

COMMUNISM, SOCIALISM: ANY DIFFERENCE?

In this book, we, like Marx and Engels, have used the names “communism” and “socialism” to mean the same relation of production. Marx and Engels had used the two names alternately to signify the post-revolutionary democratic world system of “cooperative”, “communal”, or universal ownership. Why they preferred *communist* identity at the beginning of their studies and organization whilst *socialist* at the end remains well stated in Engels’s Preface to the English edition of 1888 as well as his Preface to the German edition of 1890 of the *Communist Manifesto*:

“Nevertheless, when it appeared, we could not have called it a *socialist* manifesto. In 1847, two kinds of people were considered socialists. On the one hand were the adherents of the various utopian systems, notably the Owenites in England and the Fourierists in France, both of whom, at that date, had already dwindled to mere sects gradually dying out. On the other, the manifold types of social quacks who wanted to eliminate social abuses through their various universal panaceas and all kinds of patch-work, without hurting capital and profit in the least. In both cases, people who stood outside the labour movement and who looked for support rather to the “educated” classes. The section of the working class, however, which demanded a radical reconstruction of society, convinced that mere political revolutions were not enough, then called itself *Communist*. It was still a rough-hewn, only instinctive and frequently somewhat crude communism. Yet, it was powerful enough to bring into being two systems of utopian communism — in France, the “Icarian” communists of Cabet, and in Germany that of Weitling. Socialism in 1847 signified a bourgeois movement, communism a working-class movement. Socialism was, on the Continent at least, quite respectable, whereas communism was the very opposite. And since we were very decidedly of the opinion as early as then that “the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the working class itself,” [from the [General Rules of the International](#)] we could have no hesitation as to which of the two names we should choose. Nor has it ever occurred to us to repudiate it.”

It deserves mention here that even in 1875, well after the fall of the Paris Commune when the influence of Proudhon and the utopian socialists had faded out, Marx made use of the name *communist* in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875). However, when the Berlin University *privatdocent* Dr. Dühring wrote a complete system of social reform venting his spleen against Marx, Engels wrote *Anti-Dühring* (1878). Later, at the request of Paul Lafargue he rearranged three chapters of the book into a separate booklet, which Lafargue translated into French and published in 1880 with title – *Socialisme utopique et Socialisme scientifique*.

In the 1840s, then, the term “*socialism*” used to refer to the followers of Robert Owen in England and Charles Fourier in France. In fact, the Owenites had invented the term with the first recorded use in the London *Co-operative Magazine* of November 1827, and they called themselves Socialists. Since these groups advocated going to America or into the countryside to establish small-scale communities based on common ownership as the answer to capitalism, Marx and Engels did not want to associate with them. Instead, they stood for political action by the working class to establish common ownership on a

worldwide scale. Therefore, they called themselves Communists and wrote the *Communist Manifesto* (not the *Socialist Manifesto*).

However, by 1880s those groups had largely ceased to exist. Hence, Engels named one of his best writings “*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* (not *Communism, Utopian and Scientific*), and then when William Morris, Eleanor Marx and others split away from the Social Democratic Federation with Engels’s approval in 1884 they called their new organization the *Socialist League*.

In brief what in the 1840s, Marx and Engels called *Communism* Engels in the 1880s called *Socialism*.

Socialism is the end of economics, politics and class-history

Socialism is a system of social life involving the world of humans as equals. There alienation will have given way to free association whereby all various aspects of life will have merged into a single field of knowledge. You will have no usurper mediators and interpreters, hence no philosophy; nothing to economize hence no economics, albeit informed use of resources will hold; no power and no leaders to elevate to power hence no politics, since politics is all about power. As Marx said, “There will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of the antagonism in civil society.”¹ You will have only conscious *practical* productive life, free from all artificial constraints of class-interests, hence only active dynamic *criticism* and *evolution* of one single eco-friendly planetary society. Socialism is an egalitarian relation of production.

In fact, all past revolutions were about the seizure of power by one new set of exploiters from the old, with exploitation of the producing classes becoming more and more masked and intensified. The producers were the pawns. Socialist revolution is a revolution by the modern producers, the wage and salary working class, for a complete change of society in the interest of the whole humanity.

Workers enter the political arena to wrest political power – the power to direct society – from the capitalists, in order to implement their own socialist relations of production. Socialist relations do not spring out of the political revolution, but out of the contradiction between how we produce and how we should produce, which engenders political conflict eventually giving rise to new political conditions that favour Socialism. Production relations are basic, but socialist production relations exist potentially, theoretically, as a dynamic, until the revolution will have done away with capital.

When the workers declare dissolution of the existing social order, as Marx said, it does no more than disclose the secret of its own existence, for it is the effective dissolution of that order. “The condition for emancipation of the working class is the abolition of all classes.”²

Lenin’s ‘Socialism’ = State Capitalism

In the 20th century, usage changed again when after the Bolshevik seizure power in Russia in 1917, Lenin named his party “Communist” to distinguish from the “Socialist” parties of western and central Europe founded in Engels’s time. In the meantime these parties had become openly and hopelessly reformist. However, Lenin made “socialism” a transitional stage between capitalism and communism under state ownership with people as employees. He lacked the courage to put it in his own name, hence the lie as if Marx had made the distinction in 1875 that Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894.

In the “*April Theses*” or “*Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*”, written April 10, 1917, Lenin said:

“The name ‘Social-Democracy’ is *scientifically* incorrect, as Marx frequently pointed out, in particular, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* in 1875, and as Engels reaffirmed in a more popular form in 1894. From capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism, i.e., to the social ownership of the means of production and *the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual*. Our party looks further ahead: socialism must inevitably evolve gradually into communism, upon the banner of which is inscribed the motto, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”.³ [Emphasis added]

That “socialism” will have “the distribution of products according to the amount of work” was Lenin’s creed replacing Marx’s word “need” with “work”; it could never work, because workers are never paid for what they produce, but for what is required to produce and reproduce their ability to work. They produce more than what they receive – leaving a surplus at the disposal of their employers.

In September 1917, Lenin put on record that “socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people* and has to that extent ceased to be capitalist monopoly.”⁴ [Lenin’s emphasis]

Absurd, since nobody could make capitalism “*to serve the interests of the whole people*”. Capitalism works objectively to serve the interests of the capitalist class against the interests of working class. On the contrary, Socialism is the negation of capitalism. However, Lenin lacked courage to present his absurdities without Marx’s name, lest people would catch him in the act of an anti-Marxist.

Again, in the *State and Revolution*, written in September 1917, he made an arbitrary “scientific distinction” between ‘socialism’ and ‘communism’:

“But the scientific distinction between socialism and communism is clear. What is usually called socialism was termed by Marx the ‘first’, or lower, phase of communist society. In so far as the means of production become *common* property, the word ‘communism’ is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism.”⁵ [Lenin’s italics]

“The scientific distinction” was Lenin’s fabrication. It is true that Marx did distinguish between “the first phase of communist society” and “a higher phase of communist society” in his “*Critique of the Gotha Programme*”. However, since he used the two terms alternately and synonymously to describe the post-revolutionary world society based on common ownership, so he could have also called it “socialist society”.

Even during the first phase, the production relations of society are certainly communist *or* socialist without even an iota of the *relations of production* remaining capitalist there. According to Marx, notwithstanding phases – “the first” or “a higher” – this is “communist society”. This he also calls alternatively “the co-operative society”. He declares:

“Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labour employed on the products appear here *as the value* of these products, as an objective quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labour no longer exists in an indirect fashion, but directly as a component part of the total labour.”⁶

Thus, what you own in “*common*” with other members of society you do not buy; neither can you sell. How can you sell your labour-power, which has become “directly ... a component part of the total labour”, for a wage, i.e. private property, in a society with “common ownership”? Who will buy and how, where “exchange” and “*value*” will already have become non-existent?

Therefore, in communism or socialism, phases aside, you do not have the economy with money, market and capitalist relations of production. In the first phase Marx did propose a “labour voucher” (not wage or salary) scheme – not “*according to the amount of work*” as Lenin claims – but only after six necessary *deductions* from the “proceeds of labour”. At the same time, however, he argued that it was a “*defect*”, which would be overcome in

“a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labour, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labour, has vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but itself life’s prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: *From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!*”⁷

Obviously, at that time (1875) productive abundance was deficient, hence Marx’s distinction. However, any “labour voucher” scheme can no longer be endorsed, since it conforms to a form of economic rationing and would in time give rise to exchange, alienation and in effect voucher circulation, which have no function in the non-exchange economy as sought by socialists. The abundance Marx looked forward to achieve the “higher phase” has waited for recognition since the beginning of the twentieth century,

but has not come about because a disorientated working class, suffering from a lack of class-consciousness, has not taken political action to end capitalism and its artificial scarcity and organized waste. Abundance does not have a measure of measures. For modern-day socialists the only measure is the satisfaction of needs.

State

On the question of the state, one moment Lenin quotes “Marx’s theory of “the state i.e., the proletariat organised as the ruling class”,⁸ then demands – “the *smashing*, the *destruction* of the “ready-made state machinery” everywhere including “Britain and America” as “the precondition of every real people’s revolution”⁹ ... “expropriation of the expropriators”¹⁰ ... having “overthrown the capitalists”¹¹ ... “building up the state”¹² anew ... “a state of *armed workers*”.¹³ Next moment he claims, “It follows that under communism there remains for a time not only the bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie”; then “the complete *withering away* of every form of state in general”,¹⁴ will occur under complete communism and that is “a lengthy process”¹⁵ [Lenin’s italics]

It is completely irrational to propose to smash and destroy a state entirely, then to build up one, and then again see its “withering away” while even the bourgeois state exists “without the bourgeoisie”.

Marx and Engels were emphatically transparent and systematic on the question: the immense majority of the world’s workers would become class-conscious, would unite themselves in an independent organization worldwide and state wise and politically seize the state power in the first place. Then by using their newly acquired political power they would turn the state’s forces into the agent of emancipation by dismantling “the bureaucratic-military apparatus”¹⁶ of [12 April 1871] of “the purely coercive character of the state power”¹⁷ for suppressing any resistances of the bourgeoisie and their possible supporters. Thus, they would bring the still useful organs under democratic control with universal suffrage applying the *Paris Commune Principle* of mandated and democratically elected delegates revocable at short notice. Because, “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes”.¹⁸ [24 June 1872] In addition, during the initiation of their co-operative society based on universal ownership, i.e., administration of affairs of life as against the administration of people, society will see the gradual dissolution of the state. With the dissolution of class antagonism, the state will completely “wither away” – politics, economics and class distinctions will end, and will begin the democratic administration of production and distribution for use.

Whereas, Lenin quoted those words of 24 June 1872 by Marx and Engels and wrote, “The authors took the words ... from Marx’s essay – *The Civil War in France*. Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as an important correction into the Manifesto. Most characteristically, it is this important correction that has been distorted by the opportunists ... the current vulgar “interpretation” of Marx’s famous statement just quoted is that Marx here allegedly emphasizes the idea of slow

development in contradistinction to the seizure of power and so on. As a matter of fact, *the exact opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery", and cannot continue itself merely to laying hold of it."¹⁹ [Lenin's italics]

Next, Lenin picked up Marx's declaration from Marx's 12 April 1871 letter to Kugelmann "that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer, as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another, but to *smash* it [Marx's italics – the original is *zerbrechen*]"²⁰

Readers must minutely note that Lenin has cut out the phrase "ready-made state machinery" from the quotation of 24 June 1872, pasted beside it the words "smash it" from the 1871 quote just above and added his own words "break up". Thus, with cut-here-and-paste-there tactic Lenin has confused two differently used phrases to accomplish his own purpose. A "talented" tactician, indeed. For, the word "apparatus" is singularly used to mean: the equipment needed for a particular purpose, a political or other organization; the "machinery" is a plural word meaning: machines collectively, an organised system; while "machine" is a singular word meaning: an apparatus, an organization.

Therefore, the "state machinery" is not equal to "the bureaucratic-military machine" or "apparatus" anyway. The state is a complex machinery with many parts of which some are of "the purely coercive character of state power" (such as the "bureaucratic-military machine" or "apparatus"), while some others are of useful character (such as food, housing, health, ecology etc.)

Then what exactly has to be "broken up, smashed"? For Marx "the bureaucratic-military machine" whereas for Lenin the "state machinery".

Let us read Lenin rejecting the "federalism" of Proudhon, "the founder of anarchism" and praising Marx for expressly emphasizing the "revolutionary and *transient* form" [Lenin's italics] of the state, and supporting Engels' argument about "a certain amount of authority or power".²¹ Then he applauds, "The expression "the state withers away" is very well chosen"²² In no time he has taken the anarchists to task because "they want to abolish the state completely overnight" and put forward his own dogma: "Revolution consists in the proletariat destroying the "administrative apparatus" and *the whole state machine* [emphasis added], replacing it by a new one, made up of the armed workers"²³ although temporarily during the "transition".

Actually, Marx and Engels critically and delicately analyzed the question of state. They had neither emphasized nor undermined the state's complex machinery. Some commentators call them 'statist' while some others call them 'anti-state' even though they were not captives of such ideologies. They were scientists. As such, like any other question, they analyzed the state's form-and-content totality and upheld the lessons of history to show its coming into being, evolution and ending. The "revolutionary and transient form" of state would work on the Paris Commune Principle of democracy. It is

about a method of adopting decisions that will remove the hitherto running ‘top-down’ order of class societies with the participatory democratic *bottom-up* organizations. Instead of administration of people, it is about *administration of the affairs of life*. This administration of production, distribution and all other necessary and useful affairs of life will run on two modes: 1) *local* affairs on direct participation of the respective people involved, and 2) *regional* and *global* affairs by electing delegates – mandated and revocable at short notice.

Monopoly and Imperialism

Inevitably, the Leninist theory and practice of *The State and Revolution* that socialism is merely a ‘transitional’ society remained ready at hand to become a plea of state capitalism. For Lenin held, “Imperialism – the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, of the development of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism – has clearly shown an extraordinary strengthening of the “state machine” and an unprecedented growth in its bureaucratic and military apparatus in connection with the intensification of repressive measures against the proletariat both in the monarchical and in the freest, republican countries.”²⁴

Before it, in his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (written in the first half of 1916) Lenin said, “State monopoly ... state monopoly in capitalist society²⁵ ... a financial oligarchy²⁶ ... [is] a new type of monopoly²⁷. ... Finance capital has created the epoch of monopolies²⁸ ... over all countries of the world²⁹ ... world concentration of capital³⁰ ... imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism³¹ ... Imperialism is the epoch of finance capital and monopolies³² ... in its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition.”³³

Compare: Long ago, in studying capitalism’s history, Marx and Engels had identified private property to be the origin of monopoly in the first place. “The *one* great basic monopoly, property” had given rise to “the utmost ... enmity between individuals, the ignominious war of competition,” wrote Engels in 1843 in his *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*.³⁴ And Marx in 1844 in his *Comments on James Mill* wrote, “The original determining feature of private property is monopoly; hence when it creates a political constitution, it is that of monopoly. The perfect monopoly is competition.”³⁵

For Lenin, on the other hand, monopoly “is the transition from capitalist system to a higher form of capitalist system to a higher socio-economic order ... monopoly has sprung from banks.”³⁶

Whereas everybody knows that a bank, or the finance capital which lives on interest as a part of surplus value or gross profit (shared by the collective capitalist class as rent, interest, commercial and industrial profits, taxes, philanthropy, etc.), is also a form of private property. Marx has also shown, “The nature of capital remains the same in its developed as in its undeveloped form.”³⁷

Lenin claimed, “Monopolies, oligarchy, the striving for domination and not freedom, the

exploitation of an increasing number of small or weak nations by a handful of the richest or most powerful nations – all these have given birth to these distinctive characteristics of imperialism.”³⁸ Later, after the Bolsheviks had seized power, he called upon these ‘weak nations’ to unite with Bolshevik Russia against the ‘exceptionally rich and powerful states which plunder the whole world’.³⁹ He claimed that this handful of states was able ‘to bribe the labour leaders and upper stratum of the labour aristocracy’, i.e. a section of the working class, from the proceeds of the ‘enormous superprofits’ they made from plundering the rest of the world. It is on this premise that the erroneous views of the ‘three-worldist’ – ‘third-worldist’ – ‘post-modernist’ – ‘anti-globalization’ ideologies stand.

Now compare: Marxism stands on struggle between classes and not between nations. Moreover, exploitation is a class concept. A class exploits a class. Under capitalism, the capitalists of the world as a collective class which owns and controls the means of production and distribution employs and exploits the collective working class of the world that lives by selling their only means – their labour power or the ability to work. In addition, all countries of the world are class-divided. The view that not just the capitalists but some of the workers of a few nations can exploit the combined capitalists and workers of some other nations is out and out idealist. As early as in 1848, Marx and Engels in their *Manifesto*, explained and upheld “the universal inter-dependence of nations”⁴⁰ in “the world market”⁴¹ and called upon the workers of the world, “The working men have no country ... The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win, Working men of all countries, unite!”⁴²

Thus, the Leninist theory that weak nations (capitalists and workers combined) should unite against ‘the richest and most powerful nations’ (capitalists and a section of the working class) is bizarre – nationalist, hence idealist.

Lenin’s definition of ‘Socialism

However, circumstances blessed this idealist conception and it forged ahead. Lenin viewed capitalism becoming state monopoly capitalism under the pressure of the First World War, and its Bolshevization becoming *socialism*. This he derived from his directives in the *Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* written September 10-14, 1917 wherein he defined ‘socialism’ as follows: “socialism is merely the next step forward from state capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely the state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests of the whole people*.”⁴³ Lenin’s ideal was the economic policy adopted by the German Junker state in the First World War. [Lenin’s emphasis]

Again, note that the task of capital is to look after its own interest against the interest of labour. Capitalism involves workers and capitalists in a constant struggle around wages and profits. It works in favour of profit – in the interests of the capitalist class. It could never be “*made to serve the interests of the whole people*” – i.e., made to serve the interests of both the capitalists and workers.

In his *State and Revolution*, Lenin instructs, “We, the workers, ... shall reduce the role of

the state officials to that of simply carrying out our instructions as responsible, revocable, modestly paid “foremen and accountants” (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is *our* proletarian task.⁴⁴ ... *All* citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a single country-wide state “syndicate”. All that is required is that they should work equally, do their proper share of work, and get equal pay ... The whole society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay.”⁴⁵ According to him, in this ““first” or lower, phase of communist society ... The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society.”⁴⁶ [Lenin’s italics]

Note: for Lenin here Society = State. Moreover, if the means of production belong to the whole of society, appropriation too must be social, which means the end of the wages system – the end of the profit system – the end of employment system, i.e., the end of private appropriation altogether. But this could not and did not happen, for state ownership in no way means social ownership simply because the state is not equal to society. The state arose out of society and eventually placed itself above society and as such, it is only a part – the dominating parasitic part of society. Under state ownership, the functionaries become *de facto* owners who employ, exploit and oppress “citizens” turned “employees and workers” irrespective of the form of the state.

Creation of a dogma

Then Lenin continued to tell us that wages and salaries would not only continue but also be “equal” for all.

A ‘Marxist’ of any degree knows very well that wages imply exploitation. If wages exist, so does profit and hence capital and capitalism pure and simple. However, Lenin ignored Marx’s message as also that “*wages and private property are identical*”⁴⁷ [Marx’s emphasis]

The extremely harmful distortion was his arbitrary cut-here-and-paste-there, turn and twist tactics to suit his own patchwork about state capitalism and, indeed, to convince his readers that despite the continued existence of wages and salaries i.e., the existence of the exploitation system, “exploitation of man by man will be impossible because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production* – the factories, machines, land etc. – and make them private property,”⁴⁸ and that is supposed to be in accordance with Marxism.

Lenin, the creator of the dogma of the distribution of products according to each person’s accomplished work, also declared, “the socialist principle, “He who does not work shall not eat”, is *already* realized; the other socialist principle, “An equal amount of products for an equal amount of labour”, is also *already* realized. But this is not yet communism.”⁴⁹

The first quote was in no way a socialist principle, but a religious precept of Paul, the Christian saint. In no society could and would it work. For obvious reasons: children, nursing mothers, the aged, the disabled etc. will eat although they do not work. The

second quote is also Lenin's fantasy. For it too could and would not work, because *social labour* produces both for *individual consumption* and for *social provision*. You cannot eat away everything you produce. Thus, both the utterances are absurd. Nevertheless, this dogma was eventually refined into Stalin's 1936 announcement of "socialism in one country" in the USSR Constitution to manifest as the "principle of socialism": "to each according to his work". Tactician Lenin set out with "*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*" in 1904 yet his party and principles always remained cramped in the muddy waters of capitalism. And by 1991, what a miserable nadir Leninism reached is known to everybody.

Regarding Communism/Socialism, fairly, Marx and Engels have advised, "the abolition of private property"⁵⁰ – "Abolition of the wages system altogether"⁵¹ for "wages and private property are identical".

Marx and Engels had never uttered any 'socialist' principle that wages or salaries would be "according to work", and they never could. Wages and salaries are the price of labour power i.e., ability to work or skill so to say. Like any other commodity, its price is determined mainly according to its cost of production. Skills are different and require different time spans and training means involving different expenses, which is why wages or salaries also become different. For this reason, already long ago in 1845 in *The German Ideology*, they had upheld the severe criticism in the *La Fraternité* against Proudhon's prejudice of "equal wage" while refuting it.

In *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (October 1, 1917) Lenin proposed, "The chief difficulty facing the proletarian revolution is the establishment on a country-wide scale the most precise and the most conscientious accounting and control, the workers' control of the production and distribution of goods." "This brings us," asserts Lenin, "to another aspect of ... the state apparatus ... which has extremely close connections with the banks and syndicates, and apparatus which performs an enormous amount of accounting and registration work. ... This apparatus must be wrested from the control of the capitalists ... it must be subordinated to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide. Capitalism has created an accounting *apparatus* in the shape of the banks, syndicates, postal service, consumers' societies, and office employees' unions. *Without big banks socialism would be impossible*. The big banks are the "state apparatus" which we *need* to bring about socialism, and which we *take ready-made* from capitalism. ... A single State Bank, the biggest of the big, with branches in every rural district, in every factory, will constitute as much as nine-tenths of the *socialist* apparatus. ... The important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but country-wide all embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. ... Instead of confiscation, we could easily impose a *fair* tax. ... *Compulsory syndication*, i.e., compulsory amalgamation in associations under state-control – this is what has been carried out in Germany by the Junkers' state, this is what can be carried out in Russia by the Soviets, by the proletarian dictatorship, and this is what will *provide us with a state apparatus* that will be universal, up-to-date, and non-bureaucratic."⁵² [Lenin's italics]

Therefore, Lenin's 'socialism' comprised of big banks and syndicates, a single State Bank, biggest of the big, office employees' unions, retaining capitalists' property under "workers' control" copying the Junkers' state of Germany. Also note: "control" in Russian is "kontroll" which means "inspection". Yet, according to Lenin, we would have to call this 'socialism'.

In 1918 in *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* Lenin's directives involved "raising the productivity of labour [i.e., raising the rate of exploitation] and *socialising* production *in practice*"⁵³ [i.e., for Lenin, nationalization or statification] ... "to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the "services" of the top bourgeois experts"⁵⁴ [i.e., by accepting differential or unequal wage rates] ... "nationalisation of banks, monopolisation of foreign trade, the state control of money circulation, the introduction of a property and income tax [whilst tax is a part of surplus value realized as gross profit in the first place] ... and the introduction of compulsory labour service"⁵⁵ [i.e., forcible extraction of surplus labour] ... "People's Bank"⁵⁶ [Proudhon's prejudice] ... "piece-work" and making "wages correspond to the total amount of goods turned out ... the Taylor system [i.e., intensifying the rate of exploitation]."⁵⁷

Compare: "Income tax presupposes various sources of income of various social classes, and hence capitalist society," wrote Marx⁵⁸; and Lenin was well aware that "The maintenance of the special public power standing above society requires taxes and state loans."⁵⁹

Dictatorship

"Yes, it is a dictatorship of one party! This is what we stand for and we shall not shift from that position ...," said Lenin in 1919.⁶⁰

Already in 1918 Lenin ordered, "*unquestioning subordination* to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organised on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. Today, however, the same revolution demands – precisely in the interest of its development and consolidation, precisely in the interests of socialism – that people *unquestioningly obey the single will* of the leaders of labour."⁶¹ [Lenin's italics]

What else could the people do? From the very beginning of Lenin's theorization, owing to his dismal disregard and disdain about workers' power of understanding as early as in 1902 in his *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin put down his position, "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without* [Lenin's emphasis], that is, only from outside the economic struggle [whereas for Marx every struggle is a political struggle], from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers."⁶² Because according to Lenin workers by themselves were unable to go beyond trade union consciousness – incapable of developing "class political consciousness". Thus, they require "the vanguard of the revolutionary forces"⁶³ ... "an organization that will consist of professional revolutionaries"⁶⁴ ... "the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by hundreds) ... "a dozen wise men"⁶⁵ ... in a "conspiratorial"⁶⁶ ... "strictly secret organization"⁶⁷ All along Lenin maintained this

theory and practice of an elitist, vanguardist, centralist, conspiratorial, strictly secret party class relationship.

Lenin was building up a regime of state capitalism under his single party rule led by his single will. Well, that was Lenin's business, but when he sought to equate all this with socialism, we oppose. This was merely reactionary, anti-Marxist hence anti-working class. Lenin pretended to be a 'Marxist' by summoning Marx and Engels for anything they had in fact opposed.

Marx and Engels learned Communism/Socialism from *within* the class

Lenin claimed, "The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by the educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals. By their social status the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia."⁶⁸

Marxian revolutionary understanding says that in class society class struggle is the motive force whereby "the proletariat can and must emancipate itself".⁶⁹ This principle was of so enormous importance to them that they made it the first sentence of the *Provisional Rules of the Working Men's International Association* as: "That the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves."⁷⁰ Explicitly since 1840s Marx and Engels had insisted on this principle because it is from itself – "a class which forms the majority of all members of society" – that there "emanates the consciousness of the necessity of a fundamental revolution, the communist consciousness."⁷¹ Thus, the workers require unrelenting interaction within their own independent socialist organization.

Let us read where and how Marx and Engels took their lessons of Communism/Socialism *from within* the sphere of relations involving working class' struggles:

"The French Communists could assist us in the first stages only of our development, and we soon found that we knew more than our teachers; but we shall have to learn a great deal yet from the English Socialists,"⁷² wrote Engels in his *Progress of Social Reforms on the Continent* in 1843.

"It goes without saying that besides the French and English socialists I have also used German socialist works,"⁷³ wrote Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

What it all boils down to is that Lenin's view – later codified as "Leninism" – had nothing to do with Marxism. He, as the leader of labour having "a single will" to become a dictator, conjured up a peculiar 'socialism' which had capital with its capitalists who with their property went on exploiting in collaboration with the state. As opposed to Marx's non-market "co-operative society", Lenin directed the Bolsheviks to learn trade ... and "organise competition".⁷⁴ In addition, on behalf of the 'proletariat', the Bolshevik

leaders went on inspecting possessions in their ordered manner; and all citizens had to remain submissive in compliance with the “single will” “unquestioningly”.

In any event, under capitalism the workers do all the work. If for argument’s sake we accept that “kontroll” might mean “control”, the question remains – who controls whom – workers the capitalists – or the capitalists the workers, or else capital both? Marx had already answered it eloquently: “capital is necessarily also a *capitalist*. The idea of some socialists, that we need capital but not capitalists, is completely false. ... The concept of capital implies the capitalist. ... Capital is essentially a capitalist”⁷⁵ for capital is self-expanding value.

In 1936, Stalin proclaimed that Russia had become a “socialist country” and when the Russian army overran Eastern Europe after the Second World War it set up puppet regimes in the various countries there which, together with Russia, Stalin and his supporters called ‘the socialist countries’. However, after those regimes were ousted by street-level popular actions in 1991, their formerly ruling parties converted themselves into ordinary reformist parties competing with other parties for the job of running capitalism in their countries.

Interestingly, some of them, as in Hungary and Bulgaria, have chosen to call themselves the “Socialist Party”, while many in other peripheral regions of capitalism are still clinging to their hypocrisy and philistinism with the name “communist”. As far as workers are concerned, they are no more “socialist” or “communist” today than they were “communist” yesterday. They have nothing to do with the working class, except misleading them, for they have nothing “socialist”/“communist” except for a name as a cover.

Remember Marx’s prudence: “As in private life one differentiates between what a man thinks and says of himself and what he really is and does, so in historical struggles one must distinguish still more the phrases and fancies of parties from their real organism and their real interests, their conception of themselves, from their reality.”⁷⁶

Socialism has nowhere and never been tried. When it will be tried, it will have to be worldwide. World Socialism can come about only democratically and essentially peacefully. Socialism means a world system of social organization based on: universal ownership, democratic control, production for use and free access for all.

Marx and Engels envisaged,

“Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples “all at once” and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with communism. Moreover, the mass of propertyless workers – the utterly precarious position of labour-power on a mass scale cut off from capital or from even a limited satisfaction and, therefore, no longer merely temporarily deprived of work itself as a secure source of life – presupposes the world market through competition. The proletariat can thus only exist *world-historically*, just as

communism, its activity, can only have a “world-historical” existence. World-historical existence of individuals means existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history.

“Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the now existing premise. ...

“... this transformation of history into world history is not indeed a mere abstract act on the part of the “self-consciousness,” the world spirit, or of any other metaphysical spectre, but a quite material, empirically verifiable act, an act the proof of which every individual furnishes as he comes and goes, eats, drinks and clothes himself.

“In history up to the present it is certainly likewise an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity ... the overthrow of the existing state of society by the communist revolution ... and the abolition of private property which is identical with it ... the real intellectual wealth of the individual depends entirely on the wealth of his real connections. Only this will liberate the separate individuals from the various national and local barriers, bring them into practical connection with the production (including intellectual production) of the whole world and make it possible for them to acquire the capacity to enjoy this all-sided production of the whole earth (the creations of man). *All-round* dependence, this primary natural form of the *world-historical* co-operation of individuals, will be transformed by ... this communist revolution into the control and conscious mastery of these powers, which, born of the action of men on one another have till now overawed and ruled men as powers completely alien to them.”⁷⁷ (italics by Marx and Engels)

As a text of the *Socialist Party of Great Britain* written in August 1989 put it:

“Socialism means One World

Just as capitalism is a world system of society, so too must socialism be. There never has been, and never can be, socialism in just one country because its material basis is the world-wide and interdependent means of production that capitalism has built up. The bulk of the wealth produced in the world today is produced by the co-operative labour of the millions employed to operate these means of production. What is needed now, to establish socialism, is a conscious political decision on the part of these millions across the world to run society in their own interests.

This will be done by taking the means of production throughout the world into *common ownership*, with their *democratic control* by the whole community, and with *production solely for use*.

Common ownership will be a social relationship of equality between all people with regard to the use of the means of production. No longer will there be classes, governments and their state machinery, or national frontiers.

Democratic control will involve the whole community in making decisions about the use

of the means of production. Instead of government over people there would be various levels of democratic administration, from the local up to regional and world levels, with responsibility being delegated if necessary to groups and individuals.

Production for use will bring production into direct line with human needs. Without money, wages, buying and selling there will be a world of free access. Everyone will be able to contribute to society by working voluntarily, according to ability. Everyone will be able to take freely from whatever is readily available, according to self-defined needs.

Global Problems

The motivation for this new world comes from the common class interest of those who produce but do not possess. An important part of this motivation comes from the global problems thrown up by capitalism. Ecological problems make a nonsense of the efforts of governments. War and the continuing threat of nuclear war affect us all. The problem of uneven development means that many producers in the underdeveloped countries suffer starvation, disease and absolute poverty. All of these problems of capitalism can only be solved within the framework of a socialist world. Ecological problems require the sort of long-term planning and development of which competitive, international capitalism is incapable. Converting the armaments industry (capitalism's biggest industry) from producing weapons of destruction to producing useful things to satisfy human needs will take time. Ending world hunger and poverty, above all, makes the world-wide co-operation of socialism an urgent necessity.

But this does not rule out local democracy. In fact a democratic system of decision-making would require that the basic unit of social organisation would be the local community. However, the nature of some of the problems we face and the many goods and services presently produced, such as raw materials, energy sources, agricultural products, world transport and communications, need production and distribution to be organised at a world level. Corresponding to this, of course, there would be a need for a democratic world administration, controlled by delegates from the regional and local levels of organisation throughout the world.

Development of Ideas

The world socialist movement, of which the Socialist Party is a constituent part, expresses the common class interest of the producers. Because political power in capitalism is organised on a territorial basis each socialist party has the task of seeking democratically to gain political power in the country where it operates. If it is suggested that socialist ideas might develop unevenly across the world, and that socialists of only a part of the world were in a position to get political control, then the decision about the action to be taken would be one for the whole of the socialist movement in the light of all the circumstances at the time. It would certainly be a folly, however, to base a programme of political action on the assumption that socialist ideas will develop unevenly and that we must therefore be prepared to establish "socialism" in one country or even a group of countries like the European Community.

For a start, it is an unreasonable assumption that socialist ideas will develop unevenly.

Given the world-wide nature of capitalism and its social relationships, the vast majority of people live under basically similar conditions, and because of the world-wide system of communications and media, there is no reason for socialist ideas to be restricted to one part of the world. Any attempt to establish "socialism" in one country would be bound to fail owing to the pressures exerted by the world market on that country's means of production. Recent experience in Russia, China and elsewhere shows conclusively that even capitalist states cannot detach themselves from the requirements of an integrated system of production operated through the world market.

Faced with this explanation of how the world could be organised, many would reject it in favour of something more "realistic", including some who call themselves socialist. They seek to solve social problems within the framework of government policies, the state machine, national frontiers, money, wages, buying and selling. But if our analysis of capitalism as a world system is correct—and we've yet to be shown how it's wrong—the state politics are irrelevant as a way of solving social problems. Viewed globally, state politics only make sense when seen as a means for capturing political power in order to introduce a world of free access.”⁷⁸

Notes

- 1 Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Collected Works, Vol. 6, Moscow 1976, p. 212
- 2 *op. cit.* p. 212
- 3 Lenin, *Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*, Selected Works, Vol. 2, Moscow 1967, p. 47
- 4 Lenin, *Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, written September 10-14, 1917, Selected Works, Vol. 2, p. 247
- 5 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, SW, Vol. 2, p. 342
- 6 Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Peking 1976, p. 14
- 7 *Ibid.* p. 17
- 8 Lenin, SW, Vol. 2, pp. 283, 285
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 295
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 299; also see Lenin's positive comment – “expropriation of the capitalists” at p. 341
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 304
- 12 *loc. cit.*
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 341
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 358
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 331
- 16 Marx's letter to Kugelmann, April 12, 1871
- 17 Marx, *Civil War in France*, cited by Lenin in his *The State and Revolution*, SW 2, Moscow 1967, p.297
- 18 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Preface to the German Edition of 1872, Moscow 1977, p. 12
- 19 Lenin, Selected Works, Vol. 2, p. 294
- 20 *loc. cit.*
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 313

22 *Ibid.*, p. 335
23 *Ibid.*, p. 355,
24 *Ibid.*, p. 290
25 *Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage Of Capitalism*, Selected Works, Vol. 1,
Moscow 1967, p. 703
26 *Ibid.*, p. 711
27 *Ibid.*, p. 723
28 *Ibid.*, p. 726
29 *Ibid.*, p. 727
30 *Ibid.*, p. 728
31 *Ibid.*, p. 745
32 *Ibid.*, p. 771
33 *Ibid.*, pp. 772-73
34 Engels, *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*, Collected Works, Vol. 3,
Moscow 1975, p. 423
35 Marx, *Comments on James Mill, Éléments d'économie politique*, Collected
Works, Vol. 3, Moscow 1975, p. 221. Marx repeated the concept as “the source of
monopoly, private property” in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of*
36 *1844, op. cit.*, p. 267
Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage Of Capitalism, SW 1, Moscow 1967, p.
773
37 Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, Moscow 1974, p. 272, footnote 3
38 *Lenin, op. cit.*, p. 774
39 *Lenin, Imperialism, The Highest Stage Of Capitalism, 1920 Preface to the French*
and German editions, See: [http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref02.htm)
[hsc/pref02.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/pref02.htm)
40 Marx Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Moscow 1977, p.39
41 *loc. cit.*
42 *Ibid.*, pp. 56, 74
43 *Lenin, Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, SW 2, Moscow 1967, p.
247
44 *Ibid.*, p. 303
45 *Ibid.*, pp. 344-45
46 *Ibid.*, p. 337
47 Marx, *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, CW 3, Moscow
1975, p. 280
48 *Lenin, The State and Revolution*, SW 2, p. 338
49 *Ibid.*, p. 339
50 Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, Moscow 1977, p. 50
51 Engels, *Trade Unions I*, May 28th 1881, *The Wages System*, Moscow 1984, p. 16
52 *Lenin, Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* SW. 2, Moscow, pp. 396-99
53 *Lenin, The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, SW. 2, Moscow 1967,
p.649
54 *op. cit.* p. 655
55 *op. cit.* pp. 657-58
56 *op. cit.* p. 658
57 *op. cit.* p. 664

58 Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Peking 1976, p. 29
59 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, SW 2, p.274
60 Speech At *The First All-Russia Congress Of Workers In Education And Socialist Culture*, July 31, 1919; Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, Vol. 29, p. 535, Published according to *Pravda* text. Also, see: <http://www.marx2mao.net/Lenin/SW5C19.htm/>
61 Lenin, *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, SW 2, p. 673
62 Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* SW. 1, Moscow 1967, p. 163
63 *op. cit.* p. 171
64 *op. cit.* p. 179
65 *op. cit.* p. 199
66 *op. cit.* p. 208
67 *op. cit.* p. 210
68 *Ibid.*, p. 122
69 Marx, *The Holy Family*, CW. Vol. 4, Moscow 1975, p. 37
70 Marx, *Provisional Rules of the Working Men's International Association*, CW. Vol. 20, Moscow 1985, p. 14
71 Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, CW. Vol. 5, Moscow 1976, p. 52
72 Engels, *Progress of Social Reforms on the Continent*, written Oct-Nov, 1843, CW. Vol. 3, Moscow 1975, p. 407
73 Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, CW. Vol. 3, p. 232
74 Lenin, *How To Organise Competition*, SW 2. Moscow 1967, p. 511
75 Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, International Publishers, New York, 1975, pp. 118-19
76 Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, SW. Vol. 1, Moscow 1969, p. 421
77 Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1976, pp. 49-52.
78 <http://www.worldsocialism.org/spgb/overview/world.pdf>