

Socialism

Key Terms

Revolutionary	Evolutionary	Fraternity	Marxism	Historical Materialism
Cooperation	Dialectic	Communism	Revisionism	Marxism

Core Ideas and Principles

Common Humanity

- Socialists believe that people are naturally inclined to work together in cooperation
- Underpinning this is a belief in fraternity and community socialists find pleasure and fulfilment in work that focuses on cooperation and collectivisation rather than individualism and competition
- Marx and Engels argued that human nature was deformed by capitalism and the power money holds corrupts those who possess it with capitalism abolished. Common humanity will flourish as workers will no longer be exploited and corrupted by the individual competitive nature of capitalism and therefore humanity will truly be free.
- However more contemporary socialist movements such as social democracy believe that capitalism is a system which can be harnessed and reformed to provide for the greater good and improve the human condition

Collectivism

- Socialism's view of Human Nature perceives humans as naturally social creatures and the collective prioritises the group over the individual.
- Revolutionary and more traditional socialists argue that the workforces should own all industry and stop controlling the means of production. The collective common ownership of property would end inequalities and class conflict present in a capitalist society
- Beatrice Webb favoured the idea of cooperative federalism which would see business being owned by their customers who had a say in decision making and would receive dividends from any profits made
- To prevent decisions being made that would overlook the needs of the average worker a strong trade union movement would form a vital part of cooperative federalism

Equality

- The capital Society leads to economic inequality due to a rigid class structure and capitalist procedures. So therefore it is argued a person's economic wealth is determined by their social position rather than their ability or skill

Social Class

- Capitalists force a rigid class structure which is needed to keep the wealthy rich and the poor poor. Capitalists take surplus value to alienate the worker from their labour
- It is also argued that a capitalist state is not neutral and actively enforces this "oppressive" a system by the means of the police force law and bureaucracy
- Beatrice Webb argues that the nature of the state could be altered through the introduction of universal nationalisation progressive taxation and a welfare state which would significantly narrow class division

Workers control

- Marxists often believe that in the immediate aftermath of a revolution there will be a transitory party where workers would become the ones in control. Leninists see this as the Vanguard party which is a group of intellectual workers needed to guide the uneducated workers to seek their class consciousness
- Eventually it is believed by Marxist that once Socialist control has been established in society the state can wither away and there was no longer be need for control as the deceptive and evil nature of Capitalism would no longer be present
- Beatrice Webb however did not believe in workers control. Dismissing workers as incapable of holding such responsibility. She was openly critical of the 1920's Guild Socialism, which advocated state nationalisation under workers control, she argued that workers like the intellectual capability to organise such Enterprise as efficiently
- Social Democrats viewed workers control and an idea of a militant class struggle as outdated notions. They argue that capitalism has largely been reformed to consider the needs of the worker and thus an aggressive revolutionary overhaul of control in society is not needed.
- For example Enterprises could exist privately yet that progressive tax system would therefore fund a welfare state to reinforce workers wishes full stop this is also present in the idea of a minimum and living national wage which allows Enterprises to profit but also does not allow workers to fall short however this is debated in modern society as the inflationary price has not matched the waging increase and is a hot Topic between left wing and socialist factions in modern politics

Key Considerations

- The Socialist idea of estate and the Communist idea of a state varies drastically. socialists do not deny the existence or need to exist of a state many socialists advocate for a strong state to enforce socialist values

- Communists on overhand believe in the end goal of Marxism which is a cashless moneyless and stateless Society whether people act as one community without the need for a governing hierarchical state
- Marxists, Leninists, Trotskyists And other Marxist ideologies believe that socialism is a transitory ideology to achieve communism. for example marxists often believe that a socialist state is necessary to take action against dismantling the capitalist system and then to eventually let the state "wither away"

Origins of Socialist thought and Core Concepts

- Arose as a reaction against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of capitalism.
- Character of early socialism was influenced by the harsh conditions in which the working class lived.
- Early socialists sought a radical, even revolutionary alternative to capitalism.
- Fourier and Robert Owen subscribed to utopianism in founding experimental communities based on sharing and cooperation.
- Marx and Engels developed a more complex theory – revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was inevitable.
- Democratic socialists, gradual movement. Growth of trade unions, working class political parties etc.

Social justice

Legal and formal justice (as put forward by Libs) is not enough to guarantee equal opportunity, these things must be accompanied by social justice, involving for example healthcare and education accessible to all, or a minimum wage for employees. Case for social justice usually leads to a case for collectivism

Equality

In many respects is the defining feature of socialist ideology, equality being the political value that most clearly distinguishes socialism from its rivals. Socialist egalitarianism is characterised by a belief in social equality or equality of outcome. Socialists have advanced at least three arguments in favour of this: social equality upholds justice or fairness. Socialists are reluctant to explain the inequality of wealth in terms of innate differences of ability among individuals. Socialists believe that the most significant forms of human inequality are a result of unequal treatment in society.

Class Conflict

- Radical socialists always see this as crucial as it is the vehicle by which real change can be enacted, not through democratic means as they are inevitably in favour of the middle classes.
- Marx called it the 'class consciousness' others call it 'common class interest' but by achieving this the workers will be those people who will look to lead the revolution.

- Evolutionary socialists would seek to alter capitalism pushing for economic and social equality, which would be achieved through democratic means but with the interests of the working class at their heart.
- Democratic socialists modify capitalism with controls through state intervention on a huge scale e.g. Atlee government through welfare but also through nationalisation and the role of the state being to provide jobs for people. Class is less important the state is a neutral arbiter
- Modern Socialists would claim that class is no longer important e.g. New Labour but their ideas on promoting equality and social justice remain.

Fraternity

Humans should regard each other as siblings rather than rivals, and , therefore relationships should be based not on competition but on generosity.

Cooperation

Individuals working collectively for mutual benefit

Dialectic

Clash of ideas and perceptions between each stage of history. Occurs when societies pre existing values is no long valued by the majority, in this society would be born from these contradictions

Timeline

Primitive Society → Slave society → Feudalism → Primitive Capitalism → Capitalism
→ Emergence of the two classes → Class consciousness → Revolution → Dictatorship of proletariat → Withering of state → Communism

Human Nature

- Altruistic, Co-operative and generous
- Socialists have optimistic view of human nature and seen as 'progressive' ideology
- However differ from Liberalism as to why they are optimistic (Socialists feel individuals are product of society in which they are born, Libs society is sum of autonomous individuals)
- Human beings seek comradery, fraternity and solidarity (John Donne)
- Social animals
- Human nature is malleable, it can be adjusted (social)

Society and Class

- Society is an independent construct formed by impersonal, primarily economic forces

- Socialists are sceptical of CL claim that individuals can be master of their own destiny, as society determines this through your status and allowed opportunity as embraced by the capitalist system
- Socialists believe that if society can be improved, the prospects of individuals can also be, this is where the importance of class comes into focus
- Socialism insists that Liberal forms of equality are meaningless without greater equality of outcome, meaning a greater similarity between peoples material resources and circumstances
- This forms the base of socialism's case for social justice and the connection between equality and socialism is more pronounced than within liberalism
- Socialism regarded as more egalitarian doctrine than liberalism

Economy

Economic Model

- Centralised economy
 - Collective and redistributionist
 - 'Individuals do not work in isolation but in cooperation with one another'
 - redistribution in terms of physical units rather financial units
 - Commonly owned means of production
 - SOEs & nationalisation
 - Command Economies
- They feel equality of opportunity is denied by the inequalities of social class, the issue of inequality cannot be addressed without addressing the structure of the economy as social class is determined by economic status (duh) Comrade Lola yeehaw
- Against private property and capitalism as highly problematic and also does not align with socialist view of human nature, as fraternity is threatened by capitalisms encouragement of competitiveness, egotism and self-interest
 - Free market also generates huge inequalities of outcome which for socialists is incomparable with equality of opportunity and social justice

How can problems of capitalism be rectified?

- Provide for greater workers control in employment
- Significant redistribution of wealth and resources within the economy, the 'redistributionist' economy will usually involve two broad principles

- 1) An emphatic rejection of laissez-faire capitalism with a large role of state
- 2) Greater collectivism, focus on the needs of society.

Economic Collectivism:

- Progressive taxation (sliding scale)
- Progressive public spending

- Extensive public services
- Extensive state regulation of capitalism
- State/common ownership

Benefits:

- Seen as expressions of a more fraternal, cooperative society with greater social justice
- Redistribution benefits whole community
- Collectivist policies are thought to make the economy more efficient. Marx and Engels pointed out cap and market forces unpredictable and volatile, more collective economics equals stability and more manageable **THIS IS HIGHLY DEBATED DON'T TAKE IT FACE VALUE COLLECTIVISATION IN THE USSR WAS THE REASON HOLMODOR STARTED AND QUEUING FOR BREAD**

State

- Core socialist values of equality, fraternity and collectivism are also shared by certain anarchists, what makes socialists individual is the advocacy for a strong state
- For guarantee of a strong future a certain state essential to ensure fair, equal society
- Reject Monarchical, Theocratic, Aristocratic states
- Advocates for redistribution of political power as well as wealth so decision making reflects the principle of equality and empowerment of the people
- Any reduction of state power is likely to produce increased inequality
- Still significant differences amongst socialists about the structure of an ideal state, extent of its activities and how it emerges
- **Criticism lies that by overthrowing the aristocracy ruling class with a vanguard party, you are essentially replacing one elite group with another, and the struggle for power restarts under a different name. E.G leading to Stalin's Red Army purges, Lavrenty Beria and other power struggles.**

Fundamental Socialism

- Represents earliest forms of socialist thought, Marx and Engels 'classical socialism'
- Capitalism to be abolished
- Differences in how this is to be achieved

Revolutionary Socialism

- Destruction of capitalism
- Overthrow of the existing world order
- Creation of a socialist state
- Total state control over the economy
- Socialist state governed by a dictatorship of the proletariat
- Common ownership

Marxism

- Humans are social beings whose natural state of fraternity, cooperation and selflessness have been masked into a 'false consciousness' by the ruthless and greedy system of capitalism
- Social class is central to the perception of human history, described as the economic phases and relationship of the two classes, proletariat and bourgeois.
- Bourgeois exploit the proletariat by undervaluing them for profit
- Historical materialism, in which economic conflict is the catalyst for historical and social development
- Historical development driven by dialectic, a continuing chain of internal contradictions between two opposing forces, the exploiters and the exploited
- History would pass through stages in which would end with a perfect communist society, ending the mark of history

Utopian Socialism

- Charles Fourier and Robert Owen advocated small scale cooperative communities
- Marx criticised this variant as utopian, simplistic and idealistic with no depth of thought to how such a society would be created or maintained

Karl Marx (1818-83) & Friedrich Engels (1820-95)

Key Works

The Communist Manifesto (1848) Das Kapital (1867)

- They believed that their theories were empirical and scientifically determined, so as well as explaining historical change they believed their theories would inevitably be fulfilled
- Class struggle, arising from property ownership had existed throughout history and it was only a matter of time, inevitably that class consciousness would be realised
- Capitalism will be overthrown and a dictatorship will be in place to guide toward communism
- The state will eventually wither away and true communism will be achieved (No money, no class, no state) This will be the peak of human social evolution and history will come to an end

'Accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation at the opposite pole'

Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919)

Key Works

The Accumulation of Capital (1913)

- Evolutionary socialism was flawed as it would leave the capitalist model intact in society and thus cannot truly escape the system

- Marx's historical materialism idea is flawed as capitalism did not need to reach a 'final stage' before it could be abolished and could occur in less developed countries
- Lenin's 'Vanguard' system of basically a class which would guide the uneducated proletariat to realise their position was also flawed as consciousness would come spontaneously as they protest for reforms and workplace democracy
- Socialism must be internationalist rather nationalist in nature, which was consistent with Marx's idea of workers unite

'Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of the press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies in every institution'

Evolutionary Socialism

Democratic Socialism

- Evolve from current political system
- Socialist state achieved by socialist parties winning electoral majorities
- Nationalisation and common ownership
- Social democrats believe in rationalism and evolutionary socialism

Fabian Society (Beatrice & Sidney Webb)

- An elite could be permeated (influenced) by the moral supremacy of socialism over capitalism
- Webbs' ideas influential to the UK labour party, Sidney wrote clause IV which asserts common ownership of the means of production, Fabian Society also influenced the German Social Democratic Party.

Beatrice Webb

Key Works

The Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission (1909)

- The Inevitability of Gradualness is an believe parliamentary democracy will deliver the expected socialist society
- Essentially overthrowing capitalism via the Ballot rather than the gun
- Expansion of the state is essential and will develop an elite level of administrators and specialists to organise the society
- Technocratic elite will 'impregnate all the existing forces of society'
- 'National minimum of civilised life' many of the ideas from this report appeared in the Beveridge report of 1942 which was used as an intellectual basis for the post WW2 welfare state
- William Bevelridge wrote how his report 'stemmed from what all of us had imbibed from the Webbs'

- Revolutions are 'chaotic, efficient and counter-productive'

'Are all Cabinet congeries of little autocrats with a super-autocrat presiding over them?'

'We do not have faith in the average sensual man, we do not believe that he can do more than describe his grievances, we do not think that he can prescribe to remedies'

Revisionist Socialism

- Revisionist is belief that socialism can be achieved without the destruction of capitalism, private prop or revolution, therefore form of evolutionary socialism
- Associated with Edward Bernstein post war social democracy and The Third Way of the late 20th Century

Social Democracy

- Rationality
- Evolutionary socialism
- Mixed economy
- State involvement of economy
- Nationalisation of private industries
- Keynesian economics
- Persuading voters of the innovative benefits through social justice

Anthony Crossland (1918-77)

Key Work

He Future of Socialism (1956)

- Crossland criticised the negative view of capitalist development, arguing that it did not drive social change and that 'evolutionary and revolutionary philosophies of progress have proved false' Internal tensions required in Marx's dialectic of historical materialism were not present in post war capitalism
- Socialism was best served by 'state managed capitalism' Crossland favoured mixed economics which focused on equality of outcome facilitate by increased public spending
- Keynesian economics had made state managed capitalism a reality and society could look toward permanent growth and employment
- Creation of comprehensive schools which would cater for all abilities and break down the 'social segregation; of grammar schools

'Marx had little or nothing to offer the contemporary socialist'

'In Britain, equality of opportunity and social mobility are not enough. They need to be combined with measures to equalise the distribution of rewards and privileges so as to diminish the degree of class stratification, the injustices of large inequalities and the collective discontents'

Third Way Socialism

By the 1990s social democracy had been revised and the result was the Third Way.

Third Way can be seen as a response to the changes in traditional industrial changes (rise of globalisation and mechanisation) incorporating neo-liberal ideas into existing social democratic ones.

Principles

- State must accept the free market and reject top down state intervention
- Role of the state must move away from the economic and social engineering of social democracy and embrace social investment in both infrastructure and education
- An emphasis on social inclusion and equality of opportunity
- Marginalised groups targeted with tax credits, minimum and living wage, along with educational maintenance grants
- Traditional egalitarianism was scaled back, and did not endorse 'cradle to grave' policies of social democracy.

Anthony Giddens

- Developed economies had entered a post Fordian period, globalisation and mechanisation fragment traditional industrial economies
- Capitalism and individualism is irreversible
- Socialism must harness the benefits of capitalism (where does the sense make i don't know) but neutralise social inequalities

Third Way v Social Democracy

Collectivist Examples	Social Democratic	Third Way
Industrial Relations	Workers belong to trade unions that have strong bargaining rights to stop exploitation	Unions should exist to preserve fair practice, but must recognise wages are market driven
Healthcare	A national health service provides universal health care according to need. This service is paid by general tax	Universal healthcare is unsustainable
Education	Widespread comprehensive education is available for all, extending equality of opportunity	An extension of opportunity is facilitated by education, but uni students expected to help fund their education
Key Industries	Key utilities, brought under government control and operate in the collective interest of all.	Free market the best way??? Hello how on earth is this socialism

More Info on Evolutionary Socialism

Gradualism - Achievement of socialism through gradual improvements, rather than revolution. Change is brought about through legal and peaceful reform.

Parliamentary Socialism - The belief that socialism would develop inevitably and peacefully out of liberal capitalism through a combination of education and political action.

Democratic socialists however endorse the parliamentary route towards a socialist system. By gaining an electoral mandate from the people, a socialist government could utilise a system based upon parliamentary sovereignty to implement a programme of nationalisation, centralisation, protectionism and co-operatives run by the workers. Such measures can be achieved on an evolutionary basis. In doing so, there is no need for the bloody revolution prescribed by Marxists. The democratic process therefore offers the most preferable route towards a socialist economic system.

In contrast to their more left-wing brethren, social democrats endorse a far less radical approach. Those on the centre-left of the political spectrum advocate gradual and piecemeal tactics towards lasting social change. On a related point, it is perhaps worth noting that the division between reformists and radicals/revolutionaries is a feature of all those ideologies committed to substantial change. Such measures help to humanise the existing economic system rather than scrapping it altogether in hope of some 'New Jerusalem.'

Social democracy is at heart a moderate form of socialism that seeks to persuade people as to the merits of incremental steps. For instance, social democrats argue that paying workers a decent wage helps to raise productivity and reduce the number of hours lost due to staff absences. Indeed, there are many organisations who actively promote opportunities for their workforce. Even with the recent trend towards globalisation, the concept of corporate social responsibility and conscious capitalism has become an increasingly important business strategy.

The Labour Party has long been associated with a gradual approach to change, particularly when in government. Successive Labour governments have attempted to advance their cause on an incremental basis. The gradualist position is also reflected in organisations such as the Fabian Society, which gains its name from the Roman General Quintus Fabius Maximus whose motto was "for the right moment you must wait." Fabians such as Sidney and Beatrice Webb believe there is an "inevitability of gradualness." Fabianism therefore places prominence upon strategies such as comprehensive education and municipal socialism within local government.

The gradualist stance has been subject to considerable criticism from those further to the left of the political spectrum. Incremental change inevitably entails compromise with capitalists and a watered-down version of the socialist vision. During the Labour governments of the 60s and 70s, left-wingers within the Labour Party and the trade unions often put forward this argument. They claimed that the Labour leadership had betrayed their principles in the pursuit of power. However, such criticism reached their zenith during the era of New Labour. Many within the labour movement felt that the leadership abandoned socialism altogether in the pursuit of a Thatcherite agenda of foundation hospitals, academy schools, de-regulation and the marketisation of the welfare state.

Ethical Socialism

- A theoretical basis for socialism dependent on moral or religious beliefs rather than scientific analysis.
- Ethical socialism is a political philosophy that appeals to socialism on ethical and moral grounds as opposed to consumeristic, economic, and egoistic grounds. It emphasises the need for a morally conscious economy based upon the principles of altruism, cooperation, and social justice while opposing possessive individualism.
- In contrast to socialism inspired by historical materialism, Marxist theory, neoclassical economics, and rationalism which base their appeals for socialism on grounds of economic efficiency, historical inevitability, or rationality, ethical socialism focuses on the moral and ethical reasons for advocating socialism. It became the official philosophy of several socialist parties

Decline in 21st Century Socialism

- By the start of the 21st century many political commentators referred to socialism as a 'wasm' not an 'ism' as they referred to socialism as a redundant and largely dead ideology

For

- Collapse in USSR
- 1978 Deng Xiaoping opened China's open Door policy which enabled western private entities to invest in China along with economically liberal reforms, socialism was relabelled 'socialism with chinese characteristics'
- 2021 Cuba, socialist nation, announced it would allow private business to operate in most economic sectors
- Western socialist parties (Labour) renounced their previous support from common ownership, and many embraced Third Way, which many see as leftist liberalism.
- No mention of the word socialism in the labour party manifesto from 1997 to 2010
- Jeremy Corbyn modern socialism massive electoral failure

Against

- 'Revisionist socialist' party in France won the 2012 election (Francois Hollande)
- Alleged slow death of neoliberalism is around the corner
- 2008 and 2020 crashed causes increase government economic regulation
- Rise in anti-capitalist parties PODEMOS (ESP) and SYRIZA (GRE)
- Jeremy Corbyn winning the Labour election shows labour still has an interest in socialist policies.

Are Marx's views still relevant to communism?

Yes

- capitalism creates inequality
- revolutionary tactics are still supported by some communist parties. Cap is unable to be reformed, must be revolution
- Class is the defining feature of society
- Many communist still believe in equality

No

- Marx wanted revolution, unachieved. Neo-marxists different path
- His views altered by Lenin which all major socialist nations take a path of Leninism
- Communist parties in 70s abandoned idea of revolution
- His views on class did not last, the development of capitalism has seen demises of traditional w/c
- His views on equality were naive
- Abolishing priv prop and introducing collectivism does not result in equality eg russia resulted in totalitarianism
- Rapid Collectivisation policies lead to the Holodomor