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## **HISTORY AND DANGER OF SOCIALISM: RETURN TO TRIBALISM**

### **Сажетак**

*Задатак овог рада јесте да представи нешто попут кратке историјске рекапитулације и подсетника пројекта социјализма као и кључних идеја које стоје у позадини ове, за велики број људи, веома атрактивне идеологије. По узору на Мареја Родбарда, али у другачијем контексту и уз помоћ теоријског апарата који је изградио Имануел Кант, у раду се излаже теза да не постоје добре идеје које не функционишу у пракси јер по дефиницији онога што представља валидно одређење добре идеје тако нешто није могуће. На крају рада ће се, надам се, видети зашто не постоје добре идеје које не функционишу и то захваљујући управо искуству пројекта социјализма као и то зашто је социјализам у битном смислу једна предмодерна политичка теорија и идеологија.*

*Кључне речи: социјализам, марксизам, либерализам, социјална правда, једнакост, позитивна и негативна слобода, трибализам*

**T**here is a very popular belief that there are number of good or true ideas that have bad luck when it comes to realization. Many ordinary people as well as social scientists are thinking that this is the case with the idea of socialism. In fact, a great number of socialist themselves are also thinking the same and we should not be surprised about this, because socialism is nothing more than a sort of philosophy of complaining. However, we have to enter in the realm of this idea in order to check the thesis from the beginning. It is necessary to explain why so many people are thinking that socialism is something that is inherently good, that

involves some very valuable characteristics. This is curious especially if we have in mind a whole specter of historical evidences, disasters, killings and number of other events and facts that are showing us the enormous damage that this ideology has caused.

In order to understand what socialism is and what is so dangerous about it, it is of utmost importance to emphasize against whom socialism has always been fighting and also, which ideas are in its foundation, and what are the values that it is defending.

My task here is to present something as a brief historical recapitulation and reminder of the project of socialism as well as the main ideas that are standing in background of this, for a great number of people, very attractive ideology. I hope that at the end we will really see why there are no good ideas that are not working – thanks to socialism, and why socialism is in an essential way pre-modern theory.

It is a sad historical fact, for socialism, that everything what socialism was and still is, it paradoxically, owns to its main enemy, classical liberalism. And when I say classical liberalism I am assuming whole specter of ideas that are presenting the core of this theory of which ideas of individual freedom, rule of law and free market are most important. At the time of emerging of socialism its opponent, classical liberalism, was well known and established both through its economic part (through the capitalism) and as political theory and doctrine (in theory and practice). In theory through the works of many theoreticians such as Adam Smith, John Locke, Adam Ferguson, David Ricardo etc. In practice through the social and economic system of capitalism that was present in Western Europe and United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Certainly, socialist ideas are not so “new”. There were some traces of similar theories from ancient times, but the theoretical and practical victory of classical liberalism marked the beginning of systematic attempts to create a socialist doctrine and why not to use its own term, that was intended for someone else, ideology.

Socialism started as reaction to the capitalism of eighteenth and nineteenth century and as Friedrich von Hayek noticed,<sup>1)</sup> with a very authoritarian teaching of French revolutionary Saint Simon. He was advocating very strongly idea of equality of all people through the strategy of abolishment of the institution of private ownership. And we will later see that this has always been the main preoccupation of socialism. This authoritarian beginning of socialism is like bad ghost that is always

1) See F.A. Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, Routledge, 2001, pp. 25-26.

appearing when contemporary socialist theoreticians want to show the morality and validity of its doctrine; because there is something inherently authoritarian in this ideology. But the bad fortune of socialism always reveal itself when it comes to the realization and it certainly has something to do with the very ideas that are in the center of socialist doctrine. Even at the time of the most prominent socialist Karl Marx it was obvious that socialism is not operational idea, since many economists showed that it is practically impossible<sup>2)</sup>. But Marx and his fellow Friedrich Engels did not gave up; they continued to fight for a “new” and “better” world through political work and with the establishment of First and Second International.

### ETHIC APPEAL WITHOUT ETHICS

I would not here explain the teaching of Marxism as it would demand much more time and place to be explained. One thing that has to be mentioned is that it is one very authoritarian and revolutionary oriented doctrine that was aiming to constitute new political order that would be in sharp contrast and opposition to the emerging concept of Western liberal democracies. This radical teaching assumed abolishment of the all institutions of “evil” capitalism, especially private ownership and free market economy and aiming at building new institutions of central planning in economy and one party system in political sphere. That all assumed a new methodology, “revolutionary practice of proletariat” through the dialectics of classes, which would do the job, with the view that all this can and should be done regardless the human casualties. *In the name of human lives Marxism as socialist ideology justified devastation of human lives.*<sup>3)</sup>

Although doctrinarian Marxism did not have any developed ethical theory - in fact, it rejects every kind of bourgeois ethics as ethic of alienated individual – in the perception of its followers it has strong ethical appeal. Even today people see Marxism as humanistic ideology. And not just that, word “humanism”, apart from the meaning of that term

2) Ludwig von Mises, *Socialism An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

3) It was pure utopianism that was intended for Western industrial societies but its implementation was realized in the regions of the world for which it was not designed for (Southeastern Europe, Russia). In one letter Engels explicitly stated that eastern Europeans societies are not so developed to accept the new revolutionary ideology and practice. Originally, it was intended for very developed countries of Western Europe as a “necessary” step in historical “movement of proletariat”. Surely, this “necessary” historical step never happened due to the impossibility of the Hegelian logic from which Marx build his historical determinism.

as historical period, is being identified and associated with left oriented theory and movements. So people see Marxism as ethical doctrine that takes care of ordinary people that are being “exploited” by ruthless capitalist system. It is very interesting and very important to have in mind this ethical appeal of Marxism because it is precisely why it was so popular even nowadays when we can hear that there are some “good” things in Marxism or socialism, that even if it had some disastrous historical consequences the “intentions” were good and “humanistic ideal” on which it stands still remains the goal for our time to achieve. As mentioned, doctrinarian Marxism did not have any developed moral doctrine, but it had strong moral appeal. How this can be explained? This is even more curious since Marxism is built on a methodology that says “never mind the lives, the final end is important”.<sup>4)</sup> This ambivalence in Marxism, its factual authoritarian traits with its virtual and imaginary ethical appeal is not so often been analyzed. For people see Marxism and its completion in form of communism and its transitional phase socialism as *par excellence* ethical theory. Historical practice of communism as seen in Soviet Union and other eastern European countries, with millions of lives lost, tells us on a very basic and simple level, that there are no ethics in Marxism, and that single human life, except the life of communist dictator or lives of the party members, worth nothing. If Marxism has any ethics at all that it is simple and bluntly the ethics that can be summed in these words “ends justify means”.<sup>5)</sup>

### MASKED EVIL

It did not have to come to Stalin and his communist tyranny that many of socialists would admitted that this systematic theory of socialism with its methodology is not working. Very soon many socialist oriented intellectuals made shift from Marxism in order to defend the rest of socialism. And it was very important move for them (unfortunately not for all the rest of us) that saved the socialist idea from complete disaster. This new, allegedly anti-authoritarian move of socialists assumed

- 4) This is very well documented in literature but the famous dispute between Karl Kautsky and Leon Trotsky shows this in a most clear way. See Karl Kautsky, *Terrorism and Communism: A Contribution to the Natural History of Revolution*, Hyperion Press, 1973 (reprinted edition from 1922) and Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism: A Reply to Karl Kautsky*, University of Michigan, 1961.
- 5) This posture is discarded by Kautsky in abovementioned polemics. But, when this is abandoned what is really left of Marxism and its softer versions? If “ends” does not justify “means” are we not immediately in realm of deontological ethics (ethics of Kant’s categorical imperative and the realms of “purpose by itself”) that is so distant from every Marxist or socialist methodology?

strategy of masking and disguising with the aim to create new, prettier image. At the end of ninetieth century socialism made success in this regard with some necessary modifications. It wanted to represent itself as a progressive social and political movement that should and must replace the old and corrupt bourgeois system.

And how that was possible? Only by taking something that is really progressive and changing it in a way that suits the purposes. And that were the ideas of classical liberalism. Socialist were well aware of the strength of these ideas. At the end of nineteenth century classical liberal movement was not so strong and old liberals were in some kind of resignation due to historical developments.<sup>6)</sup> Socialist, on the other side, played well on the weakness of human memory. It was the time of increasing tide of collectivism all over the Europe, and once progressive, now almost forgotten, classical liberalism unwillingly stepped aside and socialism occupied its place, taking all the credits for progressiveness. It managed to steal all the main ideas of classical liberalism, even its name! (Liberalism, liberals) And let us remind that classical liberalism developed as the intellectual movement and political philosophy that emerged as progressive force that introduced new political values without which the modern civilization as we know it would be inconceivable. However, the content of these old/new ideas was very different from that of classical liberalism. For “freedom” does not mean the “freedom” or “liberty” in a liberal sense, or “justice” or even “equality”.

### GUILT OF CIRCUMSTANCES

Thus, we have seen that a part of socialist ideologists and agitators soften their version of socialism (in comparison to Marxism), in order to accept progressive ideas but with changed meanings. Socialism had to make itself something that is different from doctrinarian Marxism. That was one of the first masking of the socialism. Another one happened when hard core leftist from Frankfurt school of social philosophy (Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer) criticized school of dialectic materialism (DIAMAT) that was present in Soviet Union at the time of Stalin's rule.<sup>7)</sup> In that way, not just softer version of socialist, that later became social democrats but also hard core leftist and Marxist very

6) See already mentioned Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* and Mises's *Socialism An Economic and Sociological Analysis* and also from the same author *Liberalism – In the Classic Tradition*, The Foundation for Economic Education, Inc, Irvington-on-Hudson, New York, 1985.

7) See for example Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophische terminologie*, Suhrkamp Verlag Frankfurt am Main, band I, 1973.

early tired to justify and defend the idea of the Marxism or socialism from its totalitarian realization (such was Lenin revolutionary attempt to make Marxist “social science” real or Stalin’s totalitarianism). They all defended socialism by blaming poor realization and circumstances for its practical disaster. *But it is always too easy to blame circumstances for the bad realizations, and that is a poor strategy both for governing our lives and the ideas that we are holding.* Socialists are constantly doing just that, and ideas of socialism were never to blame for anything. They were exempt from critique as such. From one to another social experiment, socialism was changing and reforming, making its ideology acceptable in any following situation. That is a secret of its strength and success but this also shows us the scale of voidness of the very idea of socialism.

### MODERN COLLECTIVISM

Beside this “philosophy of complaining” or “blaming” that is inherently related to socialism there is also one thing, for certain, that represents the main substance of socialism. It is its collectivism. Socialism is collectivistic ideology and that is something crucial that is differentiating it from liberalism and something that is connecting it with other ideologies, such are fascism, Nazism, and nationalism. And that is not accidental; it is the soul of socialism. We always have to have this in mind. As collectivistic ideology it puts collective above the individual, well good of the community above the well being of individual. Extreme nationalism produced Hitler, extreme socialism produced Stalin. Something like that would never be possible in the system where the rights of individual are protected. I do not have here to mention that Hitler was not just a product of nationalism. He is also a product of socialism. “National Socialistic Party” “successfully” combined ideologies of nationalism and socialism. And economy of Nazi Germany was built on similar economic reasoning as socialist – planned economy, and his social demagogy, beside its nationalistic part, was the demagogy of equality and social justice (for the German people).

Those are the ideas and political practices that would all be defended by any socialist, past, present or future. So, are there any substantial differences? I am not sure. But great many Marxist and socialist are defending their doctrines by pointing out at the communist critique of Hitlerism during the Second World War, but they are not too open to admit that in many cases that was critique from the standpoint of one

collectivism to another. And when Stalinism showed all its potentials it was clear, for those who wanted it to become clear, that there is something very similar between historical events of Hitlerism and Stalinism, something that connected them in their “deeds”. Both were in its origins collectivist ideology and both of them were fighting against all institution of modern societies.

Still, there are many socialist today who will admit that real socialism was not good and that Stalin was very dangerous autocrat. But they would still hold that ideas of socialism are good and that they should not be abandoned. They think that without them there is no “humanity” and that defense of socialism is a defense of justice, equality and freedom. And how they understand these ideas?

*FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY  
– IN SOCIALIST’S WAY*

Neither of these tree notions has any real meaning, just imaginary. This statement may seem too hasty and extreme but if we define what meaning of some idea should represent then we will not be too harsh in evaluating this thesis. For an idea to be meaningful it is necessary, very broadly speaking, that it has some connection with reality. If I now say that “all man on earth should and must have at least one billion dollars each” everybody will agree that that is good idea, at first glance. But if we think what is necessary for realization of this idea we will come to the conclusion that this idea is, in fact, stupid idea and that it cannot be good even in the segment of our fantasizes, because it is too extreme and has nothing to do with reality. Meanings of socialist ideas are very close to this. They are so imaginary that are reminding us of a bad dream in which we are imagining many beautiful things but when dream ends, we see that nothing of that is true and only thing that remains after is feeling of being depressed.

*POSITIVE FREEDOM AS NEGATION  
OF FREEDOM AS SUCH*

What about socialist idea of freedom? There are many views of how socialist understands this notion, but I will specify just some important features. We know that classical liberalism understands freedom as individual freedom, negative liberty that should be protected in every just society. But socialists understand something different than that. For

them freedom is freedom of opportunities and freedom of choice. And that may be appropriate at first glance, but what does it presuppose? It assumes ideal social and life circumstances around us. For example, if I want to achieve something in my life, to have good career and good post, everything should be arranged for me without any of my efforts. Someone else, society, government, or even my parents should know what I need and should acquire that. It is a story of our potentials and talents that are constrained by unjust societal system such as capitalism, for example. In order to change the situation it is necessary to change that humiliating system and replace it with the system in which freedom of every one of us would flourish. It is an idea of *positive freedom*, very popular notion of freedom that can be found in the works of many contemporary socialist intellectuals.<sup>8)</sup>

Thus, at first glance, this idea of freedom looks attractive and alluring. But as we can assume it is completely unrealistic since it cannot answer two simple questions: Who will make this freedom possible, subject of this freedom or someone else? And the other question: “Who will have to pay for the realization of that kind of freedom?” Here the whole idea breaks apart, and we feel like in that dream, depressed. And that is not all for the subject of idea of socialist freedom is a subordinated human being, insecure and immature creature. In short, a human being for whom some other has to work and make opportunities, and for certain, pay. I am not telling that in normal societies there should be no good opportunities for work and life. That is not what I am having in mind. But these opportunities, conditions and the possibilities of choices are depending of factual situation, real situation and the quality of markets in specific country. If a market is free enough and if business is flourishing, than we will have more possibilities and better conditions<sup>9)</sup>.

8) But not just there, since prominent “liberal” Isaiah Berlin carry the quilt - for the most part – for establishing idea of positive freedom (in above explained way) as legitimate and unavoidable theoretical concept. See Isaiah Berlin, *Liberty: Incorporating Four Essays on Liberty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 and also my article “The Philosophies of Freedom” in *Serbian Political Thought*, Institute for Political Studies, 2008.

9) Only capitalist society enables broad spectrum of possibilities and opportunities for individuals. (Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom: Fortieth Anniversary Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, chap. 1) In fact, this very idea of freedom is only possible in capitalist society and under its conditions. Positive freedom is consequences of free and developed markets and not something that is preceding it. That means first, that there is no positive freedom beyond such system, and second, that this kind of freedom is only possible on the level of individual preferences, that is, I may be “positively” free only and only if I am working for making possible something that I want and in society where exist such opportunities (capitalist society). But surely, envisioned in this way, positive freedom is not something that is usually been understood by this notion.



Still, it is also on us to build ourselves, to work for our lives and to create opportunities and favorable conditions.

### *EQUALITY AGAINST HUMAN NATURE*

The next very important idea that is socialism fighting for is idea of equality. From the time of French Revolution it became main political idea for socialist oriented intellectuals. It should be said that this idea originally assumed equality before the legitimate and just laws but also an idea of equality of people in sense of their belongings, wealth, and even personal capabilities and talents. And this second meaning is one that socialist are favoring and that is in opposition to classical liberal understanding of the idea of equality. For liberals equality means just equality before law and equality of citizens, and it has nothing to do with the substantial idea of equality. For liberals are thinking that although we are born unequal in sense of our physical and mental capabilities, belongings and in many other aspects, *we should and must be equal before the law, we should and must be equal as citizens*. And that is just the opposite that socialist are defending. They think that we should be equal in a more ambitious way; a system has to be invited that will make of us equal in everything that is possible. The socialist idea of equality assumes demand that we all should be *made* and *created* equal and only after that we will become equal before law. And in that interregnum the arbitrary will of party dictator or the party itself will decide on its own who is to be made more equal than other, and who is too equal.

If we look the historical practice of ex communistic countries we will see this pattern in which very capable and talented individuals were systematically humiliated on behalf of mediocrity majority. I am not saying that capitalist countries do not have mediocrity majority – mass production and free trade are making such individuals, and let me be very clear about this, *I do not see anything bad in that*. But in capitalist society every talented individual can find its place under the sky and make his dreams come true. Almost every majority is by default mediocre majority (we should probably exempt from this Ancient Greeks in specific time of history), and that is fact of nature, not of our desires. When Milton Friedman was distinguishing capitalist from socialist societies he was showing that in capitalist societies, as free societies, it is possible for people that are different from us, that are advocating political ideas that are completely different from ours, to live and prosper regardless these differences. And it is precisely due to the fact that in

capitalist society every person that wants to work on its talents can find palace for self, irrespectively what ideas, political attitudes and standpoint he is supporting. If we strictly follow the collectivistic matrix of socialist thought that is just that is not possible. No matter how the socialism is disguising, at one point it will be necessary for him to cross the line and to show real face. This should not be of surprise since we are talking about ideas and the logic in them, and in reality due to all its complexity, various kinds of scenarios are possible (but this is not our subject of conversation). Someone would point to example of Sweden or some other northern European country. These are countries of mix systems and we cannot classify them as undemocratic or authoritarian. But it can be said, with a good reason, that all that is acceptable in these and similar countries, has to be ascribed to the existing of some institutions (or part of these institutions), for example right of law or protection of private property.<sup>10)</sup> And these institutions are product of classical liberalism. If these would not have been present we will have the same picture as we had in Soviet Union, oppression, coercion, totalitarianism.

Hence, distorted idea of equality that is defended by socialist is showing all its emptiness and vagueness but as in case of the idea of freedom this is secret of its strength. It is aiming at human emotions and not to human common sense and reason, in order to achieve its end, and that is society of ants not of free minded and self dependent human beings.

### *SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE ETHICS OF PATRONIZING*

The Idea of equality brings us to the very important socialist's ideal of justice, "social justice", as they want to say it. Many studies were written to show the economical impossibility of this kind of justice (just to remind you of Hayek's attacks on the idea of social justice) but I will talk here about moral dimension of this idea. It is easy to explain socialist concept of justice with the help of metaphor of Robin Hood and his strategy of taking from the riches in order to give it to the poor ones. Socialist sees justice in this way. For him procedural, liberal, concept of justice is not so important – as it is not in the case of ideal of equality, that we have already seen, and only that is important are manners of redistribution and the subject of redistribution. Because socialist ideology sees the institution of private property as its greatest enemy, it is

10) And some natural resources that are in abundances in these countries and the way this wealth is redistributed.

obvious that socialist vision of justice attacks just this institution. In order to give someone something it has to be taken from someone else. Robin Hood strategy is showing its face. In case of just property of that “someone” it is clear that socialist strategy at the final reveal itself as strategy of a thief. And this ideal of justice has nothing in common with the liberal or libertarian conception of justice that has its two main features. First one is concerned with procedural justice that is presupposed by legitimate laws (the laws that can be universalized) and second one is related to a moral concern for the guaranteed sphere of individual freedom in which nobody without consent of the subject of that freedom can or should interfere. As strategy of a thief it presupposes a society from which can be taken or stolen, for you cannot stole from empty house. And historical evidence of socialist countries is showing just this. Proletarian party robbed everything that was to be robbed and society at the end collapsed like the house of cards.

And in this example of socialist vision of justice we can see, as in previous examples, that for final end socialist had devastation of human individuality and peculiarity.<sup>11)</sup> This phenomenon can be seen from the very idea of social justice. This ideal is assuming some collective body, organ or something similar that will decide whom to give and from whom to take on the basis of its perception of who is deserving and who is not. Since that “objective” standard for such decisions could not be given in advance, Robin Hood strategy is doomed to fail. It is by its own logic impossible and it will necessary create many injustices. But this strategy is justified by ethical appeal of socialism. They just want to help people to get out from injustices of the ruling order, as they want to say. They want to make more humane society in which everybody would have at least the same as any other. In order to accomplish that, socialist are claiming to possess almost divine knowledge of human nature, its needs and the mechanisms for resolving this issue. And surely, if there is some moral dimension of socialist demand for social justice it is a bad one. It is ethics of patronizing that says “I know what is needed for you, since I know you better than you know yourself”. Since the equality in socialist version is impossible on practical grounds what remains is patronizing strategy of socialist that are trying to convince us that they know what it really means and that they would make it possible for us and *without* us.

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11) Its collectivism *plus* its central planning in economy and destruction of the individuality and creativity as its consequences had that sterility in architecture, design, style and not to mention human lives...

## ANTHROPOLOGY OF ROBOTS

All these key ideas of socialism are presupposing a kind of anthropology, or view on human nature that can explain us many things about socialism. For if the realization of these ideas would be possible it will make us to see human nature and the universe that surround it in completely different way that we usually understand them. And we usually see human nature as something that is on the very basis limited both in its physical sense and its capabilities and that is operating with scarce resources. That is why economy is often been metaphorically called science of scarce resources. On the other side, human nature has that astonishing ability to understand world around us and to *imagine* things. Great philosopher Immanuel Kant saw the significance of this human feature and elaborated it at length in his crucial study of human reason (*Critique of Pure Reason*).<sup>12)</sup> He saw clearly that reason and our experience is in deep relation with power of imagination. But very often two elements of human creativity, reason and imagination are not harmonized and as a consequence they are producing strange ideas (that Kant called metaphysical) that are responsible for many following conceptual and practical misunderstandings.

That is the case with socialist ideas. They are product of that natural human characteristic called imagination. But with one crucial exemption, called reason. For how we could explain the social utopianism of doctrinal Marxism with its messianic approach? There is no reason in that, or if there is, it is a product of the game of socialist's fantasies. But this game of imagination produced specific anthropology that stands as groundwork for all other ideas of socialism. It has several features.

First, it sees man as primarily social being for which the societal demands are to be of utmost importance. A men's nature is reduced just to one of his features, and that is social aspect of his nature. There are many leftist intellectuals such are Sartre, Gramsci, Marcuse and others that were speaking that "man is always in relation to another man", and that were lamented about bad fortune of human beings that had become "alienated atoms". But this is just a part of a story, not a whole story. Classical Liberals were holding a position that only an individual *as* individual can be a societal being, so we can see that individuality, in contrast to socialists, is a precondition for societal relations not the opposite.

12) See Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Drukt und Verlag von Philipp Reclam jun, Leipzig, 1878.

Second, it understands human nature as a nature of Supreme Being in a way that “a man is stronger than nature”. This attitude is particularly present in Marxist anthropology and its vivid and scary presentations in Lenin’s and Stalin’s Russia with the picture of “strong” and godlike proletarians holding the hammers that had to show that a man can crush and defeat nature by his own will and strength (Does not this pictures resembling us of very similar posters from the time of Nazi Germany, with a representations of “Übermensch”?). This idea presents the core for socialist utopianism that had to construct “brave, new world” (Huxley) of some dictatorship or totalitarianism. It says that men not just exist in nature but also that he can change it and even create it. The myth of almighty scientist and science had helped this socialist vision. Bad science accompanied bad ideology. Therefore it is not of surprise how much trust was placed in scientists by the socialist regimes. Social engineering went along with the myth of positive science. If something would go wrong socialist constructivist would not blame principal human limitations, lack of knowledge and ignorance, but the unwillingness of the unsuccessful scientist to help the “higher cause”.

Third, socialist anthropology presents human beings not just as societal beings but also as collectivistic beings. It means that individual should by its nature be subordinated to the collective. And it does not matter what this collective is, it could be anything. The thing that is important is that individual is not important and as long there is prime directive that says that “the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one” (Spock, sincere socialist<sup>13</sup>). And, as I have said, socialism is collectivistic ideology like some forms of conservatism and nationalism, but that connection is not so important here.

We can see that this anthropology is very obscure and pessimistic and every normal person would certainly not agree to accept such a version of human nature. Today, many social-democrats do not accept the anthropology that has been presented here. They will tell us that that is a something from the past that has nothing to do with contemporary socialism. But as I have mentioned before this attitude is just an illusion and justification of the fall of the socialism. It is a really hard for a modest socialist to admit that everything that can be characterized as good and progressive in his own ideology comes from the theory of its mortal enemy, classical liberalism. For a classical liberalism advocated and defended the rights of individual against the church, kingdom and even

13) A character from famous sci-fi novel “Star Trek”.

democracy; and it is philosophy of the individuality not of collectivity. When some socialist today accept individualistic approach and methodology they are taking something from classical liberalism, thanks god, let them take all!

However, the basic insight that unites all these anthropological features is unrealistic perception of human nature and the nature in general. When these erroneous perceptions are unified in one system of ideas we got socialist ideology as we know it, with its economics, politics, “justice” and etc. And we have disaster. Having in mind all of this I would just remind that there are still many people that are thinking that socialism is “good” idea, but as we have seen good idea means much more than that good idea of socialism. But lets us tell something more about socialism.

### IRRATIONALISM OF SOCIALISM

As it is already said, it is in human nature to go beyond the present condition and limitations of reason. This trait of human character can have both good and bad consequences. It is showing its negative side when is trying to go beyond the “limits of possible experience” (and real), to say it with Kantian words. And this happened in the history of political ideas as well in ordinary life and politics. For it is a constant feature of human nature to demonstrate from time to time a dose or portion of irrationalism and in its extreme forms. In a case of critique of the system that is based on the laws of economics that had been explained since the classical works of Adam Smith and David Ricardo<sup>14)</sup> - that is, in case of capitalist system, it is more than obvious when we look at the socialist attacks. For a capitalist system showed and is still showing its strength, vitality and productivity not because some ruling class of bourgeoisie won the battle over the class of oppressed people, namely, proletariat, but because its inner connection with the basic laws of economics and reality.<sup>15)</sup> That is why irrationality of socialism has one almost tragicomic dimension that can be showed by this kind of reasoning: Nature (or God) created man as imperfect being in imperfect

14) See Adam Smith's, *Wealth of Nations*, Random House, New York, 1994, and David Ricardo's *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, Dover Publications, 2004.

15) This is well documented in natural rights and law tradition since Hobbes, Locke and others (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*. New York: Touchstone, 2008; John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008). See also Leo Strauss's work *Natural Right and History*. (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1999.) and Pierre Manent's book *Intellectual History of Liberalism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996.

world. Since a man is imperfect his political system cannot be perfect (although it can be operational and making people happy and prosperous as it is possible in such a world). Consequently, the socialist are blaming capitalism for the imperfection of nature! Socialism is really revolt against human reason and nature.

That is why economic science and policy in order to be successful has to follow these natural laws and restrictions and not hazardous creativity of central planned oriented group of intellectuals who are calling themselves “socialist economists”.

Disastrous consequences of socialist experiments throughout the world showed once more, for unbelievers as well for believers, that there are no alternatives to this system. For the capitalism managed to win the battle not just in its immediate sphere (economics) that was attacked from socialism; it won the battle on more important ground. As Ayn Rand effectively showed<sup>16)</sup> capitalism is deeply moral theory and economic practice, which should and must stand in foundation of every just political order. This result ruined the image of socialist ideology as “justly” and “moral”, at least for those that are equipped with enough sense for accepting the forces of valid arguments.

But this victory of capitalism, both in practical and conceptual sphere, provoked the irrational reactions of leftist intellectuals who were and still are not prepared to accept these facts. Its ideology does not make it possible for them as well the peculiarity of human nature to accept that there can be no magical wand that will create utopian world of socialism.

For a capitalism and the institutions of free societies are result of many centuries of progress of humankind and it is not some social construct and invention that can be easily changed and replaced with something different and better. In one sentence, *because there is capitalism there are critics of capitalism*. And it is not so important what kinds of critiques are being offered, because there would be always critique as such, since it is our habit to criticize, even those things that are not to be criticized (that are only possible). And for us who are advocating the “order of liberty” should be accustomed and always prepared to that.

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16) Ayn Rand, *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*, Signet, New York, 1986. See especially introductory chapter.

*FAKE MODERNITY AND FAKE PROGRESSIVENESS*

When Hayek wrote *Road to Serfdom* it was the time of socialist expansion and dominance. That time is ended but the ideas are still present, and the dangerous of some kind of socialist experiment is still possible. We should not be so confident in the strength of our institutions for an irrationalism is a very strong force of human nature and that fact should be kept constantly in mind. There is no reason for relaxation because historical evidence is showing us on many examples how something that is impossible in some contexts and situations still may happen. If there would not be like that, the history of mankind would be no more than history of stones; there would be no history at all. But in spite of this necessity of emergence of evil, in any of its forms (and socialism certainly represents one) the good institutions that are being in accordance with some very general traits of human nature and the nature of universe should be protected and all dreadful experiences of the past times has to be constantly evoked in our memory.

Especially when that bad experience and practice are wanting to present itself as “modern” and “progressive” form of social organization. From the time of diminishing of values and authority of classical liberalism socialism represent itself just in this way. Everybody was seeing socialism as “progressive”; and even some classical liberals accepted that. But the historical evidence was telling opposite. Today it is very difficult to defend socialism, especially its stronger forms. Still, for great many of people it is seen as good and progressive idea that has bad luck. We have seen, I hope, that socialism can be anything else, but not “good” and “progressive”. Because in order to be “good” or “true” even in most abstract and general sense ( the realm of ideas and concepts) it has to be in harmony with the reason and nature (as we have seen neither of this is the case with socialism). And in order to be “progressive” or “modern” it has to be in relation with those ideas and values that are in sharp contrast to the ideas, values and practices of the past times that we can call “pre-modern” or “retrograde”.

So, is the socialism really “modern” or “progressive”? We have seen that it is certainly not “good” in any sensible meaning of the term “good”. But still, is it “modern” and “progressive”? It can be said with good reasons that there are no good reasons for socialism to be seen as such. This ideology is lacking of all essential components of the meaning and connotation of these words in respect to political history and



theory. For a modern political theory was built on new and epochal concepts of individual freedom, rule of law and free market.

Individual freedom assumed something that is material in one sense, and the great contribution for theoretical conceptualization and advocacy of the institution of property as such – the material component of individual freedom, belongs to John Locke, famous British Philosopher. Individual freedom along with the respect of private property, or property as such, means that individual *and not collective* is the political subject or subject of politics. And that was really a great discovery in political theory and organization of societies.

The second main institution of modern political theory means not just that we are all equal before the laws of our countries - that is known from the time of Roman Empire, but equal before just and universal laws, laws that can be universalized (and that means that they can be implemented wherever man is living and that they are just).

And the third idea, the idea of free market represents the necessary consequence of the political order that protects individual freedom and right to property: right of individuals to handle their just property as they wish with no constraints that are not product of consent of the involved owners. This assumes free exchanges between individuals that are entering in consensual arrangements.

It can be seen now that If all these ideas are present in some political system, if they are in its foundations, this system will be marked as “free” and “just”, but also “modern” and “progressive”.

If we now look at the ideology of socialism to find something of these ideas we can see that there is nothing in it from them at all. In the ideology of socialism individual is not so important and it does not represent the center, or subject of politics as it is the case in liberalism. For even when they are talking of individual, when they are worrying about the “exploited” people, socialist are always assuming collectivistic and patronizing discourse that in individual never sees a end by itself but only occasion for its political purposes, such is overthrowing of corrupt and evil capitalist system. They are never defending the right of individual to be free in only way that it is possible but instead, they are advocating the thesis that they know better than individuals what is good for them. The attitude of patronizing has nothing in common with modern idea of freedom and free society and is inherently tribal or tribalistic in its origins. Because only in primitive societies individual

is not important, and opinion of collective, tribe or council of elders is something that has priority.

In a case of second modern political institution, the idea of rule of law in sense that it has already been explained, it can be said that although socialism accepts the idea of legal system (in some moderate versions of this ideology) it does not assume the idea of *universal* and *just* law. So it does involve the idea of legality but it does not involve the idea of legitimacy. And this is something that is connecting the ideology of socialism with other authoritarian ideologies; for example, fascism, Nazism and a like. Not all laws are just, and laws that are not legitimate are still laws but not the laws of the free society. But even in cases when socialist society accept some kind of laws or legality with the minimum legitimacy it is not so devoted to the idea of “blind justice”. For in this kind of political systems the opinion of party leader or the party itself is much more important than court of law. Arbitrary whim of socialist leader is the law and he can interpret it as he like.

Although socialist ideology (as well its proponents) is strongly opposing ideas of individual freedom and rule of law there is nothing more that is object of its animosity and aversion than is idea of free market, or even the idea of trade, trading. For a socialist concept presuppose tribal version of economy in which everything belongs to community, state or tribe. Major question of this kind of economic reasoning is not the question of free and undisturbed flow and exchange of goods between private owners, but the question of distribution or redistribution. And again here we have the same problem as in previous cases. Someone has to decide how, when and where to be distributed; there is no autonomous will of entrepreneurs or private owners that are to decide on how to use their property but the arbitrary whim, or mercy of some mighty individual (usually presented through the “collective will” or “general will”).

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We started our investigation of socialism with the thesis that there are some good and true ideas that are not functioning. Than we have seen that this thesis is not true in general, because in order for idea to be good there are some necessary conditions that have to be taken in account. On an example of socialism it is shown that it is not good idea, in any sensible meaning of that word. That mean that it cannot function well either. If it were good idea it could function. In addition we have seen that socialism is not just “bad” idea on conceptual level, but also

that it is not even “progressive” or “modern” as it is often been presented. As pre-modern, collectivistic theory, implementation of socialism would necessary involve some kind of return to tribalism. And that is why socialism is so dangerous.

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## **HISTORY AND DANGER OF SOCIALISM: RETURN TO TRIBALISM**

### **Summary**

*My task here is to present something as a brief historical recapitulation and reminder of the project of socialism as well as the main ideas that are standing in background of this, for a great number of people, very attractive ideology. On an example from the work of Murray Rothbard but within another context and with the help of theoretical apparatus built in philosophy of Immanuel Kant, this article is rendering thesis that there are no good ideas that are not functioning in practice due to the valid definition of "good idea" which says that something like that is not possible. At the end of the article, I will hopely show why there are no good ideas that are not working – thanks to socialism, and why socialism is in an essential way pre-modern theory.*

*Key-words: Socialism, Marxism, liberalism, social justice, equality, collectivism, positive and negative freedom, tribalism*