Chapter 4
Socialism

1. Origins and development
2. No man is an island – central themes
3. Roads to socialism
4. Marxism
5. Social democracy
6. Socialism in the twenty-first century

Origins and development

The term ‘socialist’ derives from the Latin sociare, meaning to combine or to share. Its earliest known usage was in 1827 in Britain, in an issue of the Co-operative Magazine. By the early 1830s the followers of Robert Owen (1771–1858) in Britain and Saint-Simon (1760–1825) in France had started to refer to their beliefs as ‘socialism’, and by the 1840s the term was familiar in a range of industrialized countries, notably France, Belgium and the German states.

Although socialists have sometimes claimed an intellectual heritage that goes back to Plato's Republic or Thomas More's Utopia ([1516] 1965), like liberalism and conservatism the origins of socialism lie in the nineteenth century. Socialism arose as a reaction against the social and economic conditions generated in Europe by the growth of industrial capitalism. Socialist ideas came quickly to be linked to the development of a new but growing class of industrial workers, who suffered the poverty and degradation that are so often a feature of early industrialization. Although socialism and liberalism have common roots in the Enlightenment, and share a faith in principles such as reason and progress, socialism emerged as a critique of liberal market society and was defined by its attempt to offer an alternative to industrial capitalism.

The character of early socialism was influenced by the harsh and often inhuman conditions in which the industrial working class lived and worked. The laissez-faire policies of the early nineteenth century gave factory owners a free hand when setting wage levels and factory conditions. Wages were typically low, child and female labour were commonplace, the working day often lasted up to twelve hours and the threat of unemployment was ever-present. In addition, the new working class was disorientated, being largely composed of first-generation urban dwellers, unfamiliar with the conditions of industrial life and work and possessing few of the social institutions that could give their lives stability or meaning. As a result, early socialists often sought a radical, even revolutionary alternative to industrial capitalism. For instance, Charles Fourier (1772–1837) in France and Robert Owen in Britain advocated the establishment of utopian communities based upon cooperation and love, rather than competition and greed. The Germans, Karl Marx (see p. 126) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95), developed more complex and systematic theories, which claimed to uncover the ‘laws of history’ and proclaimed that the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was inevitable.

In the late nineteenth century, the character of socialism was transformed by a gradual improvement in working-class living conditions and the advance of political democracy. The growth of trade unions, working-class political parties and sports and social clubs served to provide greater economic security and to integrate the working class into industrial society. In the advanced industrial societies of western Europe it became increasingly difficult to continue to see the working class as a revolutionary force. Socialist political parties progressively adopted legal and constitutional tactics, encouraged by the gradual extension of the vote to working-class men. By the First World War, the socialist world was clearly divided between those socialist parties that had sought power through the ballot box and preached reform, and those, usually in more backward countries such as Russia, that proclaimed a continuing need for revolution. The Russian Revolution of 1917 entrenched this split: revolutionary socialists, following the example of Lenin (see p. 132) and the Bolsheviks, usually adopted the title 'communist', while reformist socialists retained the name 'socialist' or 'social democrat'.

The twentieth century witnessed the spread of socialist ideas into African, Asian and Latin American, countries with little or no experience of industrial capitalism. Socialism in these countries often developed out of the anticolonial struggle, rather than a class struggle. The idea of class exploitation was replaced by that of colonial oppression, creating a potent fusion of socialism and nationalism, which is examined more fully in Chapter 5. The Bolshevik model of communism was imposed on eastern Europe after 1945; it was adopted in China after the revolution of 1949 and subsequently spread to North Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. More moderate forms of socialism have been practised elsewhere, for example by the Congress Party, which dominated Indian politics in the decades after independence in 1947. Distinctive forms of African and Arab socialism were also developed, being influenced respectively by the communal values of traditional tribal life and the moral principles of Islam. In South and Central America in the 1960s and 1970s, socialist revolutionaries waged war against military dictatorships, often seen to be operating in the interests of US imperialism. The Castro regime, which came to power after the Cuban revolution of 1959, developed close links with the Soviet Union, while the Sandinista guerrillas, who seized power in Nicaragua in 1979, remained non-aligned. In Chile in 1970, Salvador Allende became the world's first democratically elected Marxist head of state, but was overthrown and killed in a CIA-backed coup in 1973.

Since the late twentieth century socialism has suffered a number of spectacular reverses, leading some to proclaim the 'death of socialism'. The most dramatic of these reverses was, of course, the collapse of communism in the eastern European revolutions of 1989–91. However, rather than socialists uniting around the principles of western social democracy, these principles were thrown into doubt as parliamentary socialist parties in many parts of the world embraced ideas and policies that are more commonly associated with liberalism or even conservatism. The final section of this chapter looks at whether socialism any longer has future as a distinctive ideology.

No man is an island – central themes

One of the difficulties of analysing socialism is that the term has been understood in at least three distinctive ways. From one point of view, socialism is seen as an economic model, usually linked to some form of collectivization and planning. Socialism, in this sense, stands as an alternative to capitalism, the choice between these two qualitatively different productive systems

traditionally being seen as the most crucial of all economic questions. However, the choice between 'pure' socialism' and 'pure' capitalism was always an illusion, as all economic forms have, in different ways, blended features of both systems. Indeed, modern socialists tend to view socialism not so much as an alternative to capitalism, but as a means of harnessing capitalism to broader social ends. The second approach treats socialism as an instrument of the labour movement. Socialism, in this view, represents the interests of the working class and offers a programme through which the workers can acquire political or economic power. Socialism is thus really a form of 'labourism', a vehicle for advancing the interest of organized labour. From this perspective, the significance of socialism fluctuates with the fortunes of the working-class movement worldwide. Nevertheless, although the historical link between socialism and organized labour cannot be doubted, socialist ideas have also been associated with skilled craftsmen, the peasantry and, for that matter, with political and bureaucratic elites. That is why, in this book, socialism is understood in a third and broader sense as a political creed or ideology, characterized by a particular cluster of ideas, values and theories. The most significant of these are the following:

- Community
- Cooperation
- Equality
- Social class
- Common ownership

Community

At its heart, socialism possesses a unifying vision of human beings as social creatures, capable of overcoming social and economic problems by drawing upon the power of the community rather than simply individual effort. This is a collectivist vision because it stresses the capacity of human beings for collective action, their willingness and ability to pursue goals by working together, as opposed to striving for personal self-interest. Most socialists, for instance, would be prepared to echo the words of the English metaphysical poet, John Donne (1571–1631):

No man is an Island entire of itself;

every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main; …

any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind;

and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls;

it tolls for thee.

Human beings are therefore 'comrades', 'brothers' or 'sisters', tied to one another by the bonds of a common humanity.

Socialists are far less willing than either liberals or conservatives to believe that human nature is unchanging and fixed at birth. Rather they believe that human nature is 'plastic', moulded by the

experiences and circumstances of social life. In the long-standing philosophical debate about whether 'nurture' or 'nature' determines human behaviour, socialists resolutely side with nurture. From birth – perhaps even while in the womb – each individual is subjected to experiences that shape and condition his or her personality. All human skills and attributes are learnt from society, from the fact that we stand upright to the language we speak. Whereas liberals draw a clear distinction between the 'individual' and 'society', socialists believe that the individual is inseparable from society. Human beings are neither self-sufficient nor self-contained; to think of them as separate or atomized 'individuals' is absurd. Individuals can only be understood, and understand themselves, through the social groups to which they belong. The behaviour of human beings therefore tells us more Collectivism

Collectivism is, broadly, the belief that collective human endeavour is of greater practical and moral value than individual self-striving. It thus reflects the idea that human nature has a social core, and implies that social groups, whether 'classes', 'nations', 'races' or whatever, are meaningful political entities. However, the term is used with little consistency. Bakunin (see p. 197) and other anarchists used collectivism to refer to self-governing associations of free individuals. Others have treated collectivism as strictly the opposite of individualism (see p. 30), holding that it implies that collective interests should prevail over individual ones. It is also sometimes linked to the state as the mechanism through which collective interests are upheld, suggesting that the growth of state responsibilities marks the advance of collectivism.

about the society in which they live and have been brought up, than it does about any abiding or immutable human nature.

Liberals and conservatives often argue that, at heart, human beings are essentially self-seeking and egoistical. Socialists, on the other hand, regard selfish, acquisitive, materialistic or aggressive behaviour as socially conditioned rather than natural. Such characteristics are the product of a society that encourages and rewards selfish and acquisitive behaviour. This is precisely the allegation that socialists have traditionally made against capitalism. Human beings are not utility maximizers; rather, they are encouraged to act as such by the mechanism of the capitalist market, geared as it is to the pursuit of profit.

The radical edge of socialism derives not from its concern with what people are like, but with what they have the capacity to become. This has led socialists to develop utopian visions of a better society in which human beings can achieve genuine emancipation and fulfilment as members of a community. African and Asian socialists have often stressed that their traditional, preindustrial societies already emphasize the importance of social life and the value of community. In these circumstances, socialism has sought to preserve traditional social values in the face of the challenge from western individualism. As Julius Nyerere, president of Tanzania, 1964–85, pointed out, 'We, in Africa, have no more real need to be "converted" to socialism, than we have of being "taught" democracy.' He therefore described his own views as 'tribal socialism'.

In the West, however, the social dimension of life has had to be 'reclaimed' after generations of industrial capitalism. This was the goal of nineteenth-century utopian socialists such as Fourier and Owen, who organized experiments in communal living. Charles Fourier encouraged the

founding of model communities, each containing about 1800 members, which he called 'phalansteries'. Robert Owen also set up a number of experimental communities, the best known being New Harmony in Indiana, 1824–9. The most enduringly successful communitarian experiment has been the kibbutz system in Israel, which consists of a system of cooperative, usually rural, settlements that are collectively owned and run by their members. The first kibbutz was founded in 1909 and now about 3 per cent of Israeli citizens live on kibbutzim, while a further 5 per cent live in rather less strict Moshav settlements.

Cooperation

If human beings are social animals, socialists believe that the natural relationship amongst them is one of cooperation rather than competition. Liberals and conservatives regard competition amongst human beings as natural and, in some respects, healthy. It is natural because human beings are thought to be self-interested, and healthy insofar as it encourages individuals to work hard and develop whatever skills or abilities they may possess. Individuals should be rewarded for their personal achievements, whether it is running faster than anyone else, gaining higher marks in an exam or working harder than their colleagues.

Socialists, on the other hand, believe that competition pits one individual against another, encouraging each of them to deny or ignore their social nature rather than embrace it. As a result, competition fosters only a limited range of social attributes and, instead, promotes selfishness and aggression. Cooperation, however, makes moral and economic sense. Individuals who work together rather than against each other will develop bonds of sympathy, caring and affection. Furthermore, the energies of the community rather than those of the single individual can be harnessed. The Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin (see p. 203), for example, suggested that the principal reason why the human species had survived and prospered was because of its capacity for 'mutual aid'. Socialists believe that human beings can be motivated by moral incentives and not merely by material incentives. In theory, capitalism rewards individuals for the work they do: the harder they work, or the more abundant their skills, the greater their reward will be. The moral incentive to work hard, however, is the desire to contribute to the common good, which develops out of a sympathy or sense of responsibility for fellow human beings. Marx expressed this idea in proposing the communist theory of distribution: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.' Although few modern social democrats would contemplate the outright abolition of material incentives, they nevertheless insist on the need for a balance of some kind between material and moral incentives. For example, socialists would argue that an important incentive for achieving economic growth is that it helps to finance the provision of welfare support for the poorest and most vulnerable elements in society.

The socialist commitment to cooperation has stimulated the growth of cooperative enterprises, designed to replace the competitive and hierarchic businesses that have proliferated under capitalism. Both producers' and consumers' cooperatives have attempted to harness the energies of groups of people working for mutual benefit. In the UK, cooperative societies sprang up in the early nineteenth century. These societies bought goods in bulk and sold them cheaply to their working-class members. The 'Rochdale Pioneers' set up a grocery shop in 1844 and their example was soon taken up throughout industrial England and Scotland. Producer cooperatives, owned and run by their workforce, are common in parts of northern Spain and former

Yugoslavia, where industry is organized according to the principle of workers' self-management. Collective farms in the Soviet Union were also designed to be cooperative and self-managing, though in practice they operated within a rigid planning system and were usually controlled by local party bosses.

Equality

A commitment to equality is in many respects the defining feature of socialist ideology, equality being the political value that most clearly distinguishes socialism from its rivals, notably liberalism and conservatism. Conservatives believe society to be naturally hierarchic, and therefore reject the idea of social equality as simply absurd. Liberals, however, are committed to equality, but on the grounds that all individuals are of equal moral worth and are therefore entitled to equal rights and respect. They are nevertheless born with very different talents and skills and are entitled to be rewarded accordingly: those who work hard and possess abilities deserve to be wealthier than those who do not. Liberals therefore favour equality of opportunity, but see no reason why this should, or will, lead to social and economic equality.

Socialism is characterized by its belief in social equality, or equality of outcome. Socialists have advanced at least three arguments in favour of this form of equality. First, social equality upholds justice or fairness. Socialists are reluctant to explain the inequality of wealth in terms of innate differences of ability amongst individuals. Socialists believe that just as capitalism has fostered competitive and selfish behaviour, human inequality very largely reflects the unequal structure of society. They do not hold the naive belief that all people are born identical, possessing precisely the same capacities and skills. An egalitarian society would not, for instance, be one in which all students gain the same mark in their mathematics examinations. Nevertheless, socialists believe that the most significant forms of human inequality are a result of unequal treatment by society, rather than unequal endowment by nature. Justice, from a socialist perspective, therefore demands that people are treated equally, or at least more equally, by society in terms of their rewards and material circumstances. Formal equality, in its legal and political senses, is clearly inadequate because it disregards the structural inequalities of the capitalist system. Equality of opportunity, for its part, legitimizes inequality by perpetuating the myth of innate inequality.

Second, social equality underpins community and cooperation. If people live in equal social circumstances, they will be more likely to identify with one another and work together for common benefit. Equal outcomes therefore strengthen social solidarity. Social inequality, by the same token, leads to conflict and instability. This is most clearly reflected in socialist theories about class conflict, or even ‘class war’. It also explains why socialists have criticized equality of opportunity for breeding a ‘survival of the fittest’ mentality. R. H. Tawney (see p. 142), for example, dismissed it as a ‘tadpole philosophy’. Third, socialists support social equality because they hold that need-satisfaction in the basis for human fulfilment and self-realization. A ‘need’ is a necessity: it demands satisfaction; it is not simply a frivolous wish or a passing fancy. Basic needs, such as the need for food, water, shelter, companionship and so on, are fundamental to the human condition, which means that, for socialists, their satisfaction is the very stuff of freedom. Since all people have broadly similar needs, distributing wealth on the basis of need-satisfaction has clearly egalitarian implications. Unlike liberals, socialists therefore believe that freedom and equality are compatible principles. Nevertheless, need-satisfaction can also have inegalitarian

implications, as in the case of so-called 'special' needs, arising, for instance, from physical or mental disability.

Although socialists agree about the virtue of social and economic equality, they disagree about the extent to which this can and should be brought about. Marxists and communists believe in absolute social equality, brought about by the abolition of private property and collectivization of productive wealth. Marx, moreover, believed that once the remnants of the capitalist class system fade, rewards should be distributed entirely on the basis of need. Social democrats, however, believe in relative social equality, achieved through the redistribution of wealth through the welfare state and a system of progressive taxation. The social-democratic desire to tame capitalism rather than abolish it reflects an acceptance of a continuing role for material incentives and the fact that the significance of need-satisfaction is largely confined to the eradication of poverty.

Perspectives on …

Equality

Liberals believe that people are 'born' equal in the sense that they are of equal moral worth. This implies formal equality, notably legal and political equality, as well as equality of opportunity; but social equality is likely to be purchased at the expense of freedom and through the penalizing of talent. Nevertheless, whereas classical liberals emphasize the need for strict meritocracy and economic incentives, modern liberals have argued that genuine equal opportunities require relative social equality.

Conservatives have traditionally viewed society as naturally hierarchical and have thus dismissed equality as an abstract and unachievable goal. Nevertheless, the new right evinces a strongly individualist belief in equality of opportunity while emphasizing the economic benefits of material inequality.

Socialists regard equality as a fundamental value and, in particular, endorse social equality. Despite shifts within social democracy towards a liberal belief in equality of opportunity, social equality, whether in its relative (social democratic) or absolute (communist) sense, has been seen as essential to ensuring social cohesion and fraternity, establishing justice or equity, and enlarging freedom in a positive sense.

Anarchists place a particular stress upon political equality, understood as an equal and absolute right to personal autonomy, implying that all forms of political inequality amount to oppression. Anarcho-communists believe in absolute social equality achieved through the collective ownership of productive wealth.

Fascists believe that humankind is marked by radical inequality, both between leaders and followers and between the various nations or races of the world. Nevertheless, the emphasis on the nation or race implies that all members are equal, at least in terms of their core social identity.

Feminists take equality to mean sexual equality, in the sense of equal rights and equal opportunities (liberal feminism) or equal social or economic power (socialist feminism) irrespective of gender. However, some radical feminists have argued that the demand for equality may simply lead to women being 'male-identified'.

Ecologists advance the notion of biocentric equality, which emphasizes that all life forms have an equal right to 'live and blossom'. Conventional notions of equality are therefore seen as anthropocentric, in that they exclude the interests of all organisms and entities other than humankind.

Social class

Social class refers, broadly, to groups of people who share a similar social and economic position. Socialists have traditionally viewed social class as the deepest and most politically significant of social divisions. Socialist class politics has been expressed in two ways, however. In the first, social class is an analytical tool. In pre-socialist societies at least, socialists have believed that human beings tend to think and act together with others with whom they share a common economic position or interest. In other words, social classes, rather than individuals, are the principal actors in history and therefore provide the key to understanding social and political change. For example, the iniquities and injustices of the capitalist system are best explained by the tendency of the privileged and propertied classes to oppress and exploit subordinate classes. The second form of socialist class politics focuses specifically upon the working class, and is concerned with political struggle and emancipation. Socialism has often been viewed as an expression of the interests of the working class, and the working class has been seen as the vehicle through which socialism will be achieved. Nevertheless, social class has not been accepted as a necessary or permanent feature of society: socialist societies have either been seen as classless or as a society in which class inequalities have been substantially reduced. In emancipating itself from capitalist exploitation, the working class thus also emancipates itself from its own class identity, becoming, in the process, fully developed human beings.

Socialists have nevertheless been divided about the nature and importance of social class. In the Marxist tradition, class is linked to economic power, as defined by the individual's relationship to the means of production. From this perspective, class divisions are divisions between 'capital' and 'labour': that is, between the owners of productive wealth (the bourgeoisie) and those who live off the sale of their labour power (the proletariat). This Marxist two-class model is characterized by irreconcilable conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, leading, inevitably, to the overthrow of capitalism through a proletarian revolution. As Marx and Engels put it in the final words of the Communist Manifesto, 'Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.' Social democrats, on the other hand, have tended to define social class in terms of income and status differences between 'white collar' or non-manual workers (the middle class) and 'blue collar' or manual workers (the working class). From this perspective, the advance of socialism is associated with the narrowing of divisions between the middle class and the working class brought about through economic and social intervention. Social democrats therefore believe in social amelioration and class harmony rather than social polarization and class war.

However, the link between socialism and class politics has declined since the mid-twentieth century. This has largely been a consequence of declining levels of class solidarity and, in particular, the shrinkage of traditional working class or urban proletariat. The traditional association between socialism and the working class was formally abandoned in works such as André Gorz's Farewell to the Working Class (1982). The waning in class politics is a consequence of deindustrialization, the contraction of the economy's manufacturing base, reflected in the decline of traditional labour-intensive industries such as coal, steel, shipbuilding and so on. A 'Fordist' system, based upon mass production and mass consumption, has given way to a 'post-Fordist' system characterized by more pluralized class formations. The impact of post-Fordism upon working-class-based socialist parties has been considerable. Not only have they been under pressure to abandon traditional socialist policies in order to appeal to middle-class voters, but they have also increasingly defined their radicalism less in terms of class emancipation and more in relation to issues such as gender equality, ecological harmony, animal rights, peace and international development.

Common ownership

Socialists have often traced the origins of competition and inequality to the institution of private property, by which they usually mean productive wealth or 'capital' rather than personal belongings such as clothes, furniture or houses. This attitude to property sets socialism apart from liberalism and conservatism, which both regard property ownership as natural and proper. Socialists criticize private property for a number of reasons. In the first place, property is unjust: wealth is produced by the collective effort of human labour and should therefore be owned by the community, not by private individuals. Second, socialists believe that property breeds acquisitiveness and so is morally corrupting. Private property encourages people to be materialistic, to believe that human happiness or fulfilment can be gained through the pursuit of wealth. Those who own property wish to accumulate more, while those who have little or no wealth long to acquire it. Finally, property is divisive: it fosters conflict in society, for example between owners and workers, employers and employees, or simply the rich and the poor. Socialists have therefore proposed that the institution of private property either be abolished and replaced by the common ownership of productive wealth, or, more modestly, that the right to property be balanced against the interests of the community.

Karl Marx envisaged the abolition of private property and hence the creation of a classless, communist society in place of capitalism. He clearly believed that property should be owned collectively and used for the benefit of humanity. However, he said little about how this goal could be achieved in practice. When Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia in 1917 they believed that socialism could be built through nationalization, the extension of direct state control over the economy. This process was not completed until the 1930s, when Stalin's 'second revolution' witnessed the construction of a centrally planned economy, a

Liberals see the economy as a vital part of civil society and have a strong preference for a market or capitalist economic order based on property, competition and material incentives. However, while classical liberals favour laissez-faire capitalism, modern liberals recognise the limitations of the market and accept limited economic management.

Conservatives show clear support for private enterprise but have traditionally favoured pragmatic if limited intervention, fearing the free-for-all of laissez-faire and the attendant risks of social instability. The new right, however, endorses unregulated capitalism.

Socialists in the Marxist tradition have expressed a preference for common ownership and absolute social equality, which in orthodox communism was expressed in state collectivization and central planning. Social democrats, though, support welfare or regulated capitalism, believing that the market is a good servant but a bad master.

Anarchists reject any form of economic control or management. However, while anarcho-communists endorse common ownership and small-scale self-management, anarcho-capitalists advocate an entirely unregulated market economy.

Fascists have sought a 'third way' between capitalism and communism, often expressed through the ideas of corporatism, supposedly drawing labour and capital together into an organic whole. Planning and nationalisation are supported as attempts to subordinate profit to the (alleged) needs of the nation or race.

Ecologists condemn both market capitalism and state collectivism for being growth-obsessed and environmentally unsustainable. Economics, therefore, must be subordinate to ecology, and the drive for profit at any cost must be replaced by a concern with long-term sustainability and harmony between humankind and nature.

system of state collectivization. 'Common ownership' came to mean 'state ownership', or what the Soviet constitution described as 'socialist state property'. The Soviet Union thus developed a form of state socialism.

Social democrats have also been attracted to the state as an instrument through which wealth can be collectively owned and the economy rationally planned. However, in the West nationalization has been applied more selectively, its objective not being full state collectivism but the construction of a mixed economy, in which some industries would remain in private hands while others would be publicly owned. In the UK, for example, the Attlee Labour government, 1945–51, nationalized what it called the 'commanding heights' of the economy: major industries such as coal, steel, electricity and gas. Through these industries the government hoped to regulate the entire economy without the need for comprehensive collectivization. However, since the 1950s, parliamentary socialist parties have gradually distanced themselves from the 'politics of ownership', preferring to define socialism in term of the pursuit of equality and social justice rather than the advance of public ownership. Indeed, one of the chief features of the so-called 'new' revisionism since the 1980s has been the acceptance of an essentially privately owned economy and even support, at times, for privatization.

Roads to socialism

Two major issues have divided competing traditions and tendencies within socialism. The first is the goals or 'ends' for which socialists should strive. Socialists have held very different conceptions of what a socialist society should look like; in effect, they have developed competing definitions of 'socialism'. The principal disagreement here is between fundamentalist socialism and revisionist socialism, represented, respectively, by the communist and the social democratic traditions. These traditions are examined in the next two sections of this chapter. This section discusses the second issue that has divided socialists: the 'means' they should use to achieving socialist ends, or the 'roads to socialism'. This concern with means follows from the fact the socialism has always had an oppositional character: it is a force for change, for the transformation of the capitalist or colonial societies in which it emerged. The 'road' that socialist have adopted is not merely a matter of strategic significance alone; it both determines the character of the socialist movement and influences the form of socialism eventually achieved. In other words, means and ends within socialism are often interconnected.

Revolutionary socialism

Many early socialists believed that socialism could only be introduced by the revolutionary overthrow of the existing political system, and accepted that violence would be an inevitable feature of such a revolution. One of the earliest advocates of revolution was the French socialist Auguste Blanqui (1805–81), who proposed the formation of a small band of dedicated conspirators to plan and carry out a revolutionary seizure of power. Marx and Engels, on the other hand, envisaged a 'proletarian revolution', in which the class-conscious working masses would rise up to overthrow capitalism. The first successful socialist revolution did not, however, take place until 1917, when a dedicated and disciplined group of revolutionaries, led by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, seized power in Russia in what was more a coup d'état than a popular insurrection. In many ways the Bolshevik Revolution served as a model for subsequent generations of socialist revolutionaries.

During the nineteenth century, revolutionary tactics were attractive to socialists for two reasons. First, the early stages of industrialization produced stark injustice as the working masses were afflicted by grinding poverty and widespread unemployment. Capitalism was viewed as a system of naked oppression and exploitation, and the working class was thought to be on the brink of revolution. When Marx and Engels wrote in 1848 that 'A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism', they were writing against a background of revolt and revolution in many parts of the continent. Second, the working classes had few alternative means of political influence; indeed, almost everywhere they were excluded from political life. Where autocratic monarchies persisted throughout the nineteenth century, as in Russia, these were dominated by the landed aristocracy. Where constitutional and representative government had developed, the right to vote was usually restricted by a property qualification to the middle classes. In the exceptional cases where universal manhood suffrage was introduced much earlier, as in France in 1848, it was in predominantly agricultural and still deeply religious countries where the majority of the electorate, the smallholding peasantry, were politically conservative. In such cases, the French anarchist Proudhon (see p. 200) warned that 'universal suffrage is counter-

revolution'. For the unenfranchised working masses the only realistic prospect of introducing socialism lay with political revolution.

Revolution has, however, not merely been a tactical consideration for socialists; it also reflects their analysis of the state and of the nature of the state power. Whereas liberals believe the state to be a neutral body, responding to the interests of all citizens and acting in the common good, revolutionary socialists view the state as an agent of class oppression, acting in the interests of 'capital' and against those of 'labour'. Marxists, for example, believe that political power reflects class interests, and that the state is a 'bourgeois state', inevitably biased in favour of capital. Political reform and gradual change are clearly pointless. Universal suffrage and regular and competitive elections are at best a façade, their purpose being to concealing the reality of unequal class and to misdirect the political energies of the working class. A class-conscious proletariat thus has no alternative: in order to build socialism it has first to overthrow the bourgeois state through political revolution. Marx believed that this revolution would be followed by a temporary period called the 'dictatorship of the proletariat', during which the revolution would need to be protected against the danger of counter-revolution carried out by the dispossessed bourgeoisie.

In the second half of the twentieth century, faith in revolution was most evident amongst socialists in the developing world. In the post-1945 period many national liberation movements embraced the 'armed struggle' in the belief that colonial rule could neither be negotiated nor voted out of existence. In Asia, the Chinese Revolution of 1949, led by Mao Zedong, was the culmination of a long military campaign against both Japan and the Chinese Nationalists, the Kuomintang. Vietnamese national unity was achieved in 1975 after a prolonged war fought first against France and subsequently against the United States. Until his death in 1967, Che Guevara, the Argentine revolutionary, led guerrilla forces in various parts of South America and commanded troops during the Cuban revolution of 1959, which overthrew the US-backed Batista regime and brought Fidel Castro to power. Similar revolutionary struggles took place in Africa; for example, the bitter war through which Algeria eventually gained independence from France in 1962. In the light of the Algerian experience, the French revolutionary theorist Frantz Fanon (1925–61) argued in The Wretched of the Earth ([1961] 1965) that violent insurrection was not merely a political necessity, but was also a psychologically desirable feature of the anticolonial struggle. Fanon believed that years of colonial rule had engendered a paralysing sense of inferiority and impotence amongst the black peoples of Africa, which could only be purged by the experience of revolt and the shedding of blood.

The choice of revolutionary or insurrectionary political means had profound consequences for socialism. For example, the use of revolution usually led to the pursuit of fundamentalist ends. Revolution had the advantage that it allowed the remnants of the old order to be overthrown and an entirely new social system to be constructed. Thus when the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, seized power in Cambodia in 1975 they declared 'Year Zero'. Capitalism could be abolished and a qualitatively different socialist society established in its place. Socialism, in this context, usually took the form of state collectivization, modelled upon the Soviet Union during the Stalinist period. The revolution 'road' was also associated with a drift towards dictatorship and the use of political repression. This occurred for a number of reasons. First, the use of force accustomed the new rulers to regard violence as a legitimate instrument of policy; as Mao put it,

'power resides in the barrel of a gun'. Second, revolutionary parties typically adopted military-style structures, based upon strong leadership and strict discipline, that were merely consolidated once power was achieved. Third, in rooting out the vestiges of the old order, all oppositional forces were also removed, effectively preparing the way for the construction of totalitarian dictatorships. The revolutionary socialist tradition, nevertheless, was fatally undermined by the collapse of communism in what were, effectively, the counter-revolutions of 1989–91. This finally ended the divide that had opened up in socialist politics in 1917, and completed the conversion of socialism to constitutional and democratic politics. Where revolutionary socialism survives, it is only in pockets such as continuing Maoist insurgency in Peru and Nepal.

Evolutionary socialism

Although early socialists often supported the idea of revolution, as the nineteenth century progressed enthusiasm for popular revolt waned, at least in the advanced capitalist states of western and central Europe. Capitalism itself had matured and by the late nineteenth century the urban working class had lost its revolutionary character and been integrated into society. Wages and living standards had started to rise, partly as a result of colonial expansion into Africa and Asia after 1875. The working class had also begun to develop a range of institutions – working men's clubs, trade unions, political parties and so on – which both protected their interests and nurtured a sense of security and belonging within industrial society. Furthermore, the gradual advance of political democracy led to the extension of the franchise (the right to vote) to the working classes. By the end of the First World War, a large majority of western state had introduced universal manhood suffrage, with a growing number extending voting rights also to women. The combined effect of these factors was to shift the attention of socialists away from violent insurrection and to persuade them that there was an alternative evolutionary, 'democratic' or 'parliamentary' road to socialism. It is notable, for example, that towards the end of his life Marx was prepared to speculate about the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in the advanced capitalist countries of western Europe, and Engels openly approved of the electoral tactics increasingly employed by the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Where revolutionary doctrines continued to dominate it was usually in economically and politically backward countries such as Russia.

The Fabian Society, formed in 1884, took up the cause of parliamentary socialism in the UK. The Fabians, led by Beatrice Webb (1858–1943) and Sidney Webb (1859–1947), and including noted intellectuals such as George Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells, took their name from the Roman General Fabius Maximus, who was noted for the patient and defensive tactics he had employed in defeating Hannibal's invading armies. In their view, socialism would develop naturally and peacefully out of liberal capitalism via a very similar process. This would occur through a combination of political action and education. Political action required the formation of a socialist party, which would compete for power against established parliamentary parties rather than prepare for violent revolution. They therefore accepted the liberal theory of the state as a neutral arbiter, rather than the Marxist belief that it was an agent of class oppression. The Webbs were actively involved in the formation of the UK Labour Party and helped to write its 1918 constitution. The Fabians also believed that elite groups, such as politicians of all parties, civil servants, scientists and academics, could be converted to socialism through education.

These elite groups would be 'permeated' by socialist ideas as they recognized that socialism is morally superior to capitalism, being based, for example, upon Biblical principles, and is also more rational and efficient. A socialist economy, for instance, could avoid the waste involved in class conflict and debilitating poverty.

Fabian ideas also had an impact upon the SPD, formed in 1875. The SPD quickly became the largest socialist party in Europe, and in 1912 the largest party in the German Reichstag. Although committed in theory to a Marxist strategy, in practice it adopted a reformist approach, influenced by the ideas of Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64). Lassalle had argued that the extension of political democracy could enable the state to respond to working-class interests, and he envisaged socialism being established through a gradual process of social reform, introduced by a benign state. Such ideas were developed more thoroughly by Eduard Bernstein (see p. 143), whose Evolutionary Socialism (1898) developed ideas that paralleled the Fabian belief in gradualism. Bernstein was particularly impressed by the development of the democratic state, which he believed made the Marxist call for revolution redundant. The working class could use the ballot box to introduce socialism, which would therefore develop as an evolutionary outgrowth of capitalism. Such principles dominated the working-class political parties that sprang up around the turn of the century: the Australian Labour Party was founded in 1891, the UK Labour Party in 1900, the Italian Socialist Party in 1892, its French counterpart in 1905, and so on. They came, in the 1970s, to be adopted also by western communist parties, led by the Spanish, Italian and French communist parties. The resulting Eurocommunism was committed to pursuing a democratic road to communism and maintaining an open, competitive political system.

The inevitability of gradualism?

The advent of political democracy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries caused a wave of optimism to spread throughout the socialist movement, as reflected, for example, in the Fabian prophecy of 'the inevitability of gradualism'. The idea that the victory of socialism was inevitable was not new. For instance, Marx had predicted the inevitable overthrow of capitalist society in a proletarian revolution. However, whereas Marx believed that history was driven by the irresistible forces of class conflict, evolutionary socialists highlighted the logic of the democratic process itself.

Their optimism was founded on a number of assumptions. First, the progressive extension of the franchise would eventually lead to the establishment of universal adult suffrage and therefore of political equality. Second, political equality would, in practice, work in the interests of the majority, that is, those who decide the outcome of elections. Socialists thus believed that political democracy would invest power in the hands of the working class, easily the most numerous class in any industrial society. Third, socialism was thought to be the natural 'home' of the working class. As capitalism was seen as a system of class exploitation, oppressed workers would naturally be drawn to socialist parties, which offered them the prospect of social justice and emancipation. The electoral success of socialist parties would therefore be guaranteed by the numerical strength of the working class. Fourth, once in power, socialist parties would be able to carry out a fundamental transformation of society through a process of social reform. In this way political democracy not only opened up the possibility of achieving socialism peacefully, it made

this process inevitable. The achievement of political equality had to be speedily followed by the establishment of social equality.

Such optimistic expectations have, however, not been borne out in reality. Some have even argued that democratic socialism is founded upon a contradiction: in order to respond successfully to electoral pressures, socialists have been forced to revise or 'water down' their ideological beliefs. Socialist parties have enjoyed periods of power in virtually all liberal democracies, with the exception of North America. However, they have certainly not been guaranteed power. The Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party (SAP) has been the most successful in this respect, having been in power alone or as the senior partner in a coalition for most of the period since 1951. Nevertheless, even the SAP has only once achieved 50 per cent of the popular vote (in 1968). The UK Labour Party gained its greatest support (49 per cent) in 1951, equalled by the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party in 1982. The SPD in Germany got 46 per cent of the vote in 1972 and the combined socialist and communist vote in Italy in 1976 amounted to 44 per cent. Moreover, although these parties have undoubtedly introduced significant social reforms when in power, usually involving the expansion of welfare provision and economic management, they have certainly not presided over any fundamental social transformation. At best, capitalism has been reformed, not abolished.

Democratic socialism has in fact encountered a number of problems not envisaged by its founding fathers. In the first place, does the working class any longer constitute the majority of the electorate in advanced industrial societies? Socialist parties have traditionally focused their electoral appeal upon urban manual workers, the 'factory fodder' of capitalist societies. Modern capitalism, however, has become increasingly technological, demanding a skilled workforce that is often engaged in technical rather than manual tasks. The 'traditional' working class, engaged in regimented manual labour and working in established heavy industries, has thus declined in size, giving rise to the idea of so-called 'two-thirds, one-third' societies, in which poverty and disadvantage are concentrated in the 'underclass'. In The Culture of Contentment (1992) J. K. Galbraith drew attention to the emergence in modern societies, or at least amongst the politically active, of a 'contented majority' whose material affluence and economic security encourage them to be politically conservative. If working-class support no longer offers socialist parties the prospect of an electoral majority, they are either forced to appeal more broadly for support to other social classes, or to share power as a coalition partner with middle-class parties. Both options require socialist parties to modify their ideological commitments, either in order to appeal to electors who have little or no interest in socialism, or to work with parties that seek to uphold capitalism.

Furthermore, is the working class socialist at heart? Is socialism genuinely in the interests of the working class? Socialist parties have been forced to acknowledge the ability of capitalism to 'deliver the goods', especially during the 'long boom' of the post-1945 period, which brought growing affluence to all classes in western societies. During the 1950s socialist parties, once committed to fundamental change, revised their policies in an attempt to appeal to an increasingly affluent working class. A similar process took place in the 1980s and 1990s, as socialist parties struggled to come to terms with changes in the class structure of capitalism as well as the pressures generated by economic globalization. In effect, socialism came to be associated with attempts to make the market economy work, rather than with the attempt to re-

engineer the social structure of capitalism. Such shifts are examined in more detail later, in connection with the changing character of social democracy.

Left-wing socialists, on the other hand, have been reluctant to accept that the working class has abandoned fundamentalist socialism. Rather, they believe that the working class has been deprived of the ability to make independent political judgements that reflect their own interests. Marxists, for example, have argued that capitalism is supported by a process of ideological manipulation. 'Bourgeois ideology' pervades society, preventing the working class perceiving the reality of its own exploitation. For example, Lenin proclaimed that without the leadership of a revolutionary party the working class would only be able to gain 'trade union consciousness', a desire for material improvement within the capitalist system, but not full revolutionary 'class consciousness'. Gramsci (see p. 9) emphasized that the bourgeoisie dominates capitalism not only through its economic power but also by a process of 'ideological hegemony'.

Finally, can socialist parties, even if elected to power, carry out socialist reforms? Socialist parties have formed single-party governments in a number of western countries, including France, Sweden, Spain, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. Once elected, however, they have been confronted with entrenched interests in both the state and society. As early as 1902, Karl Kautsky pointed out that 'the capitalist class rules but it does not govern, it contents itself with ruling the government'. Elected governments operate within what Miliband (1983) called a 'state system' – the administration, courts, police and military – whose personnel are not elected and come from similar social backgrounds to businesspeople. These groups reflect a class bias and are capable of blocking, or at least diluting, radical socialist policies. Moreover, elected governments, of whatever ideological inclination, must respect the power of big business, which is the major employer and investor in the economy as well as the wealthiest contributor to party funds. In other words, although democratic socialist parties may succeed in forming elected governments, there is the danger that they will merely win office without necessarily acquiring power.

Marxism

Strictly speaking, 'Marxism' as a codified body of thought only came into existence after Marx's death in 1883. It was the product of the attempt, notably by Marx's lifelong collaborator, Engels, the German socialist leader Karl Kautsky and the Russian theoretician Georgi Plekhanov (1857–1918), to condense Marx's ideas and theories into a systematic and comprehensive world view that suited the needs of the growing socialist movement. Engels' Anti-Dühring, written in 1876, while Marx was still alive, is sometimes seen as the first work of Marxist orthodoxy, emphasizing the need for adherence to an authoritative interpretation of Marx's work. This orthodox Marxism, which is often portrayed as 'dialectical materialism' (a term coined by Plekhanov and not used by Marx), later formed the basis of Soviet communism. 'Vulgar' Marxism, as it has been called, undoubtedly placed heavier stress on mechanistic theories and historical inevitability than did Marx's own writings. The matter, however, is further complicated by the breadth and complexity of Marx's own writings and the difficulty of establishing the 'Marxism of Marx'. Some, for instance, see Marx as an economic determinist, while others proclaim him to be a humanist socialist. Moreover, distinctions have also been drawn between his early and later writings, sometimes presented as the distinction between the 'young Marx'

and the 'mature Marx'. It is nevertheless clear that Marx himself believed that he had developed a new brand of socialism that was scientific in the sense that it was primarily concerned with disclosing the nature of social and historical development, rather than with advancing an essentially ethical critique of capitalism.

At least three forms of Marxism can be identified. These are as follows:

- Classical
- Orthodox communism
- Modern

Classical

Philosophy

The core of classical Marxism – the Marxism of Marx – is a philosophy of history that outlines why capitalism is doomed and why socialism is destined to replace it. This is, however, philosophy of a particular kind. As Marx put it in his 'Theses on Feuerbach' ([1845] Marx and Engels, 1968): 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it'. He therefore saw his work as both a theory of society and a socialist political project. Indeed, the sophistication and complexity of Marx's writings derive in part from his unwillingness to separate theory from practice and his belief that as human beings shape their world, in the process, they are also helping to shape themselves. But in what sense did Marx believe his work to be scientific? Marx criticized earlier socialist thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen as 'utopians' on the ground that their socialism was grounded in a desire for total social transformation unconnected with the necessity of class struggle and revolution. Marx, in contrast, undertook a laborious empirical analysis of history and society, hoping thereby to gain insight into the nature of future developments. However, whether with Marx's help or not, Marxism as the attempt to gain historical understanding through the application of scientific methods, later developed into Marxism as a body of scientific truths, gaining a status more akin to that of a religion. Engels' declaration that Marx had uncovered the 'laws' of historical and social development was a clear indication of this transition.

What made Marx's approach different from that of other social thinkers was that he subscribed to what Engels called the 'materialist conception of history' or historical materialism. Rejecting the idealism of the German philosopher Hegel (1770–1831), who believed that history amounted to the unfolding of the so-called 'world spirit', Marx held material circumstances to be fundamental to all forms of social and historical development. This reflected the belief that the production of the means of subsistence is the most crucial of all human activities. Since humans cannot survive without food, water, shelter and so on, the way in which these are produced conditions all other aspects of life; in short, 'social being determines consciousness'. In the preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, written in 1859, Marx gave this theory its most succinct expression by suggesting that social consciousness and the 'legal and political superstructure' arise from the 'economic base', the real foundation of society. This 'base' consists essentially of the 'mode of production' or economic system – feudalism, capitalism, socialism and

Karl Marx (1818–83)

German philosopher, economist and political thinker, usually portrayed as the father of twentieth-century communism. After a brief career as a teacher and journalist, Marx spent the rest of his life as an active revolutionary and writer, living mainly in London and supported by his friend and life-long collaborator, Friedrich Engels.

Marx's work was derived from a synthesis of Hegelian philosophy, British political economy and French socialism. Its centrepiece was a critique of capitalism that highlights its transitional nature by drawing attention to systemic inequality and instability. Marx subscribed to a teleological theory of history that held that social development would inevitably culminate with the establishment of communism. His classic work is the three-volume Capital (1867, 1885 and 1894); his best-known and most accessible work, with Engels, is the Communist Manifesto (1848).

so on. Although the precise nature of the relationship between the base and the superstructure has been the subject of considerable debate and speculation, it undoubtedly led Marx to conclude that political, legal, cultural, religious, artistic and other aspects of life could primarily be explained by reference to economic factors.

Although in other respects a critic of Hegel, Marx nevertheless embraced his belief that the driving force of historical change was the dialectic, a process of interaction between competing forces that leads to a higher stage of development. In effect, progress is the consequence of internal conflict. For Hegel, this explained the movement of the ‘world spirit’ towards self-realization through conflict between a thesis and its opposing force, an antithesis, producing a higher level, a synthesis, which in turn constitutes a new thesis. Marx, as Engels put it, ‘turned Hegel on his head’ by investing this Hegelian dialectic with a materialistic interpretation. Marx thus explained historical change by reference to internal contradictions within each mode of production arising from the existence of private property. Capitalism is thus doomed because it embodies its own antithesis, the proletariat, seen by Marx as the ‘grave digger of capitalism’. Conflict between capitalism and the proletariat will therefore lead to a higher stage of development in the establishment of a socialist, and eventually a communist, society.

Marx's theory of history is therefore teleological, in the sense that it invests history with meaning or a purpose, reflected in its goal: classless communism. This goal would nevertheless only be achieved once history had developed through a series of stages or epochs, each characterized by its own economic structure and class system. In The German Ideology ([1846] 1970) Marx identified four such stages: (1) primitive communism or tribal society, in which material scarcity provided the principal source of conflict; (2) slavery, covering classical or ancient societies and characterized by conflict between master and slave; (3) feudalism, marked by antagonism between land owners and serfs; and (4) capitalism, dominated by the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Human history had therefore been a long struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor, the exploited and the exploiter. Each stage of history nevertheless marked an advance on the last in that it brought about the further development of the ‘forces of production’: machinery, technology, labour processes and the like. However, following Hegel, Marx envisaged an end of history, which would occur when a society was constructed that

embodied no internal contradictions or antagonisms. This, for Marx, meant communism, a classless society based on the common ownership of productive wealth. With the establishment of communism, what Marx called the 'pre-history of mankind' would come to an end.

Economics

In Marx's early writings much of his critique of capitalism rests on the notion of alienation. This suggests that capitalism has separated people from their genuine or essential natures, that is, from their capacity as workers to develop skills, talents and understanding through the experience of free productive labour. Since capitalism is a system of production for exchange, it alienates humans from the product of their labour: they work to produce not what they need or what is useful, but 'commodities' to be sold for profit. They are also alienated from the process of labour, because most are forced to work under the supervision of foremen or managers. In addition, work is not social: individuals are encouraged to be self-interested and are therefore alienated from fellow human beings. Finally, workers are alienated from themselves. Labour itself is reduced to a mere commodity and work becomes a depersonalized activity instead of a creative and fulfilling one. In Marx's later work, however, capitalism is more often analysed in terms of class conflict and exploitation.

Marx defined class in terms of economic power, specifically where people stand in relation to the ownership of the 'means of production', or productive wealth. He believed that capitalist society was increasingly being divided into 'two great classes facing one another: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat'. The bourgeoisie make up the capitalist class and live off the ownership of productive wealth; the proletariat constitute the propertyless masses, who are forced to subsist through the sale of their labour power and can thus be seen as 'wage slaves'. For Marx and later Marxists, the analysis of the class system provides the key to historical understanding and enables predictions to be made about the future development of capitalism: in the words of the Communist Manifesto, 'The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle.'

Classes, rather than individuals, parties or other movements, are the chief agents of historical change. Crucially, Marx believed that the relationship between classes is one of irreconcilable antagonism, the subordinate class being necessarily and systematically exploited by the 'ruling class'. This he explained by reference to the idea of 'surplus value'. Unlike conventional economists, who estimate value in terms of price determined by market forces, Marx, in line with earlier theorists such as Locke (see p. 39), subscribed to a labour theory of value. This suggests that the value of a good reflects the quantity of labour that has been expended in its production. Capitalism's quest for profit can only be satisfied through the extraction of 'surplus value' from its workers, by paying them less than the value their labour generates. Economic exploitation is therefore an essential feature of the capitalist mode of production, and it operates regardless of the meanness or generosity of particular employers.

Marx was concerned not only to highlight the inherent instability of capitalism, based as it is on irreconcilable class conflict, but also to analyse the nature of capitalist development. In particular, he drew attention to its tendency to experience deepening economic crises. These stemmed, in the main, from cyclical crises of overproduction, plunging the economy into

stagnation and bringing unemployment and immiseration to the working class. Each crisis would be more severe than the last because, Marx calculated, in the long-term the rate of profit would fall. Further tensions would result from a tendency towards monopolization, the concentration of capital in fewer and fewer hands and the absorption of all other classes into the ranks of the proletariat. The exploited masses, united by a common economic interest, would thus come to constitute the overwhelming majority in any capitalist society.

Politics

Marx's most important prediction was that capitalism was destined to be overthrown by a proletarian revolution. This would be not merely a political revolution that would remove the governing elite or overthrow the state machine, but a social revolution that would establish a new mode of production and culminate with the achievement of full communism. In Marx's view, the epoch of social revolution would begin when the class system, the 'relations of production', became a fetter upon the further development of productive techniques and innovation, the so-called forces of production. Such a revolution, he anticipated, would occur in the most mature capitalist countries – for example, Germany, Belgium, France or Britain – where the forces of production had expanded to their limit within the constraints of the capitalist system. Nevertheless, revolution would not simply be determined by the development of objective conditions. The subjective element would be supplied by a 'class-conscious' proletariat, meaning that revolution would occur when both objective and subjective conditions were 'ripe'. As class antagonisms intensified, the proletariat would recognize the fact of its own exploitation and become a revolutionary force: a class-for-itself. In this sense, revolution would be a spontaneous act, carried out by the proletarian class that, in effect, would lead or guide itself.

The initial target of this revolution was to be the bourgeois state. Two theories of the state can be identified in Marx's writings. The first is expressed in the often-quoted dictum from the Communist Manifesto: 'The executive of the modern state is the committee for managing the common affairs of the bourgeoisie.' From this perspective, the state is clearly dependent upon society and acts as nothing more than an instrument of oppression wielded by the economically dominant class. A second – more complex and subtle – theory of the state is found in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte ([1852] 1968). In this Marx allowed that the state could enjoy what has come to be seen as 'relative autonomy' from the ruling class, its principal role being to mediate between conflicting classes and so perpetuate the class system. In either case, however, the proletariat has no alternative: in order to defeat capitalism the state machine that upholds it must first be overthrown.

Marx nevertheless recognized that there could be no immediate transition from capitalism to communism. A transitionary 'socialist' stage of development would last as long as class antagonisms persisted. This would be characterized by what Marx called the 'revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat', in effect, a proletarian state whose purpose would be to safeguard the gains of the revolution by preventing counter-revolution by the dispossessed bourgeoisie. However, as class antagonisms began to fade with the emergence of full communism, the state would 'wither away' – once the class system had been abolished the state would lose its reason for existence. The resulting communist society would therefore be stateless as well as classless, and would allow a system of commodity production to give way to one geared to the satisfaction

of human needs. For the first time, human beings would be able to shape their own destinies and realize their full potential, reflected in Marx's belief that 'the free development of each is the precondition of the free development of all'.

Orthodox communism

The Russian Revolution and its consequences dominated the image of communism in the twentieth century. The Bolshevik party, led by V. I. Lenin, seized power in a coup d'état in October 1917, and the following year adopted the name 'Communist Party'. As the first successful communist revolutionaries, the Bolshevik leaders enjoyed unquestionable authority within the communist world, at least until the 1950s. Communist parties set up elsewhere accepted the ideological leadership of Moscow and joined the Communist International, or 'Comintern', founded in 1919. The communist regimes established in eastern Europe after 1945, in China in 1949 and in Cuba in 1959 were consciously modelled upon the structure of the Soviet Union. Thus Soviet communism became the dominant model of communist rule, and the ideas of Marxism-Leninism became the ruling ideology of the communist world.

However, twentieth-century communism differed significantly from the ideas and expectations of Marx and Engels. In the first place, although the communist parties that developed in the twentieth century were founded upon the theories of classical Marxism, they were forced to adapt these to the tasks of winning and retaining political power. Communism, in that sense, was 'Marxism in practice'. Twentieth-century communist leaders had, in particular, to give greater attention to issues such as leadership, political organization and economic management than Marx had done. Second, the communist regimes were shaped by the historical circumstances in which they developed. Communist parties did not achieve power, as Marx had anticipated, in the developed capitalist states of western Europe, but in backward, largely rural countries such as Russia and China. In consequence, the urban proletariat was invariably small and unsophisticated, quite incapable of carrying out a genuine class revolution. Communist rule thus became the rule of a communist elite and of communist leaders. Furthermore, being born in a context of backwardness, the newly-formed communist regimes were dominated by the task of economic development. Twentieth-century communism therefore became more an ideology of modernization than one of social and personal emancipation. Twentieth-century communist regimes were also forced to confront enemies within and without. The Bolshevik regime in Russia, for example, had to survive a three-year civil war in which the 'white' or Tsarist forces were supported by and invasion by troops from the UK, France, the United States and Japan. As a result, the emerging communist regimes became accustomed to employing coercive means to maintain political stability and defend themselves against 'class enemies'. Third, Soviet communism, which later became the basis for the world communist movement, was crucially shaped by the decisive personal contribution of the first two Bolshevik leaders, Lenin and Stalin (see p. 134).

Leninism

Lenin was both a political leader and a major political thinker. Lenin's ideas reflected his overriding concern with the problems of winning power and establishing communist rule. He remained faithful to the idea of revolution, believing that parliamentary politics were merely a

bourgeois sham, aimed at tricking the proletariat into believing that political power was exercised through the ballot box. Power had to be seized through armed insurrection, in accordance with Lenin's exhortation to ‘smash the state!’ Lenin also echoed Marx's call for a transitional dictatorship of the proletariat, between the overthrow of capitalism and the achievement of ‘full communism’. The revolution had to be protected against the possibility of counter-revolution by ‘class enemies’, in particular the dispossessed bourgeoisie which wished to restore capitalism. Socialist revolution must therefore be followed by the construction of a proletarian or workers' state.

Vladimir Ilich Lenin (1870–1924)

Russian Marxist theorist and revolutionary. Lenin was drawn into active politics by the execution of his brother in 1887, and became a Marxist in 1889. In 1903 he founded the Bolshevik Party, later masterminding the 1917 October Revolution. Lenin remained leader of the Soviet state until his death, although he effectively retired in late 1922 after a series of strokes.

Undoubtedly the most influential Marxist theorist of the twentieth century, Lenin was primarily concerned with the issues of organization and revolution. What is to be Done? (1902) emphasized the central importance of a tightly organized ‘vanguard’ party to lead and guide the proletarian class. In Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916), he analysed colonialism as an economic phenomenon and highlighted the possibility of turning world war into class war. State and Revolution (1917) outlined Lenin's firm commitment to the ‘insurrectionary road’ and rejected electoral democracy as ‘bourgeois parliamentarianism’.

The most significant and novel of Lenin's ideas was his belief in the need for a new kind of political party, a revolutionary party or vanguard party. Unlike Marx, Lenin did not believe that the proletariat would spontaneously develop revolutionary class consciousness, as the working class was deluded by bourgeois ideas and beliefs. Lacking any grasp of Marxist analysis, workers were failing to recognize that their real enemy was the capitalist system itself, and were instead seeking to improve their conditions within capitalism, for instance by achieving better pay, shorter hours and safer working conditions. Lenin suggested that only a ‘revolutionary party’ could lead the working class from ‘trade union consciousness’ to revolutionary class consciousness. Such a party should be composed of professional and dedicated revolutionaries. Its claim to leadership would lie in its ideological wisdom, specifically its understanding of Marxist theory, which was thought to provide a scientific explanation of social and historical development. The party could therefore act as the ‘vanguard of the proletariat’ because, armed with Marxism, it would be able to perceive the genuine interests of the proletariat and be dedicated to awakening the proletarian class to its revolutionary potential.

Lenin proposed that the vanguard party should be organized according to the principles of democratic centralism. The party should be composed of a hierarchy of institutions, linking grass-root cells to the party's highest organs: its central committee and politburo. ‘Democracy’ within the party required that each level of the party would be able to debate freely, make recommendations to higher organs and elect their delegates; however ‘centralization’ meant that minorities would have to accept the views of the majority, and that lower organs of the party should obey decisions made by higher ones. The revolutionary party had to be tightly disciplined

and centrally organized in order to provide the ideological leadership the proletariat needed. Lenin proclaimed that democratic centralism would achieve ‘freedom of discussion and unity of action’.

When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917 they did so as a vanguard party and therefore in the name of the proletariat. If the Bolshevik Party was acting in the interests of the working class, it followed that opposition parties must represent the interests of classes hostile to the proletariat, in particular the bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat required that the revolution be protected against its class enemies, which effectively meant the suppression of all parties other than the Communist Party. By 1920 Russia had become a one-party state. Leninist theory therefore implies the existence of a monopolistic party, which enjoys sole responsibility for articulating the interests of the proletariat and guiding the revolution toward its ultimate goal, that of ‘building communism’. Moreover, the party must also be a ruling party. As the source of political authority within a communist state, the Communist Party must be the leading and guiding force within government and all other institutions. Orthodox communist states, modelled on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, should therefore invest their ruling communist parties with entrenched political power and a monopoly of ideological wisdom.

Stalinism

Soviet communism was no less deeply influenced by the rule of Joseph Stalin than that of Lenin. Indeed more so, as the Soviet Union was more profoundly affected by Stalin's ‘second revolution’ in the 1930s than it had been by the October Revolution. Stalin's most important ideological shift was to embrace the doctrine of ‘Socialism in One Country’, initially developed by Bukharin. Announced in 1924, this proclaimed that the Soviet Union could succeed in ‘building socialism’ without the need for international revolution. This clearly distinguished him from his rival for power, Leon Trotsky (and, indeed, from Lenin and Marx), who maintained an unswerving commitment to internationalism. After consolidating himself in power, however, Stalin oversaw a dramatic economic and political upheaval, commencing with the announcement of the first Five Year Plan in 1928. Under Lenin's New Economic Policy, introduced in 1921, the Soviet Union had developed a mixed economy in which agriculture and small-scale industry remained in private hands, while the state controlled only what Lenin called the ‘commanding heights of the economy’. Stalin's Five Year Plans, however, brought about rapid industrialization as well as the swift and total eradication of private enterprise. From 1929 agriculture was collectivized, and Soviet peasants were forced at the cost of literally millions of lives to give up their land and join state or collective farms. Economic Stalinism therefore took the form of state collectivization or ‘state socialism’. The capitalist market was entirely removed and replaced by a system of central planning, dominated by the State Planning Committee, ‘Gosplan’, and administered by a collection of powerful economic ministries based in Moscow.

Major political changes accompanied this ‘second revolution’. In order to achieve power, Stalin had exploited his position as general secretary of the Communist Party by ensuring that his supporters were appointed to influential posts within the party apparatus. Party officials were appointed from above by a system known as the nomenklatura, rather than being elected from below. Democratic centralism became less democratic and more centralized, leading to a ‘circular flow of power’ in which the party leader acquired unrivalled authority by virtue of his

control over patronage and promotion. During the 1930s Stalin used this power to brutal effect, removing anyone suspected of disloyalty or criticism in an increasingly violent series of purges carried out by the secret police, the NKVD. The membership of the Communist Party was almost halved, over a million people lost their lives, including all surviving members of Lenin's Politburo, and many millions were imprisoned in labour camps, or gulags. Political Stalinism was therefore a form of totalitarian dictatorship, operating through a monolithic ruling party, in which all forms of debate or criticism were eradicated by terror in what amounted to a civil war conducted against the party itself. The nature of totalitarianism (see p. 227) is discussed in more depth in Chapter 7.

Joseph Stalin (1879–1953)

Russian revolutionary and leader of the Soviet Union, 1924–53. Stalin, the son of a shoemaker, was expelled from his seminary for revolutionary activities and joined the Bolsheviks in 1903. He became general secretary of the Communist Party in 1922, and after winning the struggle for power following Lenin's death he established a monolithic command–administrative system, sustained by widespread terror and a cult of personality.

Despite his voluminous writings, Stalin was not a significant theoretician, Stalinism referring more to a distinctive politico-economic system than to a body of ideas. His ideological heritage flows from the doctrine of 'Socialism in One Country', which dictated the drive for industrialization and collectivization, justified by the need to resist capitalist encirclement and to eliminate the kulaks (rich peasants) as a class. Stalin thus fused a quasi-Marxist notion of class war with an appeal to Russian nationalism.

Modern

While Marxism – or, more usually, Marxism-Leninism – was turned into a secular religion by the orthodox communist regimes of the eastern Europe and elsewhere, a more subtle and complex form of Marxism developed in western Europe. Referred to as modern Marxism, western Marxism or neo-Marxism, this amounted to an attempt to revise or recast the classical ideas of Marx while remaining faithful to certain Marxist principles or aspects of Marxist methodology.

Two principal factors shaped the character of modern Marxism. First, when Marx's prediction about the imminent collapse of capitalism failed to materialize, modern Marxists were forced to re-examine conventional class analysis. In particular, they took greater interest in Hegelian ideas and in the stress upon 'Man the creator' found in Marx's early writings. In other words, human beings came to be seen as makers of history, not simply puppets controlled by impersonal material forces. By insisting upon an interplay between economics and politics, between the material circumstances of life and the capacity of humans to shape their own destiny, modern Marxists were able to break free from the rigid 'base/superstructure' straightjacket. In short, the class struggle was no longer treated as the beginning and end of social analysis. Second, modern Marxists were usually at odds with, and sometimes profoundly repelled by, the Bolshevik model of orthodox communism. Not only were they critical of its authoritarian and repressive character, but they also recoiled from its mechanistic and avowedly scientific pretensions.

The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács (1885–1971) was one of the first to present Marxism as a humanistic philosophy, emphasizing the process of 'reification', through which capitalism dehumanizes workers by reducing them to passive objects or marketable commodities. Antonio Gramsci drew attention to the degree to which the class system is upheld not simply by unequal economic and political power but also by bourgeois 'hegemony', the spiritual and cultural supremacy of the ruling class, brought about through the spread of bourgeois values and beliefs via civil society – the media, churches, youth movements, trade unions and so on.

A more overtly Hegelian brand of Marxism was developed by the so-called Frankfurt School, whose leading members were Theodor Adorno (1903–69), Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) and Herbert Marcuse (see p. 136). Frankfurt theorists developed what was called 'critical theory', a blend of Marxist political economy, Hegelian philosophy and Freudian psychology, that came to have a considerable impact on the so-called 'new left'. The new left, prominent in the 1960s and early 1970s, rejected both of the 'old left' alternatives – Soviet-style state socialism and deradicalized western social democracy. Influenced by the writings of the 'young' Marx but also Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979)

German political philosopher and social theorist, cofounder of the Frankfurt School. A refugee from Hitler's Germany, Marcuse lived in the United States and developed a form of neo-Marxism that drew heavily on Hegel and Freud. He came to prominence in the 1960s as a leading new left thinker and 'guru' of the student movement.

Central to Marcuse's work was the portrayal of advanced industrial society as an all-encompassing system of repression, subduing argument and debate and absorbing all forms of opposition – 'repressive tolerance'. Against this 'one-dimensional society', he held up the unashamedly utopian prospect of personal and sexual liberation, looking not to the conventional working class as a revolutionary force but to groups such as students, ethnic minorities, women and workers in the Third World. Marcuse's most important works include Reason and Revolution (1941), Eros and Civilization (1958) and One-Dimensional Man (1964).

by anarchism and radical forms of phenomenology and existentialism, new left theories were often diffuse. Common themes nevertheless included the rejection of conventional society – 'the system' – as oppressive, disillusionment with the working class as the agent of revolution, a commitment to personal autonomy and self-fulfilment in the form of 'liberation', and a preference for decentralization and participatory democracy.

In contrast a form of structural Marxism emerged from the writings of the French communist Louis Althusser (1918–90). This was based on the assumption that Marx viewed individuals as simply bearers of functions that arise from their structural location, in which case Marxism becomes a 'new science' essentially concerned with the analysis of the structure of a social totality. A very different approach has been adopted by analytical Marxists such as John Roemer (1986), who has tried to fuse Marxism with a methodological individualism more commonly associated with liberalism. Instead of believing that history is shaped by collective entities, in this case classes, analytical Marxists attempt to explain collective action in terms of the rational calculations of self-interested individuals.

The death of Marxism?

The year 1989 marked a dramatic watershed in the history of communism and in ideological history generally. Commencing in April with student-led 'democracy movement' demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and culminating in November in the fall of the Berlin Wall, the division of Europe into a capitalist West and a communist East was brought to an end. By 1991 the Soviet Union, the model of orthodox communism, had ceased to exist. Where communist regimes continue, as in China, Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea and elsewhere, they have either blended political Stalinism with market-orientated economic reform (most clearly in the case of China) or suffered increasing isolation (as in the case of North Korea). These developments were a result of a number of structural flaws from which orthodox communism suffered. Chief amongst these were that although central planning proved effective in bringing about early industrialization, it could not cope with the complexity of modern industrial societies and, in particular, failed to deliver the levels of prosperity enjoyed in the capitalist West in the 1950s onwards; that repressive one-party states could not respond to demands for political freedom and civil liberties from increasingly urbanized better educated and more politically sophisticated populations, and that, in the absence of party competition, independent pressure groups and a free media, communist political systems were unable to monitor or respond to changing or growing public demands. The Gorbachev reforms in the Soviet Union after 1985, based upon the slogans of perestroika, or economic 'restructuring', and glasnost, or 'openness', merely hastened the demise of orthodox communism by exposing its structural flaws and generating an appetite for greater political change. As Alexis de Tocqueville remarked in relation to France in 1789: 'the most perilous moment for a bad government is when it seeks to mend its ways'.

There is, nevertheless, considerable debate about the implications of the collapse of communism from Marxism. On the one hand, there are those who, like the 'end of history' theorist, Francis Fukuyama (1989), argue that the 'collapse of communism' is certain proof of the demise of Marxism as a world-historical force. In this view, twentieth-century communism was the political expression of classical Marxism, in which case the rejection of the former demonstrated the irrelevance of the latter. Such thinking, indeed, built upon a growing body of liberal and conservative writing in the 1950s and 1960s, which, in the context of the Cold War, had identified totalitarian implications in Marx's thought that had eventually been realized in the form of Leninism and Stalinism. Marx was seen as the father of Stalinist totalitarianism for a variety of reasons. For example, his belief that the course of history is predetermined was seen to be based upon a determinist model of human nature which left little or no room for free-will. Marxism's scientific pretensions were also viewed as implicitly repressive since they imbued Marxist leaders with an absolute certainty in their own views and encouraged them to embark upon audacious programmes of political and social restructuring. Alternatively, Marxism was seen to be inherently monistic, in that rival ideas were dismissed as 'bourgeois ideology' and human society was seen to be converging around a single, communist model of social organization.

On the other hand, there were substantial differences between Marx's model of communism and what was done in his name in the twentieth century in Russia, China and elsewhere, a fact masked by Cold War critiques of Marx that often focused upon a mechanistic or 'vulgar' interpretation of Marxism. These differences included that Marx envisaged the socialization

(collective ownership) of the means of production rather than their nationalization (state ownership); that the state would 'wither away' rather than become increasingly powerful and bureaucratic; that material rewards would be distributed according to the egalitarian principle of need rather than to bolster a communist elite; and that decision-making would be based upon grassroots democracy rather than the entrenched power of a monopolistic party-state apparatus. Moreover, as many Marxist critics of Soviet Bolshevism pointed out, both Leninism and Stalinism can be seen as departures from, and indeed corruptions of, classical Marxism. For example, the Polish Marxist revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919) warned that Lenin's theory of the party would lead to 'substitutionism', in which a ruling party would substitute itself for the proletariat and, eventually, a supreme leader would substitute himself for the party. Leon Trotsky (see p. 185) argued that the Soviet Union under Stalin suffered from a 'bureaucratic degeneration', and proposed that a political revolution was necessary to overthrow privileged strata of state bureaucrats and return the Soviet Union to the road to socialism.

To point out that it was not Marxism but a Stalinist version of Marxism-Leninism that collapsed in 1989–91 is very far from demonstrating the continuing relevance of Marxism, however. A far more serious problem for Marxism is the failure of Marx's predictions about the inevitable collapse of capitalism and its replacement by communism to be realized. Quite simply, advanced industrial societies have not been haunted by the 'spectre of communism'. Some critics have argued that this merely reflects the fact that Marx's approach to the study of history and society is fundamentally flawed and unreliable. For example, Karl Popper (1957) accused Marx of 'historicism', the mistaken belief that the infinite complexity of human history can be reduced to a set of historical 'laws'. Modern Marxists also criticized the mistake of 'economism', the over-stating of economic or material factors in the explanation of historical and social change; however, if the economic 'base' no longer determines the political and ideological 'superstructure', then Marxism loses its predictive capacity. Even those who believe that Marx's views on matters such as alienation and exploitation continue to be relevant, have to accept that classical Marxism failed to recognize the remarkable resilience of capitalism and its capacity to recreate itself. This can certainly be seen in capitalism's seemingly inexorable appetite for technological innovation, meaning that instead of experiencing deepening crises, bringing the proletariat to revolutionary class consciousness, capitalism's crises have become less severe and class consciousness has been diluted by rising living standards. Similarly, capitalism's cultural resources, and its ability in particular to undermine support for socialism by embedding values such as consumerism and competitive individualism, have proved far stronger than Marx expected.

Some Marxists have responded to these problems by advancing 'post-Marxist' ideas and theories. Post-Marxism nevertheless has two implications. The first is that the Marxist project, and the historical materialism upon which it is based, should be abandoned in favour of alternative ideas, usually drawn from postmodernism (see p. 323). This is evident in the writings of the one-time Marxist, Jean-François Lyotard (1984), who suggested that Marxism as a totalizing theory of history, and for that matter all other 'grand narratives', had been made redundant by the emergence of postmodernity. In its alternative version, post-Marxism consists of an attempt to salvage certain key Marxist insights by attempting to reconcile Marxism with aspects of postmodernism and poststructuralism. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) accepted that the priority traditionally accorded social class, and the central position of the

working class in bringing about social change, were no longer sustainable. In so doing, they opened up space within Marxism for a wide range of other 'moments' of struggle, usually linked to so-called new social movements such as the women's movement, the ecological movement, the gay and lesbian movement and so on. This pluralistic style of politics may accord with the increasing individualism and diversity found in postmodern society, but in developing an image of social and personal liberation that is not rooted in economic issues it, arguably, undermines what is distinctive about Marxist thought. In other words, the post-Marxist stance places more emphasis on the 'post' than on the 'Marxist'.

Social democracy

The term 'social democracy' has been accorded a number of very different definitions. Its original meaning was associated with orthodox Marxism and was designed to highlight the distinction between the narrow goal of political democracy and the more radical task of collectivizing, or democratizing, productive wealth. Marxist parties formed in the late nineteenth century thus often styled themselves as social democratic parties, the best known example being the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), founded in 1875. By the early twentieth century, however, many such parties had come to adopt parliamentary tactics and were committed to a gradual and peaceful transition to socialism. As a result, social democracy was increasingly taken to refer to democratic socialism, in contrast to revolutionary socialism. After the 1917 Russian Revolution, revolutionary socialists, following the example of the Russian Bolsheviks, tended to use the title 'communist' to distance themselves from reformist social democratic parties. The final shift in the meaning of social democracy occurred by the mid-twentieth century, and resulted from the tendency among social democratic parties not only to adopt parliamentary strategies, but also to revise their socialist goals. In particular, western social democrats no longer sought to abolish capitalism but rather to reform or 'humanise' it. Social democracy therefore came to stand for a broad balance between the market economy, on the one hand, and state intervention, on the other. Although this stance has been most clearly associated with reformist socialism, it has also been embraced, to a greater or lesser extent, by others, notably modern liberals and paternalist conservatives. The major features of the social democratic stance are the following:

- Social democracy endorses liberal-democratic principles and accepts that political change can and should be brought about peacefully and constitutionally.
- Capitalism is accepted as the only reliable means of reliable means of generating wealth; socialism, therefore, is not qualitatively different from capitalism.
- Capitalism is nevertheless viewed as morally defective, particularly as a means for distributing wealth; capitalism is associated with structural inequality and poverty.
- The defects of the capitalist system can be rectified by the state through a process of economic and social engineering; the state is the custodian of public or common interest.
- The nation-state is a meaningful unit of political rule, in the sense that states have a significant capacity to regulate economic and social life within their own borders.

Social democracy was most fully developed in the early post-1945 period, during which enthusiasm for social democratic ideas and theories extended well beyond its socialist homeland, creating, in much western state, a social democratic consensus. However, since the 1970s and

1980s social democracy has struggled to retain its electoral and political relevance in the face of the advance of neoliberalism and changed economic and social circumstances. The final decades of the twentieth century therefore witnessed a process of ideological retreat on the part of reformist socialist parties across the globe. Some of these parties continued to endorse what they called 'modernized' social democracy, but others have embraced ideas such as the 'third way', the 'radical centre', the 'active centre' or the 'Neue Mitte'. Nevertheless, the relationship between the 'third way' or 'radical centre' and traditional social democracy, and their link to the socialist tradition generally, have become matters of considerable debate and argument.

Ethical socialism

The theoretical basis for social democracy has been provided more by moral or religious beliefs, rather than by scientific analysis. Marx and Engels had described their own theories as 'scientific socialism', and rejected the 'utopian socialism' of earlier years. Marxism's claim to being scientific rested upon the belief that it uncovered the laws of social and historical development: the victory of socialism was inevitable, not because it embodied a higher moral vision, but because the class struggle would drive history through a succession of stages until the eventual achievement of a classless society. Marx's scientific method was based upon historical materialism, the belief that human thought and behaviour are conditioned by the economic circumstances of life. Social democrats have not accepted the materialist and highly systematic ideas of Marx and Engels, but rather advanced an essentially moral critique of capitalism. In short, socialism is portrayed as morally superior to capitalism because human beings are ethical creatures, bound to one another by the ties of love, sympathy and compassion. Such ideas have often given socialism a markedly utopian character.

The moral vision that underlies ethical socialism has been based upon both humanistic and religious principles. Socialism in France, the UK and other Commonwealth countries has been more strongly influenced by the utopian ideas of Fourier, Owen and William Morris (1854–96) than by the 'scientific' creed of Karl Marx. Socialism has also drawn heavily upon Christianity. For example, there is a long-established tradition of Christian socialism in the UK, reflected in the twentieth century in the work of R. H. Tawney (see p. 142). The Christian ethic that has inspired British socialism is that of universal brotherhood, the respect that should be accorded all individuals as creations of God, a principle embodied in the commandment 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself'. In The Acquisitive Society (1921), Tawney condemned unregulated capitalism because it is driven by the 'sin of avarice' rather than faith in a 'common humanity'. In Equality ([1931] 1969) Tawney condemned the British class system as 'particularly detestable to Christians' and called for a substantial reduction of social inequality.

Such religious inspiration has also been evident in the ideas of liberation theology, which has influenced many Catholic developing-world states, Richard Henry Tawney (1880–1962)

UK social philosopher and historian. Drawn into educational social work in London's East End by his social conscience, Tawney devoted his life to social reconstruction through his association with the Workers' Educational Association, the Labour Party and as professor of economic history at the London School of Economics.

Tawney's socialism was firmly rooted in a Christian social moralism unconnected with Marxist class analysis. The disorders of capitalism derived from the absence of a 'moral ideal', leading to unchecked acquisitiveness and widespread material inequality. The project of socialism was therefore to build a 'common culture' that would provide the basis for social cohesion and solidarity. Tawney's major works include The Acquisitive Society (1921), Equality (1931) and The Radical Tradition (1964).

especially in Latin America. After years of providing support for repressive regimes in Latin America, Roman Catholic bishops meeting at Medellin, Colombia, in 1968 declared a 'preferential option for the poor'. The religious responsibilities of the clergy were seen to extend beyond the narrowly spiritual and to embrace the social and political struggles of ordinary people. Despite the condemnation of Pope John Paul II and the Vatican, radical priests in many parts of Latin America campaigned against poverty and political oppression and at times even backed socialist revolutionary movements. Similarly, socialist movements in the predominantly Muslim countries of North Africa, the Middle East and Asia have been inspired by religion. Islam is linked to socialism in that it exhorts the principles of social justice, charity and cooperation, and specifically prohibits usury or profiteering.

In abandoning scientific analysis in favour of moral or religious principles, however, social democracy weakened the theoretical basis of socialism. Social democracy has been primarily concerned with the notion of a just or fair distribution of wealth in society. This is embodied in the overriding principle of social democracy: social justice, implying a commitment to greater equality and reflected in values such as caring and compassion. Social democracy consequently came to stand for a broad range of views, extending from a left-wing commitment to extending equality and expanding the collective ownership of wealth, to more right-wing acceptance of the need for market efficiency and individual self-reliance that may be indistinguishable from certain forms of liberalism or conservatism. Attempts have nevertheless been made to give social democracy a theoretical basis, usually involving a re-examination of capitalism itself and a redefinition of the goal of socialism.

Revisionist socialism

The original, fundamentalist goal of socialism was that productive wealth should be owned in common by all and therefore used for the common benefit. This required the abolition of private property and the introduction of what Marx referred to as 'social revolution', the transition from a capitalist mode of production to a socialist one. Fundamentalist socialism is based upon the belief that capitalism is unredeemable: it is a system of class exploitation and oppression that deserves to be abolished altogether, not merely reformed.

By the end of the nineteenth century, some socialists had come to believe that Marx's analysis was defective. The clearest theoretical expression of this belief was found in Eduard Bernstein's Evolutionary Socialism ([1898] 1962), which undertook a comprehensive criticism of Marx and the first major revision of Marxist analysis. Bernstein's analysis was largely empirical; he rejected Marx's method of analysis – historical materialism – because the predictions Marx had made had proved to be incorrect. Capitalism had shown itself to be both stable and flexible. Indeed by the end of the nineteenth century there was little evidence that the 'spectre of

Communism', referred to by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto, was still haunting Europe. Rather than class conflict intensifying, dividing capitalist society into 'two great classes', the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, Bernstein suggested that capitalism was becoming increasingly complex and differentiated. In particular, the ownership of wealth had widened as a result of the introduction of joint stock companies, owned by a number of shareholders, instead of a single powerful industrialist. The

Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932)

German socialist politician and theorist. An early member of the German Social Democratic Party, Bernstein became one of its leading intellectuals, deeply embroiled in the revisionist controversy. He left the party because of his opposition to the First World War, though he subsequently returned.

Influenced by British Fabianism and the philosophy of Kant (1724–1804), Bernstein attempted to revise and modernize orthodox Marxism. In Evolutionary Socialism (1898) he argued that economic crises were becoming less, not more acute, and drew attention to the 'steady advance of the working class'. He therefore called for alliances with the liberal middle class and the peasantry, and emphasized the possibility of a gradual and peaceful transition to socialism. In his later writings he abandoned all semblance of Marxism and developed a form of ethical socialism based on neo-Kantianism.

ranks of the middle classes had also swollen, the growing number of salaried employees, technicians, government officials and professional workers being neither capitalists nor proletarians. In Bernstein's view, capitalism was no longer a system of naked class oppression. Capitalism could therefore be reformed by the nationalisation of major industries and the extension of legal protection and welfare benefits to the working class, a process which Bernstein was confident could be achieved peacefully and democratically.

Western socialist parties have been revisionist in practice, if not always in theory, intent upon 'taming' capitalism rather than abolishing it. In some cases they long retained a formal commitment to fundamentalist goals, as in the British Labour Party's belief in 'the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange', expressed in clause IV of its constitution, which survived unaltered until 1995. Nevertheless, as the twentieth century progressed, social democrats dropped their commitment to planning as they recognized the efficiency and vigour of the capitalist market. The Swedish Social Democratic Labour Party formally abandoned planning in the 1930s, as did the West German Social Democrats at the Bad Godesberg Congress of 1959, which accepted the principle, 'competition when possible; planning when necessary'. In the UK, a similar bid formally to embrace revisionism in the late 1950s ended in failure when the Labour Party conference rejected the then leader Hugh Gaitskell's attempt to abolish clause IV. Nevertheless, when in power the Labour Party never revealed any appetite for wholesale nationalization.

The abandonment of planning and comprehensive nationalisation left social democracy with three more modest objectives. The first of these was the mixed economy, a blend of public and private ownership that stands between free market capitalism and state

collectivism. Nationalization, when advocated by social democrats, is invariably selective and reserved for the 'commanding heights' of the economy, or industries that are thought to be 'natural monopolies'. The 1945–51 Attlee Labour government, for example, nationalized the major utilities – electricity, gas, coal, steel, the railways and so on – but left most of British industry in private hands. Second, social democrats sought to regulate or manage capitalist economies in order to maintain economic growth and keep unemployment low. After 1945, most social democratic parties were converted to Keynesian economics as a device for controlling the economy and delivering full employment. Third, socialists were attracted to the welfare state as the principal means of reforming or humanizing capitalism. The welfare state was seen as a redistributive mechanism that would help to promote social equality and eradicate poverty. Capitalism no longer needed to be abolished, only modified through the establishment of reformed or welfare capitalism.

Tensions within Socialism (1)

Social democracy	v.	Communism
ethical socialism	–	scientific socialism
revisionism	–	fundamentalism
reformism	–	utopianism
evolution/gradualism	–	revolution
'humanize' capitalism	–	abolish capitalism
redistribution	–	common ownership
ameliorate class conflict	–	classless society
relative equality	–	absolute equality
mixed economy	–	state collectivisation
economic management	–	central planning
parliamentary party	–	vanguard party
political pluralism	–	dictatorship of proletariat
liberal-democratic state	–	proletarian/people's state

An attempt to give theoretical substance to these developments, and in effect update Bernstein, was made by the UK politician and social theorist Anthony Crosland in The Future of Socialism (1956). Crosland (1918–77) argued that modern capitalism bore little resemblance to the nineteenth-century model that Marx had had in mind. Crosland was influenced by the ideas of James Burnham, who in The Managerial Revolution ([1941] 1960) suggested that a new class of managers, experts and technocrats had supplanted the old capitalist class and come to dominate all advanced industrial societies, both capitalist and communist. Crosland believed that the ownership of wealth had become divorced from its control. Whereas shareholders, who own businesses, are principally concerned with profit, salaried managers, who make day-to-day business decisions, have a broader range of goals, including the maintenance of industrial harmony as well as the public image of their company. Marxism had therefore become irrelevant; if capitalism could no longer be viewed as a system of class exploitation, the fundamentalist goals of nationalization and planning were simply outdated.

However, as a socialist, Crosland remained faithful to the goal of social justice, which he understood to mean a more equal distribution of wealth. Wealth need not be owned in common, it could be redistributed through a welfare state, financed by progressive taxation. The welfare state would raise the living standards of the poor and the most vulnerable sections in society, while progressive taxation would ensure that the prosperous and strong bore the burden of expanded welfare support. Finally, Crosland recognized that economic growth plays a crucial role in the achievement of socialism. A growing economy is essential to generate the tax revenues needed to finance more generous social expenditure. In addition, the prosperous will only be prepared to finance the needy if their own living standards are underwritten by economic growth.

The crisis of social democracy

During the early post-1945 period Keynesian social democracy – or traditional social democracy – appeared to have triumphed. Its strength was that it harnessed the dynamism of the market without succumbing to the levels of inequality and instability that Marx believed would doom capitalism. Liberal and conservative parties responded to this eagerly by developing their own forms of social democracy, the former based on equal opportunities, the latter on the paternalist or 'one nation' ideal. But moderate socialism, it seemed, had won the battle of ideas: political thought was moving inexorably to the left. Nevertheless, Keynesian social democracy continued to be based upon a compromise. On the one hand, there was a pragmatic acceptance of the market as the only reliable means of generating wealth. This reluctant conversion to the market meant that social democrats accepted that there was no viable socialist alternative to the market, meaning that the socialist project was reborn as an attempt to reform, not replace, capitalism. On the other hand, the socialist ethic survived in the form of a commitment to social justice, the idea of a morally defensible distribution of benefits or rewards in society. This, in turn, was linked to a weak notion of equality: distributive equality, the idea that poverty should be reduced and inequality narrowed through the redistribution of wealth from rich to poor. Abandoning the task of wholesale social reconstruction, socialists nevertheless wished pursue a programme of social engineering.

However, whereas fundamentalist socialism had a clear and well-defined goal – the abolition of capitalism – the revisionist goal of reforming capitalism was far more vague. All social democrats accepted that capitalism should be modified in accordance with the principle of social justice, but they had very different views about how this could be achieved, and even about how 'social justice' should be defined. What, for example, should be the balance between public and private ownership within a mixed economy – which industries should be nationalized and which left in private hands? How far should the welfare state be expanded before the growing tax burden became an impediment to economic growth? Should socialist governments accede to wage demands from low-paid workers when this risked stimulating inflation? Moreover, over time, social democrats came to defend intervention less in terms of traditional socialist principles and more by reference to modern liberal ideas such as equality of opportunity and positive freedom. The divide between socialism and liberalism thus became increasingly blurred.

At the heart of Keynesian social democracy lay a conflict between its commitment to both economic efficiency and egalitarianism. During the 'long boom' of the post-war period, social

democrats were not forced to confront this conflict because sustained growth, low unemployment and low inflation improved the living standards of all social groups and helped to finance more generous welfare provision. However, as Crosland had anticipated, recession in the 1970s and 1980s created strains within social democracy, polarizing socialist thought into more clearly defined left-wing and right-wing positions. Recession precipitated a 'fiscal crisis of the welfare state', simultaneously increasing demand for welfare support as unemployment re-emerged, and squeezing the tax revenues that financed welfare spending, because fewer people were at work and businesses were less profitable. A difficult question had to be answered: should social democrats attempt to restore efficiency to the market economy, which might mean cutting inflation and possibly taxes, or should they defend the poor and the lower paid by maintaining or even expanding welfare spending?

This crisis of social democracy was intensified in the 1980s and 1990s by a combination of further factors. In the first place, the electoral viability of social democracy was undermined by de-industrialization and the shrinkage of the traditional working class, the social base of traditional social democracy. Whereas in the early post-1945 period the tide of democracy had flowed with progressive politics, since the 1980s it has increasingly been orientated around the interests of what J. K. Galbraith called the 'contented majority'. Keynesianism thus came to be associated with a 'tax and spend' approach to economic management that risked permanently high levels of inflation; the welfare state was viewed as a burden on the employed in particular and upon wealth creation in general; and nationalized industries were seen to be unresponsive and inefficient. Social democratic parties paid a high price for the social and electoral shifts. For instance, the UK Labour Party lost four successive general elections between 1979 and 1992; the SPD in Germany was out of power between 1982 and 1998; and the French Socialist Party has suffered crushing defeats, notably in 1993 and 2002, when the Socialist candidate, Lionel Jospin, failed to get through to the run-off stage of the presidential election. Second, the economic viability of social democracy has been undermined by the advance of economic globalization. The integration of national economies into a larger global capitalist system not only rendered Keynesianism unworkable, because Keynesian policies require that govern ments can manage discrete national economies, but also intensified international competition, creating pressure to reduce tax and spending levels, particularly by reforming the welfare state, and to promote labour flexibility. Third, the intellectual credibility of social democracy was badly damaged by the collapse of communism. Not only did this create a world without any significant non-capitalist economic forms, but it also undermined faith in what Anthony Giddens (see p. 151) called the 'cybernetic model' of socialism, in which the state, acting as the brain within society, serves as the principal agent of economic and social reform. In this light, Keynesian social democracy could be viewed as only a more modest version of the 'top-down' state socialism that was so abruptly discarded in the revolutions of 1989–91.

Neorevisionism and the 'third way'

Since the 1980s reformist socialist parties across the globe have undergone a further bout of revisionism, sometimes termed neorevisionism, in which they have distanced themselves, to a greater or lesser extent, from the principles and commitments of traditional social democracy. The resulting ideological stance has been described in various ways, including 'modernized' social democracy, the 'third way', the 'radical centre', the active centre' and the 'Neue Mitte'

(new middle). However, the ideological significance of neorevisionism, and its relationship to traditional social democracy in particular and to socialism in general, are shrouded in debate and confusion. This is partly because neorevisionism has taken different forms in different countries. There are therefore a number of contrasting neorevisionist projects, including those associated with Bill Clinton and the 'new' Democrats in the USA and Tony Blair and 'new' Labour in the UK, as well as those that have emerged in states such as Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand. In some cases, these projects are nonsocialist or postsocialist in character, while in others an explicit attempt has been made to salvage socialist or at least social-democratic values. Neorevisionism, moreover, draws upon various ideological traditions. In addition to social democracy, it has been influenced by economic liberalism, social liberalism, communitarianism and social conservatism. It is thus not so much a single, coherent ideological tradition in its own right, but more an attempt to blend competing traditions and reconcile apparently conflicting ideas and values. Finally, neorevisionism has a marked pragmatic bias. It has been fashioned more by the search for workable policy solutions and the attempt to re-establish electoral credibility than by the desire to develop a new ideological system. Indeed, neorevisionism sometimes resembles postmodernism in regarding ideological systems as rigid and outmoded.

The central thrust of neorevisionism has been the attempt to develop a so-called 'third way'. The third way broadly encapsulates the idea of an alternative to both capitalism and socialism. The term was first used by fascists, and could, quite reasonably, be used to describe traditional social democracy. In its modern form, however, the third way represents the notion of an alternative to old-style social democracy and neoliberalism. Although the third way is (perhaps inherently) imprecise and subject to a number of interpretations, certain characteristic third-way themes can nevertheless be identified. The first of these is the belief that socialism, at least in the form of 'top-down' state intervention, is dead: there is no alternative to what clause 4 of the UK Labour Party's constitution, re-written in 1995, refers to as 'a dynamic market economy'. With this goes a general acceptance of globalization and the belief that capitalism has mutated into an 'information society' or 'knowledge economy', which places a premium on information technology, individual skills and both labour and business flexibility. This general acceptance of the market over the state, and the adoption of a pro-business and pro-enterprise stance, means that the third way attempts to build upon, rather than reverse, the neoliberal revolution of the 1980s and 1990s.

The second key third-way belief is its emphasis upon community and moral responsibility. Community, of course, has a long socialist heritage, drawing as it does, like fraternity and cooperation, upon the idea of a social essence. However, the communitarianism that influences third-way thinking is associated with a critique of liberal individualism. Communitarian theorists such as Alisdair MacIntyre (1981) and Michael Sandel (1982) argued that in conceiving of the individual as logically prior to or 'outside' society, liberalism has merely legitimized selfish and egoistical behaviour, downgrading the very idea of the public good. Thus, although

Communitarianism

Communitarianism is the belief that the self or person is constituted through the community, in the sense that individuals are shaped by the communities to which they belong and thus owe

them a debt of respect and consideration – there are no 'unencumbered selves'. Although clearly at odds with liberal individualism, communitarianism nevertheless has a variety of political forms. Left-wing communitarianism holds that community demands unrestricted freedom and social equality (for example, anarchism). Centrist communitarianism holds that community is grounded in an acknowledgement of reciprocal rights and responsibilities (for example, social democracy/Tory paternalism). Right-wing communitarianism holds that community requires respect for authority and established values (for example, the new right).

the third way accepts many of the economic theories of neoliberalism, it firmly rejects its philosophical basis and its moral and social implications. The danger of market fundamentalism is that it generates a free-for-all that undermines the moral foundations of society. Some versions of the third way, notably the 'Blair project' in the UK, nevertheless attempt to fuse communitarian ideas with liberal ones, creating a form of communitarian liberalism, which in many ways resembles the 'New Liberalism' of the late nineteenth century. The cornerstone belief of communitarian liberalism is that rights and responsibilities are intrinsically bound together: all rights must be balanced against responsibilities and vice versa. This view is based upon a so-called 'new' individualism, which endorses autonomy but stresses that individuals operate within a context of interdependence and reciprocity. From this perspective, both social democracy and neoliberalism can be condemned for having broadened rights without extending responsibilities, in the case of the former, social and welfare rights, and in the case of the latter, economic and ownership rights. Third-way politics thus tries to rectify a 'responsibility deficit' in society.

Third, supporters of the third way tend to adopt a consensus view of society, in contrast to socialism's conflict view of society. This is evident, for example, in the tendency of community to highlight ties that bind all members of society and thus to ignore or conceal class differences and economic inequalities. Similarly, the idea of a 'knowledge-driven economy' suggests that material rewards are no longer distributed on the basis of structural inequalities but now correspond more closely to the fluid distribution of work-related skills across society. A faith in consensus and social harmony is also reflected in the value framework of the third way, which rejects the either/or approach of conventional moral and ideological thinking and offers what almost amounts to a non-dualistic world-view. Third-way politicians thus typically endorse enterprise and fairness, self-opportunity and security, self-reliance and interdependence, and so on. While this may demonstrate that the third way goes 'beyond left and right', as Anthony Giddens (1994) argued, it also leave it open to the criticism that it is at best ambiguous and at worse simply incoherent.

Fourth, the third way has substituted a concern with social inclusion for the traditional socialist commitment to equality. This is evident in the stress placed upon liberal ideas such as opportunity and even meritocracy. Egalitarianism is therefore scaled down to a belief in equality of opportunities or 'asset-based egalitarianism', the right of access to assets and opportunities that enable individuals to realise their potential. Third-way proposals for welfare reform therefore typically reject both the neoliberal emphasis upon 'standing on your own two feet' and the social democratic belief in comprehensive or 'cradle to grave' welfare. Instead, welfare should be targeted on the 'socially excluded' and should follow the modern Anthony Giddens (born 1938)

UK social and political theorist. Giddens was director of the London School of Economics, 1997–2003. Frequently referred to as ‘Tony Blair's guru’, he has had a strong impact on the development of a new social-democratic agenda in the UK and elsewhere.

Giddens' importance as a social theorist was established by his theory of structuration, developed in works such as New Rules of Sociological Method (1976) and The Constitution of Society (1984), which set out to transcend the conventional dualism of structure and agency. In his later work, including Beyond Left and Right (1994), The Third Way (1998), The Runaway World (1999) and The Third Way and Its Critics (2000), he has sought to remodel social democracy in the light of the advent of late modernity, taking account of developments such as globalization, de-traditionalization and the increase in social reflexivity (reciprocity and interdependence).

liberal approach of ‘helping people to help themselves’, or as Clinton put it, giving people ‘a hand up, not a hand out’. Welfare policies should, in particular, aim to widen access to work, in line with the US idea of ‘workfare’, the belief that welfare support should be conditional upon individual's willingness to seek work and become self-reliant.

Finally, the third way is characterized by new ideas about the proper role the state. Whereas neoliberals argue that the state should be confined to its minimal or ‘nightwatchman’ role, and social democrats wish to use the state to counter-balance the injustices of capitalism, the third way embraces the idea of a competition or market state. A competition state is a state whose principal role is to pursue strategies for national prosperity in conditions of intensifying global competition. The state should therefore concentrate upon social investment, which means improving the infrastructure of the economy and, most importantly, strengthening the skills and knowledge of the country's workforce. This is a ‘supply-side’ approach to the economy, which aims to boost production and improve competitiveness, rather than a social-democratic ‘demand-side’ approach, which aims to increase consumption and eradicate poverty. Education rather than the social security should therefore be the government's priority, with education being valued not in its own right, because it furthers personal development (the modern liberal view), but because it promotes employability and benefits the economy (the utilitarian or classical liberal view). From this perspective, the government is essentially a cultural actor, whose purpose is to shape or re-shape the population's attitudes, values, skills, beliefs and knowledge, rather than to carry out a programme of economic and social engineering.

Tensions within Socialism (2)

Third way	v.	Social democracy
pragmatic	–	ideological
globalization	–	nation-state
information society	–	industrial society
community	–	class politics
market economy	–	mixed economy
full employability	–	full employment
equality of opportunity	–	equality of outcome
meritocracy	–	concern for underdog
opportunity for all	–	social justice
promote inclusion	–	eradicate poverty
rights and responsibilities	–	social rights
welfare-to-work	–	cradle-to-grave welfare
competition/market state	–	social-reformist state

Socialism in the twenty-first century

Some would regard a discussion of socialism in the twenty-first century as pointless. Socialism is dead and the obituaries have been written. The evidence to sustain this view is all too familiar. The eastern European revolutions of 1989–91 removed the last vestiges of 'actually existing socialism', and where nominally socialist regimes survive, as in China, North Korea and Cuba it is only because of the willingness of communist parties to introduce market reforms. Elsewhere, parliamentary socialist parties have been in flight from traditional principles, attempting to maintain electoral credibility by demonstrating growing sympathy market-orientated economics. The only serious debate has been about the cause of socialism's death. End-of-history theorists such as Francis Fukuyama (1989) have put it down to the inherent flaws in all socialist models and the manifest superiority of liberal capitalism. Others have highlighted the tendency of a globalized economy irresistibly to draw all nations into an international capitalist system. Still others have emphasized the shrinkage of socialism's political base from the mass ranks of the working class to an isolated and de-politicized underclass. Whatever the explanation, the world has shifted dramatically and permanently to the right, consigning socialism to what Trotsky, in very different circumstances, called the 'dustbin of history'.

However, socialists with a longer sense of history are unlikely to succumb to this despond. Just as predictions at the beginning of the twentieth century about the inevitable victory of socialism proved to be flawed, so proclamations about the death of socialism made at the beginning of the twenty-first century are likely to be unreliable. Indeed, as recently as the 1960s it was free-market liberalism that was considered to be redundant while socialism appeared to be making irresistible progress. Hopes for the survival of socialism largely rest on the enduring and perhaps intrinsic imperfections of the capitalist system. As Ralph Miliband put it in his final work, Socialism for a Sceptical Age (1995), 'the notion that capitalism has been thoroughly transformed and represents the best that humankind can ever hope to achieve is a dreadful slur on

the human race'. In that sense socialism is destined to survive if only because it serves as a reminder that human development can extend beyond market individualism. Moreover, globalization may bring opportunities for socialism as well as challenges. Just as capitalism is being transformed by the growing significance of the supranational dimension of economic life, socialism may be in the process of being transformed into a critique of global exploitation and inequality. Although it is as yet theoretically unsophisticated, this, after all, is the thrust of the emergent anti-capitalist or anti-globalization movement. In other words, socialism in the twenty-first century may simply be reborn as anti-capitalism.

If socialism survives, what kind of socialism will it be? What seems clear is that it is unlikely to draw inspiration from the bureaucratic authoritarianism of the Soviet era. Marxism-Leninism might indeed be dead, and few socialist tears would be shed at its passing. One of the consequences of this may be a re-examination of Marx's legacy, now disentangled from the experience of Leninism and Stalinism. However, this is more likely to be Marx the humanist socialist than the more familiar twentieth-century image of Marx as an economic determinist. As far as parliamentary socialism is concerned, an important task remains. Keynesian social democracy, at least in its post-1945 guise, may have been discarded, but a politically and electorally viable alternative to market capitalism has yet to emerge. Interest in the third way and in other neorevisionist projects undoubtedly provides evidence of the desire for 'new thinking' within socialism, and particularly of the need to resist fundamentalist neoliberalism, but it is difficult to see it a proof of socialism's rebirth. Meanwhile the search for the new socialist paradigm continues.

Further reading

Giddens, A. The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998). Widely regarded as the key text of third-way politics.

Harrington, M., Socialism Past and Future (London: Pluto Press, 1993). A committed, passionate and insightful discussion of where socialism has been and where it is going.

Lane, D., The Rise and Fall of State Socialism (Oxford: Polity Press, 1997). A detailed analysis of the themes and structures of the socialist tradition that was born out of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution.

Martell, L. (ed.) Social Democracy: Global and National Perspectives (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2001). A collection of articles that analyse developments within social democracy in the light of globalization, Europeanization and different national traditions.

McLellan, D., The Thought of Karl Marx, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1980). A thorough and helpful introduction to Marx's work, supported by selective texts.

Moschonas, G., In the Name of Social Democracy – The Great Transformation: 1945 to the Present (London and New York: Verso, 2002). An impressive and thorough account of the nature, history and impact of social democracy that focuses upon the emergence of 'new social democracy'.

Sassoon, D., One Hundred Years of Socialism (London: Fontana, 1997). A very stylish and detailed account of the life and times of democratic socialist ideas and movements.

Wright, A., Socialisms: Theories and Practices (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). A good, brief and accessible introduction to the basic themes of socialism, highlighting the causes of disagreement within the socialist family.