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**Economic Content of
Socialism in Lenin
Is It the Same as in
Marx?**

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In the following lines we propose to discuss critically how Lenin conceived of socialism as a new form of society and to what extent his concept of socialism could be considered Marxian. As the title of the paper indicates, we shall be concerned here basically with the economic content of socialism considered purely as a theoretical category. It should be emphasised that we are not concerned here with the (practical) policies Lenin pursued, before or after October 1917, towards the realisation of socialism. Ours is an exercise in pure theory. In what follows, Section I summarises Lenin's main ideas on socialism's economic content, Section II examines these ideas in the light of Marx's writings on the subject, while Section III concludes the paper.

I

The discussion of socialism considered as a specific economic-social formation does not figure much in Lenin's writings as a theoretical category before 1917. Even then it is difficult to accept the statement of a contemporary Hungarian economist that "prior to the 1917 socialist revolution Lenin made only sporadic allusions to the pattern of the socialist economy".⁽¹⁾ True, beginning with the Bolshevik seizure of political power in October 1917, the problem of building a socialist economy in his country increasingly preoccupied Lenin's mind. However, while this preoccupation concerned socialism's implementation in practice, Lenin's most comprehensive discussion of socialism as a purely theoretical category—particularly with respect to its economic content—antedates the October seizure of power and is found mainly in the famous pamphlet *The State and Revolution*, unfinished though its composition was. On the other hand, in Lenin's post-October writings there appear important theoretical formulations on socialism. Here we shall be trying to touch upon what we consider to be Lenin's most significant writings on the socialist economy, before and after October 1917, and we shall be paying particular attention to the relevant discussion in *The State and Revolution*.

Lenin makes a distinction between socialism and communism as well as identifies socialism with what is already, according to Marx, the "first phase of communism". Thus he holds that "from capitalism mankind can pass directly only to socialism" and that "socialism must inevitably grow...gradually into communism".(2) Similarly, after posing the question, "what is communism and what distinguishes it from socialism?", he answers that communism is a "higher social form" compared to socialism, the latter being the "first form of the new society".(3) On the other hand, Lenin explicitly identifies 'socialism' with Marx's "first phase of communism",(4) while referring, at the same time, to the "scientific distinction between socialism and communism".(5) Consistently with the latter argument he speaks of two distinct "transitions", one "from capitalism to socialism" and the other "from socialism to communism".(6)

Coming to socialism itself, Lenin conceives it as a system of "social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the measure of each one's labour".(7) By "social ownership of the means of production" or, alternatively, "the common ownership of the whole of society over the means of production", (8) Lenin means—negatively speaking—the abolition of

"private ownership of the means of production", (9) where, again, by "private ownership" he means "private ownership of separate persons (otdel'nykh lits)". (10) In socialism "the means of production have ceased to be the private ownership of separate persons, the means of production belong to the whole society". (11) Positively speaking, "social ownership of the means of production" signifies for Lenin "the means of production belonging to the working class state power", or "the ownership of the means of production being in the hands of the (working class) state", as he puts it in one of his articles. (12) He calls the enterprises as being of "consequent socialist type" when these, including the land on which these are situated, "belong to the (working class) state". (13)

Continuing on the transformation of the property form, Lenin observes that under socialism, since "it will be impossible to usurp the means of production and turn them into private property, the exploitation of individual by individual will be impossible". (14)

As regards the distribution relations in socialism—understood as Marx's "first phase of communism"—Lenin, paraphrasing Marx's 'Marginal Notes' of 1875, observes that "every member of society, performing a certain part of the socially-necessary labour, receives from society a certificate to the effect that he/she has

done a certain amount of labour". Then, "after a deduction is made of the amount of labour going to the public fund" every labourer receives, against the certificate, a corresponding amount of products from the public store of consumer goods and thus "receives from society as much as he/she has given to it". Following Marx textually, Lenin points out that this "equal right" of the labourer, being an application of an equal measure to different people, in fact implies inequality and hence does not cross the "narrow horizon of bourgeois right". Lenin infers that this "bourgeois right" in socialism necessitates the presence of the "bourgeois state" to enforce it, of course "without the bourgeoisie". (15)

Lenin further observes, referring to the "first phase of communism", that since communism cannot yet be entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism, there will be (in its first phase) "equality of all members of society (only) in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and wages".(16) But somewhat differently, in the first phase of the communist society "all citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state...that is, a single country-wide state syndicate...with equality of labour and pay". (17)

Finally, as regards exchange relations, Lenin excludes commodity production from socialism. The end of capitalism would signify for him "the elimination of commodity production", (18) and in the new social order "organised and state-wide distribution of products" is to be "substituted for commerce". (19) In the same way the Party Programme adopted in 1919 under his direct guidance emphasises the need for "applying measures for extending accounting without money and for preparing the elimination of money". (20)

Now Lenin's position that we have cited here—namely, the incompatibility of socialism with commodity production—refers to his texts composed before the start of the 'New Economic Policy' (NEP) (in 1921). There is a fairly widespread view that this position changed in his writings beginning with NEP, and that in these writings Lenin emphasised commodity production's compatibility with, if not its necessity under, socialism.(21) This view, we submit, is not quite correct.

What changed in Lenin's perspective in the period after the so-called 'War Communism' was not his basic position on commodity production in relation to socialism but rather the way he envisaged such production in relation to the transition to socialism. Indeed, as can be seen from Lenin's writings and

speeches after the period of 'War Communism', his sole preoccupation during the last years of his life is with the specific problems of arriving at socialism—in the absence of proletarian revolutions in western Europe—in the situation of Russia's backward economy marked strongly by traits of pre-capitalism.

Lenin admits earlier policy mistakes of the Bolshevik leadership in this regard. "We", he writes on the fourth anniversary of October, "reckoned on establishing—directly commanded by the proletarian state—the state production and distribution of products on communist lines in a small-peasant country. Life has shown our mistake." Now he realises that in a "small-peasant country" (like Russia) socialism has to be reached "by way of state capitalism"—"led" by the "wholesale merchant".(22) Lenin asks the party, in the "contemporary transitional economy from capitalism to socialism", (23) to "grasp trade as the link...in the transitional forms of [our] socialist contribution...to create the foundation for socialist social-economic relations".(24) When Lenin says that "commodity exchange with the peasantry" forms "the economic foundation of socialism", (25) he seems to mean that commodity production and exchange are the elements not of socialism itself but they serve as "mediating links"

for the "transition from patriarchalism and small production to socialism", (26) as "firm footbridges to socialism through state capitalism". (27) On the contrary, "the socialist exchange of products", Lenin emphasises, "are not commodities in the politico-economic sense of the term". (28)

When, in one of his last compositions, Lenin asserts that "there has been a radical change in our whole point of view on socialism", this "change" has little to do with Lenin's basic position on commodity production in the future society. This "change" rather refers to the new emphasis on the "growth of co-operation" and the necessity of "cultural revolution"—away from the earlier preoccupation with the "winning of political power"—for "an advance to socialism" (pereiti K sotsializmu) requiring a "whole historical epoch". (29)

II

Earlier we referred to the distinction between socialism and communism made by Lenin as well as his identification of socialism with the "first phase of communism". These are Lenin's own contributions and not Marx's. Marx uses the terms 'socialism' and 'communism' at different places indifferently and equivalently—without making any distinction between them—as well as other equivalent terms such as 'union', 'association' or 'society of producers' to designate the new economic-social formation based on what he calls the "associated mode of production"(30) that is to succeed the older one based on the capitalist mode of production.

Marx's non-distinction between 'socialism and 'communism' follows naturally from his three-phase periodisation of the evolution of human society based on the relation between the producers and their conditions of production: "original union", "separation" and "restoration of the original union in a new historical form"(31) where, as it should be clear, the third phase refers to the "society of free and associated producers" succeeding "separation". (Almost two decades earlier, Marx had equivalently written about "three social forms"

of human development: "personal dependence", "personal independence based on material dependence" and "free individuality based on the universal development of the individuals and the domination of their common, social productivity as their social power", (32) the last one, again, obviously referring to socialism or communism.) When Marx, in his 'Marginal Notes' of 1875, speaks of a "lower" and a "higher" phase in relation to the future society, he is not referring to two societies based on two different modes of production but is referring to a single society passing through two historical phases, just as he refers to the "formal" and "real" subsumption of labour under capital as two distinct phases through which a single society—the capitalist society, based on the labourers' separation from the conditions of production—passes. In this sense Marx could as well speak of a "lower" and a "higher" phase of the 'socialist' society.(33) Indeed, in his "Encyclopaedia" article on 'Karl Marx', written on the eve of the first world war, Lenin, scrupulously following Marx, does not make any distinction between socialism and communism and, in an entire section devoted to the future society, speaks exclusively of "socialism".(34)

It should be stressed that the period leading from capitalism to the establishment of the "republican

system of the association of free and equal producers" — as the Resolution of the First Congress of the First International (drafted by Marx) put it—is justly called by Marx the "political transition period" corresponding to the absolute political role of the proletariat,(35) it has still not transformed the capitalist mode of production.(36) The commonly held idea of socialism as the transition between capitalism and communism has no basis in Marx's texts.(37)

As regards the socialist society itself— assuming with Lenin that it is the same as Marx's "first phase of communism" — Lenin's position on the absence of commodity production in socialism—that we touched on earlier—seems to be in basic agreement with Marx's (our paper not being on Marx as such, we cannot here go far into the question of commodity production vis-à-vis socialism as envisaged by Marx.) We simply refer here to two relevant texts of Marx composed at two different periods. "The necessity of transforming the product or the activity of the individuals into exchange value", reads the first and earlier text, "proves that the production of the individuals is...not the offspring of association which distributes the [social] labour within itself...Here the individuals are subsumed under social production which

exists outside of them like a fatality. Nothing, therefore, is more absurd than to suppose the control of the associated individuals over their production on the basis of exchange value."(38) The second text written two decades later refers specifically to the "communist society as it has just come out [hervargeht] of the capitalist society"—in other words, the society designated by Lenin as "socialist"—and asserts that here "the producers do not exchange their products [tauschen ihre Produkte nicht aus] [and] as little does the labour employed on these products appear as value".(39)

However, let us note that Lenin's position on this question is not completely free from ambiguities. Though he maintains that "socialist exchange of products" is "not commodities"—as we saw above—at least in one place he nevertheless identifies "socialist exchange" with "a [certain] type of commodity exchange (toverroobmen)" and then distinguishes it from "ordinary purchase and sale, trade". (40)

As regards the social product's distribution in socialism—understood as Marx's "first phase of communism"—Lenin broadly follows Marx's basic principle of the distribution of means of consumption among society's members—after the necessary deduction for the common funds has been made—based on the quantum

of labour contributed by each member to the total social labour.

On the other hand, unlike Marx, Lenin hardly envisages the new society as a society of "free and associated producers" based on the "associated mode of production". Approaching the question basically through the framework of property, Lenin, however, conceives socialism not in terms of a specific "property relations" in the sense of Marx— that is, "judicial expression" of a specific relation of production(41) — but in terms of a specific property form, that is, state property, by negating the "private property of separate persons". Secondly, for Lenin the negation of (individual) private ownership in the means of production leading to (proletarian) state ownership is equivalent to "social ownership" of the means of production which in its turn signifies, at the same time, the end of "exploitation of person by person", as we noted earlier. On both these counts Lenin, we submit, considerably narrows the Marxian framework. Let us elaborate our submission in the following sub-section.

Marx points out that production is simply the "appropriation" of nature by individuals "through labour"; it is "property over objectified labour". Thus

"what appears as a real process is recognised as a judicial relation". (42) In this sense, property relations are simply a "juridical expression" of production relations, they only "reflect" the (real) economic relations which are their "content".(43) But within the same property relation—corresponding to a specific relation of production—there can be different property forms, as Marx shows particularly with reference to capitalism. Thus under the capitalist property relation, individual private property over the means of production— "private property of separate persons", as Lenin would call it—is not the only form of property, though, historically, it is the starting point through the expropriation of the immediate producers. In course of its development, capitalist production reaches a stage where the exigencies of accumulation are such that capital has to be 'freed' from individual private property and transformed into the property of the "associated capitalists", thereby inaugurating "directly social capital", of course, "with all its contradictions".(44)

The first form of 'capitalist collective' Marx discerns in share capital—showing the separation between ownership of the means of production and the process of production itself— where "within the capitalist mode of production itself" there occurs the "abolition

(sublimation) of private property in the means of production".(45) A second form of 'capitalist collective'—with capitalists as only the "functionaries of capital" and not its individual owners—is represented by the "state itself" as a "capitalist producer [with] its product as a commodity" through its "employment of productive wage labour".(46) On the other hand, at a particular stage of capital accumulation, the "centralisation of capital would reach the last limit...where the total national capital would constitute only a single capital in the hands of a single capitalist", as Marx notes in the French version of Capital (vol I).(47) This "single capitalist", we might add, could very well be the state, given the existence of the state as a capitalist. Thereby capital would attain its complete 'liberation' from all constraints of individual private property. However, capital as a specific property relation—"reflecting" its production relation—remains invariant under these different (and changing) property forms of capital. In other words, from a Marxian perspective, even in the complete absence of "private property" in the means of production in its Leninist sense, capitalism could continue to exist. (In his discussion of what he calls "monopoly capitalism" in his Imperialism (ch III) Lenin does refer to the separation of ownership in capital from its "application" in production, but curiously does not

even refer to Marx's revolutionary conclusion reached in this connection on the irrelevance of individual private property in the means of production for the existence of capital).(48)

On the other hand, "capitalist private property" has another and more profound meaning in Marx (and Engels) which does not figure in Lenin's discussion. Here "private property" is the same as class property which could subsume individual as well as collective capitalist property. As Marx puts it, it is the "private property of a part of society", (49) here the "means of production are monopolised by a distinct part of society".(50) Thus when the Communist Manifesto declares that the communist can sum up their theory in a single expression: 'abolition of private property', the latter is expressly used in the sense of the "disappearance of class property" (Aufhören des Klasseneigentums.)(51) In the same vein Marx writes almost two and a half decades later: "The Commune, they exclaim, intends to abolish property, the basis of all civilisation! Yes, gentlemen, the Commune intends to abolish class property, which makes the labour of the many the wealth of the few!"(52) It is evident that Marx here makes the abolition of capitalism conditional upon the abolition of "capitalist private property" not in the mere sense of individual private

property. In this fundamental sense "capitalist private property" is identical with its opposite, that is, labourers' non property (in the means of production) and, entirely coinciding with capitalist property relation, continues to exist as long as capitalist production exists, even when the latter has eliminated private property in the means of production in the sense of Lenin.

We noted earlier Lenin's contention that the abolition of individual private property in the means of production is equivalent to the "common ownership" by society over the means of production, the latter being, in its turn, equivalent to the "ownership of the means of production" by the "working class state". Here, again, the Marxian position is not the same. True, Marx too speaks of "common means of production",⁽⁵³⁾ or "common ownership in the means of production".⁽⁵⁴⁾ But unlike Lenin, Marx does not equate it either with the abolition of private property of "separate individuals" in the means of production or with the (proletarian) state ownership in the means of production. Let us take up these two points.

We argued above that according to Marx the elimination of individual private property in the means of production does not have to wait for the socialist revolution. It is already accomplished by capital itself in course of its

accumulation. Naturally "capitalist private property" in the fundamental Marxian sense of capitalist class property—irrespective of the specific forms it assumes—cannot, by definition, be abolished by capital and is eliminated along with capital by the socialist revolution. Marx's "common ownership" in the means of production refers to the abolition of capitalist ownership only in the latter sense. It is in this sense, as the Communist Manifesto asserts, that "the communist revolution [the same as the socialist revolution] is the most radical break with the traditional property relation", where, as we saw above, "property relations" are simply "the juridical way of expressing the production relations.

Marx's "social" or "common ownership", secondly, refers to the "real appropriation of the means of production, their subjugation by the associated working class (unter die assoziierte Arbeiterklasse)". (55) This ownership has nothing to do with the state ('public') ownership. True, the proletarian rule starts by "centralising all instruments of production in the hands of the state", as the Communist Manifesto asserts. But this act of what is usually called 'nationalisation' has nothing to do with socialism. This is undertaken rather as a mediating process towards "transforming these means of production into instruments of free and associated

labour". (56) This change in the form of bourgeois property would signify basically that the proletariat first has to complete the task left unfinished, as it were, by capital itself before inaugurating and as a means of inaugurating its own emancipation. (We argued earlier that the proletarian dictatorship, while increasingly modifying the capitalist mode of production, does not completely cross it before its own extinction.)

It is only in course of time, with the demise of the proletarian state, when the "whole mode of production is revolutionised" and socialism begins that the real metamorphosis of what Marx calls "capitalist private property" into the appropriation by the whole society (itself) takes place, inasmuch as only then "all production is concentrated" not in the hands of the state— since the "public power" has lost "its political character"— but "in the hands of the associated individuals (in den Händen der assoziierten Individuen)".(51) It follows that from the point of view of Marx the Leninist contention of the end of exploitation of person by person simply is the absence of individual private property—referred to earlier—is not quite correct. In the Marxian perspective such exploitation ceases only with the elimination of capitalist private property conceived as class property which includes individual private property only as a sub-class.

Indeed, in the very text that Lenin analyses and uses to come to his own conclusion, Marx does not speak of private property of "separate individuals" over the conditions of production when speaking of capitalist property, but of "material conditions of production being apportioned to the non-workers in the form of property in capital"—that is, precisely, the capitalist class property including all its different forms—and of their transformation into the "co-operative property of the workers themselves".(58)

True, Lenin too speaks of "socialism" as equivalent to a "co-operative comprising the entire society"(59)—the nearest he comes to treating socialism in terms of (new) relations of production. However, this "socialism", representing the "regime of civilised co-operators", as he would later call it, is based on "ownership of the means of production" by the "working class political power", which Lenin equates with "ownership by the socialist state" or, alternatively, "social ownership".(60) Thus Lenin seems to obscure the distinction between proletarian dictatorship and socialism even when the latter is equated to Marx's "first phase of communism".(61)

Earlier we referred to Lenin's view that the state remains in the first phase of communism in so far as it enforces the "bourgeois right" in the distribution of consumer goods among the society's members. This is of course Lenin's own conclusion which he seems to claim to derive from Marx's 'Marginal Notes' of 1875. This Lenin does by connecting two analytically separate sections in Marx's text—one on the distribution of consumer goods and the other on the state. Let us see how far Lenin's inference is warranted by Marx's texts.

First, as regards the distribution of consumer goods among members of the new society, Marx speaks of it in several places in alternative ways,(62) but nowhere brings in the state to enforce the "bourgeois right" underlying it. The "labour certificate"—as opposed to wage—which enables the labourer to draw his/her quota from society's common consumption stock, the labourer "receives from society (erhalt von der Gesellschaft)"(63) and not from the state. Indeed, the first phase of communism, which is ushered in after the proletarian dictatorship, that is, the proletarian state has met its natural death (along with the demise of the proletariat itself), does not require a special state (machinery) to "safeguard" either the "common ownership of the means

of production" or "equality of labour", as Lenin would have it. If "society"—and not the state—can "distribute labour power and means of production among different branches of occupation", as Marx asserts,(64) there is no reason why the same society, that is, the "associated producers" themselves, cannot regulate the distribution of consumer goods among society's members.

Secondly, as to the question of the state, in the very first section of chapter V of the State and Revolution Lenin cites the following lines from Marx's 'Marginal Notes' of 1875: "The question is then: what transformation will the state form (staatswesen) undergo in a communist society? In other words, what social functions will be left there that are analogous to the present-day state functions?"(65) In the third section of the same chapter Lenin discusses the problem of distribution of the consumer goods among society's members, yet unable to transgress the "bourgeois right", and in the chapter's fourth section—devoted to the question of the "higher phase" of the communist society—Lenin asserts that only in that phase will the state completely wither away, and adds: "It follows that under communism not only the bourgeois right remains for a while but even the bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie".(66) We

submit that Lenin's conclusion does not necessarily follow from Marx's text(s). Let us see why.

First of all, as we reasoned above, whatever "bourgeois right" remains under the first phase of communism in the sphere of distribution of consumer goods could be enforced by what Marx calls the "co-operative society" itself without being mediated by a state (Marx himself does not refer to such a mediation). Secondly, in the quotation in question—where, as Lenin himself notes, Marx "only touches upon the question [of the state] in passing (mimokhodom)"(67) —Marx speaks not exactly of state as such but of "state form (staatswesen)"(68) and quite legitimately asks what kind of transformation the "state form" undergoes in the future society, in other words—as he clarifies—what kind of functions would remain that would be "analogous" to the functions of the present-day state.

Now, it so happens that Marx has a similar position regarding commodity production in (the first phase of) communism. Thus while discussing the principle of distribution of consumer goods among the future society's members Marx explicitly refers to the principle underlying commodity production "only as a parallel", (69) which obviously has the same sense as an 'analogy'. However, the society in connection with which this

"parallel" or analogy is drawn completely excludes commodity production according to Marx, as we already know. On this basis we would think that raising the question of the existence of functions—in the future society—"analogous" to those of the present-day state need no more mean the existence of the state itself in that society than drawing a "parallel" with commodity production in connection with distribution in that society or even maintaining the "sameness" of the "principle of commodity exchange" with that of distribution in that society,(70) would mean the existence of commodity production itself in the first phase of communism.

(Incidentally, Marx's speculation concerning the future of functions "analogous" to those of the present-day state refers to the "communist society" as such, not specifically to its "first phase".)(71) On the other hand, in a number of texts spread over practically his whole life, Marx explicitly excludes the state from the "Association" (which replaces the capitalist society).(72)

Finally, let us consider Lenin's contention—referred to earlier—that "all citizens", in the first phase of communism, "are transformed into hired employees (sluzhashchikh po naimu) and workers of one state syndicate" for whom there is "equality of labour and wages (zarabotnoi platyi)".(73) This perspective of

socialism in Lenin is, we submit, completely different from—if not opposed to—the Marxian perspective even when the latter refers to the first phase of communism.

For Marx, as he repeats in the very text that Lenin is considering here, wage is simply "the value or price of labour power", and if labour power ceases to be a commodity (along with the disappearance of capital) there obviously cannot be wage as labour remuneration either. For Marx the "Association"—at any stage—of (self) emancipated labourers and wage form of remuneration are, by definition, incompatible. On this question Marx's position is too well known to require any citation of specific texts. It must be stressed that the "labour certificates" given to the workers by society in the first phase of communism in no way constitute "wage" remuneration even when the society has not yet transgressed the "narrow bourgeois horizon". (74) As to the "hired employees of the state syndicate" they would of course go well with the wage form of payment. But, again, there can be no hired employees in the "co-operative society of producers" according to Marx. In his inaugural address to the International Workingmen's Association Marx in fact opposes "hired labour" to "associated labour". It could be that Lenin in the discussion on "wage" remuneration and "hired

employees" — referred to here—is really having in mind proletarian dictatorship and not socialism (in his sense). But the context of his discussion, as is clear from his text, is the first phase of communism and not the "political transition period". Thus the analysis is pretty ambiguous, to say the least.

III

We conclude that the economic content of socialism in Lenin is not exactly the same as that in Marx. In his discussion of socialism Lenin departs from as well as follows Marx.

In Marx there is no distinction between socialism and communism, either of them referring to the "society of free and associated producers" which passes through (at least) two phases sequentially. Lenin calls Marx's first phase of the new society 'socialism' and (often) reserves the term 'communism' for the second phase. Secondly, Lenin's approach to socialism is rather narrow, compared to Marx's and basically juridical. It is in terms of a specific property form in the means of production, where socialism is supposed to be based on "social ownership" (in the means of production), equated to (proletarian) state ownership, and is opposed to the private ownership of "separate individuals" in the means of production, supposed to be the basis of capitalism. The concept of ownership—including "social ownership" of the means of production—is very different in Marx. On the other hand, Lenin basically accepts Marx's position on the question of distribution of consumer goods in communism (in both the phases) as well as Marx's

contention that there is no commodity production even at the first phase of the new society.

Lenin's position, again, is clearly different from Marx's in that he believes in the existence of wage form of remuneration for the "hired employees" of the state syndicate as well as the necessity of the existence of some form of "bourgeois state" ("without the bourgeoisie", of course) in the first phase of communism. Neither of these elements is a part of the Marxian "Association".

It should be stressed that the divergences between Lenin's concept of socialism and that of Marx cannot be adequately explained (or explained away) by a reference to any particular conjuncture that Lenin faced in "concretely applying" Marxian socialism, simply because most of the elements of the divergences are encountered in Lenin's theoretical writings before the October seizure of power—particularly in the *State and Revolution*, a work of pure theory, perhaps the last that Lenin wrote without much connection with the exigencies of 'application'.⁽⁷⁵⁾ We would rather suggest that while justly fighting to uphold Marxism as a guide to the revolutionary practice of the proletariat against the reformism of the Second International, Lenin ultimately does not seem to have succeeded in wholly transgressing

the Second International's narrow horizon of concerning socialism as basically (proletarian) "state ownership" in the means of production as opposed to Marx's emancipatory vision of a society of free and associated producers created by themselves as an act of their self-liberation.

Notes

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The citations from the texts of Lenin and the non-English texts of Marx are given in our own translation. However, for the convenience of readers, we have—wherever we could—given the references to the standard English versions of the relevant texts side by side.]

1 L Szamnely, First Models of the Socialist Economic Systems: Principles and Theories (Budapest, Akademiai Kiado, 1974: p 46).

2 'Zadachi proletariata v nashei revoliutsi' (1917), Izbrannye Proizvedeniya (hereafter . IP) II (Moscow, 1982: p 42); The Tasks of the Proletariat in our Revolution' (1917), Selected Works (hereafter SW) II (Moscow, 1975: p 60).

3 'Doklad O subbotnikakh na Moskovsjoi

obshchegarodskoi konferentsii RKP (B)' (1919), Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (hereafter PSS) p 40 (Moscow, 1963: p 280).

4 *'Gosudarstvo i revoliutsia' (hereafter 'GR') (1917), IP II: pp 301-302; 'The State and Revolution' (hereafter SR) (1917), SW II: pp 305, 306.*

5 *Ibid, IP II: p 305; SW II: p 310.*

6 *'O provol'stvennom naloge' (1921), IP III (Moscow 1982: pp. 530, 541-42); '(On) The Tax in Kind'(1921), SW III (Moscow. 1971: pp 589, 600). Later this was to be the standard line upheld by the Soviet rulers and their international followers.*

7 *'Zadachi' (1917} IP II: p 42; The Tasks' (1917) SW II: p 60.*

8 *'OR', IP II: p 302; 'SR' SW II: p 306.*

9 *'Rech' na I vserossiiskom s'ezde..' (1918) IP II: p 669; 'speech at the 1st All-Russia Congress..: (1918) SW II: p 660.*

10 *'OR', IP II: pp 300, 302; 'SR' SW II: pp 305, 306. The word 'separate' does not appear in the standard English version (our emphasis).*

11 *Ibid, IP II: p 300; ibid, SW II: p 305, (our emphasis).*

12 *'O kooperastii' (1923) IP III: pp 711, 712, 714; 'on cooperation' (1923) SWII: pp 760, 761, 763.*

13 *Ibid: p 715; ibid: p 764.*

14 *'GR', IP II: p 301; 'SR', SW II: p 306.*

15 *Ibid*, pp 301, 302, 306; *ibid*: pp 305, 307, 310.

16 *Ibid*, p 306; *Ibid*: pp 310-311.

17 *Ibid*: p 308; *Ibid*: p 312.

18 'Pervonachal'nyi variant stati' 'o cherednye zadachi Sovetskoi vlasti' (1918) PSS 36 (Moscow, 1962; p 151).

19 'Proekt programmayi RKP(B)' (1919) PSS 38 (Moscow, 1963; p 121).

20 KPSS v Resoliutsiakh i Resheniach II (Moscow, 1970, p 55).

21 Thus two Soviet economists, N Shmelev and V Popov, representing a consensus among the contemporary Soviet scholars, write: "Lenin's views on commodity-money relations under socialism gradually changed over the course of NEP", *The Turning Point: Revitalising the Soviet Economy* (New York, Doubleday, 1989; p 285).

22 'K Chetyrekhletnei godovshcine oktyabr'skoi revoliutsu' (1921), IP III: p 594; '(Towards) The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution' (1921). SW III: 647 (*emphasis in the Original*).

23 'O prodovol'stvennom naloge' IP III: p 530; '(On) The Tax in Kind', SW III: 589 (*our emphasis*).

24 'O znachenii zolota..: (1921), IP III: p 599; '(On) The Importance of Gold..! (1921), SW III: p 652 (*our emphasis*).

25 'Planyi broshiuryi 'O prodovol'stvennom naloge' (1921), PSS 43 (Moscow, 1963): p385.

26 'O prodovol'stvennom naloge¹, IP III: p 549'; '(On) Tax in Kind', SW III: p 606.

27 'K Chetyrekhletnei godovshchine...; IP III: p 594; '(Towards) The Fourth Anniversary'. SW III: p 647 (our emphasis).

28 'O prodovol'stvennom naloge"', IP III: p 561; '(On) Tax in Kind', SW III: p 618' 'Nakaz ot sto'mestnym Sovetskim uchrezhdeniyam', (1921), PSS 43 (Moscow, 1964): p 276.

29 'O Kooperatsii"', IP III: pp 713, 714, 717; 'On Co-operation', SW III: pp 761, 762, 766 (our emphasis).

30 *Das Kapital* (hereafter DK) III (Berlin, Dietz 1964: p 456); *Capital* III (Moscow, 1959: p 440).

31 'Wages, Price and Profit', Marx-Engels— Selected Works (in one volume) (hereafter MESW) (Moscow, 1970: p 208.).

32 *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* (hereafter *Grundrisse*) (Berlin, Dietz: p 75).

33 Thus when A Nove, the noted sovietologist writes: "It is sometimes alleged that no distinction was known to Marx between socialism and communism... This is surely not so. Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme spoke of a first or a lower stage"; he shows how not to read Marx. See his *The Economics of Feasible Socialism* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1983; p 10).

34 IP I (Moscow, 1982: pp 24ff); SW 1 (Moscow, 1970: pp 50ff).

35 'Kritik der Gothaer Programms', Marx-Engels, *Ausgewahlte Schriften (hereafter MEAS) II* (Berlin, Dietz, 1964: p 24); 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', MESW: p327.

36 'Konspekt von Bakunins Buch 'Staatlichkeit und Anarchic'. Marx-Engels-H^r/te (hereafter MEW) XV111 (Berlin, .Dietz: p 630). Thus B Ollman seems to be utterly confused when he says, "Marx divides the communist future into halves, a first stage generally regarded as the dictatorship of the proletariat and a second stage usually called full communism", ('Marx's vision of Communism', *Critique* 1978, No 8, p 9).

37 When Paul Sweezy writes that "for Marx Socialism was a transitional society between capitalism and communism", it seems more appropriate to substitute 'Lenin' for 'Marx'. See his *Post Revolutionary Society* (New York, MR Press, 1980: p 136).

38 *Grundrisse*: p 76. The Phrase 'Offspring of Association' is in English in the Original.

39 'Kritik des Gothaer Programms; MEAS II: pp 15,16; 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', MESW: p 319 (emphasis in the text). Thus Oskar Lange's astounding affirmation that "a careful study of Marx's writings establishes clearly that he held the view that the theory of value applies to a socialist society" ('Marxian Economics in the Soviet Union', *American Economic*

Review 1945, Mach: p 128), is clearly based on an erroneous reading of Marx's texts.

40 'VII Moskovskaya gubpartkonferentsiya' (1921), PSS 44 (Moscow, 1964: pp 207-08) (our emphasis).

41 Zur Kritik der politischem Okononic (Berlin, Dietz, 1958: p 13)' 'Towards a Critique of Political Economy' (Preface), MESW: p 181.

42 Grundrisse : pp 9, 413.

43 DK I (Berlin, Dietz 1962: p 99); Capital I (Moscow, 1954: 88).

44 'Letter to Engels (2-4-1858)' in Briefe uber 'Das Kapital' (Erlangen, 1972: p 88); DK III p 452; Capital III: 436.

45 DK III, ibid; Capital III, ibid. When P J D Wiles writes, 'No facts are more threatening and heretical for Marxist Economic thought than the divorce of ownership from control by limited liability companies under capitalism', one is amazed at his innocence of Marx's texts. That the author has not understood anything of Marx is clear when referring to Marx he adds that 'it is the accumulation of capital that brings us from socialism to communism'. See the author's The Political Economy of Communism (Oxford, 1962: pp 50, 60).

46 'Randglossen zu A Wagners 'Lehrbuch', MEW XIX (Berlin, Dietz, 1962: 370); DK II (Berlin, Dietz 1973: p 101); Capital II (Moscow, 1956: p 100).

47 Le Capital I (Paris, Editions Sociales, 1976: p 448);

Capital I: p 588.

48 Similarly, when citing Engels precisely on the 'disappearance' of 'private production' under capitalism (State and Revolution, ch IV, sec 4) Lenin passes by the immense importance of the question under discussion.

49 Theorien uber den Mehrwert I (Berlin, Dietz, 1956: p 21).

50 DK III: 823 Capital III: p 815.

51 Marx-Engels Studienausgabe (hereafter MESA) III (Frankfurt am Main, Fischer, 1966: pp 71, 73); MESW: pp 47, 49.

52 The Civil War in France, MESW: 290.

53 DK I: p 92; Capital I: pp 82-83.

54 MEAS II: p 15; MESW: p 319.

55 Klassenkämpfe in Frankreich 1848 bis 1850, MEW III (Berlin Dietz, 1973: p 42).

56 The Civil War in France, op cit; p 291.

57 MESA III: pp 76-77; MESW: p 53 (our emphasis). The standard English translation of this crucial sentence of the Manifesto is highly defective.

58 MEAS II: p 18; MESW: p 321.

59 'Pervonachalny variant..' PSS 36: 161.

60 See his two-part article 'On Co-operation' (1923) (IP III: pp 711-17; SW HI: pp 760-66).

61 With Lenin's successors, East and West, North and South—it is well known—the abolition of (individual)

private property in the means of production, state-ownership over these means, their 'common ownership' by society, abolition of capitalism', elimination of 'exploitation of person by person', socialism—all these became equivalent expressions, where the beginning one is the result of a legislative act by the supposed to be 'proletarian state'.

62 For example, in Capital I, Ch 1, Sec 4; Capital II Ch 18; Gotha Critique, sect 1, sub-sec 3.

63 MEAS II: p 16; MESW: p 319.

64 DK II: p 358; Capital II: p 362.

65 Our translation from Marx's text and our emphasis.

66 IP II: p 306; SW II: p 310.

67 Ibid: p 294; ibid: p 299 our emphasis.

68 The standard English translation of Marx's 'Staatswesen' as simply 'State' is misleading as well as inexact. It is also curious that while citing Marx's relevant text in his own translation Lenin scrupulously uses, for Marx's 'Staatswesen', the exact Russian equivalent 'Gosudarstvennost', but while paraphrasing the text he simply uses 'State' ('Gosudarstvo') in the same sense as Marx's 'Staatswesen'.

69 DK I: p 93; Capital I: p 83. Here Marx does not yet distinguish between the two phases of the 'Association'.

70 MEAS II: p 16; MESW: p 319.

71 Assuming with Lenin—for argument's sake—that the

state's existence is necessary in the first phase of communism, why does it have to be a 'bourgeois' state? Is it because only a bourgeois state can administer a 'bourgeois right'? Inasmuch as the first phase of communism, by definition, is inaugurated only after the transition period has come to an end—along with the proletarian dictatorship which had arisen on the ruins of the bourgeois state—the existence of bourgeois state in this phase, then, would imply that, in the absence of the bourgeoisie (also by definition), the workers themselves recreate the bourgeois state (however partially), after having abolished their own. Interesting.

72 The incompatibility of state and socialism (that is, 'Association') Marx shows almost uninterruptedly at least beginning with his polemic against A Ruge (Kritische Randglossen, 1844, MEWI: p 409), right up to his last theoretical writing (Randglossen Zu Adloph 'Wagners Lehrbuch'. MEW XIX: pp 360-61) passing through his polemic against Proudhon (Misère de la philosophie, Oeuvres: Economie I, Paris, Gallimard; p 136), Communist Manifesto (end of the second section), 'Marginal Notes' of 1875 where he denounces 'servile faith in the State" as 'remote from socialism' (MEAS II: p 26; MESW: p 329). It should be stressed that Lenin fully accepts the Marxian position concerning the 'withering away' of the state in future. In fact in his Encyclopaedia article, referred to

earlier, he specifically says that 'by leading to the elimination of classes, socialism will thereby also lead to the elimination of the state'. (IP I: p 26; SW I: p 53). But here he does not distinguish between socialism and communism. In the *State and Revolution* he maintains that the state will disappear only in the higher phase of communism but still remains in its first phase or what he calls 'socialism'. Indeed, he makes even a stronger statement in another, contemporary pamphlet: 'Socialism is nothing but state monopoly capitalism put to the service of the whole people and thereby ceasing to be capitalist monopoly' (IP II: p 201; SW II: p 211), that is, becoming simply state monopoly, we might add. We can only say that while Lenin's 1913 position fully corresponds to Marx's texts, his 1917 position—the dominant one in him—does not.

73 IP II: pp 306, 308; SW II: pp 310, 312. Allowing for Lenin's contention that there is a 'bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie' in the first phase of communism, the state syndicate in question can only be the bourgeois state syndicate employing wage labourers in the first phase of communism, given the absence (by definition) of the proletarian state.

74 Here is an example of utter distortion of Marx's (emancipatory) position by a well known Marxist, which does not require any comment: 'Under the conditions

*which Marx described as the first stage of socialism', wrote M H Dobb, 'The existence of wage-differences according to the kind and amount of work performed necessarily plays a role in production', and rationalising Soviet 'socialism' he added: 'pricing of labour power according to the conditions affecting its supply...was to remain a basic constituent of (Soviet) economic accounting'.—Soviet Economic Development Since 1917 (New York, International Publishers, 1966: pp 388, 464).
75 It goes without saying that the question of comparative 'practicality' ('feasibility') of Marx's 'pure1 model of socialism versus its modified version in Lenin is altogether at a different level of abstraction*