

# A Communist Carol

A Play in One Act  
With Apologies to Charles Dickens



(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

## CHARACTERS (in the order of their appearance)

UNCLE SCROOGE .....	<i>Karl Marx</i>
BOB CRATCHITT .....	<i>Defense Minister Yazov</i>
MARY CRATCHITT .....	<i>Mrs. Yazov</i>
FIRST GHOST OF COMMUNISM PAST .....	<i>Vladimir Lenin</i>
SECOND GHOST OF COMMUNISM PAST .....	<i>Josef Stalin</i>
GHOST OF COMMUNISM PRESENT .....	<i>Leonid Brezhnev</i>
GHOST OF COMMUNISM FUTURE .....	<i>Mikhail Gorbachev</i>
TINY TIM .....	<i>A Russian Child</i>

UNCLE SCROOGE, *who has been asleep for what seems like a hundred years, awakes slowly. Discovering his surroundings have changed dramatically, he starts looking about for familiar objects. Instead of his small office, he realizes with a start he is in a huge factory of sorts, with hundreds of people and thousands of strange objects all around. Walking slowly from stage left to center stage, he bellows:*

**Cratchitt!, Bob Cratchitt!**

*(From behind him, center stage, appears his office manager, who looks startled.)*

**Yes, is that you, Uncle Scrooge?**

**SCROOGE.** Of course it's me! What is this? What's going on here? Things look so different. I don't recognize anything . . . even the shop.

**BOB.** You've been asleep, dear uncle. We . . . I . . . your employees, we have had to manage without you for a while. You've been gone so long.

**SCROOGE.** When I fell asleep, I had a nice little shop. It was profitable - and I could imagine what it would look like years hence. Rather idyllic, actually. Lots of hard work of course . . . but all this! What is all this?

**BOB.** Uncle, you've been asleep for a hundred years. We . . . I mean, I, know what you wanted the shop to do - but we've encountered some problems stemming from our incorporation and we had to make do . . .

**SCROOGE.** Incorporation?

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BOB. Yes, uncle – back in 1917.

SCROOGE. My God, it took that long? And this isn't Germany, is it Bob?!

BOB. No, Uncle, it's Russia – that is, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

SCROOGE. I don't know what that means. It looks like Russia to me.

BOB. Well, Uncle...

SCROOGE. What are all these things here?

*(Their conversation is interrupted by BOB's wife MARY, who glides in elegantly dressed and made up in sharp contrast to the office workers present who stand in awe of her presence.)*

MARY. Bob, Bob – it's Tiny Tim again!

BOB. Mary, there's someone here...

MARY. Bob, what are you going to do with Tim? If he's not being mischievous in the Ukraine playing with his science kit at that reactor place, or leading that gang of thugs in Kazakhstan, he's playing cops and robbers in Afghanistan! Now he's throwing paper airplanes from Finland to the Kremlin!

BOB. Mary, shhh! We have company. Uncle Scrooge is awake.

MARY. Ohhh! Uncle Scrooge. Oh dear G...! I mean, why, welcome back, uncle. We've missed you – Bob more so than the others, I think. But I'm not sure any of them have really missed you at all...

BOB. Mary, please... that's enough. Of course we've missed you, uncle. Why, Tiny Tim especially has been wondering what's happened to you. He's missed your stories about the way things would be someday. It's going to be wonderful having you back, I mean awake, I think....

SCROOGE. Thank you, Bob. *(pausing)* Bob, I want you to take the rest of the day off. Why don't you tend to Tiny Tim? He obviously needs a fatherly chat.

BOB. But, Uncle, if I tend to my work here at the factory, Tim will appreciate me that much more when I show him what I've done for him.

SCROOGE. No, Bob, I think you should spend even more time with him. Take a good look at that sign above your head... "Glasnost." It doesn't mean just publicity – telling him what you're doing. It also means being open – finding out what he's thinking.

BOB. *(chuckling)* We've really got them fooled in the West, don't we, Uncle? *(with a realization)* Of course, they do go hand in hand, don't they, Uncle? But before I go – you asked me about the factory.

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SCROOGE. That's all right, Bob. I'll just ask questions as I go.

BOB. Well, all right, Uncle, but there's something I should tell you.

SCROOGE. *(frowning)* Well, what is it? Come on, man.

BOB. Well, Uncle, the factory is haunted. There are ghosts roaming around who try to direct the workers. It makes our job as managers difficult at times.

SCROOGE. *(skeptically)* I see, Bob. Well you and Mary run along now. I'll tend to the . . . ghosts. Spend some time with Tiny Tim, get to know him better. It'll be fun.

*With that dismissal, BOB and MARY leave, MARY leading BOB who keeps looking back over his shoulder uncertainly. SCROOGE looks out over what is at least in name his domain. Most of it looks incomprehensible to him. He lets it soak in for several minutes, then starts walking slowly. Almost immediately he is confronted with an apparition. The ghostly presence, obviously highly intelligent and very concerned, looks more frightened than SCROOGE does. SCROOGE, comforted by this realization, addresses the apparition.*

SCROOGE. Who, might I ask, are you? And why are you here?

FIRST GHOST OF PAST. *(entering from left of center stage)* Permit me to introduce myself. I am the Ghost of Communism Past. I'm here . . . well, I managed the store for a few years after we incorporated back in '17. But I got sick and . . . well, things started slipping away before I died.

SCROOGE. What do you mean "things started slipping away?"

FIRST GHOST OF PAST. Well, we had some problems, you see. First, even after we revolted, the other countries didn't, and well, they invaded in an attempt to get us out of power. Then, well, Uncle Scrooge, that theory of yours had some flaws, so we had to experiment. I tried to warn everyone about *him* . . .

*(With this a SECOND GHOST appears from right of center stage, much more confidently and aggressively.)*

SCROOGE. Who are you?

SECOND GHOST OF PAST. I'm the one who pulled you and him from the dustbin of history, so to speak. I am the Ghost of Communism Past, not this Bolshevik! If I hadn't reworked your theory and fixed his mistakes, none of us would be standing in this factory today. We'd still be back in your shop.

SCROOGE. Just what was wrong with my shop? Why has this all been changed so . . . ?

FIRST GHOST OF PAST. Well, I can understand some of it *(as he surveys the T-80s, Backfires and Blackjacks, BMPS, SS-N-23's, LPAR's, destroyers, etc.)*, but I doubt *all* of this is necessary.

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SECOND GHOST OF PAST. Of course it's necessary, why we've been invaded four times this century. Since you fell asleep, Uncle Scrooge!!

SCROOGE. But, there's so much here.

SECOND GHOST OF PAST. Absolutely necessary! And I'm proud that my involvement . . . although I never would have imagined all this . . . really set things in motion.

FIRST GHOST OF PAST. Things could have been different! Some of this may be necessary. But all these resources devoted to one purpose! So much else could be done.

SCROOGE. Enough, both of you! I'm still confused as to how and why . . . Go! Leave me in peace.

*(FIRST GHOST pulls SECOND GHOST away, forcing him to vanish as well. FIRST GHOST takes longer to depart, mournfully looking at a row of T-80's, then back at SCROOGE, obviously wanting to talk more.)*

*SCROOGE walks slowly along the overhang outside his office, looking down at seemingly thousands of uniformed and plain clothes workers who all, in regimented fashion, joylessly go about their jobs. The uniformed lot seems slightly less joyless than the civilians, if only because they look more authoritative. Row upon row of armament rolls off countless assembly lines. Below him are portals where the machinery is mixed and apparently designated for shipment. He sees signs with strange names painted on them, where machinery is queued. Afghanistan, Angola, Bulgaria, Congo, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Finland, Hungary, Iraq, Libya, Mozambique, North Korea, Peru, Romania, Syria, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, Zambia. Each has different amounts and different mixes. As much material as is headed for these destinations, it is a trifling quantity when compared with much larger assemblages with much broader and more complex mixes underneath signs which read GSFG, CGF, SGF, NGF, Moscow MD, Far East, Transcaucasus MD, etc! . . . MD after MD. SCROOGE staggers back, boggled by all he has seen. Men, soldiers, planes, guns, ships, signs representing unheard of places.*

SCROOGE. What does all this mean? *(He cries to the assemblage which remains unable to see him for the chaos on the factory floor, while the GHOST OF COMMUNISM PRESENT appears from stage right - a big, gruff, bushy-eyebrowed, none-too-intelligent looking, yet forceful presence.)*

GHOST OF PRESENT. Force, power, strength! That is what all this means. *(The GHOST OF PRESENT stops as if nothing more need be said, and as if he has nothing more to say.)*

*(SCROOGE stares at him for a minute. He looks hard and realizes he will get only short, direct answers, stripped of the potential arguments - theoretical and otherwise - that the FIRST GHOST OF PAST would have given him.)*

SCROOGE. Why the need for so much strength, force, and power? This seems overwhelming, so omnipotent.

GHOST OF PRESENT. *(smiling broadly, almost patronizingly)* Yes, it does, doesn't it?

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SCROOGE. *(pausing)* But why?

GHOST OF PRESENT. Because of our enemies, those we have now and those we shall have.

SCROOGE. Enemies! What enemies? Why should you have so many enemies? Why do you anticipate more? This isn't what I imagined!

GHOST OF PRESENT. We had to adapt some, we may have to adapt more to make sure the dream – yours and ours, of course – is reality.

SCROOGE. But surely not this way!

GHOST OF PRESENT. There is no other way. In order to succeed, the vanguards of the worldwide movement need. . .

SCROOGE. Vanguards, what vanguards?

GHOST OF PRESENT. Ah . . . you know, the vanguard, the . . . ahh . . . forefront of . . . the . . . leadership . . . maybe you should talk to the Ghost of Communism Past, the first one, I believe.

SCROOGE. *(in mock understanding)* Yes, of course. I'll have to do that! What exactly is your contribution to the present, ghost?

GHOST OF PRESENT. Much of this, Uncle. I presided over almost twenty years of the metamorphosis of the shop into a factory such as this. In turn, I was able to expand upon the factory's management style considerably.

SCROOGE. Oh, and how did you accomplish this?

GHOST OF PRESENT. Well, when those damn Czechs . . . forgive me . . . when our fellow socialists, or rather soon-to-be communist haven in Czechoslovakia was threatened by the forces of . . . of . . . of . . . oh, yes – Western imperialism, our party ideologue drafted my doctrine!

SCROOGE. And what doctrine was that?

GHOST OF PRESENT. You know, the one where I said that socialism . . . I mean communism, must remain inert, or intact, something like that. And we had to have the toys, or tools, to make sure it did.

*(SCROOGE says nothing in response. He merely frowns, which soon becomes a scowl. Under his gaze, GHOST OF PRESENT slowly, uncertainly, fades away.)*

*SCROOGE takes everything in again with a slow, sweeping gaze – almost incomprehensibly. He longs for his shop, searching for any remaining evidence of it. Unable to recognize any, he debates going back to sleep for another long, perhaps longer, nap, when his disillusioned reverie is interrupted by another ghostly presence. The apparition appears first from stage right, then from stage left, then from center stage, and even appears for an instant to be able to appear simultaneously across the entire stage.*

CRYPTOLOGIC QUARTERLY

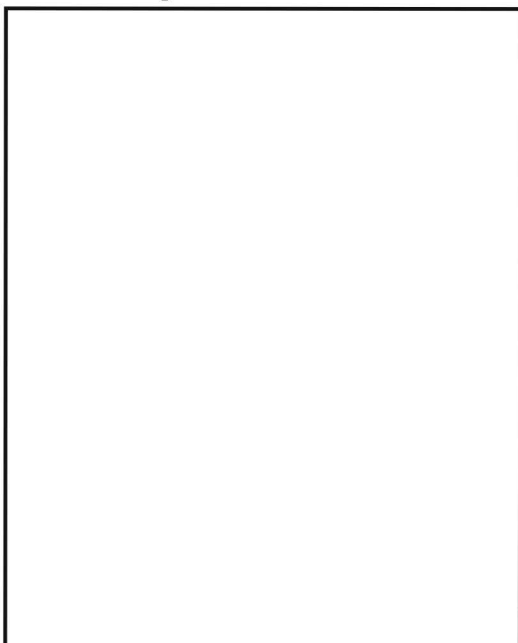
*This apparition confuses SCROOGE. It has the intelligent look of the FIRST GHOST OF PAST, the determination of the SECOND GHOST OF PAST, the resolve of the GHOST OF PRESENT, but interestingly has almost some semblance of the humanity and compassion with which SCROOGE had hoped the store would be managed. SCROOGE, however, senses something deeper in this apparition; beneath the surface is an almost troubled countenance. SCROOGE and the ghost look at each other questioningly. Then SCROOGE realizes he confronts the GHOST OF FUTURE. SCROOGE sees that there is potential in this ghost, but of an unknown nature. He is neither fiercely protective of the factory, nor consumed by it. He seems instead, accepting, as if he embraces the reality conveyed by the ghosts of PAST and PRESENT, but also is aware of the tremendous resources devoured by the factory.*

*The GHOST OF FUTURE looks at SCROOGE smilingly, but with a sad smile, and at that instant, SCROOGE realizes his little shop is gone forever. The forces he had unleashed by keeping his meticulous ledgers had been overtaken by the shop's incorporation. The GHOST OF FUTURE stares openly at SCROOGE, awaiting the questions he knows he cannot answer satisfactorily.*

*Just then there is a loud knock at the heavy iron door to the factory. The GHOST OF FUTURE knows who it is and with a gentle nod indicates that SCROOGE should open the door. As SCROOGE does so, he sees the face of the crippled TINY TIM, so misunderstood and maligned even by BOB and MARY. The crippled child stares at SCROOGE, and both of them then look at GHOST OF FUTURE. TINY TIM is uncertain of this ghost. The others he had come to understand, but this one defied logic. SCROOGE is able to discern this confusion from the pleading look on TINY TIM's face. Both of them look imploringly at the ghost, who slowly turns away and looks out at the huge factory. TINY TIM realizes before SCROOGE that the ghost is indicating their mutual future.*

*SCROOGE bows his head and starts to walk back to his chair from which he so recently awoke and arose. As he sits down, TINY TIM moves up to the ghost at the railing, but stays an arm's length away. SCROOGE puts his head down on his desk without bothering to go over his ledgers.*

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(FOUO) [redacted] is an IR Intern currently assigned to B442. Before joining NSA, [redacted]

