been divided into two diametrically opposed campuses.

Denial of Innate Human Rights

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels regarded man essentially as a product of nature who is bound by its laws and who works out his own means of livelihood. According to them, men "begin to differentiate themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence."¹ This for them is the activity which from a real point of view distinguishes man from his fellow creatures. Marx denied the dignity of the individual, treating it as a heritage from the old bourgeois world, and had no use for the individual as such, unless he belonged to a special class or relations and interests. And all individuals who do not represent a "special class or relations and interests Engels condemned to death: "The abolition of bourgeois individuality... is undoubtedly aimed at... no other person than the bourgeois, than the middle class owner of property. This person must, indeed, be swept out of the way..."²

Communist theorists, incapable of denying the existence of human nature, call for "a mass change of human nature."³ Marx and Engels believed that human nature is transmutable in accordance with each stage of the development of society: "...man's consciousness, changed with every change of the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and his social life."⁴

Communists also deny man and sacrifice him to the collective. Their concept of man is founded on sociology and not on theology which should be the starting point of every consideration. To them man has value only because he is an instrument of the collectivity;⁵ and when he ceases to be a member, he ceases to have value. The collective interest is not the sum total of individual interests, however parallel they may be. What collective interest means is a completely unified rationality and homogeneity, over and above any differences. In such a transcendent society the dignity of man and his innate rights cannot conflict with those of the community because the community is a collective of men and the individual is rooted in the community even though he may transcend it. The collective is the only absolute, and has no room for him who does not fit into the system; such an individual is not only socially superfluous but even dangerous. Not man but the collective is the ultimate end. The collective has its own superior end which is so paramount that it can justify the destruction of individuals. The collective is not interested in man's inner life, his real desires or in human relations, but only in the relations of the individual to the community.

In the Soviet Union under the guidance of the All-Union Communist Party (B.) a new type of man is being shaped — the man of Communist society... He is not an individualist sealing himself up in a shell, and therefore he is not poor and empty spiritually. Soviet man has been fused with the whole people and the socialist fatherland.⁶

Consequently, man's individuality, his personal liberties and, to a considerable extent, his dignity as a human being are submerged, all in the interest of the absolute supremacy of society as a whole.

Marx and Engels, hold the natural law and all fundamental human rights (pre-existent to the collective and valid for everybody, irrespective to citizenship, sex, race and age) as incompatible with their concept of materialism and collectivism, and as entirely foreign to their makeup. "We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie; that eternal justice found its realization in bourgeois justice; that equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law."⁷

Engels' statement: "no sovereignty of the individual"; Lenin's — "the rights of the individual are bourgeois fiction"; the assertion of Soviet Jurists' that human rights are an empty declaration, in itself undemocratic and demagogic tending only to limit existing laws⁸ — all show the absolute denial of the Innate human rights which have formed the basic tenets of Christian thought, of Western constitutions, and of today's **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.⁹

Rejection of Western Ethics

The morality or ethics of communism are the natural consequence of its materialistic belief. Marxists deny the existence of the soul and of conscience, saying the first is the function of the body, the second of the brain, which is the product of a long process of biological evolution.

The production of ideas, concepts, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of actual life.¹⁰

Matter is the element essential to man and to his action; conscience is secondary: "It is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness",¹¹ stated Marx and Engels, thus inverting all Aristotelian and Christian logic.

The Communist theory of ethics is that "all moral theories are the product, in the last analysis, of the economic stage which society reached at any particular epoch".¹² In other words, in a society divided into classes, ethics becomes an ethics of classes whereby the ruling classes seek to subjugate the oppressed masses. Their fundamental thesis is that ethics does not shape the world, but the world shapes its own ethics. Therefore, they deny eternal theses of ethics, because these theses "put man in chains and then seek to justify the existing conditions."

We therefore reject every attempt to impose on us any moral dogma whatsoever as an eternal, ultimate and for ever immutable moral law...¹³

Like many questions of social importance, the realization of the purest Communist morality is promised in the period of full communism. "A really human morality, which transcends class antagonisms and their legacies in thought, becomes possible only at a stage of society which not only has overcome class contradictions but has even forgotten them in practical life."¹⁴

Lenin, in a speech to the young Communists in 1920, underlined the difference between Communist and religious morality:

We deny ethics in the sense in which they are preached by the bourgeoisie, which deduces these morals from God's Commandments. We deny all morality taken from super-man or non-class conceptions. We say that this is a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and the capitalists.¹⁵

He expressly stated that "our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat."¹⁶

Soviet ethics are motivated by the principle that the "class struggle of the proletariat justifies any means." Moral education in the Soviet Union is shaped in the light of Communist ideals, actions, and habits, the entire conduct of a person determining his attitude toward the struggle against the exploiters, against private property, against Western culture, and his attitude toward the world revolution and toward the collective. The needs of the class struggle of the proletariat determine morality; hence whatever fosters the revolutionary overthrow of "capitalism", and the violent dispossession of those who own property is, morally, a good act; whatever hinders the revolution, such as a refusal to take orders from the revolutionary leader, and the refusal to think in the way one is supposed to think, is, morally, a bad act. There is no limit to hatred, violence, social turmoil,¹⁷ chicanery, duplicity, devilry, unscrupulousness, etc. On the contrary, such acts are presented as the principal Communist virtues. When conditions change, new techniques are developed, but all are equally moral and just to the Communist, as long as they further the cause of communism. According to their own moral code there is no such thing as intrinsic justice and right — there exist only collective mores representing objective ethics. Accordingly, morality is a question of conformity to the modes of thinking, aims and orders of Stalin and his inner circle. Lenin himself boasted of unethical measures used by the Bolsheviks in their activity in the Soviet Union.

In no other country during these fifteen years was there anything approximating such wide revolutionary experience; such a variety and rapidity of shifting forms in the movement, legal and illegal, peaceful and stormy, open and underground, embracing small circles and large masses, employing both parliamentary and terroristic means. In no

other country during so short a period of time has there been concentrated such multiplicity of forms, shades, distinctions and methods of struggle embracing all classes of modern society.¹⁸

He set the pattern for Communist procedures when he advocated "zigzags" and "retreats" as part of standard Soviet strategy.

The strictest loyalty to the ideas of communism must be combined with the ability to make all the necessary compromises, to 'tack', to make agreements, zigzags, retreats, and so on, in order to accelerate the coming into power of the Communists.¹⁹

Even "while we (Communists) profess a most serene and peaceful attitude (at the Peace Congresses), we are simultaneously ready in a military sense."²⁰

Communism, divorcing economics from ethics, denied the independent existence of morality. Its morality demands as a basis complete repudiation of a moral order grounded in the natural law and fundamental human rights. There is no room for brotherly love, compassion, sympathy, truthfulness, idealism.²¹ Loss of personal morality is compensated for by an intense devotion to collective morality. Collective conscience²² takes the place of individual conscience. There is no conscience but Party conscience, no morality but class morality, subjugated totally to the cause of communism.

In the victory of the new (world, i.e., of communism), over the old, progress over regression, lie the highest moral principles and their objective historical content."²³

Rejecting the present Western morality, as a creation of the bourgeoisie in order to justify and protect itself, the contemporary theorists of the U.S.S.R., however, claim that "the Soviet people (are) on an immeasurably higher level morally and politically than the people of the old world."²⁴ P. A. Shariya goes much further and maintains that in the whole history of mankind only the Soviet people is the bearer and leading vanguard of morality. The highest expression of the new morality for a Soviet man "is patriotism, and in-dissolubly connected with it the internationalism of Lenin and Stalin, standing against under-strained chauvinism, racialism and orphaned cosmopolitanism."²⁵ This Soviet vaunting of the "high level of morality" in turn is being denied in Soviet daily newspapers.

Anyone who imagines, however, that the Soviet ethical system does not recommend in principle such virtues as courage, discipline, pursuit of knowledge, elimination of race and sex discrimination, and the like, is over-simplifying the problem. This does not mean, of course, that they always follow these fine principles. But such principles are presented as norms of value to the collective.

Conclusion

The findings on the Communist ethics may be summarized as follows:

1. Communist ethics, being brutal and a tool in the hands of All-Union Communist Party, is compatible with a sound human nature and rationality.
2. Their ethics rest on compulsion rather than conviction.
3. It explains the technique of Soviet diplomacy, essence of Soviet propaganda, and reasons for unilateral breaking of innumerable international treaties and agreements. In all, Soviet regime's activity at home and abroad makes absence of every scruple, in rough and uncouth proceedings, in loud and angry accusation, in their insolence and aggressiveness, and in that constant and affected show or impoliteness. Its function is concentrated primarily to excite and galvanize the masses, at home and abroad — the fifth columns.
4. Fanatism and blind devotion of fifth columns, and shielding their activity behind propitious rights of respective liberal countries, are understandable only in the light of Communist ethics.

Footnotes:

1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. "German Ideology", in Emile Burns **A Handbook of Marxism**, New York. International Publishers, 1935. p. 211.
2. Frederick Engels. **Herr Eugen Dürings Revolution in Science**, New York. Intern. Publ., 1935. p. 352.
3. "The mass awakening of Communist consciousness, the cause of socialism itself, call for a mass change of human nature which can be achieved only in the course of practical movement, in revolution" (**Program of the Communist International Together with its Constitution**, New York, Workers Library Publishers. 1936. p. 32).
4. K. Marx and F. Engels, **Manifesto of the Communist Party**, Moscow-Leningrad. Co-operative Publ. Society or Foreign Workers in the U. S. S. R.. 1935, p. 52.

5. The collective in a broad sense is identified with the state, society and the community.
6. P. Trofimov. "Edinstvo Eticheskikh i Esteticheskikh Printsipov v Sovetskom Iskusstvo" ("Unity of Ethical and Aesthetical Principles in Soviet Art"). **Bolshevik**, 1950. No. 18. p. 34.
7. **Manifesto**, p. 24.
8. G. Gavrov. "O Mezhdunarodnoi Zachchite Prav Chelo-veka" ("On the International Defence of the Man's Rights"). **Sovietskoe Gosudarstvo i Pravo** (The Soviet State and Law). 1948. No. 7. pp. 3-8. **Osnovy Sovetskogo Gosudarstva | Prava** (The Foundations of the Soviet State and Law). Moscow, Juridical Publ. of the Ministry of Justice of the U. S. S. R.. 1947. pp. 190-194.
9. An International bill of rights entitled **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948. by forty-eight nations. Before the vote A. Vyshinsky made a final effort to prevent the adoption of the Declaration. He said that the Declaration is "unsatisfactory and requires considerable amendments" (**Universal Declaration of Human Rights** n. 1., United Nations Department of Public Information. 1947. Cf. The New York Times, November 21. December 7 and 11. 1948). — If one consults the records of the United Nations Commission on the Declaration of Human Rights, he can readily appreciate the polarity between our approach and that of the Soviet camp to a whole register of political definitions.
10. Marx and Engels. **German Ideology**, p. 212. Engels repeated the same ideas in another work: "...our consciousness and thinking, however supra-sensuous they may seem, are the product of material, bodily organ, the brain" ("Ludwig Feuerbach") in E. Burns, op. cit., p. 219).
11. Marx and Engels. **German Ideology**, p. 215.
12. F. Engels. Herr Eugen Dürings Revolution in Science, p. 108.
13. **Ibid.**, p. 249.
14. Lenin. **The Infantile Sickness of 'Leftism' in Communism** (no imprint), Contemporary Publish. Association. 1935. p. 9.
15. Id.. **Religion**, New York. Intern. Publ.. 1935. p. 56.
16. Id.. **The Infantile Sickness of 'Leftism' in Communism**, p. 9. — To Lenin's ideas on Soviet socialist morality Stalin added approvingly: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a rule unrestricted by law. and based on force..." (Stalin. **Problems of Leninism**, Moscow. Foreign Languages Publ. House. 1940. p. 32.
17. These are inseparable parts of the Soviet ideology. In 1946 Stalin said: "Soviet patriotism is indissolubly connected with hatred toward the enemies of the Socialist Fatherland. It is impossible to conquer an enemy without having learned to hate him with all the might of one's soul" (Stalin. **O Velkoi Otechestvennoi Voine Sovetskogo Soyuz**) The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union). 4th ed.. Moscow. Ogiz. 1944. p. 55). "Lenin-Stalin ideology (must instill) a hatred for the capitalist order, and the dying, hypocritical bourgeoisie whose purpose is to deceive the masses..." ("Lenin and Stalin on Party Ideology". **Partiinaya Zhizn** (Party Life). 1947. No. 1. p. 11). "The teaching of hatred for the enemies of the toilers enriches the conception of socialist communism by distinguishing it from sugary and hypocritical philanthropy" (**Gratkaya Sovetskaya Entziklopediya** (Brief Soviet Encyclopedia. XI. p. 1045).
18. Lenin. **The Infantile Sickness of 'Leftism' in Communism**, p. 9.
19. Id.. **Selected Works**, New York. Intern. Publ.. 1935. X. p. 138.
20. **Bolshevik**, 1951. No. 20. p. 9.