

What kind of socialism in the 21st century (outline)

Today we can see the global crises of - neoliberal- capitalism in a total open manner: the economic crisis which hits the world economy, the social crisis which is leading to a further rise of unemployment and precarity; the ecological disaster which is a danger for the whole mankind and nature. And all these crises are not isolated but combined and make the consequences stronger.

In that concrete context the fight for socialism is again full on the agenda- not only in a "historical" sense but as a practical perspective hic et nunc.

Confronted with these crises bourgeois governments and politicians had introduced a lot of "anticrisis measures". But it is obvious to any objective observer of the situation that these measures can only moderate (sometimes) the consequences of the crises but cannot solve the crises themselves. Billions of dollars and euros were given to banks and "sick" companies and now we are confronted with the debt crisis in Greece ( and tomorrow maybe in Portugal, Spain,...). Neokeynesian programmes were developed but did not bring a real "take off" of economy. In Copenhagen in December last year the UNO-climate summit ( COP 15 ) ended with a disaster. Not one concrete point was elaborated to prevent climate change.

Another world is possible and necessary but to fulfill these task the concept of another society without exploitation of man and nature has to be " attractive " again. To succeed in the fight for a socialist society marxists cannot go on as if "nothing happened" in our own ranks. In contrary we have to reshape our concepts- for above all it is necessary to draw full the consequences of the failure of stalinism and so called " real socialism".

What today is on the agenda is a " socialism of the 21st century". The main elements of such a socialism of the 21st century are in my opinion:

- There has to be a -revolutionary- "break" with capitalism. Reforms -though necessary- alone will not lead to a society which is not based on the principle of profit. As always in the history of the workers movement we have to start with the immediate problems of the masses ( unemployment, social cuts,... ecological demands like drinkable water without paying for it). But today even smaller reforms cannot be achieved under capitalist rule. Only when there is a fundamental change in the "logic of society" -needs instead of profits-these improvements will be implemented. And it is clear that no bourgeois government will orientate itself on such a noncapitalist logic.

- Without plurality and democracy socialism will not be attractive for millions. As long as " socialism" was associated with iron curtain, gulags and oppression it was easy for the apologists of capitalism to present the western world as the only form of "expression of freedom". Today Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe have vanished and we have to learn from this historical defeat. About all the mistakes and crimes in these societies has been spoken in an open and selfcritical way. Marxists of the 21st century have to state clear that plurality and democracy is essential- as it was for Marx, Engels or Lenin.

Democracy

and plurality are not only necessary in the fight for a socialist society. Only with plurality and democracy socialist societies can mobilize its resources in an adequate manner ( for example: democratic planning of the economy " from below " ).

- The ecological dimension can no longer be ignored. There is no "planet B". While capitalism is destroying nature more and more a socialist society has to use natural resources in a sustainable way. The climate summit in Cochabamba ( 19.-22.May 2010) is a good example how climate change and ecological questions in general should be seen by marxists which are on " height of time ".

- A " feminisation" of the socialist theory and praxis is necessary. The socialist movement cannot tolerate any longer that in its ranks patriarchal structures are reproduced.

Hermann Dworczak