

The two fundamental interpretations of socialism

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Socialism, considered generically, represents the set of aspirations for social improvement, which tend to crystallize in a new economic order, and in norms of coexistence in which the interest of the individual is identified and is protected in the collective interest. It is, above all, a generous idea of social justice, of administration of common goods for the good of all, without privileges and without plunder.

Both the expositions and the collective movements in which it has been shaped through successive generations (with a historical continuity that gives it permanence as a living species and biological integration and differentiation), have acquired diverse manifestations. The most characteristic, fundamental and differentiated are the two forms of interpretation that we are going to expose here comparatively, in the current state in which we see them in our people, competing in favor of the proletariat and the destinies of the Spanish nation.

These two fundamental interpretations are: the authoritarian or Marxist one and the libertarian or anarchist one. In the scheme of this comparison, we ignore the other secondary nuances that represent nothing more than aborted and deviant forms.

Highlighting the differences, pointing out their contrast, is always more didactic than a simple and isolated exposition.

The proletariat, as an exploited and dispossessed social class, is the great actor and animator of socialism, because it embodies its sufferings, its class consciousness, its concerns, rebellions and utopian aspirations. Authoritarian socialism and libertarian socialism mark, in the proletariat, two tendencies, two methods of struggle, two feelings and two mentalities.

Both tendencies, in their nonconformity with the present, in the common situation of exploited workers, in the struggle against the common enemy and in the need to defend themselves against the same danger, are about to reach a revolutionary circumstantial understanding. But such tactical understanding must inevitably be broken, otherwise mutual tolerance will be found in respect for the right of each region to choose its preferred form of constructive organization. Only in this way will the contrast of experiences and their appreciable results facilitate the triumph of the best.

Before pointing out what characterizes their respective social constructions, we must point out the following detail. The acceptance of the State, like the denial of freedom by Marxists, is not doctrinal, but tactical. They recognize that Anarchy is the final ideal of Society, they also recognize that the State and even dictatorship are an evil, but they accept them as a necessary evil for the construction of Socialism. I renounce to value this fact, leaving such care to the reader, since I have proposed to make an impartial exposition, pruning it of all sectarianism, to the extent that it is possible for me.

Current organized form of authoritarian socialism

Today's defence organisations exert an educational influence on their members, both in the sense of developing dignity and class spirit, as well as a feeling of solidarity. They also serve as a channel for emancipatory aspirations and group wills into a collective group, which acts within society as an evolutionary and transformative force.

The General Workers' Union is the proletarian organization that leads to the realization of authoritarian socialism. It is a branch of the socialist party, with which it identifies itself in the persons of its leaders, who are almost stable and permanent.

Because of its political influence, the organization is centralist, hierarchical, that is, authoritarian. The permanence of the positions and the economic interests of its multiple base (relief groups, resistance funds, consumer cooperatives, casinos, etc.) favor the development of a paid bureaucracy.

It cultivates in the member a political mentality, that is, the belief that redemption can be achieved through the mediation of the leaders and representatives of politicians. The electoral struggle for access to positions of popular representation has produced the deviation of the movement towards class collaboration and pacts with bourgeois political parties.

The harangue of parliamentary speeches, the ardor of verbal battles with enemies, lulls the desire for freedom and the liberating rebellions.

Due to the imperative of special circumstances, known to all, the organization, like the party that leads it, has recently changed its collaborationist and legal course, to take the rough and straight path of revolutionary insurrection.

Current organized form of libertarian socialism

Libertarian tendency, represented by the National Confederation of Labor, which characterizes both its unique basis of economic defense against the capitalist exploitation of labor, as well as its tactics of direct action, which, by removing the worker from parliamentary and political action, accustoms him to rely solely on the strength of his organized action.

It aims to educate its members in solidarity, mutual aid and self-confidence. It is a confederation, as its name suggests, of unions, with autonomy in those areas that are exclusive to them, and even these, with a federation of sections, equally autonomous, which manifest their sovereignty in the Assemblies. The unpaid officials exercise the mandate conferred on them by the Assembly, before which they must render accounts of their management, thus neutralizing authoritarianism or centralism.

It acts in a permanent state of revolutionary gestation, and for this reason it has endured multiple repressions and periods of clandestinity longer than those of legality.

It is therefore more essentially proletarian, and its members more selectly revolutionary, since anyone who joined it through a desire for careerism would reap more days in jail than allowances.

It is therefore, within the current society, an anticipation of the future organization, both by its organizational structure and by the self-sufficient and anti-redemptive mentality that it tries to instill in its adherents.

Not being tied to the present by any conservative or stationary interest, the wills tend directly towards the transformation of the capitalist and state society.

Revolutionary tactics of authoritarian socialism

The conspiracy aimed at the violent transformation of society is no different, for the authoritarians, from that of other political parties, that is, from the tactics of the coup d'état. Since they have to use the organized force of this institution to build the new society, they do not need to destroy it, but to reform it, and the more whole it passes into their hands, the easier it will be for them to have the excessive advances and the transforming excesses that the people deter-

mine. They need to defend themselves on one side, from the reaction, and on the other, from the libertarians who put no limits on the initiative of the people in their revenge.

They therefore take advantage of the loyal elements of the army and other armed forces, as well as the left-wing political forces dissatisfied with the bourgeois governments. They organize disciplined and hierarchical militias, which in the event of violence will control the popular insurrection and which will later be organized bodies for the defense of the new socialist State.

It is possible that, as occurred in Asturias, the proletariat organized in the UGT, both in economic and political reform, goes further than its program allows us to expect, reaching the abolition of wages and currency, and even shaking off political tutelage, but the State always tends towards uniformity and due to its structure, even if it were democratic and not dictatorial, it will oppose the advances of any dangerous experimentation.

For them, the State is the guarantee of a socialist construction, the quickest way to annul enemies and to silence the discontented, whether they be from the right or the left, regressive or evolutionary. They need the organized force of the State, and therefore the defenselessness and submission of the people, to ensure the attainment of their happiness, and as soon as they consider society secure, dictators would cease to be dictators and the mediators emancipated from labor would abandon their privilege and would reconcile themselves with it. However well the dialectic presents it to us, this sophism, or in popular language, this "tale", is only swallowed by those who have their gullets accustomed to swallowing millstones.

Revolutionary tactics of libertarian socialism

It consists of the armed insurrection of the proletariat, in taking advantage of the rebellions of all the oppressed. It accepts only the violence of the insurrectional act, as a necessary evil, which has its justification in the defense of the inherent right to economic satisfaction and freedom. But it declares itself incompatible with the organized violence of the State, in whose annulment it places the possibility of building socialism. To this end, it favors the maximum participation of the people in the insurrectional act, and in the construction of the social order. The maintenance of the people in arms, with their indignation and their awakened spontaneity, without recommendations of calm, nor promises to watch over what only it is responsible for defending, will constitute the defensive security of the new order, which must be valued for its very goodness, if it is to deserve to survive.

It is more interesting to prevent discontent, than to pursue it.

The direct participation of the people in economic management and in matters of public interest, that is, the practice of solidarity, mutual aid and freedom, is what should produce satisfaction and well-being, the enthusiasm to defend what has been conquered, better than material and legal violence.

The faith that the authoritarian places in the government and the providence of a few chosen men, the libertarian places in each and every individual who not only are not better governed, but can only be good in possession of their rights to live and be free.

The justice that is done to the people is more expeditious and exemplary than that exercised in their name by rulers of all shades, who in the ability to exploit them for their own benefit and in the skill to evade them resemble one another, as one drop of water resembles another drop of water.

In a socialist society, the politician must be only an anecdotal memory, a museum specimen of social parasites.

Authoritarian construction of socialism

Social justice, expressed as the duty to be useful to society and as the right to benefit from its wealth, its services and its organization, is governed and administered by the State. Whether dictatorial or democratic, it continues to be the provider, legislator, police, educator and judge. All forms of wealth that are currently private property become collective property, directly controlled by the State, although producers are given the right to control their management. Thus, land, transport companies, industrial companies, communication companies, etc., are governed by workers' delegates and by representatives of the State.

The worker is granted the right to receive the product of his work, a salary that is considered fair, because it is deducted from the value of the product, after deducting the inherent expenses, among which must be counted the remuneration or part of the representatives of the State, and the fiscal charges that the State requires. The salary varies according to the category. The product of his salary is accumulated by the individual, returning, upon death, to the community. Money remains the measure of the value of things and a sign of exchange. Banks and currency, like the rest of wealth, are collective property and controlled and administered by the State.

Politics remains a career and a means of livelihood, alongside work. As today, the most capable will take part in it, in order to gain the favour and representation of the people. It will be more democratic, less privileged, less exultant.

The State, through those rulers elected by the people, will dictate the law, impose the norm, guarantee the duty and the right of the citizens. The police will pursue the criminals in the new social order, and will defend the State from the conspiracy of the counterrevolutionaries.

The armed repressive bodies will be formed by men loyal to the regime. The army will be democratized, reducing its complicated hierarchical ranking and giving personality within it to the soldier, through the delegates of their communities.

Punitive justice, in charge of interpreting and enforcing the law, will be in the hands of loyalists to the regime, and will condemn criminals to material punishment and deprivation of liberty. It will have its obligatory complement in the prisons and jails, whose premises, regulations and personnel will be humanized and democratized, also recognizing the collective personality of the prisoner.

Higher technical organizations will give the precise norm in each case and moment, for the aggrandizement and improvement of the whole.

In short, it is a question of abolishing Capitalism and its legal basis, the private ownership of the means of production. The State is preserved, introducing into it those reforms tending to democratize it. The means of production, transport, banking, public services, are collective property, also collective administration, through delegates elected by the community, presided over by others appointed by the State. Their enjoyment is conditioned by the value of consumption or use, expressed by money.

The common people, as producers or consumers, and exceptionally, as soldiers or prisoners, do not have individual personality, unless they find a way to express it through the collective.

Thus, the economic emancipation from the voracious claws of Capitalism appears to be achieved, but in no way the political emancipation from the oppression of the State, which continues to weigh on the individual, in a more accentuated and universal way than at present.

The exploitation of labour has two painful aspects, each more revolting than the other: forcing the worker to perform with the complicity of the machine, the stopwatch, the skilled worker and the inquisitive gaze of the foreman; and remunerating him insufficiently or unfairly. Nothing is more just than for the worker to aspire, as such, to these two orders of emancipation.

In this way, and until a new revolution occurs, or the State agrees to dissolve itself, only a restricted part of what is generically understood as socialism is realized, sacrificing the rest for the sake of positivism, which, if we take into account that Science does not dogmatize about what is possible and impossible, has very little of scientific.

Libertarian construction of socialism

Just as capitalism is abolished by abolishing the right of private ownership of the means of production, the State is abolished by destroying its accumulated power and returning its functions to the Community. Only that which can be replaced advantageously is effectively destroyed.

The destruction of the State in the way we are going to see is not, exclusively, what distinguishes libertarian construction. If in the critique of society it goes further than Marxism, it also goes further in the construction of Socialism.

The elements of production: land, transport, communications, services and everything that constitutes social wealth, are not placed in collective property, but in common property. I am interested in clarifying the scope and meaning of these two terms, which are easily distinguishable, since currently, both forms of property exist. Collective or public, is that which is administered by communities, through their representatives and is enjoyed through favor, money or privilege, in a regulated way. Common, is that which is administered and enjoyed directly, by everyone. Under a collective regime, a railroad, for example, would be governed and administered by indirect (political) and direct representatives of its personnel. The public would not intervene in its internal regime and has access to it through a favor pass from the railroad itself or through the payment of the ticket. A common railroad would be administered by its own employees, or its direct representatives, and the individual could use it freely, when needed.

In the libertarian construction, everyone is a producer, who accepts the duty to produce in exchange for the right to satisfy their needs. Their capacity is not valued, nor their performance, nor do they receive a salary. They acquire the right to consume, and products, whether rationed or not, depending on their scarcity or abundance, lack value for exchange.

Money is unnecessary, since there is no value of work, nor a value of products, that needs to be measured with it. Exchange between individuals or between collectivities is carried out without notion of its value, freely and by mutual agreement, thus providing the most expeditious solution to the Gordian knot of the Economy.

The value that products lose is acquired by man, by the exponent of his needs. With the justification of his quality as a producer, man will have the right to satisfy his needs to the extent that the common stock allows. In this way, the distributive justice of duties and rights, the desirable and possible equity, is achieved.

The State, recognized as incompatible with liberty, not only disappears as such an Institution, dissolving its providence, its police, its armed militias, its army, its legislative and judging role in the People, but the new society guards itself against its offspring, against its masked forms, avoiding the concentration of these powers in bureaucratic mediators and professional redeemers. Power returns to the individual and, collectively, it only manifests itself circumstantially in Assemblies or Congresses.

Political mediation ceases to be a profession; not even the fact of being armed for defense against internal or external dangers can serve to exempt one from the obligation to produce. The libertarian conscience of the people, educated in a propitious environment, will be the best guarantee against the offspring of careerism and authoritarianism.

Punitive justice is renounced as counterproductive and sterile, as it is nothing more than a semblance of justice. The judging role is taken over by the people, by their Assemblies, which, in accordance with the new libertarian morality, renounce any sanction other than moral, or at most economic.

With federalist autonomy, individuals will form geographic communities, free communes, or open councils, in small population centers. In the cities there will be Factory and Industrial Unions, consumer organizations, neighborhood groups and whatever else is required by common, diverse and multiple interests. All these various collectives, already outlined by the libertarian proletariat, will federate regionally and nationally.

In this way, Socialism is achieved in an integral way, without sophistry or scientificism, eliminating classes and hierarchies that are a sign of economic or political injustice. Man is fully emancipated, and the path to experimentation with new forms, to evolution and progress is not closed. Man, beneficiary of society, and not the other way around, by practicing freedom, learns to be free, that is, the only way in which learning is possible. The individual personality is not drowned out by the collective voice, given the multiplicity of forms of organization and the libertarian social structure.

It is a question of a new economy, a new justice, a new morality. Three factors that we consider indispensable for a social transformation to be truly revolutionary, efficient and fruitful for the achievement of human well-being.

Summary

At a time when interest in social forms that can replace the current one, which has already exhausted all its possibilities, goes beyond the proletariat, I consider it interesting to highlight in this comparative way the two emancipatory currents that are fighting over the construction of a new social structure.

The contrast is clear enough to serve as a lesson to those who have not yet decided on one or the other tendency. With the cards thus laid out, few will hesitate.

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