

1970

The Unperfect Society

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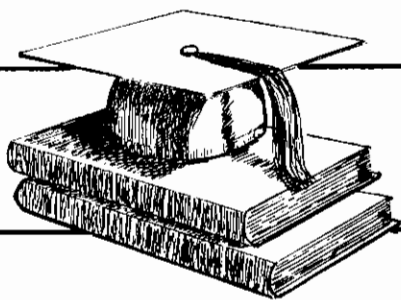
Milovan Djilas

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Recommended Citation

Abromitis, W. and Djilas, Milovan (1970) "The Unperfect Society," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 23 : No. 5 , Article 12.
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol23/iss5/12>

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PROFESSIONAL READING

Djilas, Milovan. *The Unperfect Society*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969. 267 p.

In *The Unperfect Society*, Milovan Djilas, the much imprisoned Vice President of Yugoslavia, explains his revolt and his ideas "namely, that radical changes in Communism will take place, and are already doing so, principally caused by the system itself, as a result of the unreality of its ideology and the bleak outlook for the future of its reality." The author describes the struggle within himself as his ideas regarding communism changed from those of faithful allegiance to those of open criticism. His thoughts, or—more precisely—discussions, of Marxist theories intertwined, as he sees them, with the philosophies of Aristotle, Plato, Hegel, Rousseau, and Diderot, are the argument for his position. He states that the Marxist theories are not scientific as claimed but dogmatic statements based on limited observations from a social scientist's point of view. In fact, the dogma is so inflexible that the validity of Einstein's Theory of Relativity had to be held in disrepute, as it directly contradicted Marxian tenets. The author states that a reading of Engels' *Anti-Dühring* shows that communism did not arise out of scientific motives but from definite political party needs. He further states that communism's quasi-infallibility leads more surely to the ideology's self-destruction as its executives become more wedded to the dogma. In this same theme, the author states that communism becomes democratic only if

stripped of Marxist dogmas like "leadership for action," which really means privileges and powers based on ideological allegiances. Milovan Djilas concludes that the Communist Parties of the future will have no alternative but to be sociopolitical movements that strive in collaboration with others to achieve definite patterns of society and governments under their own national conditions.

The Unperfect Society will provide the serious student of the Communist movement with some new and interesting insights.

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Guttridge, Leonard F. and Smith, Jay D. *The Commodores*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969. 340 p.

For many, even those who have made a profession of going to sea, the heroes of the American sailing navy are too frequently cardboard figures, perhaps only remembered for some heroic utterance in the heat of battle. Here is a book that makes them live as men. *The Commodores* is a series of readable, lusty tales about the U.S. Navy from shortly after the Revolutionary War to just before the Civil War—and, almost incidentally, is factual, well-researched, and informative history. The book focuses on the ship captains of the early American Navy, their problems, triumphs, personalities, and faults. All of the men depicted at one time or another commanded a company of ships and so were entitled to the broad pennant and