

The Communist Horizon: Unveiling the Power of Pocket Communism

Communism, a socio-political ideology that aims to establish a classless society where the means of production are owned and controlled by the community, has long been a topic of discussion and debate. From Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* to the tumultuous history of the Soviet Union, communism has left its mark on global politics and the collective human experience.

In recent years, however, a new form of communism has emerged that challenges traditional notions and seeks to redefine the movement in the modern world. Enter Pocket Communism, a term coined by French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy in his book *Communists Like Us*.

So, what exactly is Pocket Communism, and how does it diverge from its predecessors? Let's embark on a journey to explore this fascinating concept and understand its potential implications for our society.



The Communist Horizon (Pocket Communism)

by Jodi Dean(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 677 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

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Defining Pocket Communism

Pocket Communism, as the name suggests, focuses on making communism more accessible and applicable to everyday life. It advocates for small-scale, localized experiments in communal living and resource sharing, rather than advocating for large-scale revolutions or central planning.

According to Nancy, Pocket Communism encourages a grassroots approach, where individuals create micro-communities within existing social structures. These communities emphasize collective decision-making, sharing resources, and fostering solidarity based on egalitarian principles.

The genesis of Pocket Communism lies in the belief that significant social change starts at the individual level. By fostering small-scale experiments and resisting hierarchical structures, proponents of Pocket Communism aim to create pockets of resistance to the prevailing capitalist system.

The Principles of Pocket Communism

Pocket Communism draws inspiration from various thinkers and movements, while also presenting its unique set of principles. Here are a few key ideas that define Pocket Communism:

1. **Autonomy:** Pocket Communism emphasizes individual autonomy as the driving force behind collective action. It challenges the idea of a centralized authority and encourages self-governance within communities.
2. **Horizontalism:** Rejecting hierarchical structures, Pocket Communism promotes egalitarian relationships and horizontal decision-making processes. It encourages dialogue, consensus-building, and collective responsibility.

3. **Solidarity:** Solidarity is at the heart of Pocket Communism. The idea is to build a sense of community and support among individuals, strengthening bonds, and fostering mutual aid.
4. **Commons:** Pocket Communism seeks to reclaim and nurture the commons – shared resources and spaces that belong to everyone. It challenges the privatization of natural resources and advocates for their communal management.
5. **Antagonism:** In a capitalist society, Pocket Communism challenges dominant power structures and encourages resistance against oppressive forces. It aims to transform existing social relations by fostering alternative practices.

The Advantages and Limitations of Pocket Communism

Like any socio-political ideology, Pocket Communism comes with its own advantages and limitations.

One of the main advantages of Pocket Communism is its ability to adapt and thrive in diverse cultural contexts. By focusing on localized experiments, Pocket Communism can take into account the unique needs and characteristics of a particular community, creating tailor-made approaches to collective living.

Pocket Communism also provides individuals with a tangible way to engage with communist principles and envision an alternative to the capitalistic system. It offers a hands-on, participatory experience that allows for experimentation and learning from successes and failures.

However, Pocket Communism is not without its challenges. Critics argue that Pocket Communism may not be scalable and may only serve as temporary solutions rather than a comprehensive societal framework. They argue that

without larger structural changes, the impact of Pocket Communism might remain limited and unable to bring about substantive change.

Furthermore, Pocket Communism may face resistance from existing power structures and may be vulnerable to co-option or assimilation into the prevailing capitalist system. Sustaining a truly autonomous, anti-capitalist movement within a capitalist society presents numerous challenges and requires constant vigilance.

The Legacy of Pocket Communism

While Pocket Communism may still be a nascent concept, it has the potential to leave a lasting impact on our societal imagination. Its emphasis on autonomy, solidarity, and experimentation resonates with many individuals disillusioned with the prevailing capitalist paradigm.

As communities continue to experiment with Pocket Communism and develop new approaches, they contribute to a broader dialogue on alternative societal systems. The legacy of Pocket Communism lies not only in its potential to bring about localized change but also in its ability to inspire collective discussions and encourage reimagining the possibilities of our future.

From its origins in the writings of Jean-Luc Nancy to its potential for grassroots change, Pocket Communism challenges us to rethink the ways we envision and engage with communism. By focusing on small-scale experiments, autonomy, and solidarity, Pocket Communism offers an alternative path to communistic ideals within our modern world.

Though not without its limitations, Pocket Communism presents an intriguing perspective that encourages individuals to actively partake in shaping their communities and exploring new forms of collective living.

So, as we gaze upon the communist horizon, let us not forget the power of Pocket Communism – the pocket-sized revolutionary spirit ready to reshape our understanding of communal ideals and challenge the prevailing capitalist order.



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In this new title in Verso’s Pocket Communism series, Jodi Dean unshackles the communist ideal from the failures of the Soviet Union. In an age when the malfeasance of international banking has alerted exploited populations the world over to the unsustainability of an economic system predicated on perpetual growth, it is time the left ended its melancholic accommodation with capitalism.

In the new capitalism of networked information technologies, our very ability to communicate is exploited, but revolution is still possible if we organize on the basis of our common and collective desires. Examining the experience of the Occupy movement, Dean argues that such spontaneity can’t develop into a revolution and it needs to constitute itself as a party.

An innovative work of pressing relevance, The Communist Horizon offers nothing less than a manifesto for a new collective politics.



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