

On Socialism

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I

Socialism has seen enormous changes since the end of the Second World War. Its *cachet* has gone up and down and after an all-time low is now perhaps beginning to go up again. It came on hard times when 'actually existing socialism' collapsed in the Soviet Union and its satellite states in 1989, somewhat later in Yugoslavia, and since the transformation of China into something that is hardly recognizable as any kind of socialism, to say nothing of communism. Only Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea, and perhaps Vietnam and Laos remain as 'actually existing socialisms'. (North Korea is hardly a model to be emulated.)

Similar things have obtained in socialist theory. Most Western socialists, including most Marxists, while not being cold warriors did not regard these 'actually existing socialisms' as genuinely socialist but as statist non-capitalist societies that were authoritarian, non-democratic and excessively bureaucratic parading as paradigms of socialist societies. Instead of the dictatorship *of* the proletariat (what was supposed to be the mass but democratic governing of the working class by the working class in the interim before 'the withering away of the state' and the attaining of a classless society), we came to have what anarchist socialists (most notably Mikhail Bakunin) called the dictatorship *over*

the proletariat, namely the rule over the proletariat by a small elite calling themselves communists.

Among most socialist theoreticians something like this became the dominant view. The Soviet Union was not, as Trotsky thought, a flawed socialism but an authoritarian statist post-capitalist society that had betrayed many of the most fundamental beliefs of socialism. The socialist intelligentsia sought to reinvigorate socialist thought and to help create a way to reinvigorate socialist practice. For them, 'democratic socialism' was a pleonasm.

As things have evolved what it is to be a socialist has become more ambiguous than it was at the high tide of Marxism. Andrew Levine has well used 'socialism' to designate those political tendencies and movements that, since the beginning of the nineteenth century, sought to deepen what the most radical of the French revolutionists began. Like their tamer confreres on the Left, the social liberal (not the neo-liberal) socialists have always been steadfast in their dedication to 'liberty, equality, and fraternity'. But, like their revolutionary forbearers and unlike liberals, they have generally favored radical structural transformations, at least in principle. This broad characterization allows us to regard the more radical social democrats (e.g., Jürgen Habermas), some anarchists (e.g., Noam Chomsky), and orthodox Marxists (e.g., Bertell Ollman) as all socialists. Whether there is a spectrum here or some fundamental cleavage is a much debated matter. The more orthodox Marxists would take it to be definitional of socialism that a socialist of any sort is someone who favors the public or social ownership and at least indirect control of the principle means of production, and where, because of this public and shared ownership, there is no one who *simply* has to sell their labor on a labor market. 'Public ownership' can mean somewhat different things in different forms of socialism. For some it has meant state ownership; for

others, worker-controlled ownership with various schemes of worker ownership and control. For some who are more on the social democratic side, socialism has meant a mixed economy containing small-scale private ownership of the means of production but with larger-scale ownership being firmly public. And finally, some would move so far from traditional conceptions of socialism as to not identify socialism necessarily with a distinctive form of ownership at all but with radical democracy and a thoroughly egalitarian solidaristic conception of justice.

Some more standard socialists would not regard a mixed economy as socialist at all, nor would they regard normative conceptions of socialism that identify it with radical democracy and egalitarian-solidaristic justice as socialist. That would be a necessary but not sufficient condition for socialism. Someone could be a radical democrat without being a socialist. The latter is correctly taken to be social democratic and not genuinely socialist at all. A socialist society must be a society without capitalism, or on the way to being so, in which everyone is either a worker, a potential worker (children), or a former worker (the retired or disabled) or someone who soon will be one or another of these things as society progresses. There is no place in a socialist society for an *underclass* of unemployable people, except for those who are incapable of working and they should have standard care by society on par with those working for a livable wage. When these things obtain we have something that will be on its way to becoming a classless society. For socialism to be sustained, most Marxists believe, this would have to spread to the entire world.

Others would respond that contemporary society has too many strata doing various kinds of work to make 'worker' a very useful category or class analysis the feasible critical tool that Marxists took it to be. Still others would insist on its centrality while arguing that

in contemporary society classes have become more ramified than in Marx's time (Wright 1989).

What stands out as central here is that while the above characterizations of socialism are definitional matters, they are not *simply* definitional matters. Which conception is taken would, if instantiated, have different implications for social policy and for society and the world as a whole. At the far end of the social democracy spectrum, capitalism would remain with much of its power curbed (or so the plan goes); on the more robustly socialist end of the spectrum, capitalism would have to be abolished and we would move gradually from socialism to communism. Capitalism may be replaced by socialism either by the ballot box or by some form of revolution. And where socialism is identified, as it should be and usually is identified, with public ownership and control of the means of production, it matters considerably whether public ownership takes the form of state ownership or workers' ownership in workers' cooperatives or some combination of both.

Socialism, taken in the more robust sense, is often thought in the West to be tyrannical or authoritarian. But that claim has little merit. Contemporary socialists in the West have, like liberals, a commitment to liberty and democratic procedures, as did Marx and Engels, though they unrealistically thought the matter would be simpler than it actually was and is and paid little attention to procedures or to constitutional matters of protecting human rights. They thought that as the dust of the socialist revolution settles down things would automatically become democratic. But contemporary socialists do not think that. Moreover, Marx and Engels (and Rosa Luxemburg, as well) argued that wherever a socialist revolution starts it will be doomed if it does not quickly spread to the wealthy capitalist West. But it did not do that; it took place and remained during its formative years in a backward

authoritarian country with little in the way of a democratic tradition and without much in the way of developed productive forces.

Marxist socialists of whatever stripe are historical materialists, though only some are dialectical materialists, and they realized that socialism piggy-backed on developed capitalism. No socialist society can succeed, they claimed, without highly developed forces of production and a democratic tradition. Where those are absent a socialist revolution will sour and sooner or later be overthrown. But where these conditions obtain there is no fear of a socialist society going undemocratic. It should be remembered as well that those socialists who are Marxists do not believe (*pace* Stalin) that it is possible to have a sustainable socialism in one country.

The problem with contemporary democratic socialism is not that it will, where it gets instantiated, go undemocratic or be morally untoward but that as it was classically articulated it cannot work efficiently. Without markets a modern society cannot obtain goods and services when they are needed and where they are needed. It cannot provide an abundant life where people's needs are met. The response by many contemporary socialists is to propose market socialism. Alex Nove, John Roemer, and David Schweikart, cogently exemplifying this, have proposed carefully worked out (but in ways importantly different) models about how this could work. Market socialists work (as in reality do contemporary capitalists) with both market and plan. It should be avoided here, as the Soviets did not, having command/administrative allocation systems, and they should not be identified with central planning. It is the former, as John Roemer argues, which has been shown to be dysfunctional. Any complex society, whether capitalist or socialist, and certainly a globalized

world, uses some form of central planning. To think otherwise is a libertarian neo-liberal myth which is slowly being de-mythologized, but only to put capitalism in jeopardy.

Market socialism has been resisted by some orthodox Marxists (e.g., Mandel and Ollman). It is thought by some that any market socialism will reproduce the ills of a market society with a market and consumer orientation. But if markets are used *solely for allocation*, there is no reason why market socialism will lead to a society addicted to consumerism as it is in capitalism and arguably it will more adequately meet people's needs than a capitalist society does. The problem, rather, is a worry about whether it is a *political* impossibility. Given the forces that are in place in the rich powerful capitalist societies and given the media in place in those societies, market socialism, or indeed *any* socialism, cannot get on the agenda. It only remains in the heads of a few intellectuals and radical activists. This is the state of play right now, but recently this may well be turning. Neo-liberalism is finally under threat. Capitalism is now increasingly seen to be working badly and, with capitalist globalization taking an imperialist turn and Americanization engulfing much more of the world, there is more and more resistance to it. American flags get burned and Obama is scorned or joked about widely in parts of the world, though it is recognized that he is not as crude as G. W. Bush. It is not so evident that disenchantment and opposition will not grow such that socialism will once again be seriously on the agenda. For socialists, and indeed for all of us, things look bleak now, but that does not mean that it will be so forever.

II

Professor Robert X. Ware, a former colleague of mine before we went out to pasture and became emeriti, has written a reflective, well informed, and intelligently argued article,

“Socialism’s Two Projects.” Ware argues there that “any socialism has two important projects: (1) to understand and end present-day oppression, and (2) to build, in imagination and reality, a future that realizes socialist society with socialist values” (Ware 1).

I am a Marxian rather than an anarchist. I do not believe there can be any creation, as the anarchist socialists attempt to do, of ideal societies, including a future communist society of freedom and equality, without understanding present-day capitalist society and in doing that gaining an understanding of the workings of capitalism and, as well, some understanding of the structure and dynamics that would be central to societies as we have them now and that would be in place in future socialist societies and in a worldwide socialism. Moreover, we cannot have a stable socialist society in a capitalist world. This may sound dogmatic on my part but it is not. A socialist society must be capable of standing on empirical grounds. It does not escape fallibilism. The dogmatist is someone who thinks it does.

Back to Ware’s account. Ware argues, correctly I believe, that there are grounds for believing that there can be a convergence between the two projects of socialism that he mentions: Marxist socialism and anarchist socialism. I agree, but I am Marxian enough and not sufficiently anarchist enough to believe there can be no creation of ideal societies as distinct from imagining ones where we are thinking of them without understanding existing society and what it would take to change it and sustain it in a socialist direction. What sort of social and economic structures would need to obtain there is a crucial question. We must not blow bubbles in the air.

But first for a terminological matter. Marxist socialism, or better put, Marxian socialism, is fine but ‘orthodox socialism’ sounds too much like church, and scientific

socialism has made a bad name for itself from the Second and Third Internationales and through Stalinism and Louis Althusser (in his desire to distinguish himself from Marxist humanists such as Svetozar Stojanović and Mihailo Marković). Althusser wanted to distance himself and distinguish himself from what he regarded as such humanist ramblings. But his own writings are anything but, scientific claims to the contrary notwithstanding. It was remotely socialist scientific orientation or any kind of scientific orientation. Anarchist socialism is fine (Chomsky, for example), but not *libertarian* anarchist socialism. 'Libertarianism', like 'terrorism' or 'counter terrorist experts', is an expression with little of anything in the way of determinate content. Bakunin, Hayek, Friedman, Chomsky, and Ron Paul do not belong in the same bucket. They have little in common. It would be better to stick with just anarchist socialism. I shall consider in detail the Marxist socialism and anarchist socialism of the projects Ware speaks of in the first sentence of his abstract. But all of this is a matter of terminology and a rose by any other name would have as sweet a smell.

While we were at the University of Calgary, Ware and I taught a class together on Marx and Engels which was offered during the Fall Term every year. It was designed as an introductory course covering some of the texts by Marx and also texts by Marx and Engels. This course was followed in the Winter Term with an advanced seminar we also taught together on a Marxian figure and/or topic. The first offering of this advanced seminar was on Georg Lukács's *Class and Class Consciousness* which had just then finally been translated into English twenty-three years after it was first published in German. Later on we gave seminars on such dissident Marxists as Karl Korsch, the Frankfurt School and, still later, analytical Marxism. I remember one seminar we gave on historical materialism that focused

on G. A. Cohen's work. For me, all this teaching was also a matter of my learning about Marx and Marxism as we went along, and I suspect it was the same for Bob Ware, too. As a student, I never had a course on Marx or Marxism, though as an undergraduate I read avidly *The Communist Manifesto* and some Lenin and even a bit of Stalin. (I thought the latter was crude and it turned me off, though I was still innocent enough to call him Uncle Joe.) Both Ware's and my philosophical orientations were analytical and remained so. My philosophical education began before the analytical tradition became hegemonic in North America. Only in the last two years of my undergraduate study did analytical philosophy come to me in any detail and then it did so in a relieving rush, deterring me from switching to major in anthropology. The old stuff had put me off.

However, I was a socialist since adolescence but a confused one who was more influenced by local thinkers who were really social democrats of a mild sort. Anarchism never attracted me, nor did libertarianism. I thought that Nozick and Friedman were disasters, though in different ways, and that Hayek was only a more historically influenced and politically sophisticated disaster. Initially teaching at New York University and then at the University of Calgary, I had deep engagement with forms of utilitarianism and with Rawls and Hart. Rawls's liberal socialism always attracted me before neo-liberals came along to make 'liberalism' their style of a dirty word. I always, without losing my longtime allegiance to socialism, squared those interests with these standard philosophical interests. But prominent among those, my interests in moral theory and increasingly in political theory squared with my interest in Marx and Marxism. I sought to put them together with a coherent understanding of how we should live, along with an activist commitment to make it real for us human animals. But this went along with analytical philosophical techniques

about how to proceed. This has remained with me, though now I read little philosophy. And when I look back, I remain amazed at how much I once devoured.

My reading, however, as I guess like almost everyone's, was selective. My philosophical training immunized me against Hegel. I never had the time of day for Hegel or for *dialectical* materialism, though I have long been a materialist (now called a physicalist) and after studying G. A. Cohen carefully, a firm *historical* materialist, seeing it *pace* Popper and a host of others as non-teleological. But like Cohen, I recognize that history is directional, though unlinked to 'dialectical logic' (Nielsen 1983, 319-38).

Going back to my childhood and youth for background information, I remember the Great Depression and its influence on me, though I didn't realize it at the time. World War II directly and consciously influenced me, particularly at its end with the murderous and clearly unnecessary dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. Much later and even more so, I was influenced by the Vietnam War and Noam Chomsky, Hilary Putnam, Stuart Hampshire, and most of all by my students more than by reading Marx. And Chomsky never induced me toward anarchism; that issue never came up in our contacts. When Bob Ware and I taught Marx and Marxism and in the process a little bit of socialist anarchism, I thought Bakunin was alright but that he was unfortunately wrong about *transition*. However, I did not study Bakunin closely.

What motivated me to teach Marx and Marxist theory, which I had never done while at Hamilton College, Amherst College, or New York University, was that at Calgary no one was teaching it except a few professors in other departments who made a few uninformed critical remarks concerning Marxism with the intent of using Marx as a whipping boy and with the further intent to send Marx and Marxism into oblivion. I decided that this cultural

and intellectual vacuum needed overcoming and the misinformation countered. Bob and I did have a few comrades among the faculty in various departments (one even from the business school), but they were for the most part marginalized. If there had been good courses—properly informed courses—I would have gone on teaching a part of the standard philosophical meal practiced in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian universities at the time I started teaching philosophy. I would have gone on teaching Hobbes, J. S. Mill, Moore, Stevenson, Rawls, Railton, and the like and, in another key, Wittgenstein, Austin, Rorty, Habermas, and Davidson, and on various topics related to such figures and on pragmatism as well. These were things I had been educated—trained, if you will—to teach. It was my good luck that I was able to do both, continuing with what was, for my philosophical culture, standard philosophical teaching but also to teach the courses on Marx and Marxism that Bob and I developed together. And sometimes these two things creatively intersected with each other.

Now to return to Ware's article, he begins by remarking:

Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin, represent, respectively, Marxists, often known as scientific socialists, and anarchists, often known as libertarian socialists. Originally, and throughout their subsequent histories, all socialisms (in both streams) have agreed in detesting capitalist exploitation and oppression and in pursuing a better society and cooperation" (Ware 2).

Then he proceeds to say, primarily concerning the transition from capitalism to socialism and then to communism, that there is more convergence here than meets the eye between Marxists and socialist anarchists; more than we usually thought. We should initially stress, Ware has it, their common point of solid agreement that all socialists are "against capitalism with its concentration of power" and for struggles for socialism with equality and free

association (Ware 2). It is in all its forms committed to the struggle against the few who control and exploit the many. (Capitalists, particularly big capitalists, were the agents of this exploitation.) Both streams were for uniting in struggle for the many who were caught in their lives by this system of oppression. They want to bring about a world where it finally will be from each according to what they can reasonably contribute and to each according to their needs. Marxists stress the necessity of getting a grip on what needs to be done to end oppression; anarchists, by contrast, attribute the kind of society of freedom and equality this crucially needs to be achieved. But there is no conflict between these committed contentions, though there are crucial procedural differences. However, they should be seen as matters that complement each other in a full defense of socialism.

Ware is right on the mark here. Marxists try to understand existing societies and their histories and dynamics and with that understanding come to know how to transform our societies into socialist societies which will eventually become communist societies. Anarchists, by contrast, put the stress on characterizing what this future society should look like; what its underlying ideals should be after capitalism has become a thing of the past. It is obvious that these two projects are compatible and that they can even complement each other. But there are crucial differences about priorities and about how to proceed. However, I do not see how they could not be reasonably ironed out. And this seems to be Ware's view as well.

We should remember here what Marx said famously in his *Theses on Feuerbach*: philosophers have interpreted the world; the point is to change it. Forget about philosophers but remember there is a crucial need to understand the world in order to change it in a way that both Marxists and anarchists seek. And remember, as well, that this understanding is

unavoidably an interpretive understanding and often a causal understanding as well. A *blind approach* and resultant change is not what Marx sought nor what we should seek. As Ware puts it, Marx wanted “to uncover the law(s) of motion of capitalism and investigate how people are exploited and alienated in capitalism” and, with that firmly in mind, put an end to capitalism either through the ballot box or, where necessary, through revolution. It is the capitalist system that must be eradicated.

“Bakunin, and libertarian socialists in general,” Ware tells us, “have focused on including the marginalized” (Ware 6). This is what Marxists called the *lumpenproletariat* and what we now call the *underclass*. Marx clearly asserted in his important *Critique of the Gotha Program* how this feature of the capitalist system was a plain denial of effective freedom and equality and *how it could, and should, be overthrown*. Again, we have features of Marxism and anarchism that are congruent.

Ware points out that “Marx was focused on who would change the world, while Bakunin was focused on who would most benefit from a change in the world” (Ware 8). This led Bakunin to focus on what Marx called the *lumpenproletariat*: the most disposed and alienated people in the world. Marx believed they would in practice be a revolutionary force: for example, a bunch of conveniently and easily gathered strike breakers manipulated by capitalists. Such marginalized cannot emancipate themselves or change the world. But the working class, the producers of the wealth in the world, alone have the power to do so. It is only they who can bring about human emancipation. And with the rising tide of a determined radicalized revolutionary working class, the *lumpenproletariat* will be taken out of poverty and cease being *lumpenproletariat*, something that they cannot do for themselves but that only a revolutionary proletariat can. We can go on about an option for the poor, but only

with a victorious and stabilized proletariat firmly in control will this option come to anything and after a proletarian victory which will not come tomorrow. Otherwise, the poor will always be with us.

In examining the congruence between the two streams of socialism (Marxism and anarchism emanating from Marx and Bakunin, respectively), we need to examine what they say about state and authority. Ware puts it as follows:

The differences between the two main streams of socialism about state and authority is about as stark as possible. Libertarian socialists are opposed to all forms of the state and all kinds of authority. Freedom, for them, means freedom from authority. Every command is a slap in the face, as Bakunin put it. Scientific socialists, on the other hand, advocate a state, with the dictatorship of the proletariat according to Marx, during a transition to communism, and they acknowledge the role of authority in many cases, even beyond the transitional state (Ware 10).

Ware goes on to say that under study, the differences will be seen not to be so stark (Ware 10). It is the word 'dictatorship' that spooks us. Following Hal Draper and C. B. Macpherson (I add the latter), 'the dictatorship *of* the proletariat' is not supposed to be, according to Marx, a dictatorship *over* the proletariat but a *proletarian* democracy which replaces the bourgeois capitalist state. The bourgeois state is a state which in effect manages the affairs of the capitalist ruling class (the Big Bosses) in the *common* interests of the capitalist class. This state—the capitalist state—will firmly rule in common capitalist class interests. Actually, if it is to be in the efficient interests of the capitalist class it will be the rule *of* the capitalist class in its own common interests, not the rule *over* its interests in the interests of some capitalist minority. Centrally in the case of a capitalist state, it is ruled by a ruling elite of capitalists and/or elites dependent on them and serving them and with basically the same ideology. Parallel things will obtain in a workers' state. There needs to be, and there often is, a

workers' elite ruling things. But in any event, it will be a dictatorship *of* the proletariat ruling *over* the society in the *common* interests of the working class. Where there is a clash of interests of workers or segments of workers, the workers' state will work for the common interests of the working class and in that way adjudicate the conflict within the working class in the name of the efficient and fair running of the workers' society in terms of the workers' common interests. There is the question of whether we will end up with the interests *of* the proletariat or the interests *over* the proletariat by some elites, whether of proletarian origin or distinctly these are common interests of workers or sufficiently strong interests, particularly when we consider the diverse types of workers that we have in contemporary society to yield a robust common core of interests to make a dictatorship of the proletariat possible.

The standard Marxist assumption that was less problematic in Marx's time was that workers were principally industrial workers for the common interests of the working class and in that way a dictatorship could be avoided. But that is a kind of society that we don't have now and it is problematic that this Marxist hope and aim will ever be had. But it should be fought for. Both Marxist socialists and anarchist socialists agree on that. But they disagree, and crucially, on the modalities for achieving it. And here I agree with the Marxists.

It is not an exaggeration, or at the very least not too much of one, to speak of capitalist democracies (which are almost always plutocracies in reality) as dictatorships *of* the bourgeoisie and to speak of socialist democracies as dictatorships *of* the proletariat. In both cases we speak of common interests there that were reasonably identifiable. But even if that was so then, it is not obviously so now, though it is not sufficiently evident that we can just rule out the very idea of common interests and claim such a belief is utopian. Still, if there is

a movement from socialist society as the productive forces and relations develop and the society becomes classless, can we move to a stateless society? Would we not still need a group of communist elites ruling the communist order in terms of common interests of people at large here? All of us either will be workers or former workers when we are aged. Can we have a stateless society of any size, let alone a stateless world?

For Marx, after a proletarian takeover either through revolution or through the ballot box there will be a taking control of the instruments of the state and the proletarian state—the people’s state—will rule or, if you will, dictate. It will be the source of the ultimate authority at a given time concerning what is to be done. Bakunin or any anarchist socialist or otherwise could not stomach that. States, for Bakunin, should be immediately abolished after the revolution. Like Bakunin, Marx wanted a stateless society but thought that realistically we could only gradually get there after we had developed from proletarian state society’s rule under socialism to a ‘stateless rule’ in a communist society. But still Marx asked, as did Engels, what social functions in a communist society “will remain that are analogous to present state functions?” They answered ambiguously—an unsympathetic critic could say ‘evasively’—that “this question can only be answered scientifically”. Ware remarks that “it remains to work out what these future social functions might be” (Ware 11). It is clear that, *pace* Bakunin, after capitalism has dug its own grave or has been overthrown or firmly rooted out, we cannot move immediately to a stateless world. But can we *ever* move to an utterly stateless society, let alone a stateless world? It is evident that in a post-capitalist world with its post-capitalist societies that these societies would need some analogous social functions. But which ones and how could this be ascertained? And could they even be non-coercive?

Ware writes:

Marx and the scientific socialists have agreed with Bakunin and the libertarian socialists that there should be a future stateless communist society with a free association of free people. Scientific socialists have always been opposed to illegitimate capitalist authority, but there are questions first of all about the nature of authority. Might there be legitimate authority, as Chomsky allows, while many anarchists deny it? Engels and Lenin, and many since, have tried to make authority seem simple, straightforward, and necessary. Engels wrote of the importance of authority in factories and production that he accused Bakunin of ignoring. This might be connected to Marx's distinction between the realm of necessity, as in the production of our needs, and the realm of freedom, outside the necessary labor. Lenin noted the role of authority exercised by the conductor of an orchestra (Ware 1).

Ware adds, a couple of paragraphs later, that society cannot thrive without some direction and, I conjecture, he would add that authority, legitimate authority, cannot be the mere exercise of power over people and any legitimate state-like entity cannot so exercise its power over its population or a segment population, say, its Moslems, Jews, Christians or blacks. A society of any size must have in place and functioning some structures of legitimate authority and power or at least some structures of legitimate power which are regarded by its leaders as legitimate power. (I don't say these come to be the same thing.) If it has any considerable size, it cannot avoid having some state-like structures. It must have something that exercises "a monopoly of legitimate violence over a given territory", to use Max Weber's phrasing. Is it empirically possible, taking a cool hard look at societies and at history, that we can ever have stateless societies of any size and complexity, even in a classless society and a classless world? Isn't this another failure of an illusion? It is, of course, a logical possibility. just as it is logically possible that we could fall to the street from the top of the Empire State Building and survive. But so much for mere logical possibilities. We can feel the appeal of Marx's and Bakunin's shared conception of a stateless society and a stateless

world which is probably a necessary condition for a stateless society or at least for one that has a duration, just as we can feel the appeal of Kant's notion of perpetual peace. But let us face, as Marx recognized the value of facing, the hard realities and not dream utopianly.

However, being stateless aside, a communist state would be a very different state than the capitalist states that came before it or ever exists or could exist. As both Marx and Engels realized, the socialist states before the communist state (if you will, state-like entity) in a future classless society would have some social functions that in some determinate way were state-like functions. But in a genuinely communist society the exercise of legitimate authority could not be a class matter. Indeed, the society would be classless and not creating a new class.

The exercise of legitimate authority involves coercion and *sometimes* even violence. Would communist persons never go crazy and set out to kill someone and must they not be stopped and sometimes would that not involve violence again? Not so often as it is employed now in our glorious societies in which black lives do not matter, but *sometimes* would the use of coercive violence unfortunately not be unavoidable? To think it never would be is another utopian dream. I realize that this runs against the grain of Bakunin and other libertarians, but are they not here engaging in a wistful utopia?

What I am saying here does not give license to coercion, including violence, that is a tyrannical or an arbitrary use of authority. That could never be legitimate. But it does require some enforceable and enforced laws that are coercive but ones that while protecting people are also indirectly contributing to the sustaining and the flourishing of people and society as a whole and to helping sustain the reciprocal caring of people and to their secure

wellbeing. In a classless society that would apply to and for everyone and to everyone equally—something that is remote from our present glorious societies.

We must, of course, never use coercion, including violence, which causes *unnecessary* pain or death—something that in some of our societies is not infrequent—such as police chokeholds. There are a lot of unnecessary killings in most societies and not infrequent policy brutality which sometimes in turn causes brutal responses from those brutalized which again in turn causes brutalizing to those brutalized. The merry-go-round goes round and round. We see this writ large in global relations.

There would be a lot less of that in a genuinely communist society. I do not speak of the old USSR or of present-day China, let alone of North Korea. But there would be *some* of that even in genuinely communist society. And we need public practices with somewhat state-like functions in any society, even the best of societies, though many societies (famously the U.S and China) go overboard with the coercive violence.

Sometimes there would be outbreaks of infectious diseases that requires quarantining of people and the like and the government—the state—doing so would not be a slap in the fact but a very good decision. If measles was dangerous it would not be an illegitimate use of state authority to require children to be vaccinated for measles if they are going to school. If a rancher had a cow with mad cow disease he should be forced to euthanize the cow and other cattle that had been fed the infected feed. There are situations in any society which require a state to act in certain coercive ways. For some matters any society requires a state to exercise its legitimate authority coercively if necessary. Sometimes a state will abuse its power and then it should be reined in. But that is not always the case or in a decent state even usually the case. We must not be sucked in by libertarian

ideology. Suppose the police at a distance see someone torching a mosque while worshipers are inside. They can legitimately shoot him and indeed should do so. But the use of coercion and the use of legitimate violence must not get out of hand as it does in any police state or surveillance state, e.g., with the Stasi or government surveillance in the U.S., China and North Korea.

However, as Ware well recognizes, the setting out of legitimate state-like functions or state functions necessary for a future communist society will not be simple or uncontested among socialists. The legitimate aim will be for the free association of free people. It will not involve the senseless attempt to destroy all institutions and all structures, not even all *coercive* institutions and structures. That would be a crazy libertarian utopia or, perhaps better called, a crazy dystopia. What legitimate coercive structures remain in a genuine communist society will be used to enhance the well-being of a free people in a free society—something that capitalist societies have never achieved. They have only sung ideological songs about their societies being free. The United States has excelled in this. In some respects they are free, including massive the chance to be free to lose. Think of the 1% compared to the 99%. It is not just a bizarre slogan.

What the proper and necessary state or state-like functions are is to be established empirically, though I would not say scientifically and certainly not *a priori* or unscientifically. (Everything that is not scientific is not unscientific.) But it is plain that it is not a matter that can be determined or discredited by pure conceptual analysis, though sometimes it can be aided by conceptual analysis and that aid here is not just, if at all, a matter of Augean stable cleaning.

Ware is plainly on the ball in saying “Capitalism will not change to communism like Sweden changing overnight to driving on the other side of the road” (Ware). There is no question that there is a need—indeed, a necessity—for a transition to communism, if communism is to be obtained at all. It will take time and the need for development and some critical investigation of what kind of development. Perhaps it will take much longer than Marx expected? The transition from feudalism to capitalism took a long time. These kinds of changes may be quickly initiated but will take a long time to carry through. It is not like a change in political parties in our democracies.

The Soviet Union never became a thoroughly socialist society, its claims to the contrary notwithstanding, though it did become a non-capitalist statist society. In its earliest days, it was a non-proletarian non-capitalist society run by a few dedicated socialist vanguard cadres. Later, it became a dictatorship not *of* the proletariat but a dictatorship *over* the proletariat. But it did become a statist society without a proletarian democracy. China, despite its claims, became a state capitalism utilizing increasingly neo-liberal economic policies (Chaohua 2015, 20-27). Both the United States and China proclaim they are democracies while both are actually plutocracies—the United States, with American characteristics and China with Chinese characteristics and both with a lot of not very subtle ideological brouhaha. Neither are places to write home about or to get excited about their prospects for the good. It may well be that China will replace the United States as the nearly hegemonic world imperialism and become, as Hillary Clinton has rhapsodically called the United States, “the indispensable nation”. Well, perhaps we will get in China a new indispensable nation and learn that the United States wasn’t indispensable after all. We have at present two great imperialisms out to rule or control the world, though not in name.

Which of them is the less discreet? China without acknowledging it has said goodbye to socialism while the United States relishes its demise. Shock therapy can do a good job to change course.

While socialism shouldn't be a moralism we need a clear articulation of the normal goals that socialism seeks to make real. And it is there that anarchist socialism has its strength and where Marxism is ideologically weak. But we can agree with what kind of society—what kind of socialism and communism—anarchist socialism normatively articulates *and* with the Marxist notion of how to achieve it. There is no conflict here but a mutual and reciprocal supplementation. Moreover, the anarchists would surely agree with Marxists that capitalist moralizing is massively ideological and that some social democratic-style socialism is also too moralistically ideological, though their convergence might come in neoliberalism. But China may now be the more effective capitalism because of its being rooted firmly in state capitalism, and unacknowledged as it is, in neo-liberal economics with some Chinese characteristics. Will the world lingua-franca switch again, this time from English to Chinese? Or will such matters be utterly blotted out by a worldwide environmental catastrophe brought about by a climate change that cannot be stopped or adequately ameliorated? If I were a neutral observe of what is very likely to become the actual—the horrible reality—I would bet on the latter. But I am an *activist* in whatever way I can be and not a Rortyan *quietist* or any of other kind of quietist, and I am certainly not a betting person.

Again, back to Ware. I am in accord with Ware's argument for a convergence between Marxist socialism and anarchist socialism, hoping that this late in the game both can come on stream. We crucially need them both with their varied insights. As Marx rightly and crucially stresses, we need to understand and make vividly public the actual workings of

capitalism and what could be the workings of socialism and how a socialist mode of production can change things for the better while linking that with a quite legitimate Marxist worry that anarchist socialism relies too heavily on moral critique. I am on the Marxist side here. But there is no need to have warfare about this. We need both solid science and a normative grasp of what we want to achieve. The two go together like hand in glove.

Without chanting moralistically or anti-Marxistly we should realize that there are many things that without science or philosophy, not to speak of theology, that we know to be evil or know to be good. We need to avoid *scientism*, indeed something that is not scientific. We know reciprocal caring, people having a flourishing life, having enough to eat, having clean drinking water, having a toilet, having shelter, having health care, having meaningful work, not being sexually harassed, and that kindness are good things. Moreover, we know that many people do not have these things and that this is not necessary. Except for the last, i.e., kindness, we know that we do not need science or critical thought to know these things are good.

Socialists, of course, should respect science and scientific ways of thinking. In rejecting scientism and science worship we should not reject that. In rejecting scientism (the belief that what science cannot tell us humankind cannot know) we should not go in for *a priories*.

Socialism, even of the Bukunist sort with its firm non-anti-moralist orientation and pronounced and valuable moral stances, is not an *a priorism*. It has no *synthetic a priori* judgment. Moral judgments, or at least ones that anarchists are concerned with, are not *a priori* or in any way fact insensitive. They may well concede that 'murder is wrong killing and wrong killing is wrong' is analytic, or what Wittgenstein would call a grammatical

remark and indeed a rather truistic one, but they have not the slightest interest in such banalities. That is not the kind of moral remark they are interested in or even routinely lay out. They are also not interested in the meta-ethical issue over cognitivism or non-cognitivism or normative fact-sensitivity versus fact-insensitivity. In arguing or at least articulating a moral stance as they do, they could readily admit they are being non-scientific but not anti-scientific or even unscientific. I was as well in making the plain moral claims I made above that I made no proof of required no proof or any other kind of demonstration or even that they are somehow required by reason. That burning someone alive is vile does not require or rest on scientific knowledge let alone philosophical or theological knowledge (if there is such a thing). And no scientific investigation can disconfirm or discredit it. Kindness is known (again, without the help of science, philosophy or religion) to be a good thing, though what is said in the line of Brecht's powerful poem that "we who would build the foundation of kindness could not always afford to be kind" requires argument, reflection and some examination. Moral reflection is necessary scientific, mainly historical, knowledge about the world. But it is also contestable. I think what Brecht says is a hard moral truth but as well a profound moral truth. I would not speak of the *foundations* of kindness for Davidson-Rorty-like philosophical reasons but I would say that we who are committed to kindness cannot always be kind. My good friend George Kaleb, a very knowledgeable and religious person, thought Brecht's line a chilling and dreadful remark that should never be accepted. That kindness is a good thing is simply an obvious moral remark that both of us accept and it is not reasonable that it be contested. But Brecht's remark is clearly moving and something that rings true to me if it is proper, as I think it is, to speak of moral truth. (As a former non-cognitivist I didn't always think it was). However, it

could be false. (If it is true and substantive, then it could be false. Another grammatical remark.) But if it is right to have my attitude toward Brecht's remark that it is true or otherwise appropriate or Kaleb's attitude that it is chillingly inappropriate, such reactions either way require historical political knowledge. Perhaps Brecht was thinking, as I thought, of the Baltic war over communism where neither side could afford to take prisoners since the armies were moving around without a base where prisoners could be held. That is terrible but sometimes inevitable. In many moral situations, though usually not tragic situations like this, empirical matters are at issue and sometimes historically, economically, politically or sociologically they are at least potentially contestable and require scientific investigation or adjudication.

Hilary Putnam is useful here and with a bit of philosophy. Putnam goes along with the fact/value *distinction* but not with what he calls fact/value *dichotomy* (Putman 2002). He argues that our moral judgments, or at least most of them, also are thick moral descriptions that bring in empirical considerations and that they are both normative and factual in a way, *pace* R. m. Hare, that cannot be untangled so that we could isolate the normative part and the descriptive part. This being so, they are independently identifiable so that we cannot intelligibly say they are fact insensitive for they are both factual and evaluative and unscrambledly so.

The moral judgments that Bakunin appeals to are such judgments, as are my examples given above. But neither Bakunin's nor mine are scientific judgments nor do they need scientific establishment, though at least in principle they could have a scientific backing. Whether we can *actually* establish them scientifically or not is another matter. But they do not *need* that. Such a scientific establishment is not necessary for our knowing them to be

true or to be so. What it would be like to establish them to be *false* or incoherent is clearly problematic. But am I not going overboard here? Can't we establish that human beings need water and will die without water? But isn't it absurd to run an experiment to see if human beings really need water or some liquid? We know that without experimenting and our most primitive ancestors knew that. But still couldn't we in principle? But we don't need such establishment to know it already as we know we could not fly a small airplane to the moon, at least not one of World War I vintage. Such talk is plainly absurd. Talk of 'in principle' at least is otiose here. More philosophical dream walking.

Marxists should not be *scientistic*, claiming that what science cannot tell us humankind cannot know. This is one reason why I do not like talk of scientific socialism or scientific Marxism. I certainly do not accept and am not at all attracted to an anti-scientific Marxism or socialism. I do not even think there could coherently be such a thing. But I find such talk of 'scientific Marxism' distasteful. Parts of Marxism are scientific and open to confirmation and disconfirmation and indeed in need of this testability. Indeed, its economic theories and its theories of history, such as and crucially historical materialism, are and need to be. If they turn out to be metaphysical, they are discredited. Here it is in order to speak of scientific Marxism. But that is more problematic when we try to go across the board. Perhaps it is that some work of Marxists is not scientific, though it's still not unscientific or anti-scientific either but just non-scientific or problematically scientific. Think of a lot of work of Lukács for example, particularly his, *The Historical Novel* and *The Theory of the Novel* and the response by Franco Moretti.

In general, talk of scientific Marxism smacks too much of the Second and Third Internationales and of Stalin. Even someone not so scarred as Louis Althusser claimed that

his Marxism and all genuine Marxism was scientific. But Althusser's work, whatever may be its other merits, was so metaphysically constipated that it was actually anything but scientific. Indeed, it was actually obscure and obscurantist and in effect anti-scientific. I regard myself as an analytical Marxist, as I think Bob Ware does as well, and as, of course, does G. A. Cohen. Cohen's *anti-scientism* goes deeper than mine as he takes some fundamental values to be fact *insensitive* while I, like John Rawls, do not (Nielsen 2008). But that certainly does not at all make John Rawls (who is the major figure of Cohen's critique here) or me *scientistic* but only non-scientistic in a slightly different manner than is Cohen. I will leave scientism to Bertrand Russell (in theory but not in practice *scientistic*), to Sidney Hook, and to W V. Quine, firmly non-metaphysical philosophers who were here unwittingly being very metaphysical. Putnam is off the mark here in saying that Quine was in effect the last logical positivist.

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