

Two Times Two Types of Socialism

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Two Times Two Types of Socialism and Eight Questions on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The subject of this conference is socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is one of the most important questions for communists. The goal of all of our activity is to establish the proletariat's political power in order to lead humanity from capitalism to communism. This road goes through the transitional society, socialism, which cannot be anything other than the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

Why Discuss Socialism Now?

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat is always important for us. The question is put on the agenda today with three issues:

First, with the aggression against North Korea and Venezuela, Kim Jong Un and Venezuela's Maduro are presented as socialists. Despite the differences between them, the media tries to paint a picture of these two leaders as

representatives for socialist states today. Is it true? This is a question we ought to be able to answer.

Secondly, in the elections, the Red Party gained seats in Parliament for the first time since 1997. They have not focused much on socialism, but they have, for instance, tied the climate crisis to capitalism. In their party program, the Red Party writes a lot about socialism. Can the Red Party's strategy lead to a socialist society?

Third, this year, the Russian Revolution, the October Revolution, turns 100 years old. 100 years ago, on November 7th, the decisive attack on the Russian state began. This revolutionary war led to the establishment of history's first worker's and peasant's state, and the construction of the world's first socialist country. We will commemorate the October Revolution and use it to propagandize for revolution and socialism today. It is therefore good to clarify for ourselves why the Soviet Union was socialist and what we mean by revolution and socialism today.

Twice on Two Types of Socialism

Socialism is used to describe two things:

1. Firstly, on **socialist theory**.
2. Secondly, on **the socialist society**.

When one uses the term to refer to the **socialist society**, it can be used in two ways:

1. Socialism as its own society, a form of society that is not capitalism and where the collective takes care of people, where there are no large class differences and production serves the people in one way or another. This is how socialism is defined by non-Marxists – everyone from social democrats to nazis.
2. The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, a transitional phase of class struggle and change, between

capitalism and communism's second phase – where classes are completely abolished. This is the way Marxists use the term. This is how it was used by Lenin as a continuation of Marx – who referred to this transitional society as “communism's first phase”.

When we talk about **socialism as a theory**, we can divide the meanings into two camps:

1. First, all utopian, petty-bourgeois, reactionary, and bourgeois socialist tendencies. Socialism is the feeling of capitalism's injustice; socialism as “common sense”, and a more logical organization of society; socialism as a protest against the worst offenses of capitalism; or socialism as a dream of an idyllic former society one wishes to return to.
2. Second is scientific socialism, a tradition that was established first and foremost by Marx when he made two great discoveries: the materialist view of history with production as the basis and class struggle as the driving force of development and the discovery of the value that capitalists rob from the proletariat as a basis for profit and increased capital. This scientific socialism, Marxism, is our theoretical fundament.

Eight Questions on Socialism

The rest of this introduction will be presented in the form of eight questions and answers. The first question we can ask is:

1. Why in the world would it be important what we call socialism; isn't it just a word?

Words do not create reality. But words and thoughts are, for Marxists, an attempt to reflect reality. Good concepts can give us a good grasp on reality. Poor concepts can give us a poor grasp on reality. Moreover, concepts have to do with ideology. Ideology can, as Stalin said, become a material

force when it is grasped by the masses and put into practice.

What we understand socialism to be is a matter of how we understand reality and how we change it. It is a question of praxis – if it will lead us forth to communism or not. If we are not able to correctly distinguish between socialism and false socialism, we can risk that we ourselves become blind to brutal fascist terror and imperialist exploitation, only in red clothing. We can become blind to revisionism and counterrevolution.

For political change, for revolution, we need political mobilization. Without a clear understanding of socialism, we cannot give a clear understanding to the masses. Without this, praxis becomes blind and it becomes impossible to seize power, maintain it, and develop it all the way until communism.

2. How does the Red Party define socialism and why is it incorrect?

The Red Party says that *“socialism has to do with spreading power(...) socialism has to do with putting an end to a few people owning companies and deciding over most matters(...) socialism also has to do with building a strong collective.”* Additionally, they write in their program that they are for a “democratic revolution” and that they wish to have “green socialism... for the 21st century.”

The Red Party is missing a clear definition, and this is as it must be because the Red Party has members who believe that Mao was a great revolutionary, as well as members who believe that Mao was a despot in the same category as Pinochet. They have members who believe that there was socialism in the Soviet Union and China, members who believe that socialism exists today, and members who believe that socialism has never truly existed.

In order to make room for all of its members, the Red Party goes back to square one. They embrace the unclear view of

socialism from the beginning of the 19th century, but call it “socialism for the 21st century”. If it had been a trademarked brand, one could have called it false advertising. The Red Party has no strategy for revolution and no clear definition of socialism.

This porridge is “just right” for holding the party together and avoiding getting “got” in debates and in the media. But it is unserious handling of the question of socialism. It is almost as if they really believe that socialism is not a real alternative. This gives no tools for people who actually want to smash capitalism.

3. How does NKP define socialism, and why is it fatally dangerous?

The so-called “NKP” (The Communist Party of Norway) is a revisionist party that defines socialism as “a societal system where it is no longer possible for any social classes or social groups to live off of exploiting others” and where “the means of production and finance are no longer owned by a few rich private individuals”.

They do not place any weight on the class struggle in socialism. Mao developed the theory that the class struggle continues during socialism and revealed that without proletarian cultural revolutions in socialism, the bourgeoisie will reorganize itself and make counterrevolution by taking over the state bureaucracy from the inside.

When “NKP” says that social classes of social groups can no longer exploit others in socialism, they are saying that the bourgeoisie has been completely abolished in socialism. This is an incredibly dangerous idea. It leaves the door open for just this type of new bureaucratic bourgeoisie taking power.

They focus on property ownership. They emphasize the means of production no longer being owned by private individuals. Is this the definition of socialism? Is this the core of

socialism? If that is the case, it would mean the welfare state is socialism. Thus, an equality sign is placed between formal state ownership and socialism. But history has shown that the exploiting class has no problem with controlling property without owning it formally. They can organize their power and exploitation itself through the state. State capitalism is more than possible: it exists and has existed in many places, and it is no more mystical than when the Vatican could act as a collective feudal lord. That property formally belongs to God in heaven does not hinder the Pope from existing and living on earth as an emperor.

Property relations are a part of the relations of production, but the formal legal property relations are secondary. What is primary is which class it is that has power. And the bourgeoisie often has power indirectly and informally. They even prefer this to ruling, exploiting, and enriching themselves in the open and honestly.

The revisionism that obscures this is not a friend with faults, but is rather the mortal enemy of the revolution! Wherever revisionism takes power, revolutionaries are killed, persecuted, or imprisoned. Working people and poor people meet violent oppression if they go on strike or protest. Revisionism with power means social-imperialism against other countries.

Mao said that the way from counterrevolution to fascist despotism was short, partially because the dictatorship of the proletariat must centralize power over politics and production. Revisionism is a mortal danger that must absolutely be taken seriously.

4. How did Soviet revisionism show its alternative view on socialism?

Mao exposed Khrushchev and the Soviet revisionism that seized power in a coup after Stalin's death. Khrushchev attacked

Stalin's legacy and politics harshly and put forth a new line, which consisted of the following four points:

1. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union was from here on the party of the entire people and the state was the state of the entire people – in other words, they were no longer the proletariat's tools.
2. Peaceful transition to socialism; the Soviet Union would guarantee that communists could come to power through elections in the rest of the world.
3. Peaceful competition; the socialist countries were to prove themselves to be superior to the capitalist countries through peaceful competition.
4. Peaceful co-existence; the Soviet Union would put world peace first and not contribute to stoking the flames that could set the world ablaze.

This was the ideological form that the counterrevolution took. Moreover, a conscious coup was carried out, led by Krushchev, and in the aftermath, large portions of the economy were rearranged – for instance, wages for managers were increased and profits became more emphasized in production.

But the revisionists' alternative view on socialism was dangerous enough in and of itself, because it revised away Marxism's view on the class struggle as the motor in the development of society, it revised away the proletariat's especially leading role, and it revised away the necessity of revolutionary war and weakened the world's oppressed people and the entire world's proletariat – by refusing and working against the revolutionary war.

5. How did revisionism in China show its alternative view on socialism?

Chinese revisionism bore many similarities with Soviet revisionism. One of the similarities was an exaggerated focus on productive forces. It is called productive forces theory,

and in short, it has to do with the idea that the most important thing about socialism is increasing the productive forces. It claims that the core of socialism is to improve technology, increase production, and increase efficiency.

Briefly formulated, Deng Xiaoping said that "it doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, as long as it catches mice". They justified revisionism and capitalist methods with the argument that they can increase production and therefore people's living standards. In the autobiography of Labour Party politician Harald Berntsen, he cites a CIA agent and seasoned general secretary in the Labour Party in the 1940s and 50s when he says that more important than the red colour of the flag was the red colour on the cheeks of little Ola and Kari, who got a new school building with a radiator thanks to social democracy.

As Marxists, we also place weight on production and what revisionism does here is to grasp a truth that Marxism revealed, i.e. that production is the most fundamental thing in human society. But they grasp this in a mechanical manner, and make it seem as if production is always the primary side, and that economy is always more important than everything else. This is not in line with reality.

Mao's line was to "grasp revolution, promote production." The key layer in socialism for Mao was revolution, and it was this that was to drive production forward – not the other way around. Socialism's economic principles are, according to Stalin, to meet the needs of the masses maximally, but not to "enrich themselves!" the way the Chinese revisionists encouraged.

Without the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is no socialism. Without class struggle, there is no communism. On the contrary, when the dictatorship of the proletariat falls, socialism falls, and capitalism is reimplemented. The development in China after the revisionists' coup shows the

entire world how true this Maoist insight is. It does not matter how many mice the cat catches if they all lie at the doorstep of the new bourgeoisie.

6. What is the main question for socialism?

Marx says that between capitalism and communism, there is a transitional society that can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. This is a lesson based on all class struggles in history, and a lesson learned from the proletariat's own struggle.

The political rule for the proletariat is a question that socialism in its entirety hinges upon. The state must be such a state, or else socialism is impossible. Imagine a society where all companies are run by the state – but the state is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. How could this be anything other than a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie? The law of surplus-value, and this as the root of profit, can even continue to live in a moneyless bureaucrat-capitalist society.

Money and stocks are just an expression for exchange value and control – they are concepts that are for and reified by relations. The relations can be there without the concepts, or with new words to describe them, like “goods for state leaders”, “compensation for extra effort” or “trusted officials in state-run companies”.

From MLM, we can derive a number of criteria for socialism, and we can expand upon what the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat entails. But even with such tools, one must still use them in reality. Finding concepts and methods does not mean that you're off the hook for using them. When people say that North Korea is socialist, we must use a methodology for showing why it is not true. But without this methodology, without the Marxist definitions, some will have trouble distinguishing socialism from capitalism – distinguishing the dictatorship of the proletariat from fascist despotism.

7. Why talk about dictatorship, such a scary word with negative connotations?

We communists do not shy away from these scary words. We are for protracted people's war. We are for just wars. We are for the dictatorship of the proletariat. We know that it is not a word that typically has a positive connotation and that these are words that describe violence and oppression. Why would we present it as something harmless and delightful? The bourgeoisie does this all the time. For them, brutal imperialist war becomes "humanitarian intervention". But Marxism-Leninism-Maoism is an ideology for revealing, not concealing. It is a tool by which one can see the world for what it is, without dressing it up, without cloaking it in a romantic image.

All states are class states. All class states are class dictatorships. They are dictatorships exercised by one part of a class, one whole class, or several classes in alliance. And they are dictatorships that are exercised against other classes. In the case of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is the proletariat's political state power that exercises its dictatorship against the bourgeoisie. The proletariat rules in an alliance with the entirety of the working people – like peasants, small business owners, and intellectuals.

The dictatorship of the proletariat means democracy for the people, but not for the enemy. It means liberation for the masses, but the oppression of those who have the power today. It means the oppression of fascists, agents of imperialism, and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries. The only people we could fool if we even were to whitewash this, is ourselves and – if we have influence – the masses. What would the masses have to gain from having a leadership that deceives themselves and others?

8. What about a more modern socialism?

We are adherents of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. This is an ideology that was first formulated as its own system in the 1980s. It is not only the most advanced form of socialist science – it is also the most modern!

Those who claim that they wish to modernise socialism are in reality talking about new packaging for a pre-Marxist socialism. The words and contents of these theories can often be swapped out with those found in very old socialist tendencies. The only thing that distinguishes them from the old utopian socialists are the purely cosmetic forms they give their ideologies.

The Red Party wants a democratic revolution – how is this any different from Bernstein's theory that the labour movement could come to power through elections? What is modern about a naive pipe dream from 1899? What really makes the Red Party's theory different from those of Bernstein's party comrade Kautsky? This "very modern" man wrote in 1934 that he held fast to the idea that socialism is not only impossible without democracy, but that there is moreover no other way to socialism than through democracy. How very modern! He squeezed this theory out while German socialists were shackled together in Hitler's concentration camps because they could not defend themselves and wage war against the bourgeoisie's reactionary Nazi terror regime.

And Kautsky talks about democracy in general when Marxism – a theory that Kautsky claimed to support – had long since revealed that in a class society, there cannot exist any democracy "for all". Completely fundamental to Marxism was the discovery that the bourgeois society's ideology about liberty, equality, and fraternity were false – as long as class society persisted. Kautsky goes back to square one, and the Red Party and similar parties the world over, want to revisit the retreat again.

And what distinguishes their vision of socialism from that of Saint Simon, Fourier, and Owen – the great utopian socialists that Marx and Engels criticized and surpassed over 150 years ago? Very little, if anything at all, differentiates the ancient, washed-out socialism, from that of today, in the eyes of modern socialism. It is not common to read the works of these people today, but if one looks a little at the texts of Marx and Engels – or Lenin, later on – it is striking how their scathing critiques can be copied directly and directed towards today's so-called modern socialists...

Time and again, utopians, economists, and revisionists of all colours of the rainbow hit a reset button and begin with a blank page. They despise guidelines, summarized experiences, and that which communisms classics have revealed as laws for the development of society. Experiences and discoveries that have cost millions of lives in struggle are playfully thrown out the window in an attempt to “modernize”, in an attempt to make themselves mainstream, appealing, and palatable.

Against this, we put forth Marxism-Leninism-Maoism – as a summary of the laws of development for proletarian revolution, discovered and formulated by the proletariat's foremost leaders and teachers on the basis of the rich and diverse practice of the entire world's fighting proletariat. There is nothing more modern and groundbreaking, nothing more revolutionary, than the true scientific socialism.