

A Proposal to Socialists.

The goal of the proposal is to clear up the goals before socialists.

This proposal is based on the "[Revolutionary Socialism: The Minimum Theoretical, Political and Organisational Platform: A Proposal for Discussion](#)" published by Iranian socialists in 1994 in London, after the defeat of the Iranian revolution of 1979.

1. A new form of knowledge.

Iranian socialists write about Marxism as a "science" (last section of their Platform). But, if it is a science, what is it a science of? Marxism has been known for its economics, politics, anthropology, art, literature, etc. So, if by "science" we understand a special field of study, then certainly Marxism has not been a science. It is a form of knowledge which appears after science.

Specialization has been invented at the dawn of Industrial revolution as a way of improving productivity and delving deeper into knowledge. E.g. Adam Smith writes that production of needles is greatly improved by specialization of craftsmen. The same applies to intellectual endeavors of the Industrial revolution. Working recently with logarithmic tables, I have noticed that they require a great deal of attention and time. Hence, a need for specialization.

However, at the present stage of development, there is an opposite tendency: specialization tends to hinder development. We require an integration of various fields of knowledge, a fusion of theory and practice, to feel ourselves as healthy human beings. We don't need a new "theory", or a "science", but a new way of life, which integrally develops our physical and mental forces.

All mothers and fathers understand a need for overall development for their babies. However, almost all adults deem it as impossible, and perhaps even undesirable, when it concerns them.

A classless society is not divided into "thinkers" – i.e. capitalists, top managers, workers' bureaucracy, - and "workers", i.e. the rest of us, "99%" of the Earth's population. Hence, a human being who strives towards communism should have a dual, theoretical-practical nature (as light has a dual nature, as energy is at the same time matter, etc.)

Theory and practice are always relative to each other. If one is abstract, the other one is similarly abstract. Moreover, inside each of these entities there is a constant transition from one to the other. For example, let's say that a practical pole of theoretical knowledge as a whole is sailing (Einstein loved to sail and to play violin!). Yachting has a theoretical part called "navigational astronomy", which teaches one to find location at sea with the help of stars. In this theoretical discipline, in turn, there is a theoretical part, explaining how it is possible, in principle, to find one's location at sea using stars, and practical problems and methods of calculations.

Marxism has been an attempt at developing knowledge as a whole, in the period of the Industrial revolution. However, today Marxism is in a state of crisis for many reasons. One of these is its postulate on the leading role of "the working class" in the modern revolution, "the working class" being commonly understood as blue-collar, industrial workers. However, after World War II, we've seen a decline in importance of this class in the process of social production (see "The New Industrial State" by John K. Galbraith), which has taken on automatic, scientific and creative dimensions. Moreover, Marxism is mired by the paid servants of capital, in the West, and by Stalinism, in the East. Lenin was not afraid to

get rid of the name of “social-democracy” for his party in 1914; today we have many more reasons to get rid of Marxism as a whole.

How shall we combine physical and intellectual development depends a lot on local conditions. For example, a Russian general Alexander Suvorov used to say that a cold water is good both for the mind and the body. However, what he said applies for the climate of Russia, and other cold regions, where it is possible to swim in the cold, winter water. For the people living in the tropics, such slogan would not apply.

We cannot tell all how to develop harmoniously, but we can pose a need for this as a problem.

2. Theoretical self-organization

We need to find ways to organize ourselves theoretically. One of these is a “map of knowledge” similar to the other maps we have, depicting countries and continents. Socialists should organize existing knowledge, introduce order into this chaos, in order to understand “white spaces” in our knowledge, and how we can further develop our knowledge.

The existing encyclopedias are not appropriate for this goal. First, they give an idea about fragments of knowledge, without indicating how this fits into the picture of the Universe. Second, the existing encyclopedias are written by the representatives of capital or workers’ bureaucracy. For example, if we want to understand such important social phenomenon as “nationalism”, dictionaries and encyclopedias will give us only the most abstract, not living understanding of the term. Nationalism as a modern phenomenon in transitional states (ex-USSR, etc.), has its roots in the process of privatization of state property, in the attempts of the local bureaucracy to become capitalists. The existing encyclopedias will not mention this, as they are edited by the very people who serve these bureaucracies, or capitalists.

In the epoch of Enlightenment the great philosophers of the French revolution have founded their encyclopedia, in order to give the posterity a resume of all knowledge of their epoch. Similarly today, we should map all existing knowledge in order to prepare the ground – and this can only be knowledge – to jump from the realms of necessity into the realm of freedom. This is a theoretical part of our self-organization.

3. Socialism. The nature of transitional society.

What is socialism? I.e. what is the goal towards which we’re striving? “The socialist program is inevitably defined by its socialist goal” and a party is based on such a program.

A modern definition of socialism must be given relative to the experience of socialist revolutions in XX century, and their outcome, i.e. the transitional states. Transitional states are those where capital has already been expropriated from power, but the working class is not yet strong enough to take the reigns of power personally. Instead, its representatives have taken the power, and these have later degenerated into workers’ bureaucracy, “the nomenclature”. Today, the power in the transitional states is wielded by “mafia”, i.e. the former nomenclature which uses various illegal means, including the organized crime, for sake of personal empowerment and enrichment.

The Iranian socialists write: “Were these societies examples of a degenerated workers state or were they forms of state capitalism? Or did we witness the formation of a new mode of production unforeseen by Marxism? These three positions and their variations more or less summarize the more serious analyses of the last 70 years”.

The given problem has been called “the nature of the USSR”, or (among the Western Marxists, such as prof. van der Linden), “the Russian question”. However, it is not correct to pose the problem as “the nature of the Soviet Union”, for there were, and are, other societies of similar nature. To make the problem clear, we must use comparative method, i.e. compare similar societies, to see their similarities and differences, to understand their common dialectic.

Further analysis leads us to understanding societies in which there were attempts at revolution, but in which the socialists have not been able to take, or hold, power, as for example, in Chile in 1973, in Iran in 1978-79, and in Afghanistan in 1978-1992.

A relationship of transitional states to imperialist states is obvious: the imperialism strives with all of its force to destroy, erase all traces of transitional states, which represent the beginning of socialism. For example, remember the goals of Hitler in the war against the USSR: “the liquidation of the USSR”, war against bolshevism. Hence, “the Russian question” grows into a world social and political analysis.

Next I would like to make a few comments on the writing of Iranian comrades on “the nature of the USSR”:

A. “This order was neither a workers' state nor a form of state capitalism. Nor was it a new mode of production. The Russian revolution was more or less defeated by 1924; however, the victorious counter revolution could not roll back the events to such a point so as to revive capitalism.” How was the Russian revolution “defeated”? It cannot be defeated by peaceful means. It can only gradually degenerate, which process continues to this day. The point of view of Iranian socialists is called “reformism in reverse”. If by “reformism” we understand a hypothesis that capitalism can be reformed into socialism (Edward Bernstein, Germany, 1890), then by “reformism in reverse” we understand a hypothesis that a transitional society can be reformed into capitalism. However, according to Iranian socialists, capitalism has not been revived in the USSR by 1924. Hence, it is not correct to speak about a complete “defeat” of the Russian revolution. We can talk only about its partial defeats, a roll-back, a Thermidor. Step back and remember: World War II in the USSR has started with partial victories of the German armies over the Red Army. The world revolutionary process, of which the Russian revolution is a part, is a process on a greater scale, and of longer duration, than World War II. It is a process as majestic as the revolving of a Galaxy.

B. On bureaucracy, the Iranian socialists write: “although this order maintained a more or less uniform format from the time of its establishment in Stalin's era to the time of its disintegration, one cannot deny that it went through various stages of degeneration”. This social order did not disappear, but continues to undergo degeneration. This is not questioned by any sane person living in the former USSR (or other similar societies). These people encounter the remnants of the former regime in thousands of details of everyday life, from attempts to rollback free education and medicine, as a constitutional right, to regulated prices for bread, the staple goods, and the maintenance fees for apartments. “Disintegration” of the Stalinist regime is only spoken about by those “Marxists” who have abandoned Marx's concept of a state, according to which a state has to be overthrown by a violent revolution, or counterrevolution, before we can speak about a new state, having a different social nature. These “Marxists” are false Marxists, and they are the first to be criticized. Nothing is as dangerous as the enemies who put on the appearance of a virtue.

C. Iranian socialists write: “The one party system is no more than a denial of the dictatorship of the proletariat”. However, dictatorship can take many different political forms: from one-person rule, to a

“multi-party democracy”, hiding behind it the dictatorship of the capitalist class. Hence, there is no reason for a denial of one-party system. It should be used in periods like the civil war (as we see now raging in Syria), as a weapon of defense against counterrevolution and imperialism. However, the overall goal of a transitional period is a negation of individual leaders, development of skills of social self-management.

The transitional period can be compared to a childhood of a person. To leave a child completely on his own would be foolish. On the other hand, to blackmail or force a child to conform to an adult’s wishes is a tyranny. Hence, the only right policy is a patient explanation and education.

D. The end of the transition period is marked by an international socialist revolution: “This transition, i.e. the beginning of the socialist construction, cannot end until major productive forces on an international scale have come under social control. Under the conditions of the international division of labor, the thesis of socialism in one country is as ridiculous as the theory of socialism in one factory or one town. In the final analysis, socialism will only win when it can achieve a higher productivity of labor than capitalist society”. To achieve higher productivity, we require a greater degree of freedom and humanism, less brutal necessity, in the production process. All this implies human beings with a higher level of personal culture than under capitalism.

E. Agree with the following: “in the period of transition to socialism, priority lies with politics”. This has important philosophical implications. In the period of transition, “consciousness” is more important than “being”, and “the subject” is more important than “the object”, although there is still a two-way, dialectical relationship between the two. The most important “subject” is the communist society.

Generalizing what has been said, we notice that each type of society has its own laws. The laws which Marx has formulated, apply principally to capitalism, and only partially to a transitional society. Another example of this is “the law of value” vs. “the law of primitive socialist accumulation” (see the writings of a Soviet economist [Preobrazhensky](#) on this problem, “The New Economy”, 1922-1938). This is another reason to stop bowing to Marxism and to go further.

As we have shown above, an analysis of transitional states grows into a global social and political analysis. However, in addition to this, what is required is a resume of theoretical contributions to the idea of socialism, made by modern socialists, since the times of Marx. This work is similar to the fourth volume of “Capital”, in which Marx attempted to formulate his attitude to the previous theories of political economy. In other words, it is necessary to know the previous theoretical and practical efforts towards “socialism”, before we attempt to build something on our own.

To understand who are the most important modern socialists, we should follow the current socialist movement, on the one hand, and know its history, on the other.

4. Revolutionary strategy and program

The revolutionary strategy, by analogy with military strategy, is a general, non-detailed plan, which socialists must follow to achieve their long-term goal. This goal is shaped by our evaluation of previous socialist revolutions and transitional states.

A revolutionary program, by analogy with a computer program, is an array of step-by-step instructions which lead us from our present condition towards realization of our long-term goal.

Hence, the difference between a revolutionary strategy and revolutionary program is that the first is a non-detailed plan, while the second is a detailed description, a set of instructions for achieving our long-term goals.

Using these definitions, it is possible to say that a revolutionary program has never yet been created. The present essay is an attempt to develop a revolutionary strategy for our times. (First, we have proposed to lead a healthy life style. Second, we proposed to create a map of knowledge. Third, we proposed a comparative approach to evaluation of all transitional states.)

Looking back at the experience of revolutions since the Paris Commune, we can suppose that a new revolutionary wave will be the principal result of a new global war, in effect World War III. We can also suppose – looking aback at the experience of such recent protest movements as “the Arab spring” and “Occupy” movement – that a new revolution will be almost simultaneous all over the world. Perhaps, it will start at the periphery of modern capitalism, but then it will quickly spread to the whole world.

What will be the causes of the new world war? Looking back at the experience of the former Yugoslavia, we can say that the process of privatization, the struggle for re-division of property amongst the criminal clans of bureaucracy leads to the disintegration of the transitional states. Thus, these states constitute “the new Balkans”, according to a prominent ideologist of imperialism Zb. Brzezinski (see his “The Grand Chess Board”, 1997). In other words, the transitional states constitute a tasty morsel, weakened by internal divisions, over which there is a struggle between the major world predators. The “new Balkans” stimulate the long-term desire of imperialism to “liquidate” the transitional states (as we’ve seen in the war of Hitler’s Germany against the USSR, or in the wars of NATO against Yugoslavia). Further, this implies a violent struggle among the imperialist powers themselves for a larger share of the booty, as such re-division of power and has never been achieved by peaceful means.

However, the “new Balkans” may become a prologue to a “new October”. This is the perspective which socialists must keep in view, as they are preparing their movement.

5. Revolutionary organization

What is the nature of a modern revolutionary organization?

A. Iranian socialists write: “The party establishes itself around a program. Here we must distinguish ourselves from all those who assume party unity can be based on anything else.” As we’ve shown above, a “program” and a “strategy” (a general plan) are different concepts. It is possible to unite around a common strategy, without having a program. The main question is: what is this strategy?

B. As for the class nature of such organization, we believe that it is not possible to see the proletariat, i.e. the industrial workers, as the modern revolutionary class. Development of modern productive forces depends on the all-around development of knowledge, which has both theoretical and practical branches. Members of this organization can be intellectuals who, in addition to their main line of theoretical work, strive towards practice and simple people (when I write “simple people”, I mean it in the sense of the Russian song composed by “Lube”, [see a video](#)). Members of the organization can be workers who, in addition to their practical labor, strive towards socialism, knowledge, and self-organization.

C. Should this organization be a “party”? The word “party” has two meanings: one is a political organization, and the second is an informal gathering of friends. However, a revolutionary organization

should aim to overcome the military resistance of capitalists, in capitalist countries, and their lackeys, i.e. the bureaucracy, in the transitional states. Hence, this implies a need for a military organization (you fight fire with fire). However, as opposed to a traditional army, a membership in this organization is based upon voluntary acceptance of its goals and strategy. Hence, this should be an ideational organization, something akin to a party school (as we've seen Lenin organize on the island of Cyprus, before WWI). Third, the given organization has as its goal an international revolution, and hence in its essence is an International.

D. Iranian socialists write: "a member is someone who accepts the aims of the project and in the effort to realize it is committed to a certain level of activity". However, this is not enough to become a member of a revolutionary organization. This is the discussion we have seen in at the II Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (1903), resulting in the division of Russian social-democrats into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Only a "professional revolutionary", i.e. a person who makes revolution as a primary goal in life, can be a member of a revolutionary organization.

E. Of course, the regime inside revolutionary organization is "democratic centralism". However – and this is the most important difference from Bolsheviks – the regime inside the organization should be communist, i.e. members of the organization in practice share what they have with other members of the organization. This is the practice we've seen in the "narodnik" movement, which preceded the Marxists in Russia.

Moreover, some members of the "narodnik" movement had become wives and husbands to each other, for example, the leaders of the terrorist organization Sofya Perovskaya and Andrey Zhelyabov. Amongst some of them free love was practiced. For example, one of the women who was sentenced to hanging for killing the tsar Alexander II was Gesya Gelfman, who was a wife of several members of "Narodnaya Volya" organization. She was not hanged with the rest because she was in her 4th month of pregnancy. In their personal relationships, the communists should jettison "the family", as an institute of private property, and stand on the ground of free love.

To summarize our view on organization:

- 1) a revolutionary organization is established around common understanding of a goal of the movement – "socialism" – and an agreement on the problem of strategy.
- 2) People in the organization have a dualistic, theoretical-practical, nature.
- 3) It is partially a party school, partially a military organization, and in essence an International.
- 4) Members of the organization are "professional revolutionaries", not "sympathizers".
- 5) Inside the organization, there are communist relationships and democratic centralism.

Conclusions:

"Marxism" and knowledge

1. Marxism is not a science, but a step towards a more encompassing form of knowledge, which is beyond science.
2. Marxism was an all-encompassing form of knowledge of the early period of industrialization. It logically follows upon such all-encompassing teachings as that of Saint-Simon, but has grown obsolete today.

3. Marxism has not kept track of changes in the productive forces, but dogmatically continued to assert that “working class” is revolutionary. Hence, we need to get rid of Marxism, as Lenin got rid of “social-democratic” label. We need a new unified form of knowledge.

4. The principal productive force of modernity are no longer machines, raw materials, or buildings (i.e. “constant capital” in Marx’s terms), but multi-dimensional, theoretical-practical knowledge. Hence, revolutionaries are the people who learn to combine theoretical and practical knowledge.

5. Modern socialists should start by ordering and organizing what is the principal means of production today – knowledge. One way in which this can be done is through a “map of knowledge”. This is theoretical self-organization of a modern revolutionary class. Without such self-organization, all the talk about “organizing a class for itself” is empty talk.

6. One of the problems which is resolved in the course of such organization of knowledge is that of modern dialectics. Theory of socialism starts with dialectics, however, we should not repeat “ad infinitum” the definitions and laws formulated by Engels (in “Anti-Duhring”), and Lenin (in his notes on Hegel’s “Science of Logic”), but we should formulate anew the main tendencies of development of the Universe and knowledge, as both have taken great strides forward since the beginning of XX century.

Socialism and transitional states

7. For a better understanding of the goal of socialism, it is necessary to develop our attitude towards modern socialist thinkers. Here, the priority should be given to those who have attempted to implement their ideas in practice, as we’ve seen with Trotsky and Che Guevara. Left-wing university professors (for example Slavoj Žižek) represent a form of “a Marxist cretinism”. Their proper place is in circuses and on humoristic programs.

8. Understanding “what is socialism” means understanding various categories of transitional states that have come into being. Transitional states should not be understood each separately, but we need to compare the transitional states to each other, in order to understand their common dialectic.

9. A transitional states is such where, as a result of a violent revolution, the capitalist class no longer holds the reigns of power, but the working class is not yet at the helm. Hence, the functions government have been taken over by the workers’ bureaucracy. This, in time, has transformed itself into “mafia”, i.e. a criminal clans, constantly at war with each other, aiming at stealing from the state the land, factories, raw materials, etc. and thus roll back the society towards capitalism, religion, and “family values”.

10. The people in transitional states offer whatever resistance feasible to the onslaught of capitalism, defending their rights to free education, medicine, low prices for the staple goods, basic services, etc. However, if the people try to liquidate the criminal regime as a whole, it becomes a prologue to “a color revolution”, i.e. a regime change, orchestrated from an American embassy in the respective country. Hence, the people should wait until the conditions for an international socialist revolution mature.

11. A transitional state cannot be reformed into a capitalist state (“reformism in reverse”). A transitional state can only be overthrown by a violent counterrevolution and civil war.

12. Transitional states must be understood in conjunction with various categories of capitalist states (imperialism, semi-colonies). Hence, understanding “what is socialism” implies a global social-political analysis. A map of knowledge will help in this attempt.

13. A struggle over property between the criminal clans of bureaucracy turns the transitional states into “new Balkans”. The imperialist armies go there for what they call “stabilization”, but in reality an attempt to liquidate the results of socialist revolutions. All false Marxists, who proclaim the transitional states as “capitalist”, are playing on the side of imperialist armies. They are our real enemies.

Uniting socialists

14. Socialists can unite on the basis of a common strategy, i.e. a non-detailed plan for realization of the main goal. A program of a movement becomes possible only in the course of the movement itself, as concrete steps to be taken for the realization of the main strategic points.

15. Socialists can start creating their organization as a result of a common work on “the map of knowledge”, i.e. a portal of theoretical-practical knowledge which will be superior to “Wikipedia” in the general structure of knowledge. In effect, we’re proposing a plan of organization similar to Lenin’s “The Spark”, except that here the role of a national newspaper is played by a global portal.

16. Such organization should be: 1) an International union, 2) a party school, 3) a military training base. The regime inside the organization should be communist, denying in practice all private property, privileges, etc.

Hence, the order of problems for us is:

- 1) A theoretical self-organization
- 2) An analysis of the world system of states
- 3) Formulation of a revolutionary strategy
- 4) Understanding the nature of a revolutionary organization