

Reflections on the Rise and Development of Socialism

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Abstract: *Fratricidal disputes between different schools and socialist groups provide ample evidence that one man's socialism is heresy to another, and that a dissenting comrade is seen as more worthy of hatred than the common enemy. Giving up, due to numerous difficulties, the possibility of giving a definition of socialism or recalling elements that often appear under socialism, one wonders, what socialism is not.*

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Lawyer and historian of political and legal doctrines Andrzej Sylwestrzak emphasizes the fact that: *“The final disintegration of the third state, which took place in the first half of the nineteenth century, brought about to the emergence of two opposing social classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The events of the Spring of Nations made the working class more aware of the power and the historical tasks that it would have to accomplish in the future. A little later, the victory of the Paris Commune became a symbol as the first attempt by the proletariat to seize power. Against this background, the founders of socialism and communism, relying on the methodology of historical materialism, interpreted the role and epochal tasks of the proletariat in transforming socio - political relations [. . .]”¹.*

Socialism as a concept, according to the historian of political thought Jacek Bartyzel, was born in the 1830s in the articles by: Robert Owen in the "Coorporative Magazine" (1827) and Pierre Leroux in the magazine *Globe*” (1832)². This etymology is developed by James C. Docherty and Peter Lamb, who maintain that derived from the Latin word *socius* (friend, ally), the socialist term in the English "Cooperative Magazine" was used as a synonym for the term communist, and in the French "Globe" as *socialisme* he created the opposite of *individualisme* or *individualism*³.

Emile Durkheim wrote that socialism is *“a plan for the reconstruction of societies, a program for collective life that does not exist yet or which is dreamed of and proposed to people as worthy of their liking. It's perfect. It focuses much less on what it is or was than on what it should be [. . .]”⁴.*

The English economist Alexander Gray, in his publication *The Socialist Tradition: Moses to Lenin* from 1946, argued that the roots of socialism can be traced already in Plato's *Republic*, and certainly in Thomas Moore's *Utopia*.⁵ He expressed his conviction that it is easier to say who the "great socialists" are, than to give a definition of socialism that unites all its representatives and excludes its opponents⁶. Fratricidal disputes between different schools and socialist groups provide, as Gray has shown, ample evidence that one man's socialism is heresy to another, and that a dissenting comrade is seen as more worthy of hatred than the common enemy. Giving up, due to numerous difficulties, the possibility of giving a definition of socialism or recalling elements that often appear under socialism, one wonders, according to Gray, what socialism is not⁷.

This ideology is often considered as an opposition to individualism, its unjustified contrast, as the basis of individualism is the belief that each individual cares for himself/herself, he/she is a judge, adviser and teacher for himself/ herself⁸. British policy theorist Bernard Crick took the position in agreement with which the origins of socialism should not be sought in antiquity or the Middle Ages, for in these epochs there was no such scale of explosion of capitalist activity and industrialization that first appeared in Western Europe and then spread to other parts of the world after 1800⁹. Until the 1820s and 1830s, some critics of the new economic order, according to political scientists - James C. Docherty and Peter Lamb - began to grow in strength and confidence, united in a moral opposition to capitalism as a political and economic system. They opposed its pressure competition as opposed to cooperation, the benefits it gave to individuals by contrasting them with society, and its social outcomes – including poverty, unemployment, low wages, inequality, and a lack of social and economic protection. These fears were to become long - standing attributes of social thought and practice¹⁰.

¹A. Sylwestrzak, *Historia doktryn politycznych i prawnych*, Wolters Kluwer, Warszawa 2015, p. 284.

²J. Bartyzel, *Socjalizm*, [in:] Official website of the Organization of the Polish Monarchists <http://www.legitymizm.org/ebp-socjalizm>

³J.C. Docherty, P. Lamb, *Historical Dictionary of Socialism*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham-Toronto- Oxford 2006 p.1.

⁴E. Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon*, Routledge, London 2009.

Access to the publication <https://books.google.pl/books?id=MrWLAGAAQBAJ&pg=PT42&dq=SOCIALISM+DEFINITION&hl=pl&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjW1d-20svbAhURL1AKHSq8BbQ4ChDoAQg0MAI#v=onepage&q=SOCIALISM%20DEFINITION&f=false>

⁵J.C. Docherty, P. Lamb, op. cit., p.3.

⁶A. Gray, *The Socialist Tradition, Moses to Lenin*, Ludwig van Mises Institute, Colchester- London- Eton 1946, p.487.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹J.C. Docherty, P. Lamb, op.cit., p. 3.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

The dominant form of socialism, according to Docherty and Lamb, during the first half of the 19th century was utopian socialism. If society could not be changed, the only solution was to establish model communities within or outside of society, as exemplified by social groups based on the ideas of Robert Owen and Charles Fourier, founded in the USA¹¹. Although in the Communist Manifesto of 1848, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels expressed their criticism of utopian socialism as impractical and ignoring the key flaws in capitalist society, interest in socialist communities lasted until the 1930s. Belief in utopia as a form of secular millennialism remained a feature of socialism and then communism. The vision of a better society, widely disseminated from 1880 to 1914, was enormously strong in sustaining support for socialism¹².

Socialism has changed, as Docherty and Lamb illustrate, as it grew under various conditions in Western Europe¹³. France and Great Britain were considered to be the twin schools of socialist ideas before 1850. Socialism was strongly influenced by the individual political traditions of these two countries as well as the industrialization process taking place in them¹⁴. France, much more than Great Britain, developed its traditions of political change through the revolutions: the June Days of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871. In Great Britain, there was a practice of fragmentary reforms¹⁵. One of the answers to the problems caused by industrial capitalism was Christian socialism, although its influence weakened after 1900, it is worth noting its later participation in shaping the views of British (including R. H. Tawney) and American (e. g. Norman Thomas) socialists. His opposition to individual capitalism was also emphasized by Henri Saint - Simon (1760 - 1825), who emphasized the failure of the capitalist system and its failure to reward truly productive members of society¹⁶. In 1840, the French socialist Louis Blanc saw the potential to use government to implement socialist ideas, a different position - opposition to the need for government - was initiated, also in 1840, by Pierre - Joseph Proudhon¹⁷.

German sociologist and economist Werner Sombart argued that: "All theoretical attempts to show the proletariat the purpose of its efforts to summon it, to start the fight, to organize a fight, to show the path he must march to achieve success - that is all we mean by modern socialism and all practical trials, to make these ideas come true, we call it the Social Movement. Socialism and the Social Movement are therefore two sides of the same phenomenon. Their mutual relationship is like a union of thought and action, of the soul and bodies [. . .]"¹⁸.

The repressions that emerged in continental Europe after the fall of the revolution of 1848, according to Docherty and Lamb, not only persecuted socialism for the next decades,

but also exposed its weaknesses¹⁹. With the exception of Pierre - Joseph Proudhon, all intellectuals now regarded as precursors of socialism before 1860 were middle class. Blanc and Proudhon were among the few to have had political experience²⁰.

Political economist Jesus Huerta de Soto points out that socialism has traditionally been defined as a system of social organization based on state ownership of the means of production²¹. The explanation, as shown by Huerta de Soto, has long been widely accepted for political and historical reasons, but is unsatisfactory. It has a static nature since it has been formulated in terms of the existence or non - existence of a specific legal institution (property rights) in connection with a specific economic category (means of production)²². Applying this theory required a prior explanation of property rights and their economic implications. Moreover, the debate over the impossibility of socialism revealed that the various scientists involved could not communicate with each other because of the separate meanings that the concept of property rights had for them²³. The traditional definition seemed to rule out interventionism and economic regulation which, while not requiring the complete nationalization of the means of production, produced uncoordinated, qualitatively similar results²⁴. More adequate, according to Huertade Soto, seems to be the definition according to which socialism is any organized system of institutional aggression against entrepreneurship and human action²⁵.

Włodzimierz Lenin, commenting on the position of the socialists on wars, wrote that: "*Socialists have always condemned wars between nations as barbaric and bestial. But our attitude to war is fundamentally different from that of the bourgeois pacifists (supporters and heralds of peace) and anarchists. We differ from the first in that we understand the inevitable connection of wars with class struggle within the country, we understand the impossibility of liquidating wars without liquidating classes and building socialism, and by fully recognizing the rightness, progressiveness and necessity of civil wars, i. e. wars of the oppressed against the oppressive, slaves against slave owners, serfs against landlords, wage workers against the bourgeoisie. We Marxists differ from both pacifists and anarchists in that we recognize the necessity of a historical (from the point of view of Marx's dialectical materialism) analysis of every war separately [...]*"²⁶.

Indian political theorist and member of the British House of Lords Bhikhu Parekh emphasizes the fact that all types of socialism contain four principles: recognition of people's

¹⁹ J.C. Docherty, P. Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ J. Huerta de Soto, *Socialism, Economic Calculation and Entrepreneurship*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham-Northampton 2010, p.84.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 85.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 85.

²⁶ W. Lenin, *Socjalizm a wojna. Stosunek SDPRR do wojny*, [in:] Official website of the Marxist Internet Archive <https://www.marxists.org/polski/lenin/1915/socjalizm-a-wojna.htm>

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² *Ibidem*, p.4.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ C.R. Fay, *Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2014, p.66.

socialization, acceptance of social responsibility, promotion of cooperation in economic life and the idea of planning²⁷.

Contemporary discourses on socialism, according to the British economist Maurice Dobb, tend to shift the focus of the term's explanation from property to social equality²⁸. Treating the essence of the socialist economy as other than the social ownership of the means of production would represent, according to Dobb, a specific violation of the tradition of socialist thought, inherited over the centuries, which inspired attempts to create a socialist society typical of the 20th century. The emphasis on social property was not only characteristic of for the nineteenth – century fathers - the founders of socialism as a doctrine and social movement, including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, but it was also the most commonly accepted accent for successive scientists dealing with this ideology²⁹. Sociologist and economist Carl Landauer believed that: "We should not find a more satisfactory definition of socialism than this: Socialism is a system of communal (or social) ownership of the means of production designed to make the distribution of income, wealth, opportunity and economic power as equal as only possible [...]"³⁰. German economist and sociologist Werner Sombart believed that: "all socialist writers agree that there will be no private ownership of property under the new order or, if it already exists, it will be very limited. Private property as it functions today will, in the Socialist State, be transformed into universal or communist property (without the private, capitalist class, exploiters [...]"³¹.

Socialism can be considered, according to the political scientist Daniel F. Busky, as a movement for social ownership and control of the economy³². The most important political ideologies included in the socialist family include, inter alia³³:

- a) Utopian socialism - assuming the existence of perfect societies and / or attempts to create this type of community through the means of a socially owned economy
- b) Social anarchism - emphasizing the possibility of the existence of a stateless form of socialism, within it we can distinguish:
 - Mutualism - brought to life by the French anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon, presenting a vision of the abolition of the state and the transfer of ownership and supervision over factories to workers in the form of producer cooperation. Wages would be retained in the form of checks paid to employees by people's banks, according to the number of hours worked.
 - Under this system, private property would be maintained, collective anarchism - expressed the conviction that the state should be abolished and all

forms of private property. All property would remain in the hands of the labor collectives,

- Anarcho - communism - constituted the free distribution of goods and services, produced and given away for free, without any payment,
 - Anarcho - syndicalism, in which labor unions would own and oversee industry in the absence of the state,
 - Guild socialism - the English school of socialism, transferring ownership of production to workers' guilds,
- c) Democratic socialism - combining the idea of a liberal - democratic government with social ownership and control of the economy.

Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter portrayed socialism as a system in which: "control over the means of production and over production itself is sanctioned by the central government, and the economic affairs of society belong to the public sphere, not the private [...]"³⁴.

Jesus Huerta de So to see socialism in several categories. In the political sphere, socialism, in his opinion, without any doubts, is heading towards totalitarianism, since systematic coercion tends to spread in every social nook and cranny, while shedding freedom and personal responsibility.³⁵ In material terms, socialism makes it very difficult to produce goods and services, and thus it hinders economic development. In culture, socialism chains creativity by preventing the development and learning of new patterns of behavior and interfering with discoveries and introducing innovations³⁶. On the basis of science, socialism is an intellectual error, stemming from the belief that the human mind has much greater faculties than those actually possessed, and that it is therefore possible to obtain the information necessary for the development of society through coercion. In short, as Huerta de Soto believes, socialism constitutes a typical anti - human and anti - social activity since it has resisted on systematic compulsion against the most personal characteristic of human nature: the ability to act freely and creatively.³⁷

Jesus Huerta de Soto also distinguishes several types of socialism³⁸:

- Real socialism - defined by a significant degree of application of institutionalized aggression against individual human actions and the fact that this aggression is used in attempts to block the free implementation of entrepreneurship with respect for economic goods of a higher order or material factors of production,
- Democratic socialism - setting itself the goals of redistributing income and wealth and developing the functioning of society. This system tends to build the illusion that since its primary goal is a "democratic" ideal and institutional aggression is carried out by

²⁷B. Parekh, *Introduction*, [in:] Idem (ed.), *The Concept of Socialism*, Holmes and Meier Publishers, London 1975, p.10-11.

²⁸M.Dobb, *Welfare Economics and the Economics of Socialism: Towards a Commonsense Critique*, CUP Archive, Cambridge 1975, p.123.

²⁹Ibidem, p.123-124.

³⁰Ibidem, p.124.

³¹Ibidem.

³²D.F. Busky, *Democratic Socialism: A Global Survey*, Greenwood Publishing Group, London 2000, p.2.

³³Ibidem, p. 2-8.

³⁴M. Gilmartin, *Socialism*, [in:] C. Gallaher, C.T. Dahlman, M. Gilmartin, A. Mountz, P. Shirlow (ed.), *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, SAGE, Los Angeles- London- New Delhi- Singapore-Washington 2009, p.144.

³⁵J. Huerta de Soto, op. cit., p.76.

³⁶Ibidem, p. 76-77.

³⁷Ibidem, p.77.

³⁸Ibidem, p.77-83

democratically elected "representatives", this type of use of force does not cause any problems,

- Conservative or right - wing socialism - employing institutional aggression to maintain the social status quo and the privileges of certain people or social groups. It is essential for this type of socialism to maintain the social order as it is today, unchanged, while opposing the free enterprise and creative activity of individuals. It plays a big role also market paternalism -an attempt to freeze human behavior by assigning them the role of consumers or producers that a conservative regulatory agency deems appropriate,
- Scientific socialism - legitimizing all forms of socialism from a scientific point of view, tending to occur in the company of both democratic socialism and the enlightened typical despotism for right - wing socialism. It comes from the intellectual tradition of constructivist rationalism, according to which the intellect of intellectuals is capable of anything, and in particular, stands for the human, thoughtful, creation or invention of all social institutions,
- Christian socialism - occurs when certain effects of the social process are judged unfavorably from a moral point of view and the systematic, institutional use of coercion to change such unfair situations is justified,
- Syndicalist socialism - building, through the systematic and institutional application of coercion, a society in which workers have exclusive means of production.

Socialism before 1860 was limited, according to the American political scientist Paul D'Amato, to a mixed, educated group of middle – class critics of capitalism³⁹. Their ideas were sometimes complex and contradictory, needing refinement and coherence. A big role in meeting these needs played Karol Marks, giving the emerging socialist movement an essential theory of society in line with the terminology of socialist ideology and a meaningful version of socialist historical theory. Marx's works showed the socialists where their postulates came from, at what point was their movement and where it could be⁴⁰.

According to Paul D'Amato, Karl Marx and Fryderyk Engels showed that the desire and vision of another world, represented by utopian socialism, are not sufficient⁴¹. In their opinion, some utopians, by criticizing existing social relations and proposing to develop social plans for a better society, criticized what is and what is what should be. For Marx and Engels, however, there must be something that connects the future with the present⁴². Material conditions and social actors must function to make change possible and necessary for society to move forward⁴³.

Marx and Engels emphasized that: "*communism is not an ideal for us to which reality will have to adapt. It is a real movement that does away with the present state of affairs [. . .]*", D'Amato notes that the starting point for the

deliberations of Marx and Engels is not "*what people say, imagine or invent to reach other people [. . .]*"⁴⁴. The mentioned thinkers explain that: "*We start from real, active people and, based on the process of their lives, we show the development of ideological reflections and the echoes of this process [. . .]*"⁴⁵. It was not that one cannot have ideas about freedom before the conditions for their realization exist, or that there is a one - to - one mechanical relationship between human ideas and the material conditions of their lives. However, one cannot be liberated unless one is able to get enough food and drink, housing and clothes in sufficient quantity and quality. Liberation, according to Marx and Engels, is a historical act, not a mental act⁴⁶.

For Marx and Engels, socialism should therefore, according to Amato, be more than just an idea⁴⁷. There must be material and social forces at work, built within capitalism, that have the strength to make socialism a reality. If there is not enough food for all, equality in this situation means slow death for everyone. The revolutionary change is not the result of the work of a few social engineers to change society, but the action of the masses⁴⁸.

Marx and Engels, according to Amato, were able to go beyond the views of utopians for several reasons⁴⁹. As other socialists saw the enormous rise in wealth that emerged with the rise of industrial capitalism, it carried the unfulfilled promise of a need – free world. However, they also witnessed labor strikes in Germany, Great Britain and France⁵⁰. The working class ceased to be merely a "suffering class" for them and stood before them as an active activist for its own liberation - a class whose own emancipation could act as the basis for freedom for all⁵¹.

The discovery of the working class was, Amato assumes, a major breakthrough because it saw a social power as capable of transforming society through its own actions⁵². Prior to this discovery, there were two views of radical social change that saw groups of exploited people as a passive element that could help an enlightened minority transform society. Marx and Engels originally shared these views, but broke with them under the influence of their observations and experiences of the class struggle⁵³.

American political scientist Donald Eugene Smith claimed that: "*when we read the history of the Soviet Union, we usually perceive the emphasized terror of Joseph Stalin and the great red threat that casts its shadow over the entire world. But in the long run, the more important thing is the collapse of socialism. At the moment when the green light was turned on for socialism, i. e. a chance to show what could be done without the slightest opposition, the creature fell down on its feet, falling on its face. The 70 years of the*

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ Ibidem.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p.13-14.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Ibidem.

⁵² Ibidem.

⁵³ Ibidem.

³⁹P.D. Amato, *The Meaning of Marxism*, Haymarket Books, Chicago 2006, p.4-5.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p.4-5.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p.13.

⁴² Ibidem.

⁴³ Ibidem.

USSR have finally proved that socialism is an idea whose time will never come, because it cannot create the incentives to make this system viable. Proof of this is the forgotten Soviet Union [...]”⁵⁴.

Economist Alan Abouchar points out that two people rarely think about the same, when they refer to communism or socialism⁵⁵. To confirm this opinion, he indicated that in the mid - 1970s, in an article of an important international journal, there was information that the government of President Salvador Allende in Chile was socialist, not communist. The reaction of a person thinking about socialism and communism in the context of the Soviet Union would be to say that "This is little consolation. The USSR is also a socialist rather than a communist government, but it poses a paramilitary threat [...]”⁵⁶. On the other hand, the likely response to this message from a Western thinker would be, "Well, then Allende can't be that bad. After all, Great Britain also has a socialist government [...] ". In Abouchar's opinion, however, it should not be forgotten that the attempts by CIA agents to destabilize the socialist government in British Columbia in the mid - 1950s The 1970s suggested that some Western officials tended to confuse even mildly socialist forms of organization, essential in a capitalist context with the socialist style of the Soviet Union⁵⁷. The distinction between socialism and capitalism can be made, according to Abouchar, on the basis of various criteria, including the means of production.⁵⁸ In a socialist society the means of production are at the disposal of the state, while in the capitalist world they are owned by private persons. Unfortunately, there are exceptions to this rule⁵⁹. First, in socialist countries, such as the Soviet Union, many small traders had their means of production, and the cooperating farmers had their tools. Also among the capitalist nations of the West there are cases where the state owned a small share of the means of production, as was the case in France, Brazil or Mexico⁶⁰.

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⁵⁴D. Smith, *Socjalizm: refleksje na temat upadku*, [in:] Officialwebsite of the Polish- American Foundation of Education and Economic Development: <http://www.pafere.org/2018/01/23/biblioteka-wolnorynkowa/donald-g-smith/smith-socjalizm-refleksje-na-temat-upadku/>

⁵⁵A. Abouchar, *Economic Evaluation of Soviet Socialism: Pergamon Policy Studies*, Elsevier, Madrid 2015, p.1.

⁵⁶ Ibidem.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p.1-2.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p.2.

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