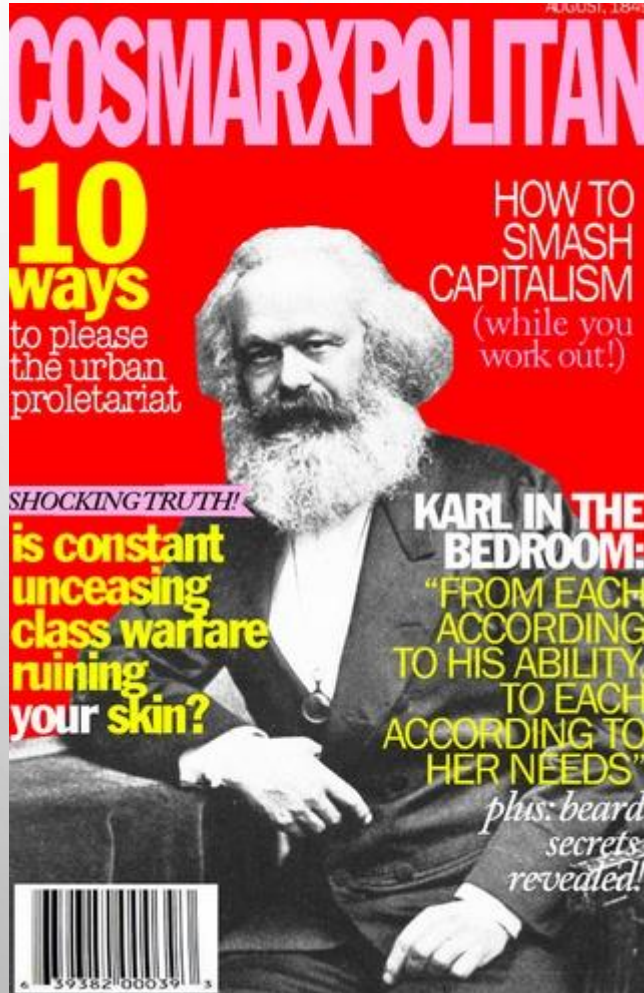


MARXISM



- Marx (1818–1883) produced the most significant theory in the history of socialism.
- The critique of capitalism was embedded in an historical theory (Historical materialism) that attempted to explain the whole development of human society.
- Only if these were understood, they believed, was it possible to understand the dynamic processes that would lead to its overthrow.
- The other general element in Marx's conception of revolutionary change concerned the role of the working class and of a political party.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY BEFORE 1914

- By 1883, when Marx died, the major features of socialist ideas had been established.
- Utopian socialists, anarchists, and Marxists had many crucial points of disagreement, but there was a common emphasis on equality, cooperation, and social solidarity, and stressed their commitment to the poorer social strata.
- Between the 1880s and the outbreak of the First World War, there was a massive growth in socialist parties in Europe, all of which came together in the Second International, founded in 1889.
- In the first place, their names, confusing at the time, have become much more so in the light of later developments. For although they were collectively known as socialist parties and most of them professed the goal of socialism



SOCIAL DEMOCRACY BEFORE 1914



- By 1883, when Marx died, the major features of socialist ideas had been established.
- Utopian socialists, anarchists, and Marxists had many crucial points of disagreement, but there was a common emphasis on equality, cooperation, and social solidarity, and stressed their commitment to the poorer social strata.
- Between the 1880s and the outbreak of the First World War, there was a massive growth in socialist parties in Europe. Though their names were confusing at the time, most of them professed the goal of socialism.
- The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) was easily the largest party in the International and was the most dominant intellectually.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY BEFORE 1914



- By 1914, the emergence of parties with a form of Marxist theory as the dominant ideology seeking mass membership and majority electoral support had already pushed alternative socialist traditions to the margins.
- One further element in the newly dominant tradition of socialism was its professed acceptance of working-class internationalism.
- It was generally understood that all the parties shared the view that the workers had no country because their common enemy was capitalism.

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISM



- Communist parties did not yet exist and social democracy covered a spectrum of views, including those that would later identify themselves with communism.
- With the formation of communist parties after the First World War, social democrats and communists would become bitter antagonists and, in the process, social democracy would change.

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISM



- Modern communism was created with the assumption of power in Russia by the Bolshevik party in 1917.
- The Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party had been formed in 1899 as the main organizational focus for Russian Marxists.
- However, it had soon dissolved into factions, one of which had been led by Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924).
- Bolsheviks changed their name to the Communist Party soon after the revolution (the term 'Bolshevik' had simply meant 'majority'), and Moscow became the centre of the doctrine that now became known as communism.

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISM

bolsheviks



- Even after the Bolsheviks had taken over, they talked of a democratically elected Constituent Assembly as the body that would rule, and they clearly expected to win a majority there.
- However, when the election results in January 1918 showed that they had won only 21% of the seats, they dissolved the Assembly.
- It soon led to a situation in which the communists were dominating all organs of power and, by the end of the civil war, the party and the Red Army had become increasingly autocratic. Each new extension of power was justified as a temporary measure, but the party/state dictatorship was now being constructed.

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISM

- During this period, the Bolsheviks attempted to administer Russia's economy purely by decree, a policy dubbed War Communism. Farmers and factory workers were ordered to produce, and food and goods were seized and issued by decree.
- By 1920, the economy was also destitute after six years of war, the support of the peasantry was in danger of being lost completely, and some 8 million people had died from disease and malnutrition since the Bolshevik Revolution
- When no bread arrived in Moscow in 1921, workers became hungry and disillusioned. They organized demonstrations against the Party's policy of privileged rations, in which the Red Army, Party members, and students received rations first.
- Lenin replaced the food requisitioning policy with a tax, signaling the inauguration of the **New Economic Policy (NEP)**

EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISM

- Lenin understood that economic conditions were dire, so he opened up markets to a greater degree of free trade, hoping to motivate the population to increase production. **NEP** economic reforms aimed to take a step back from central planning and allow the economy to become more independent.
 - an end to grain requisitions and instead instituted a tax on the peasants, thereby allowing them to keep and trade part of their produce.
 - NEP labor reforms tied labor to productivity, incentivizing the reduction of costs and the redoubled efforts of labor.
 - The NEP gave opportunities for the government to use engineers, specialists, and intelligentsia for cost accounting, equipment purchasing, efficiency procedures, railway construction, and industrial administration.

THE BREAK BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

- While many European socialists were exhilarated by the first Marxist-inspired revolution, others were less convinced.
- As they watched the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, the revolutionary terror, and the evolution towards a one-party state, their doubts as to whether this was really socialism increased.
- They did not believe that they could be justified in countries where peaceful change through constitutional means might be possible. They also questioned whether the Bolshevik Revolution could even be justified in Marxist terms.
- Whereas the Marxist conception was of a temporary impersonal dictatorship based on mass support, the Bolshevik one was of semi-permanent dictatorship exercised by a centralized and hierarchical party.

THE BREAK BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

- Many of the parties still used Marxist discourse and attempted to justify their policies in relation to the ultimate goal of revolution.
- They then formed the ***Labour and Socialist International*** concentrated primarily on seeking power through **parliamentary** means and advocating practical reforms, with the *British Labour Party* entering the mainstream of social democracy.
- This does not mean that they no longer aspired to establish socialism by abolishing capitalism, but there was now an absolute division between social democracy and communism.
- **Social democrats** rejected the Soviet model and effectively accepted the notion that there was some convergence between their own views and those of others, such as left-wing liberals, who believed in parliamentary democracy and social reform.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



- Most capitalist societies experienced either serious economic depression, characterized by mass unemployment and a reduction in social expenditure or, still worse, the elimination of liberal-democracy and its replacement by extreme right-wing dictatorship.
- Such outcomes clearly constituted a practical and intellectual defeat for the project of social democracy

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



- But when '**Keynesian**' **economics** was put into practice between the late 1940s and the early 1970s, there was a prolonged period of economic growth, leading to far higher living standards in Western Europe, and a much greater proportion of GNP devoted to **welfare expenditure**, than ever before.
- Keynesianism suggested that when there was evidence of a fall in demand in the economy, with the threat of declining employment, governments should increase their own expenditure to counteract the effects of this low phase in the business cycle.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



- During the Keynesian era, social democrats had viewed welfare systems as a matter of collective rights or social citizen.
- This raised new questions for social democracy:
 - Had capitalism been changed by social democracy so that its values were now incorporated in the system? Or
 - Had capitalism in advanced industrial countries become so successful that it could now afford concessions to the working classes whether or not these were demanded by social democracy?

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

- During the third quarter of the 20th century, there was a gradual erosion of the dominance of social democracy.
- As social expenditure increased and full employment was established, most social democratic parties underwent a further evolution.
- The fact that control over much of the economy remained in private hands inevitably limited the power of social democracy and further constraints stemmed from its need to secure electoral support for its measures.
- Most now became more openly committed to the goal of progressive social reform, rather than the total elimination of the capitalist system.
- Social democracy could now be characterized as a tradition seeking to promote increasing benefits for the working classes within a primarily capitalist system.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



- Three years later, the Thatcher government (effectively in alliance with the US) deliberately sought to create a situation that would permanently remove the existing basis for social democracy.
- The British acted as pathbreakers, but by the mid-1980s the post-war system was being eroded across Europe. In this respect, the U-turn of François Mitterrand's French socialist government was particularly significant.
- After a brief period of expansionist policies immediately after taking office, this administration turned towards austerity measures in 1982, apparently burying the idea of Keynesianism in a single country.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

- By the early 1970s, **neo-liberal economic thought** aroused.
- Such ideas were constantly propounded from the late 1970s, with an insistence on the superiority of the market over any form of government intervention.
- The neo-liberals reinforced their attack on social democrats by claiming that they ('socialists') did not want to liberate people in this way.
- On the contrary, it was argued that they sought to maintain a dependency relationship from which the state, parties, and trade union bureaucracies, rather than citizens, derived the primary benefits.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Neo-liberal economic thought provided a critique of the Keynesian welfare state.

- **First, - uneconomic**, in displacing the necessary disciplines and incentives of the marketplace, undermining the incentive of capital to invest and of labour to work.
- **Second, - unproductive** in encouraging the rapid growth of public bureaucracy and in forcing capital and human resources out of the productive private sector of the economy. At the same time, the monopoly of state welfare provision had enabled workers within the public sector to command inflationary wage increases.
- **Third, - inefficient** since the state's monopoly of welfare provision and sponsorship of the special interests of trade unions led to an inefficient delivery of services and a system geared to the interests of organized producers rather than consumers.
- **Finally, - ineffective** in failing to eliminate poverty and deprivation, despite the resources devoted to welfare.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



- By the mid-1980s, the new conventional wisdom was that individuals could and should take care of themselves rather than relying on the state, and that the costs of welfare needed to be kept under control so that taxation would not be at 'prohibitive' levels.
- the tendency was to claim that public provision always needed to be justified, for people were more interested in the quality of the service than its source.

NEW LEFTS



- Others who rejected social democracy as too timid were drawn to new forms of extra-parliamentary politics that challenged existing theories and practices across a whole range of activity.
- The **New Left** was never a coherent movement, but was rather a shorthand for a whole range of ideas and tendencies that fell outside the dominant traditions.
- Revolutionary transformation would now depend on 'outsiders', including ethnic minorities and radical intellectuals.
- Battling against existing power structures and sexual conventions, students hold their aspirations to create a new world.

NEW LEFTS



- New Left had generated **new social movements**, which maintained that the dominant forms of socialist theory and practice had been inadequate because they had marginalized or ignored the issues that were now being raised, and they argued that socialism could be enriched by broadening its range.
- Far more attention was now also paid to aspects of Marx that had generally been ignored - his concept of 'alienation', which brought together the realms of consciousness and economic exploitation.

NEW LEFTS

- Yet the new left was not always deeply theoretical or even specifically socialist.
- More generally, there was also a whole range of direct action movements in the latter 1960s and 1970s, including squatters' movements, tenants' cooperatives, and women's groups.
- Some of these included people with a coherent socialist doctrine, some based themselves on anarchist ideas, but there were also numerous activists who were drawn to radical politics on particular issues without regarding themselves as socialist.



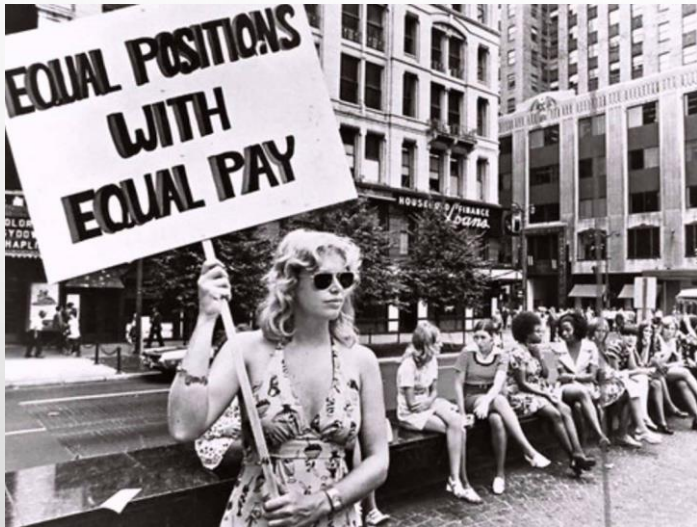
NEW LEFTS



- For example, the campaign for nuclear disarmament was the biggest mass movement in Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s and was supported by the new left, but it was fueled far more by moral outrage than any conventional socialist notions.
- The biggest single issue was opposition to the American-led war against the North Vietnamese, which generated major campaigns and demonstrations in many parts of the world.

NEW LEFTS

Feminist Socialism



Green Socialism



SOCIALISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY

- The trend is currently towards a less regulated form of capitalism that is increasing inequalities both within and between states.
- The inequality within advanced capitalist societies, which had been marginally reduced in the middle period of the 20th century, increased rapidly between the 1970s and the 1990s – particularly in the US and the UK.
- Throughout the capitalist world, the life chances of the wealthy, in terms of health, life expectancy, educational opportunities, travel, and job satisfaction are vastly greater than those of the poor.
- Individual aspiration has been a central value within capitalism that has been internalized by populations, particularly as institutions promoting an alternative message have tended to decline. With a general ethos encouraging individualism, it becomes much more difficult for socialists to advocate cooperation and social solidarity.

SOCIALISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY

- At the same time, it is also clear that many people in capitalist societies regret the absence of social solidarity or community.
- Many believe that there was once a greater sense of shared values and think that crime, drugs, violence, and the constant breakdown of relationships have something to do with the excessive individualism of contemporary life.
- Yet this can also be a theme of the political Right, which calls for the restoration of traditional values.
- At its worst, this can be coupled with racism and xenophobia, with the argument that social breakdown and the loss of the old sense of community have been caused by migrants or asylum seekers. In less extreme versions, the notion of community counterpoised to individualism often takes the form of nationalism.
- All this has therefore become difficult terrain for socialists.