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ALL THAT IS LEFT

A PUBLICATION OF LEFTIST WRITING AND
ART FOR A MOVEMENT OF SOLIDARITY

ALL THAT IS LEFT



IWW DEMONSTRATION IN NEW YORK, 1914

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Marxism

By Marceau All That Is Left

“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. the point, however, is to change it”

— Karl Marx

Marx's ideas have resonated with millions across the world: those who saw in our hazy future a better world. Marx was born in 1818 and for most of his life wrote on the problems he saw in the current system of production and proposed what he viewed as the next logical step in our mode of production. The effects of these works can not only be felt in the history of nations but also in philosophy, ushering in a wave of political and social thinkers who given us more tools with which we can critique the society we live in. Marx's theories are much too complex to sum up in a few thousand words. However, the main themes in Marx and Engels writing can be split into either the “critiques of capitalism” and the “mechanism of socialism.”

Commodity production, wage labour, class society, private property, the means of production and the capitalist state, Marx laid these things as the basic building blocks of capitalism. Marx's critiques would stem from observing how these building blocks interacted and the consequences that came from these interactions.

What first needs to be clarified before understanding commodity production, is the meaning of a commodity. In short a commodity is an article produced for the sole purpose to be sold on the market. In capitalism all things are produced to be sold on the market, therefore all products

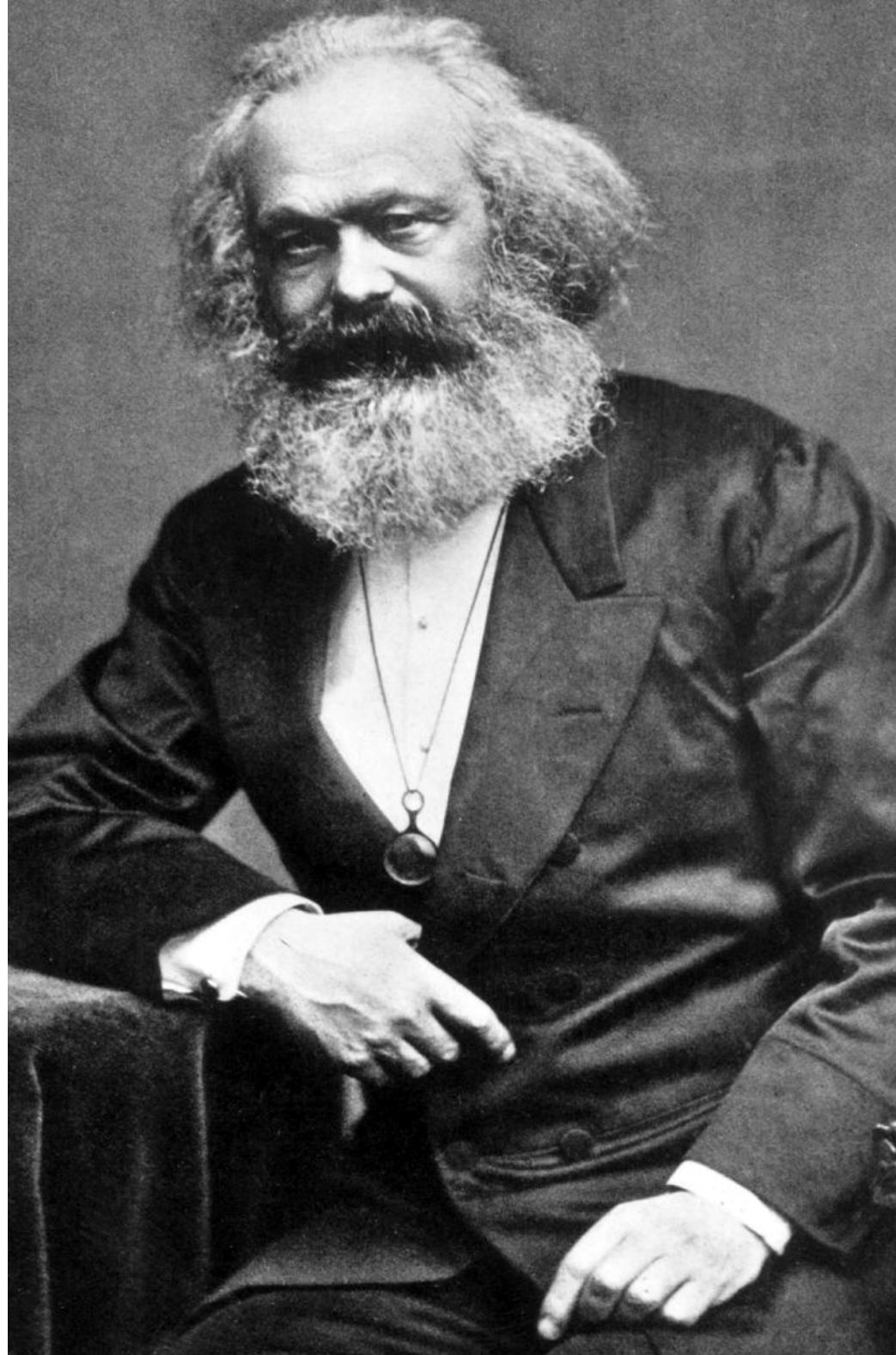
In capitalism all things are produced to be sold on the market, therefore all products are commodity, and all capitalist production is commodity production.

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are commodity, and all capitalist production is commodity production. Now you may be wondering how things can be produced without being a commodity. Since the defining feature of a commodity is that it needs to be sold on the market, anything which is produced for use and not to be sold is therefore not commodity. This mode of production is referred to as production for use.

Commodity production itself is not enough to understand capitalism, understanding the property relations under capitalism is another key in critiquing capitalism. The means of production can be defined broadly as all the tools, machinery, buildings

and land needed to produce commodities or articles. For a system to transition from commodity production to full fledged capitalism the means of production must be owned by capitalist and those who use and produce must be turned into workers. This is a change in property relations,



the worker no longer works for himself with his machinery or tools he produces commodities to be sold on a market and is given a wage.

Since the means of production are owned by the bourgeoisie and they do not actually interact with these to produce anything the worker must produce for the bourgeois. I believe Nikolai Bukharin's "The ABC's of communism" has one of the best summaries of the role of the worker under wage labour.

" Under wage labour the man himself is neither bought nor sold. What is bought or sold is his power to labour not himself. The wage labourer is free in person. [...] The worker is merely hired. It even appears the capitalist and worker were equal [...] They (The capitalist) even assert they keep the workers alive because they give them employment."

What is strange about this relationship is that the capitalist believes they are the one who are providing something to their worker by paying them and letting them work, while in reality the wage the worker is "paid" is a small percentage of what he produced through the privately owned means of production. This delusion of the capitalist is even more apparent when considering the role workers play in a company. If you remove the capitalist from the company the means of production still exist and production will continue with workers still able to create commodities; however, if the workers are removed from the company the production of any goods or service grinds to a halt. This concept of wage labor emerged from the specific interaction between generalized commodity production and the evolution of the property relations the workers have with the means of production. This is why Marx considers it an integral part of capitalism.

If you remove the capitalist from the company the means of production still exist and production will continue with workers still able to create commodities;

Since you now understand wage labour, commodity production and the means of production understanding class society should be easy. Class society is the effect that all these mechanism and relations of capitalism have on human society and its structure. The structure of a capitalist society can essentially be split into 2 tiers, the bourgeoisie and the working class. The bourgeoisie are the members of society who own the means of production and employ the working class to produce commodities using the privately owned means

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of production. In a marxist sense what determines a person's class is their relationship with the means of production, not the level of income or the education of a person. This concept of class as completely removed from the "status" someone has in society may seem reductionist however there are tangible reasons why Marx's definition is more applicable to our world.

What relationship someone has with the means of production defines their position in the economy. The working class is the productive force in the economy and are integral to how the economic system function, on the other hand the term "middle class" isn't based on the role the "middle

Since the "middle class" or any liberal class distinction is not based on economic reality these terms can be shifted at the whim of a government to serve an agenda or divide the working class.

"middle class" play in the economy, the middle class can comprise of small bourgeois to wealthy class members. Since the "middle class" or any liberal class distinction is not

based on economic reality these terms can be shifted at the whim of a government to serve an agenda or divide the working class. However a definition of class based on property relationships is based on a material reality which can not be changed

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Leninism

By All That Is Left

The theory of Leninism is at its most basic foundations, the practical application of Marxism as interpreted by Lenin. During its initial inception, Leninism as an ideological theory was largely indistinct from Marxism, varying only in the practical application of achieving the transitional phase of Socialism. Over time however, the changing needs of the growing Soviet Union provided Leninism with its own unique ideological framework. This of course, would later be synthesized into Marxism-Leninism by Lenin's contemporaries, such as Stalin, and become the official state-ideology of the Soviet Union after Lenin's death.



The most important aspect of Leninism proper would undoubtedly be the theory of the revolutionary Vanguard party, as initially conceived in Lenin's 1902 work 'What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions For Our Movement'. The ideal of the Vanguard party was a theory by which ideologically pure persons from within the broader working class revolutionary movement would be recruited to the party, then expected to unite together and steer the ideological course of the revolution, while being sure to both stray from dangerous dogmatism and ideological backpedalling.

One of the core issues afflicting the early Soviet Union which prompted the need for Leninism over a strict and orthodox theory of Marxism was that Russia was largely still a feudal nation at the time of the October Revolution. Marx had envisaged that Socialism would need to rise first in industrialized nations such as Germany, where the proletariat (wage-earning labour classes) would unite to overthrow the bourgeoisie (capitalist class that owned the means of production). This differed in much of Eastern Europe at the time where the proletariat was in fact comparatively small and

Source: Свердлова К. Т. Яков Михайлович Свердлов. - 4-е изд.- М.: Мол. Гвардия, 1985.

largely overshadowed by the class of peasantry and large-scale landowners. Rather than working with the means of production, the peasantry often were involved in subsistence farming on the land owned by someone else. It was considered by Marx that this class would be unable to achieve Socialism, which naturally created unexpected difficulties for the emerging Soviet Union. Lenin-

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Leninism, as it grew and fostered in the early years of the Soviet Union, was allowed to grow and change with the changing needs and material conditions of the time, especially as

they could fluctuate so wildly during a period of civil war. This led to Lenin and the Vanguard Party instituting temporary policies such as 'War Communism' (with priorities placed on keeping the Red Army stocked with food and ammunition) and later the 'New Economic Policy' (the temporary

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allowment of small-scale private enterprise and the ending of grain requisition, to be replaced instead by a tax). To some this may have seen like ideological contradiction, however Lenin simply saw these as being methods deemed necessary for achieving Communism in the future. To rush the process would potentially be to create catastrophe.

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In the early years, a large part of the intent of Leninism was to foster revolutions in countries around the world, hopefully leading to majority-Capitalist nations such as Germany falling to Socialist influence. This proved to not be the case and forced a change in economic and foreign policy, much of which was ultimately overseen by Stalin in the aftermath of Lenin's death.

Due to the failure of revolutions in Capitalist nations, there was seen to be a need to consolidate power and resources within the Soviet Union, ultimately leading to the famous Five Year Plans and mass industrialization and collectivization reforms. Once again, these theories and practices were primarily put in place by Stalin, however the influence of traditional Leninism lived on, with its practical application being synthesized and perfected upon to suit the material conditions of other nations, such as the People's Republic of China.

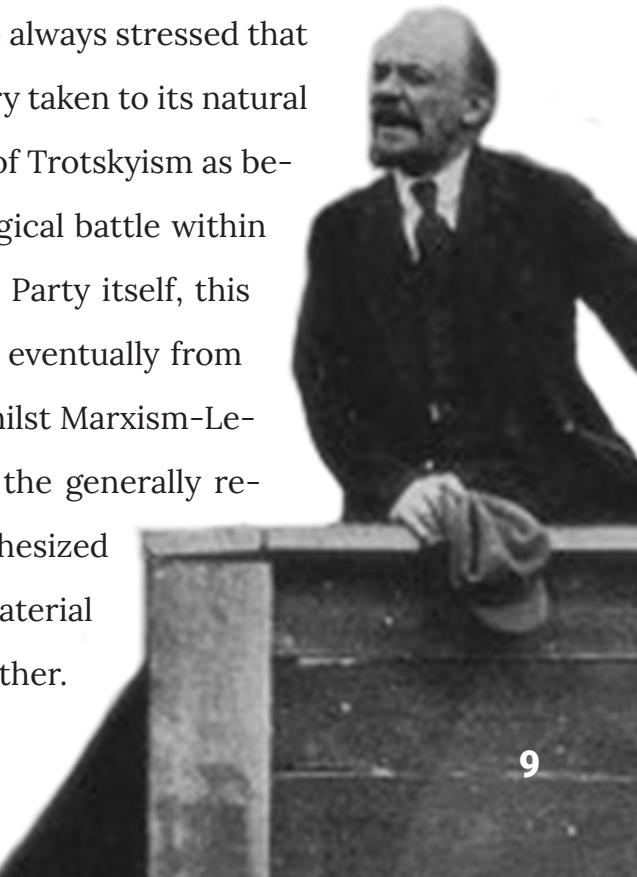
While Lenin did of course believe in the Marxist assertion that upon the true achievement of Socialism, the state would ultimately wither away, leading to Communism, he rejected Anarchist assertions that the state must be immediately crushed. Lenin saw the state as being a tool of the ruling classes to crush dissent and attempts at revolution, however he also saw it as a mechanism that could be used by the proletariat themselves to crush the bourgeoisie and end the risk of a reactionary return-to-form. Lenin also saw an inherent contradiction in the assertions of Anarchists in that by dismantling the state immediately without

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removing the material conditions that create the necessity for a state, it will be inevitable that another will simply rise in its place and make the Socialist revolution ultimately pointless.

Following the model of the Paris Commune, Lenin felt that he could use a state structure to ultimately destroy the necessity for a state in and of itself, thereby creating material conditions by which the state could naturally wither away due to a lack of material necessity and allow for the working class to achieve actual stateless Communism. This use of a state controlled by the workers themselves is the source of the term 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', with the state being run communally by the people who collectively own the means of production, with the Vanguard Party serving as a guideline for the actions of this state towards naturally achieving Communism. These theories are particularly elaborated upon in Lenin's key work 'The State and Revolution' from 1917.

After Lenin's death in 1924, the future of Leninism was in a crisis, with two principal political theories being considered its successor. Stalin advocated Marxism-Leninism, the theory by which the Soviet Union would continue to expand and evolve over the following years. While Stalin did contribute to this political theory in many ways, he always stressed that it was merely to be a continuation of orthodox Leninist theory taken to its natural conclusion. To contrast, Leon Trotsky advocated his theory of Trotskyism as being a successor to Leninism, ultimately leading to an ideological battle within the Vanguard Party. Due to the conditions of the Vanguard Party itself, this ultimately led to Trotsky being expelled from the party and eventually from Russia altogether. Trotskyism became a fringe movement whilst Marxism-Leninism became the core ideology of the Soviet Union and the generally regarded 'successor' to Leninism as a whole, being further synthesized and altered throughout the Soviet states to meet specific material conditions, or in some cases to achieve different ends altogether.



Marxism-Leninism-Maoism

By All That Is Left

Marxism-Leninism-Maoism (MLM) is both a continuation and a rupture of Marxism-Leninism, just as Marxism-Leninism (ML) continued and ruptured with Marxism. What this means is that while MLM adds on to ML theory, it is also distinct. First to understand MLM, ML must also be understood. This essay will focus purely on the Maoist addition to Marxist theory rather than the entirety of Marxism-Leninism and its theories.

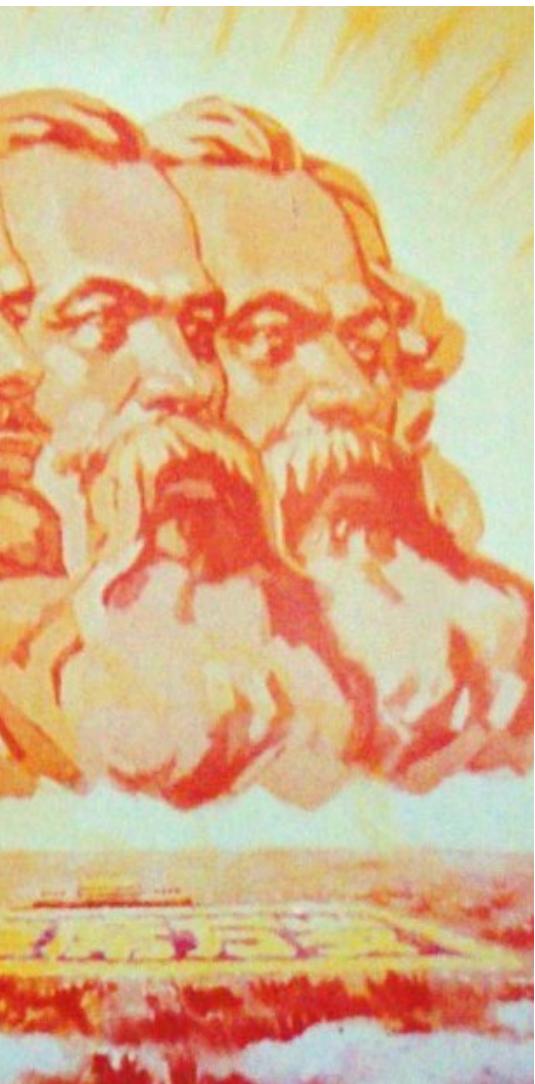
The Mass Line is a means of organizing a Communist Party's political platform as well as its internal structure. Mao considered the common people under capitalism to be inherently revolutionary, even if they didn't recognize it: their strikes, protests, riots, petitions, acts of sabotage, etcetera, could and did make their governments listen, and

change their policy. They were capable of making governments bow to their will if they felt like it. However, due to the ruling class ideology being reproduced as society's ideology, the common people, despite being unconsciously revolutionary, do not consciously believe in revolution:



therefore, while they have ideas about what they would like to change, they are accordingly watered-down. This is what the Mass Line is for. A Communist Party goes out among the people to collect these scattered, watered-down ideas, then re-convenes to discuss them. Filtering through a class-conscious, revolutionary mindset (using Marxist-Leninist analysis), they produce a political platform, and then take it back to the people for approval. If they've done their work correctly, the people will love it and flock to the Communist Party with great enthusiasm. In so doing, The

Mass Line is how the Communist Party makes itself truly democratic and representative of the whole of the people.



Protracted People's War, is conceived as a more effective method of revolution for a Communist Party to carry out. The general idea is that, while Lenin and the Bolsheviks were able to make an all-or-nothing insurrection work out for them, Mao considered such a thing to be extremely unlikely to happen again. The traditional insurrectionary approach was shown to be a failure in countries where the capitalist class had a much more firm grasp on society, such as Germany, where the revolution was brutally crushed, as it was in Finland, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. People's War was thought of as a means of a communist revolutionary force being able to both preserve its numbers as well as posing a significant threat to those they were attempting to overthrow.

While at a surface level People's War has similarities to other kinds of guerrilla warfare, on a theoretical level People's War is also a means of building a revolution's popularity among the people. The general idea is that, prior to a revolution, a Communist Party's goal is to serve the people: that is, to build what Lenin would call dual power, a revolu-

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support, and with the support and backing of the people, it can then launch into an armed campaign, attacking government offices, police, army units, etc and seizing territory to establish as a revolutionary base area.

tionary government which supplants the state in some areas, taking over the role of caregiver and building its legitimacy while destroying that of the bourgeois state in the areas in which it is active. When a Communist Party has built enough

People's War is divided into three phases: the strategic defensive, equilibrium, and strategic offensive. The first objective of a people's war is to maintain its area of operations against the inevitable counterattack of the government it is revolting against. This will, of course, primarily be a defensive role. As the war continues, the revolutionary forces continue to serve the people within the bounds of where they operate so as to continue to grow their strength and grow the rebellion. The defensive becomes the equilibrium when it is thought the revolutionary forces have enough strength to begin testing the state, launching limited offensive actions to expand their territory, crush isolated or weak state forces, etc. And finally, the strategic offensive is when the balance of power is felt to be swinging in the revolutionary forces' favor, and the main push toward the major urban areas of the crumbling state begins.

The reason it's called a people's war is because it is waged by not just a revolutionary force, but by what is known as the people's army. The people's army is not just a guerrilla force, but an army of the working people: it runs hospitals, builds roads, bridges, schools, tills fields and harvests crops, assists the people via the Mass Line in doing political work, and employs the Mass Line in newly taken areas so as to help the people there to trust them. The goal is to make the army as indistinguishable from the common people as possible, to gain the people's trust and love so the army and the people are one and the same. For a practical example of what this looks like, see the Viet Cong.

New Democracy, similarly to the Mass Line, is a means of organizing the Party. It consists of forming a coalition between the workers, peasants, common people, and proletarianized (i.e. poor, oppressed on some level, or otherwise revolutionary for whatever reason) sections of the bourgeoisie, with the proletariat firmly in the guiding role. The idea behind this was to help China advance rapidly from its semi-feudal conditions into socialism (common doctrine was they had to fully embrace capitalism first) by keeping portions of the bourgeoisie in the loop of the governing coalition.

The Leninist (and therefore MZT) conception of the Communist Party is that it is a mass organization linking all of society together: the state, the workplace, and the wider social areas, via an all-democratic, all-accepting body which is open to anyone (as it is the sole legal governing political body anyway). Therefore,

reactionary elements from the old regime – landlords, bourgeoisie, or those sympathetic to them – will also join it. Their economic means of dominance have been stripped from them because of the revolution, so they retreat to a government position to seek out political dominance, and steer country policy in such a way as to bring back a means of them accumulating capital and once again establish their position of being capitalists. These people Mao described as capitalist roaders, people who sought to commandeer the Communist Party and take it on a capitalist fork in the road as opposed to a socialist one.



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From Mao's point of view, it was capitalist roaders who took control of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union following Stalin's death, and capitalist roaders in the Communist Party of China were the ones calling for him to be removed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The former were why he thought it necessary to split with the Soviet Union, the latter he considered a direct threat to Chinese socialism. However, the key distinction is to note that, at this point in China, all was not yet lost: there was factionalism in the Party between its right/capitalist and left/socialist wings, both at a local and national level. There was still hope to shift the proverbial bus back onto the socialist road, but what would be needed was a vast uprising by the people to retake control of their Party. This, in essence, is the theory behind Cultural Revolution: calling upon the people and the progressive wings of the government to launch a mass insurrection, to suppress the capitalist roaders, to once more assert their control over their Party, their government, and their country.

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The dangers of not having a Cultural Revolution, such as in the USSR or having a failed one like what happened in the PRC are that roaders within the Party will have strength enough to launch capitalist-oriented reforms such as the Kosygin reforms in the USSR and Deng's liberalization in the PRC and begin a gradual destruction of socialism. The roaders in the Party having the necessary strength to this essentially breaks the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the proletariat are no longer in control of the governing state apparatus, and while socialist relations of production may exist on lower levels of the Party and the society, the state apparatus is effectively capitalist, and therefore capable both of destroying socialism as well as acting imperialist in interactions with other socialist nations or movements. This makes Cultural Revolution perhaps the most important contribution, as it is what allows the centralized organs of the proletarian state to remain under the control of the proletariat.

Syndicalism

By Una Ada, All That Is Left

While a sentiment of anti-authoritarianism born of a distaste for corporatism and other modern manifestations of centralized capitalist governments lends itself quite cleanly to the ideas of anarchism, what is not immediately clear is how, in an anarchist system, the resources necessary for the survival of all people will be both produced and distributed, or how a society following this ideal could avoid ever being plagued by the rebirth of capital. Syndicalism is one of the economic systems theorized to handle those issues that may arise without a hierarchical structure of economy.

The major distinguishing factor of syndicalism as contrasted with traditional approaches to the cessation of labor exploitation is this lack of hierarchy. While hierarchy is not inherently corrupt, it sets forth a system that may allow exploitation if not given constant oversight, requiring both a trust in and an expenditure of resource for a committee to carry out such oversight. Trade unions,



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the unions seen in today's industry, are an example of such a hierarchy, leading to their own internal corruption and dissociation from the will of the workers to a point where many make the argument to avoid joining unions to limit their exploitation to just that of their employer. In syndicalism, this hierarchy is replaced with federation: each workplace has assemblies (syndicates) of its workers to vote on decision, including the election of a delegate to serve at the district assembly which then elects such a delegate for the national assembly. These delegates would act per the delegate model of representative democracy, acting purely by the will of the workers to whom they are held accountable and able to be recalled at any time by the assembly that elected them. This federated system would then extend further to contain all these assemblies, just as the national federation contains the district federation, this general labor federation contains all industries' national federations.

Wages and their concept of selling one's labor to another are also nonexistent within the system of syndicalism. Labor commodification puts one's livelihood on the market, their income reliant on the factors present therein. To not follow this idea is to put the profits of a company at risk, and as such no company owner would dare do so, this is an inherent property of the capitalist system. Similarly, the exploitation of labor is inherent as the products of one's labor define its true value, and the company who has employed this labor stand to make no profit if they pay the laborer this full value. History has shown that these issues, as they are inherent, cannot be forgone with reforms to the system from which they come, rather they adapt and persist. As such, only the complete abolition of capitalism and the wage system can fully improve the conditions of the worker.

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Capital and its systems of commodification of labor must cease to exist if society is to truly return the means of production to the workers. As a means of exchange, capital has moved much past its

original intent, now it is used to value all things both concrete and abstract. Those who control the transactions of capital must take their share to incentivize their continued service, but from where does this excess value appear if both parties within the transaction agreed that the capital was of the same worth as the product? In the same manner, how can debt exist if capital has any bearing on commodity? It can then only be viewed as one party owing yet nonexistent labor to another, and so before the worker has even performed their labor they are stripped to all rights to its product.

The solution to how the matter of one's labor should be handled in opposition to capitalism is the same as many other leftist ideologies: to each according to their need. As proven by the excess resources shipped directly to landfills within the capitalist economy, there is no lack of a great many resources that people may require, and those that may be found to be lacking could be produced by the labor that had in the past been used to produce those found in excess. Each person can typically accurately gauge their own need, consuming and taking only what they need with little beyond. This socialized form of redistribution and consumption disincentivizes the production of products that serve to artificially increase one's perceived need, such as foods sweetened to create cravings. Issues with the overconsumption or lack of resources would be handled by the syndicate, as each federation finds themselves in the midst of a crisis they cannot handle, they pass the issue thru their delegate to the federation above them who will have a greater ability to find and redistribute the resources necessary to rectify the situation that any smaller community may face.

Syndicalism can exist without a hierarchical government beside it, with the syndicate working as a federation of the workers and handling all the necessary redistributions of resources for its constituents to survive. Accountability is key, each worker has a say in their workplace's assembly, be it that of textile workers or computer programmers, only they can say what is necessary for their livelihood.

Democratic Confederalism

By Temporary Warp, All That Is Left

Democratic Confederalism, also known as Apoism, is centered around three pillars: democracy, ecology and female emancipation. Today, the ideology is spearheaded by the Kurdish People and their fittingly named project “The Kurdish Project”. The ideology is largely based on Bookchin’s

theories on social ecology with a greater weight given to feminism, as such Bookchin’s influences are evident throughout. Abdullah Öcalan, the primary philosopher of the ideology, hopes that these principles would counteract the limitations of the ‘communal economy’ within democratic autonomy. Councils, communes, and cooperatives are generally separated by Rojava’s current “cantons.”

These various regions are



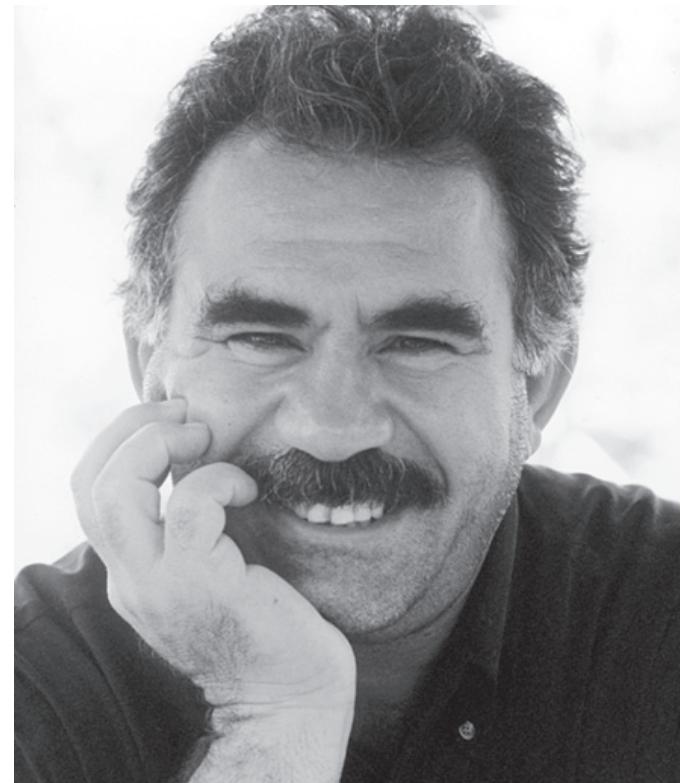
currently building this social economy without any real state or government controlling the people. Öcalan has said about this social economy that “the use value must be greater than the exchange value.” This is a promise that a social economy is one in which the needs of the people are secured away from any monopoly of the means of production. Social economy has four main characteristics: a lack of centralization, industrial and ecological integration, openness to all ecological activities, and a basis of what Ocalan believes are moral values.

Apoism is about making people self-organized and self-governed, and that every individual has a voice in how goods are produced, consumed, and distributed. This is achieved through the use of councils at every level: neighborhood, village, district, city and regional; however, organizations for women, youth, and other specific groups also have a say in the decision-making

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process. This movement asserts that the minds and hands of women are necessary to reorganize the economy. The movement claims along with this that an economy directed by women will also be the economy that prioritizes basic needs and utilities. The Kurdish Movement also says that an economy in which utilities and basic needs are prioritized would not directly seek profit and therefore be the most ecological.

The levels of the aforementioned councils are (ordered from most to least localized): neighborhood assembly, city assembly, province assembly, and finally the Democratic Society Congress. These councils are designed to create democratic autonomy in which people govern themselves and organizing themselves with communes and assemblies at the lowest level. Democratic Confederalism is used to describe these assemblies and communes joining together in a confederation. Communes can include whole villages or



Ecology is a consequence from anti-capitalism, which is seen as a liberatory tool to free resources from exploitation.

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large areas of a city. One level above these communes are the Neighborhood Councils, which are typically comprised of 7-30 communes. Another level up are the District Councils, which are made up of representatives from a collection of neighborhoods, the board of which is TEV-DEM. Political parties come into play at this level and most of the work is done through committees. These committees are: Defence, Economics, Free Society, Justice, Political, Civil Society, Ideology and Women's Council. The final level is called the People's Council of West Kurdistan and is made up of all the district councils and 11 people from each canton (TEV-DEM also exists at this level). All organizations formed by communes or councils, like a coop, have two hev-seroks, who are act as co-leaders, and it is encouraged that one is female and the other is male but not enforced.

Öcalan places ecology and environment as one of the most important issues facing the Kurdish people. He says that the social economy and community must pay attention to the impact of pro-



duction on the environment and health, as well as justice for the workers. Along with other materialist and post-colonial places, Rojava's place of importance for ecology is a consequence from anti-capitalism, which is seen as a liberatory tool to free resources from exploitation. As previously mentioned, Öcalan took many of Bookchin's ideas on social ecology and applied them to the Middle East's socio-economic context. Based on that, Democratic Confederalism is centered around having mutual respect for all aspects of life and prevents ecological problems by fixing and changing the social issues which Bookchin claimed to be causes of ecological problems. One such social issue is social hierarchy, and Democratic Confederalism intends to squash hierarchy with its co-leadership system, communes, and direct democracy.

Democratic Confederalism is centered around having mutual respect for all aspects of life...

Female emancipation is ensured in this system by protecting the rights of women and viewing them as equals with men. One example of this being how women are given various councils on the same subject matters as men. The popular council took this declaration of women's will and incorporated it into a convention with the municipal government. So now, for example, in cases of domestic violence, the council imposes sanctions on the violent husband. This convention exists because of the women's councils and is valid in every Kurdish city and town where the BDP holds power. As in this example, the struggle for the liberation of gender is bringing about tangible changes in people's lives. Because of these councils and co-ops, women's work and activism is respected and fights alongside the Kurdish movement for independence. One member of the Amed Women's Academy said that "the state reproduces its hierachal structure in the family", and so within Democratic Confederalism the hierarchy in both state and family is removed. Women, youths, and people supporting female emancipation are spearheading the Kurdish struggle, because the ideology of Apoism is about liberation from hierarchy, and a key aspect in this is the emancipation of women.

Within Democratic Confederalism the hierarchy in both state and family is removed.

Trotskyism

By red_tide, All That Is Left

On August 21, 1940, the man known as Leon Trotsky lay dead on a cot in a local hospital near his home in Mexico City. Looking at this event may be the simplest way to understand the difference between Trotsky and other communists of his time. Just as the death of Lenin marked the beginning of a future for the early Soviet Union filled with doubt, the death of Trotsky marked the conclusion of it. His death solidified the legitimacy of the Communist Party in Moscow, and ensured that the leadership in the Kremlin was lead forever by the decisions of Trotsky's rival: Joseph Stalin and his ideology of Marxism-Leninism. There's little doubt that the leaders in Moscow, especially Stalin, wished to see the memory of Leon Trotsky fall to the wayside, as to continue the rise of the USSR as an industrial powerhouse without interruption. However, the memory of Trotsky, to the

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dismay of some, lives on in many places throughout the world and has become one of the most famous splits in far-left ideology.

Trotsky's ideas stem from those of Vladimir Lenin, the first leader of the Soviet Union, whose death in 1924 prevented him from enacting the

large reforms of Russia's economic system promised after the Russian Civil War. Stalin, who favored small capitalist reforms, had been elected as general secretary in 1922 and was the primary overseer of the country's affairs. Trotsky formed an opposition based on the claim that Russia, still a feudalist society, could be lead to socialism without having to go through a separate stage of capitalism beforehand. This may present a contextual barrier for modern readers, considering that there are arguably no more feudalist countries left in the world. There was disagreement on whether a revolution could truly happen in feudalist countries, considering that Marx himself

thought that the revolution would need to start within capitalist societies. Leninists, and Trotsky in particular, disagreed with this. As long as the proletariat leads the peasantry (the distinction being that peasants are workers under a feudal system and proletariat are workers under capital-



ist bosses, both of which were found in Russia during the revolution) a socialist revolution would be able to succeed without requiring an intermediate capitalist stage to free all workers from feudalism. However, this point is now moot, since without any existing feudal societies all workers

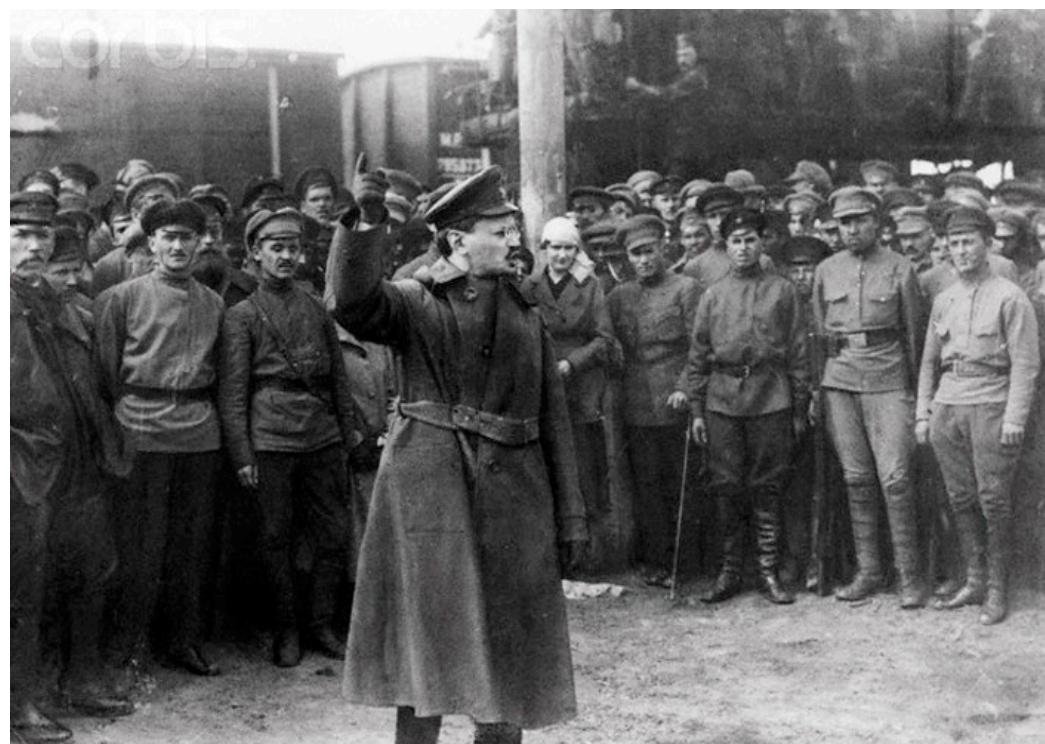
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are now members of the proletariat in some form or another. After the Russian Revolution, there was a growing problem of bureaucratization of the USSR that would continue under Stalin, which Trotsky found very unfortunate. In order to deal with the Civil War, the party had to be centralized, but Trotsky thought it should be as unbureaucratic as possible. This is one of his main disagreements with Stalin and ultimately lead to his expulsion from the country.

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like an odd idea now, when revolutions are seen to be one distinct event that stop or start periods within history. If this is the case, how can a revolution truly be “permanent”? It makes more sense when you’re looking at the historical context of Trotsky’s life.

During 1918, the last year of WW1, massive strikes and mutinies hit Germany, Britain, and other western countries in opposition to the war, arguably ending it. There was a time in Europe where it seemed like the entire continent could be plunged into a revolutionary wave. This was the context Trotsky came out of. If they could convince half



of Europe to turn to socialism they could put up a united front against capitalism and bring an end to the system. However, this never happened. The failure of any Revolutions in Germany and other developed Western countries made it much more difficult for the Soviet Union to truly put up a complete attack against the capitalist system. For Joseph Stalin it was time for the USSR to settle down, and try to defend itself against imperialist outsiders. After all, if socialism were to only succeed in Russia, what is good for Russia must be good for Socialism. Trotsky completely disagreed with this and even after the failure of many socialist revolutions in Western countries, still campaigned for the support of revolutions in the rest of the world, including in China. As Joseph Stalin thought that the Chinese Communist Party should join the Kuomintang (Chinese nationalists), Trotsky thought that the USSR should fully embrace the revolution in China and support the communists. This is probably clearest example of Trotsky directly advocating for his theories while still in the USSR. Then, in 1928, Trotsky was exiled from the Soviet Union. He traveled to several different countries in Europe (most notably starting the Fourth International in France), he was subsequently exiled from each one eventually, eventually making his way to Mexico. This provides

Trotsky thought that the USSR should fully embrace the revolution in China and support the communists.

the context in which Trotsky's most publicized idea, that of permanent revolution as opposed to socialism in one country, becomes clear. Permanent revolution may sound like an odd idea now, when revolutions are seen to be one distinct event that stops or starts periods within history, but Trotsky's idea of revolution was one of constant change of a society for the better.

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The results of the Russian Revolution ending lead to Trotsky's constant criticism of the Soviet Union as a "deformed workers state", where the gains from the social revolution (the centrally planned and communal economy) were still there, but there needed to be a political revolution to get rid of the state bureaucrats. One may have thought that Trotsky could live out the rest of his life peacefully in Mexico, but his fiery denunciation of Stalin's leadership would contribute to Stalin ordering Trotsky to be assassinated.

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So what is the legacy of Trotsky? Some might say not much. The country he helped found, the USSR, moved on without him, fully embracing socialism in one country and industrialization. Other revolutions throughout the rest of the 20th century were overwhelmingly inspired by either Marxist-Leninist or anarchist ideals, with both of them viewing Trotskyism as a defunct ideology.



But Trotskyism lives on, most notably in Latin America, in which hundreds of different Trotskyist organizations still live on today. The Trotskyist tendency to publish newspapers is a defining motif of their ideology, and their influence can be seen throughout leftist literature. Their relative distance from the policies of the USSR worked to their benefit, at least in the West, where the Cold War drove anti-Russian Hysteria to its maximum height; being separated from Russia might have been seen as a better thing, allowing more Trotskyist organizations to not be infiltrated like the CPUSA, a very Soviet friendly party, and so more Trotskyist parties could survive over the years. Whatever form the ideas of Trotsky are in, he continues to influence and inspire Marxist movements around the world.

Market Socialism

By All That Is Left

Yugoslavia was a socialist nation that arose from World War II. It was unique in many ways. It had one of the largest militaries in the world at its height, had relations with both the capitalist west and socialist east, and had a unique system, Market Socialism. Market Socialism, also known as Titoism is the implementation of socialism in Yugoslavia under Marshal Tito. It is characterized by its use of cooperatively owned worker enterprises competing against each other in a market based system. In the following paragraphs, I will

describe the tendency as well as the arguments for and against it, as well as its achievements.

(From henceforth I will just refer to it as Market Socialism)

The most important aspect of Market Socialism is cooperatively owned worker enterprises which compete against one another in markets.

Market Socialism developed in Yugoslavia after a phase of centrally planned economy. This short period was characterized by five year plans, and other aspects that were typical of what occurred in the USSR. This was not to last however, as not too long after they started, the Yugoslav-Soviet split occurred. This also resulted in a change in economics. This change is what became Market Socialism. As stated previously, the most important aspect of Market Socialism is cooper-

Historically, there has been less commodity production in socialist states...

atively owned worker enterprises which compete against one another in markets. This is interesting as it is a decentralized system. One thing which comes as a result of this is more commodity production. Historically, there has been less commodity production in socialist states to instead produce more capital

goods and goods necessary for life. This led to Yugoslavia being one of the nations in Eastern Europe with fair living standards. (This varied depending on geography) Keep in mind, this was a

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Eastern European country pillaged by the Nazis with a vast mix of different ethnic groups living inside of its borders. The ability to hold Yugoslavia together was an admirable achievement by Marshall Tito. Many consider Yugoslavia's ability to remain unaligned, fairly prosperous, and altogether successful. Tito himself contributed to this directly, as after his death, the unity

between the many ethnic groups in Yugoslavia split and civil war ensued.

While Yugoslavia and the system of Market Socialism had many positives, various critiques have come out against Market Socialism. One of the most vocal came from Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha. Hoxha said “The views of Tito and his associates showed from the very beginning that they were far from being “hard-line Marxists”, as the bourgeoisie calls the consistent Marxists, but “reasonable Marxists”, who would collaborate closely with all the old and new bourgeois and reactionary politicians of Yugoslavia”. What Hoxha is stating here is the criticism that Market Socialism

creates Bourgeoisie from its market based system. Interestingly, in the 1940s, Hoxha and Tito had thoughts of Albania joining into Yugoslavia, but it was not meant to be, as the two fell out later on. Hoxha also states “Capitalism has been fully restored in Yugoslavia, as is well-known, but this capitalism knows how to disguise. Yugoslavia portrays itself as a socialist state, but of a special kind, as the world has never seen it before! The Titoites even boast that their state has nothing in common with the first socialist state which emerged from the socialist October Revolution and which was founded by Lenin and Stalin on





the basis of the scientific theory of Marx and Engels.” Hoxha carries on his prior criticism here further stating that it distances itself from the October Revolution. While Hoxha may have been the largest critic of Market Socialism, other critiques exist. Many point out that Yugoslavia incurred many debts and attribute this to its higher standard of living. They also point out that many Yugoslavians were exported as a labour force. And finally, the most obvious critique, the collapse of

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Yugoslavia and the resurgence of nationalist sentiments directly after Tito’s death.

Market Socialism is a tendency which I believe has reasons to support it, but like all systems there is

room for some sort of improvement. We must remember that our goal as leftists should be to unite under the banner of anti-capitalism so as to bring on a socialist revolution. And as always, remember that every tendencies’ goal is the achievement of Communism.

ALL THAT IS LEFT



Democratic Socialism

By All That Is Left

There are a great multitude of misconceptions surrounding democratic socialism and the people associated with that school of thought. The term came into wider prominence amongst the general public during the 2016 US Presidential primaries, where the term was used by senator Bernie Sanders to describe his own ideology, distancing himself from the supposedly more authoritarian forms of socialism. While the Bernie Sanders phenomenon may be appreciated by us anti-capitalist leftists for providing non-radicalized Americans with a gateway to the socialist movement, it must be said that Bernie Sanders' description of his own thought is a glaring, if not painful, misnomer. In this article therefore, we will try to examine what democratic socialism exactly is, what it is not, and whether democratic socialists ought to be revolutionists or reformists to establish a post-capitalist society on the basis of two case-studies: the Allende government of Chile, and the Bolivarian government of Venezuela. It is my hope that we will uncover a greater understanding of what the goal of socialist movements should be, and that those new to socialism (which includes yours truly) will find this article informative and helpful.

In order to define democratic socialism clearly, we will try to put the term in two different contexts: the wider context of socialism, and in opposition to another school of thought, that is, social democracy. It is very important to understand that socialism is a movement. More specifically, it is the movement by the working class to get humanity to move away from the capitalist mode of production to a non-exploitative, equitable, and unoppressive mode of production through the collective ownership of the means of production. In order to guarantee political equality, according to democratic socialists, such a post-capitalist society must include a democratic form of governance (not necessarily government). This can be done through all sorts of different means, such as elections, but also councils.

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Having defined socialism, it is clear that democratic socialism is a subset of socialist thought. It can be said that whereas socialism is an economic and political movement towards collective

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ownership of the means of production, democratic socialism is a part of that movement, specifically concerned with democratic governance and ownership of those means of production. However, in public discourse the term has been used lately in a more

rhetorical, instead of a theoretical, fashion. It is often used by western progressives in order to rehabilitate the socialist movement, so maligned by the middle class in the west. When westerners (especially Americans) think of socialism, often they think of the Soviet Union, striking a negative connotation. As we recognized earlier, this rhetorical use of the term can be very beneficial, but there is one instance where the term has been blatantly misused.

Bernie Sanders, a contender for the position of Democratic candidate for the US presidency, during the 2016 primaries, used the term ‘democratic socialism’ frequently to describe his own beliefs. We can assume he did this to rehabilitate the term, in good faith, as well. After all, Sanders was a member of the youth wing of the Socialist Party of America while in college. But democratic socialism is not at all how any decently-read socialist would describe the platform Sanders’ ran on during the previous two years. He did not advocate for the abolishment of capitalism, he did not advocate the common ownership of workers over their means of production, nor did he advocate for solidarity with workers across the world. His platform could best be described as social democratic. This brings us to the second context I wish to place democratic socialism in: in opposition to social democracy.

Social democracy is the political ideology of the social democratic, and many so-called socialist, parties across the western world. It arose from marxist socialism when some people felt that abolishing capitalism was unattainable, and that it would serve the working class better to simply soften the hardships of their lives. Throughout the 20th century, through massive nationalization, taxing, and government welfare programs, the social democrats managed to carefully sculpt the face of capitalism to be more bearable, and less nasty, for those who toiled under it. This system came at a price, though. It was, and still is, financed through exploitation of many third world

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countries. This is why socialists accuse social democrats for not being real socialists: they do not want to abolish capitalism, nor do they show any sign of real solidarity with the workers of the world. In short, social democracy created a labor aristocracy in the West (a topic for another time). It is clear that social democracy will not lead to a post-capitalist society. Bernie Sanders is wrong to call himself a democratic socialist, and instead should be referring to himself as a social democrat.

Now that we have detailed what democratic socialism is, what it is not, by putting it in two different contexts, we have a sufficient understanding of what democratic socialism is. We will now look at a question that is important to the democratic socialist tendency. That question is whether a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism (i.e. reform) is possible, or whether a revolution by the working class is necessary to overthrow capitalism. This question of reformism versus revolutionism is very relevant to the story of Salvador Allende, as well as the current political crisis threatening the Bolivarian government in Venezuela.

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Salvador Allende was democratically elected president of Chile in 1970 on a platform of national-



ization. Specifically, his coalition, Popular Unity (an alliance of different left wing parties) advocated for a peaceful path to socialism. As soon as Allende was elected, he seemed to be enacting this peaceful road well enough. His government undertook actions to make the economy more equitable for the vast majority of working people, a big part of whom of indigenous ancestry, and provide the people of Chile with basic necessities such as jobs and new housing. He set up a scholarship program for Mapuche indigenous children as a way to close the education gap between ethnicities. By the end of 1972 the size of big farms was dramatically reduced, effectively ending the power the landed gentry held over agricultural workers.

There was a catch to all of this success. The legislative and judicial branches of government were still held by opposition parties, limiting Allende in every step he took. The Chilean Armed Forces were increasingly anxious with Allende's policies, as was Washington DC. So in 1973 a US backed military coup of the democratic Allende government occurred. Allende was forced to commit suicide, and he was succeeded by the newly appointed (by Allende himself!) chief of the Chilean Armed Forces: Augusto Pinochet. The rest is history.

Let us now examine the curious case of Venezuela. Something to note about the Venezuelan economy is its intense dependence on petroleum, with 95% of all export from the country being crude oil. In 1998 Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela on a socialist platform. His intention, similarly to Allende's, was to reform the capitalist economy and turn it socialist through peaceful

means. In 1999 a new constitution was adopted, founding the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela,

His intention ... was to reform the capitalist economy and turn it socialist through peaceful means.

as part of Chavez's Bolivarian "revolution", which was of course not at all an actual revolution in any meaningful sense, but merely a political-institutional overhaul of the Venezuelan government. During this entire process of the Bolivarian

revolution, continuing after Chavez's death in 2013, into Nicolás Maduro's presidency, the power of the Venezuelan bourgeoisie was not at all ended, or even seriously limited. It was merely limited enough to make the bourgeoisie mad at the socialist government. Note here that I make a distinction between a socialist government, that is, a government merely run by socialists, and a socialist society, that is, a society wherein the capitalist mode of production has been abolished.

Let us now go forward in time to the current political crisis in Venezuela. Maduro's government, beside being corrupt, is trying to continue the Chavista policies of nationalization, and wage and price controls, all the while global oil prices have tanked. It is clear that the government's erratic actions are part to blame for the shortages that now plague the country. It is struggling

hard with a serious uprising, backed by the US government and US firms, and most likely will not survive the current turmoil. Once again, reformism by a socialist government has put that government into an impossible and inescapable position. Maduro's government has to either do or die, but there is very little do: Maduro squandered that opportunity in the first few years of his presidency.



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It is clear from these examples that any kind of politically reformist socialism is doomed to fail, since most current democracies are bourgeois. There are simply too much institutions which wish a socialist society not to happen, and who want the status quo to remain. Fighting them, the bourgeoisie, with laws, decrees, debate, is not sufficient, and is often harmful to the socialist movement, as was made clear in the case of Allende and Venezuela. In order for a socialist society to be realized, revolution must occur. The people must, by force, with arms, with violence, expel the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, from their position of power, and quickly and efficiently restructure the government and the economy to serve only the people's need. Only in a revolution are the capacities of its proponents, the revolutionaries, maximally utilized. That is, only in a revolution are people willing to do anything necessary to get to the desired end goal, and such a revolution provides the revolutionaries with an opportune moment to seize power from the capitalist class. Revolution is inevitable, and difficult to reverse. This is not at all an anathema to the principles of democratic socialism. The term 'democratic' might trick one into believing that democratic socialists must inherently be reformist, but as was explained above, the 'democratic' part refers to how a socialist society would politically be structured after a revolution.

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It is for this reason that we can conclude that the future of not just democratic socialism, but socialism in general, lies with revolution, and thus that any tendency of socialism, including democratic socialism, must be revolutionary in order to be fully realizable. We, as socialists, must reject the constraints of bourgeois "democracy", and once again embrace the revolutionary spirit that seems to be so absent as of late in the socialist movement. Together we can build a better tomorrow, but it requires more effort than voting, debating, and legislating.

It requires you.

Glossary

Anarchism - Society whose structures are built around non-hierarchical (or horizontal) and voluntary organization rather than government rule and enforcement.

Bourgeoisie - Capitalist class which owns the means of production.

Capitalism - Economic system in which the means of production are privately rather than publicly (or collectively) owned.

Class - Grouping of people based on their social and/or economic standing.

Commodity - Material or product to be sold. **Commodity production** refers to the usage of the means of production to create commodities.

Commune - Collective with shared resources, possessions, and work, generally without a central controlling body or government.

Communism - Society in which all resources are collectively owned and accessed by individuals based on necessity rather than economic accessibility.

Confederation - Voluntary union of several states/governments.

Corporatism - Society organized by corporations or other large groups based.

Cultural Revolution - Shift in culture to match with a shift in infrastructure

Ecology - Study of interactions of organisms or people.

Exploitation - Mistreatment of workers for the purpose of extracting value from their labor.

Federation - Union of several states/governments which are each obligated to remain within the union by treaty/law.

Feminism - Promotion of equal treatment for people of all genders and opposition to any system that leads to inequality between genders.

Feudalism - (In Tsarist Russia) Society in which workers live and work on land owned by a landowner to whom they must pay significant portions of their income.

Hierarchy - Structure in which there are multiple levels of power such that a higher level would

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have control/influence over lower levels.

Ideology - Set of ideas and beliefs about economic, political, and social theory.

Market - System in which products are bought and sold.

Means of Production - Tools and resources required for the creation of value, such as factory machinery and minerals.

Peasantry - Laborer class under feudalism, live, work, and pay rent on land owned by a landowner.

Political Economy - Study of relationship between politics (government and law) and economy (production and trade).

Proletariat - Laborer class under capitalism.

Property - Something that belongs to or is a part of a person, group, or thing, physical or conceptual. **Private Property** is property that is exclusively controlled in by a non-government group or person, where the government enforces this groups control.

Reformism - Movement towards socialism by enacting small changes in current political institutions over time.

Revolution - Movement towards socialism by abrupt seizure of political power, not necessarily through violent insurrection.

Sectarianism - Discrimination by an individual or group of individuals within a certain subdivision (or sect) based on association with another subdivision of the same overarching group.

Socialism - Society in which the means of production are publicly or cooperatively controlled, often by way of democracy and government ownership.

Trade Union - Organization of laborers of a specific trade working towards goals of increased pay, benefits, and/or working conditions.

Vanguard - (In Leninism) Groups within in a society that are most class-conscious and politically aware that build organizations around which the working class builds movements.

Wage Labor - System in which workers trade their labor with the owners of the means of production in exchange for wages determined by a market.