

Anticapitalism as a Logical Entity, Socialism as a Historical Phenomenon

What questions must be raised to resolve the contradictions surrounding the concept of socialism and thereby advance the theory?

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Abstract

This article examines socialism as a historical phenomenon and outlines the main questions necessary for its theoretical clarification. Its focus is on the nature of proletarian power, the conditions of its emergence, the role of planning, the limits of historical socialist systems, and the difference between socialism, anticapitalism, and capitalism. The article argues that resolving these questions is necessary for a more scientific understanding of socialism, especially in light of the historical experiences of the Soviet Union and China.

Keywords: socialism; anticapitalism; dictatorship of the proletariat; economic planning; comparative economic systems; Soviet Union; China; revolutionary transition

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Introduction

Marxist communists often speak in practical terms about realizing a theoretically pre-formed vision of what they are building and what it is meant to achieve. For instance, they often treat the *Critique of the Gotha Program* as a model of what socialism should be and try to build precisely that.

Yet reality turns out differently. Instead of constructing what theory seemed to prescribe, they produce something that contradicts that theoretical ideal, and this contradiction remains unresolved to this day. To address it, we must investigate ourselves. We need to step aside, as it were, and study actual socialism as it exists, without falling into utopianism.

Question 1

What exactly is the dictatorship of the proletariat?

What does the phenomenon represent when the proletariat in its totality takes power, which we call the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat?

We must seek the answer not by falling into propaganda, but by looking to science. I am not trying to say that propaganda lies. No, I am merely saying that it does not provide a scientific answer.

Here, it is generally necessary to understand that we are interested not only in what the dictatorship of the proletariat is, but also in what socialism ultimately represents. This is because in communist discourse, the primary concept has always been the dictatorship of the proletariat. Obviously, if one consistently adheres to Marxism on this specific issue, socialism by its very nature is the dictatorship of the proletariat and not something else. That is, if the

capitalists lose power, this power must be acquired not by some new analogue of capitalists, but by a different class—the proletariat.

But a problem immediately arises here. It is not enough to simply say that the proletariat consists of workers who have gathered together and are managing the state. It is unclear what exactly was meant by this. Obviously, in reality, this cannot literally mean that millions of workers are simply sitting and directly managing everything. Therefore, this question must be answered not in a direct and literal sense, but differently: we must understand how the interests, needs, and existential logic of the proletariat as a collective class are expressed.

This is important because even if we look at the West and capitalists, for the most part, capitalists do not directly manage anything either. They influence, they own, and they move capital from one firm to another, and through this, the firms, institutions, and the system as a whole express their interests. That is, the point is not that the capitalist personally sits everywhere and commands everyone, but that the system is structured in such a way that their interest is reproduced and executed through it. Essentially, the same thing must be understood regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat. Not in the sense of the direct and literal participation of everyone, but in the sense of how the interests of the aggregate proletariat are expressed.

That is exactly why the question must be posed correctly and reconsidered. We should not ask bluntly whether the proletariat is sitting and managing; we must ask how exactly its interest is expressed, through what forms, through what mechanisms, and according to what laws all this exists at all. That is, we need to understand what exactly the dictatorship of the proletariat represents, what its laws are, how it operates, and what it consists of as a real phenomenon.

And from this arises the next question: what, in the end, is socialism? If capitalism is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat, then in this sense they indeed act as forms correlated with one another. But even if this is so, we must still separately ask what socialism is as a phenomenon, what its own laws are, how it functions, what exactly it represents, and for what purpose it exists. Here, we should be interested not only in the formula but also in the very logic of its real existence.

Question 2

Under what conditions can the proletariat take power?

That is, the question now is not about what it is, but generally when it can happen. Can power be taken at any moment, or only according to Marx's blueprints "at the moment of capitalism's end"? Until we understand when and where, we will not be able to reproduce this without relying on 20th-century intuition.

What is meant here is the following. In history, we have already seen moments when the proletariat did indeed take power. Therefore, we need to study the conditions under which the proletariat not only can take power but also begins to want to do so. Because when Marxists work theoretically, they are constantly engaged in propaganda, trying to persuade, lead forward, and so on. But the world must be viewed as a battlefield of various ideologies. It is a constant confrontation. And we ourselves are merely one side of this struggle, one form of influence on the proletariat.

Therefore, the question here is: What does the proletariat actually want? When exactly does it want it? And can we do anything about it? If, for example, the proletariat in the West does not want a revolution, can we hypothetically force it to want one? And is it even correct

to pose the question this way? Or perhaps no one can be forced, and we can only follow the movement of the proletariat itself, the current in which it is actually moving. In that case, we need to understand where and under what conditions the specific current arises in which the proletariat will desire a revolution and, accordingly, will desire us, the Marxists.

The question can even be framed in capitalist terms: where can a demand for us arise, how does it manifest itself, and what compels the proletariat to desire precisely the kind of force that will become its expression, its face, its vanguard? It is exactly then that the proletariat itself will become what we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In reality, it doesn't happen that you are simply a Marxist, possessing a certain truth or theory, and therefore the proletariat automatically must follow you. Moreover, the theory itself should not remain stagnant. If a theory freezes in time, it can no longer be the thing the proletariat should follow. Theory can become outdated. Therefore, one must follow not the theory as something immovable but the proletariat itself. It is the proletariat that moves forward, and the theory must be able to adapt to it.

This raises another important question: How can we adapt to the modern current of the proletariat, find it, and understand where it is heading, where it will emerge, and where it will seize power?

This directly depends on conditions. That is, we need to understand exactly how these conditions are formed: through crises, wars, collapses, upheavals, and the like. To do this, of course, we must study the experience of the Soviet Union and China to see exactly how everything was formed there, what exactly happened, how it happened, and why it happened that way.

And then another question arises: has anything similar happened since them, and will something similar happen in the future? For instance, one could ask whether revolutions of a different kind—not fully socialist like the Soviet or Chinese ones, but more partial, more local national liberation movements—were also expressions of such a demand. Were they not also a form of demand from the proletariat, only not in such a massive and pure form, but in a more pinpointed way, conditioned by specific historical circumstances?

The question can then be broadened further: can there exist not only a demand specifically for socialism in its full form but also a broader demand—anticapitalist, liberation-oriented, anticolonial, and so on? That is, can Marxists come to power even where the demand exists not for pure socialism, but in a broader, anticapitalist form? This also needs to be investigated.

In the 20th century, all this very often happened intuitively. Theoretically, they said one thing, but practically they did another. But this is exactly what we must learn from. We need to understand what the meaning of this intuition was, turn it into theory, and learn to recognize such moments in advance so that later, when a new historical upsurge arises, it can be utilized. We need to understand where, when, and how this happens.

Question 3

How can all this be organized? What does it represent? What might its limitations be? And how should we work with them?

And next: if everything can be organized through a plan, what does this plan represent?

The next question is how all this can generally be organized, what it represents, and what limitations it might have. Here, we are talking about the form of organization of the proletariat as an authority and as a society. If we are talking about socialism, about the dictatorship of the proletariat, we are thereby talking about the formation of a specific society that must not

merely exist politically but also produce, reproduce itself, expand, and develop. This means the question of the mode of production inevitably arises here—how exactly all this is structured in reality.

That is precisely why this question directly concerns the plan. Everyone more or less understands that ultimately it is about a plan, but that is not enough. It is not enough to simply say that socialism is organized through a plan. We need to understand exactly how this plan is expressed in reality, how it is formed, what parts it consists of, and how it is structured overall. Here, we should be interested in things like commanding heights, macromanagement, micromanagement, general planning, and the entire structural organization as a whole. This is exactly what it is about: not the plan as an abstract formula, but how it exists historically and practically.

But this question also immediately touches upon limitations. For example, the Soviet Union collapsed. This means some limitation existed, and it must be studied. We need to understand what the limitations of the historical forms of socialism were. At the same time, it would be incorrect to frame the question as if the dictatorship of the proletariat itself as a power was limited. That is not the important part; what matters is what that power rests upon. And it rests, of course, on production. If production ceases to reproduce the system, if the plan ceases to cope, then along with this, the power itself begins to be lost.

Therefore, the question must be posed differently. If the Soviet Union collapsed, it is important to understand not simply how its power was structured in a formal political sense but what its plan represented, its concrete historical expression, how exactly all this was organized, what limitations it had, and how precisely these limitations led to the collapse. This is what is meant by limitations here.

We must look at China in exactly the same way, even though it, for example, has not collapsed yet. Limitations exist there too; they simply manifest differently. And we are talking not only about the limit of the entire system as a whole but also about concrete forms of limitations. For example, in the case of the Soviet Union, we need to understand what a “deficit” is and how it was connected to the structure of the Soviet economy. This is also a limitation, and it must be investigated as a concrete property of that form of organization. Similarly, in the case of China, we need to understand what limitations are generated by its own form, such as the market and the inequality associated with it. Why does this arise, how is it connected to the structure of the Chinese economy, and what exactly does this mean for the system itself?

The point of this question is to understand how socialism is organized in reality as a form of production and management, what it consists of, how it works, and what limits and restrictions are discovered in its concrete historical expressions.

Question 4

What is our real objective (goal-setting)?

When, under certain conditions, the proletariat seizes power and builds a conditional plan, what exactly does it maximize?

The next question we are addressing is highly important because it is connected to the first three questions and, in a sense, is their consequence. If we understand what the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism are, if we understand under what conditions the proletariat wants and can come to power, and if we understand how all this is formed through the plan and organization, then we can ask the following question: What does all this ultimately do? For

what sake does it exist? What exactly is it pursuing? In other words, what is its actual objective (goal setting)?

It is important to state upfront that this objective should not be understood as something overly complex. It is not an entire system of answers or an infinitely complicated scheme. On the contrary, it should be a short answer, a single expression or sentence that answers the question: What exactly does socialism ultimately do? For what sake does it exist? What exactly is it pursuing overall?

This question can be answered in various ways. For example, one could say that socialism exists to raise the standard of living of the proletariat and that its purpose lies precisely in this. But such an answer is insufficient. We cannot say that the purpose of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat consists simply in the planned elevation of the living standards of proletarians. If that were the case, we could simply maximize current welfare right now, increase bread production, increase current consumption, and stop there. But then the system would not develop itself, would not improve its own foundations, could not compete with capitalism, and could not withstand external pressure, for example, from the West, as happened in the case of the Soviet Union and China.

In other words, we can no longer say that socialism exists in a vacuum and exists solely for the sake of pure welfare growth. I am not denying that welfare growth is one of its tasks. But the entire objective cannot be reduced to welfare alone. Because the central objective must be something that allows the system to reproduce itself, rather than something that allows it to exhaust itself as quickly as possible.

Another possible answer could be, for example, that socialism exists for the sake of communism. But here too, the question is not so simple. So far, communism is mostly understood as slogans. I am not saying that the movement toward it is absent. But communism cannot simply be taken and named as the direct objective of socialism in the sense that it is exactly what socialism maximizes for its own reproduction.

This is why the necessity arises to truly figure out what exactly the objective of socialism is. What exactly does it do in reality? What exactly does it seek to maximize? For what sake does it reproduce itself as a system? And it is important to ask this question also because later it can be compared with capitalism: what is the objective of capitalism, and what is the objective of socialism? Perhaps it is precisely here that one of the main forms of their difference will be discovered.

Question 5

What exactly does the seizure of power look like?

What precisely must be seized for us to be able to say that power has definitively been taken?

Now the question becomes more practical. Although all the previous questions were also practical, here practicality steps forward in a literal sense. We need to look at history, at the Soviet Union and China, and understand what exactly needs to be done in reality. What exactly must the proletariat, led by its vanguard, accomplish? What exactly must it seize so that we can say with certainty, "Here, proletarian power has truly been established"?

And here another important question immediately arises: is it even possible to seize power completely? For example, if a small country seizes power and a dictatorship of the proletariat is truly established within it, will this power be fully sovereign, or will such a country still remain dependent on other countries and external forces? That is, one can do a great deal internally, but externally, dependence may still persist. Therefore, the question is how to understand

what exactly must be seized in a certain territory—which specific levers, institutions, economic foundations, production, commanding heights, and so on—to be able to say that power has truly been captured.

We need to look at what exactly we are capturing, how we are doing it, and how all this is organized as a seizure of power. We need to understand under what conditions one can truly say that power has not just been formally taken but genuinely seized and is sovereign. And conversely, we need to understand when power seems to be captured but is not fully sovereign, when it remains limited or dependent.

This is especially important because it is one thing to look at the Soviet Union or China, where we have examples of truly large and sovereign forms. But if we look at other socialisms that existed in history, very often they were non-sovereign: they depended either on the West or on other socialist countries, for example, on the Soviet Union. Therefore, here we must clearly distinguish the moment when power is truly captured by the proletariat and the moment when it is not yet sovereign in the full sense.

That is exactly why this question is so important. We need to understand what it looks like in the end. Of course, it is connected to the previous questions, and in answering it, we inevitably answer some of the others, because they are all interconnected. But this question is still more practical in a direct sense. Because if we are thinking about seizing power at all, we need to understand exactly how it is done, what exactly must end up in our hands, which specific reins of control must be brought under authority, and whether it is possible to take them completely to truly say, “Here we have absolute, captured, sovereign power.”

Question 6

What is the difference between the plan, anticapitalism (as a general trend), and socialism, and how do they relate to each other?

I specifically titled the article using “anticapitalism” and “socialism” to raise another important question. In history, we often looked not only at socialism as such but also at anticapitalism as a broader movement. Marxists for the most part have always associated themselves specifically with socialism. But truthfully, many anticolonial movements of the past can also be viewed as anticapitalist, and in a certain sense, as connected to the future of the proletariat, even if outwardly they did not look purely socialist and even if they mostly preserved capitalist forms. That is exactly why this question is crucial: we need to look at history more broadly, not just through two countries or only through countries with a Soviet-type economy.

The question is then framed as follows. On the one hand, we have socialism as a socialist Marxist communist movement. The anti-capitalist movement is broader and directed the same way, but not always in the same form. In history, socialism very often acted precisely as the center of the aggregate anticapitalist movement. A communist country often became the center of a broader anticapitalist movement, which for the most part formed precisely on the periphery. This is precisely why it is so important not to get confused and to understand how all this correlates.

This raises the question: are the Soviet Union and China, for example, specifically socialist, while other, smaller countries are mostly part of a broader anticapitalist movement connected to the socialist center and acting as its continuation in one sense or another? Perhaps not literally, but in a more general historical sense. However, such countries might not be socialism in the strict sense, but rather anticapitalism in a broader meaning.

However, it may ultimately turn out that there is no rigid difference between anticapitalism and socialism and that they are perhaps the same movement, simply taking different forms. Perhaps there are centers and non-centers, and the differences in the form of manifestation depend precisely on the context. But this is precisely what needs to be investigated. We need to understand what the periphery is, what anticapitalism is, what socialism is, how they are similar, how they are different, and whether there is a real difference between them. Or perhaps they essentially coincide and differ only in specific conditions and forms of manifestation.

Connected to these issues is the question of power in anticapitalist countries. For example, if a dictator seizes power in a certain country, as Western propaganda often presents it, but this regime is not communist—though it, let's say, nationalizes oil or implements other measures of this kind—can such a country be considered socialist? Or is it anticapitalist, but not socialist? Can we say it exists within the general anticapitalist field? All of this also requires separate investigation.

And here, of course, it will ultimately be useful to definitively distinguish the plan from socialism. We have already approached this throughout the article, but at the end, it might be necessary to specifically compare the plan and socialism. Because it is precisely here, perhaps, that some of the solutions to mysteries people usually fail to understand are hidden.

Question 7

What ultimately is socialism compared to non-socialism, and how exactly does it differ?

And lastly, this is a broader, concluding question. Ultimately, we need to compare socialism as a whole with non-socialism and understand how exactly it differs. This is also connected to the previous comparison, where we contrasted socialism and anticapitalism, but now the comparison must be made directly with capitalism itself.

We need to understand how, in the end, socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and everything connected to it differ from capitalism. This, I think, will be the shortest question because here we are already making the final comparison. If by this point we have understood what socialism is, how the seizure of power happens, how all this is organized, and what its objective and forms are, then we can finally make a general comparison and thus definitively determine what real, historical socialism is.

We need to understand when the Soviet Union was built, when China was built, and what exactly was ultimately built in relation to other systems. Was it something truly different? In theory, we should come to the conclusion that it was something else, but this still needs to be proven through comparison. We need to contrast socialism with the West, with capitalism, with its objectives, its principles, and how it is structured overall, to show that socialism indeed differs from capitalism and represents a different system.

In conclusion, the following deduction can be made. If we were to truly study all these questions and answer them, then we could advance the theory, better understand the world, better utilize the theory itself, and ultimately build something greater. That is, to arrive at something greater not only in the sense of understanding, but also in the sense of realization. This is precisely why all these questions must be raised, investigated, and resolved.

For clarity, I place these questions on a separate closing page so that they stand apart from the preceding discussion and can be read as a condensed research agenda.



CLOSING PAGE

Concluding Research Questions

A distilled agenda for the theoretical clarification of socialism.

The preceding discussion leads to a final set of questions that condense the article's full argument into a single research agenda. Set apart on this last page, they mark a deliberate transition from exposition to further theoretical work.

Q1. What does the dictatorship of the proletariat genuinely represent, and what does historical or actual socialism ultimately represent?

Q2. Under what conditions can the proletariat take power? How are these conditions formed? And is it possible—and if so, how—to predict and utilize them?

Q3. What exactly does the seizure of power mean?

Q4. What is the real objective of socialism or the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Q5. How can all this be organized, and what does it represent?

Q6. What limitations might this have, and how should we deal with them?

Q7. If all this can be organized through a plan, what exactly does the plan represent?

Q8. What is the difference between the plan, anticapitalism as a general trend, and socialism, and how do they relate to each other?

Q9. What ultimately is socialism compared to non-socialism, and how exactly does it differ?

These questions summarize the article's final horizon and intentionally remain isolated as the document's concluding point of orientation.