

Chapter 1 : Eco-socialism - Wikipedia

CrimethInc. is a rebel alliance—a decentralized network pledged to anonymous collective action—a breakout from the prisons of our age. We strive to reinvent our lives and our world according to the principles of self-determination and mutual aid.

Ambrose Bierce defined politics as a "strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage. He believes, like Lord Acton, that it is right to do right. Like Rothbard, he believes there are absolute values. What does he see when he looks around his society? The powerful live in the splendor of shining stone houses, surrounded by the opulence of gleaming bronzes, white marbles, red carpets, and bright paintings, while the masses suffer in hovels and slums. The best lack all conviction; they are unprincipled and expedient, while the worst are full of intense passion for gain. An idealist is naturally struck by the wealth and greed of the ruling class of his republic or kingdom. Our young man considers the situation. There is corruption — the powerful are using their power to line their own pockets. He asks, what is the root cause of this state of affairs? Why do the rulers not occupy themselves with justice and right? He notes that the powerful conducting affairs to private advantage are obviously distracted by accumulating wealth. The wealthy on the other hand use their wealth to gain power. His conclusion is to remove the source of corruption — the accumulation of wealth and private property. Once individuals in the ruling class are stripped of the desire and opportunity for wealth, he believes, they will have nothing else to do but devote themselves to the well-being of the state. By definition, if a dirty shirt is no longer dirty, it will be clean. Similarly if a corrupt government is no longer corrupt, it will be good government. The solution is making sure good honest men untouched by greed are in power. As Chesterton noted, Many imaginative English writers, including Carlyle, seem quite unable to imagine how it was that men like Robespierre and Marat were ardently admired. The best answer is that they were admired for being poor — poor when they might have been rich. Many revolutionaries wish they were dictators. Certainly those in power are often unimpressive. The history of socialist thought, as will be shown, contains many examples of ideas that are a reaction to state corruption. Specifically, the power of the attack often stems from an attack on illegitimately attained wealth and from the corollary, illogical assumption that the origin of all wealth is corrupt and that all wealth is corrupting. While viewing socialism as incoherent and contrary to economics and logic, classical liberalism does agree that there are very real problems with state corruption. In fact classical liberalism rose in opposition to mercantilism — private property and state privilege. However, the liberals advocated eliminating the state privilege and keeping private property. The "corrupt" state is in fact operating as designed. Wealth originates in the productive activity of the people. The social function of the state is to transfer wealth from one set of pockets to another. Liberal class analysis agrees that the corrupt state engages in plunder, and makes the additional point that all states plunder by definition. One could not object to current power and privilege on the one hand, and support power and privilege on the other. Principles are no respecters of persons. Therefore it seeks to remove opportunities for plunder by limiting and dismantling state power on principle. A limited state with limited power would have limited corruption and would pose a limited burden on society. If it can be used for the benefit of the rulers, it can be used for the benefit of the people, as if a slaughterhouse for the benefit of the farmer could be used for the benefit of the animals. He typically fails to understand that the power of the state is corrupting in and of itself. He has faith in the state. He believes the propaganda legitimizing the state and he wants the state to live up to it. He sees the state as a neutral tool. Without private interest and private advantage, one would be hard pressed to conduct "public affairs. It all begins, as usual, with a Greek. This recommendation was a cure for state corruption, one arguably worse than the disease. The ambition of the rich knows no bounds; the most wealthy wish to grow yet more so. Who may be able to assuage this insatiable greed! They respect neither sacred property nor public treasure; they plunder all, in defiance of the sacred laws of justice. Benjamin Constant said, "Among the ancients, a successful war increased both private and public wealth in slaves, tributes and lands shared out. The citizens, like a pirate crew, often had nominally equal shares in the running of an enterprise that had little concern for personal

liberties and whose main concern was war and plunder. The Republic is a dialogue about justice and its value. Glaucon sees justice as a compromise position, the highest good is to commit injustice with impunity, and the worst fate is to suffer it. Like any good pirate, he does not love justice but plunder. To illustrate the value of justice on a large scale, Socrates creates an ideal just city. This first city is famous for being the first illustration of the division of labor. Glaucon objects that the city is fit for pigs, not men, as there are no luxuries. He says the feverish city can illustrate the nature of justice implying that this example is not a good, healthy city and therefore he is using an example of injustice to illustrate justice. Socrates says, "now we have discovered war to be derived from causes [desire for gain] which are also the causes of almost all the evils in States, private as well as public. Socrates asks, who will guard against the guardians? There is potential for class conflict: All sorts of safeguards are imagined to make this possible. The city described is very similar to Sparta" ironically suggesting Athens become like its enemy. The Spartans outlawed money, fearing its corrupting effects. At the end of the dialogue Socrates defines justice: One explanation is that, while Plato did believe this arrangement was more desirable than the current state of affairs, he did not think it was as desirable as a community of people who love justice. Plato may have believed that, human nature being what it is, a city without guardians and philosopher-kings would be wrenched apart by the strife of people like Glaucon trying to get wealth by any means necessary. Plato deals with the elaborate safeguards necessary to stave off corruption and political disorder. Gray states, "If Utopia survives as a living force, it is because of its comments on the social evils of the times in which it was written. In most places the nobles were essentially the descendents of the old military commanders of the empire. Gray notes that the solution to exploitation "is of course, a communistic island, where private property has ceased to exist. Though to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own, that so long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: From this self-love springs. For when we raise a son to riches and dignities, and leave an heir to much wealth, we become either ready to grasp at the property of the state, if in any case fear should be removed from the power which belongs to riches and rank; or avaricious, crafty and hypocritical, if anyone is of slender purse, little strength, and mean ancestry. But when we have taken away self-love, there remains only love for the state! It has been noted that even today, members of many African tribes are expected to use their official position to benefit their own tribe. This is often considered a primary cause of state corruption in Africa. He objects to inequality and defines inequality as any real or perceived difference between people, be it so minor as one person being a better dancer than another. He correctly observes that society creates opportunities for distinction" it breeds inequality. He ends up concluding that we should essentially abolish all opportunity for improvement, because that would introduce inequality. Because people have desire for goods, that means we should abolish goods. He defines three main stages in the descent. The first is the establishment of law and the right of property; the second is the institution of the magistrature; the third is the transformation of legitimate into arbitrary power. In somewhat different language, these stages consecrate the distinction between rich and poor, between strong and weak, and between master and slave. According to Gray, Mably "worshipped Sparta and all its institutions, real or imagined; Lycurgus was his constant obsession. The other is that it originated in state officials failing to distribute goods equally and instead keeping them for themselves or handing them to friends and relations. Firstly, the indolence that ruined primitive communism would probably once again ruin communism, if re-established; Secondly, it reveals an extraordinary confusion of thought and of argument to proclaim that communism is the only condition in which men may live virtuously and happily, and in the same breath explain that communism was abandoned because the ordinary citizen failed to play fairly by his fellows, or alternatively because the leaders of society were dishonest and given to nepotism. His fame led to his being married to Mary Wollstonecraft and becoming father-in-law to Percy Bysshe Shelley. He also saw society as fundamentally unjust, and he denounced marriage. It is no surprise he was later considered a communist and fomenter of the socialist spirit. On the other hand, he emphasized that the individual was judge and jury in all matters pertaining to his property. As a peaceful anarchist, he had a strong libertarian side. Gray says, The rich also become insolent, and develop "a temper overbearing, dictatorial and tyrannical. The context of his revolt against society is the corrupt 18th-century British

mercantile state with its system of privilege and oppression. Correctly seeing that the privileged in society benefited from the state at the expense of everyone else, Godwin condemned the entire social structure. Godwin, like many socialists, denounced rights and advocated those with property giving it away to others. But Godwin advocated a completely voluntary system, making him unlike socialists and like a lover of liberty. Shaw " shows another more modern example of socialism as an attack on corruption. Shaw is a Socialist. In politics it will abolish the party system, simplify procedures, and ensure the keeping of good and capable men in office. Shaw unsparingly diagnoses the various ills to which the body politic is heir; his diagnosis is complete and correct; and for each and every ill he prescribes the one remedy " State action.

Chapter 2 : A Critique of State Socialism by Mikhail Bakunin

This makes A Critique of State Socialism is a very welcome reprint, albeit an extremely expensive one. Originally published by Cienfuegos Press in , I fondly remember getting the B Books reprint when I just became an anarchist in

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. Christian socialism Caught up in these currents were men and women who seemed to agree on little but their condemnation of capitalism. Many prominent socialists were militant atheists, for example, but others expressly connected socialism to religion. In England the Anglican clergymen Frederick Denison Maurice and Charles Kingsley initiated a Christian socialist movement at the end of the s on the grounds that the competitive individualism of laissez-faire capitalism was incompatible with the spirit of Christianity. Similar concerns inspired socialists in other countries, including the Russian novelist, anarchist, and pacifist Leo Tolstoy. Although neither Christianity nor any other religion was a dominant force within socialist theory or politics, the connection between Christianity and socialism persisted through the 20th century. One manifestation of this connection was liberation theology –sometimes characterized as an attempt to marry Marx and Jesus –which emerged among Roman Catholic theologians in Latin America in the s. Another, perhaps more modest, manifestation is the Christian Socialist Movement in Britain, which affiliates itself with the British Labour Party. Several members of Parliament have belonged to the Christian Socialist Movement, including Prime Minister Gordon Brown , the son of a Methodist minister, and his predecessor, Tony Blair , an Anglican who converted to Catholicism not long after he left office. To the contrary, Bakunin argued, the dictatorship of the proletariat threatened to become even more oppressive than the bourgeois state, which at least had a militant and organized working class to check its growth. Kropotkin used science and history to try to demonstrate that anarchism is not foolishly optimistic. Fabian socialism As the anarcho-communists argued for a form of socialism so decentralized that it required the abolition of the state, a milder and markedly centralist version of socialism, Fabianism, emerged in Britain. Wells –who thought that persuasion and education were more likely to lead to socialism, however gradually, than violent class warfare. Rather than form their own political party or work through trade unions, moreover, the Fabians aimed at gaining influence within existing parties. Syndicalism Near the anarcho-communists on the decentralist side of socialism were the syndicalists. It was a significant force in Italy and Spain in the early 20th century until it was crushed by the fascist regimes in those countries. Guild socialism Related to syndicalism but nearer to Fabianism in its reformist tactics, Guild Socialism was an English movement that attracted a modest following in the first two decades of the 20th century. Inspired by the medieval guild , an association of craftsmen who determined their own working conditions and activities, theorists such as Samuel G. Cole advocated the public ownership of industries and their organization into guilds, each of which would be under the democratic control of its trade union. The role of the state was less clear: In general, however, the guild socialists were less inclined to invest power in the state than were their Fabian compatriots. Revisionism and revolution In , on the centenary of the French Revolution , a Second International emerged from two rival socialist conventions in Paris. But its considerable success –the SPD won almost one-fifth of the votes cast in the parliamentary elections of , for example –raised the question of whether socialism might be achieved through the ballot box rather than through revolution. Like others, Bernstein observed that the living and working conditions of the proletariat were not growing more desperate, as Marx had predicted, but were on the contrary improving, largely as a result of trade-union activity and the extension of the franchise. This led him to conclude that the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was neither necessary nor desirable. A gradual, peaceful transformation to socialism, he argued in *Evolutionary Socialism* , would be safer than the revolutionary route, with its dangerously vague and potentially tyrannical dictatorship of the proletariat. After several years of polemical war between revisionists and orthodox Marxists, the revisionists eventually triumphed within the SPD, which gradually abandoned its revolutionary pretenses. Nevertheless, some stalwarts , such as Rosa Luxemburg , remained faithful to the spirit of revolutionary Marxism. Ulyanov, better known by his pseudonym Lenin. The problem for Russian Marxists was that Russia in the late 19th century remained a semifeudal country with barely the beginnings of industrial

capitalism. To be sure, Marx had allowed that it might be possible for a country such as Russia to move directly from feudalism to socialism, but the standard position among Marxists was that capitalism was a necessary stage of economic and historical development; otherwise, there would be neither the productive power to overcome necessity nor the revolutionary proletariat to win freedom for all as it emancipated itself from capitalist exploitation. Lenin had little faith in the revolutionary potential of the proletariat, arguing in *What Is to Be Done?* Moreover, the authoritarian nature of the Russian government required that the vanguard party be conspiratorial, disciplined, and elitist. But imperialism would also be the last stage of capitalism, for it was bound to expose the contradictions of capitalism not only in the industrial countries but also in the countries exploited by the imperialistic powers—hence the possibility of revolution in a country that had not itself gone through capitalism. Lenin wrote *Imperialism* during World War I, which proved to be a watershed in the history of socialism. In the years before war broke out in August, most European socialists had held that the only war the proletariat should fight was the class war against the bourgeoisie. When the war began, however, socialists were forced to choose between international socialism and their countries, and they generally chose the latter—though there were notable exceptions, Luxemburg and Lenin among them. The Second International lingered for a time, but to no effective purpose. World War I also inflicted severe hardships on the Russian people, thereby contributing to the collapse of the tsarist regime and creating an opportunity for revolution, which the Bolsheviks seized in the Russian Revolution of 1917. For his part, Lenin feared that his regime could not survive without the aid of friendly—and therefore socialist—neighbours. The response from other countries was tepid, and, by the time the delegates convened in March 1919, the prospects for a new international had been further dimmed by the failure of the Spartacus Revolt of the new Communist Party of Germany—a failure that claimed the lives of Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht the son of Wilhelm Liebknecht, who were summarily executed by counterrevolutionary forces in see also Spartacus League. Lenin pressed on with the formation of the Comintern, but it was soon apparent that it was an agent of the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics formally created in 1922 and not of international socialism as such. Indeed, by this time a fissure had clearly developed between communists on the one hand and socialists, or social democrats, on the other. Socialism in the era of world war The division took institutional form as communist parties emerged in one country after another to challenge existing socialist parties and their common enemy, capitalism. In general, the communists were revolutionary Marxists who adhered to what came to be called Marxism-Leninism. Their socialist rivals—variously known as socialists, social democrats, and labourites—were a more diverse group, including both revisionists and non-Marxists, but they were united in their commitment to peaceful, democratic tactics. They were also less likely than the communists to claim that history was moving inexorably toward the demise of capitalism and more likely to appeal to ethical considerations. In England, for example, the reformer Richard Henry Tawney found a receptive audience within the Labour Party when he rested the case for socialism on its promotion of fellowship, the dignity of work, and the equal worth of all members of society. On the communist side, the standard was set by the increasingly totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union. Stalin not only won the struggle but eventually ordered the deaths of Trotsky and other rivals—and of millions more who opposed or resisted his policies. There were occasional deviations from the Marxist-Leninist line, as in the case of Antonio Gramsci, who helped to found the Italian Communist Party in 1927. Fascist oppression, in fact, was a major problem for communists and socialists alike, not only in Italy but subsequently in Spain under Francisco Franco and in Germany under Adolf Hitler. Nor were there any signal victories for socialism outside Europe in the years between the world wars. Debs won nearly one million votes in the U. In India, Mahatma Gandhi attracted a mass following, but his popularity owed more to his campaign for independence from Britain than to the traces of socialism in his philosophy. Library of Congress, Washington, D. In China another mass movement for national liberation developed at this time, though it was explicitly communist. After a disastrous beginning—the Comintern had pushed the Chinese communists into an alliance with the nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek, who attacked the communists as soon as he thought it expedient—Mao retreated to the fields and hills to rebuild the CCP.

Chapter 3 : A History of Socialism

A4 sized graphic depiction of Bakunin's argument against state socialism, based on a somewhat edited version of an essay published by Coptic Press in

Anarchists have always argued that real socialism cannot be created using a state. The basic core of the argument is simple. Socialism implies equality, yet the state signifies inequality - inequality in terms of power. As we argued in section B. In other words, the delegation of power into the hands of a few. As such, it violates a core idea of socialism, namely social equality. Those who make up the governing bodies in a state have more power than those who have elected them see section I. It is with this perspective that anarchists have combated the idea of state socialism and Marxism although we should stress that libertarian forms of Marxism, such as council communism, have strong similarities to anarchism. In the case of the Russian Revolution, the anarchists were amongst the first on the left to be suppressed by the Bolsheviks. Indeed, the history of Marxism is, in part, a history of its struggles against anarchists just as the history of anarchism is also, in part, a history of its struggle against the various forms of Marxism and its offshoots. While both Stirner and Proudhon wrote many pages against the evils and contradictions of state socialism, anarchists have only really been fighting the Marxist form of state socialism since Bakunin. This is because, until the First International, Marx and Engels were relatively unknown socialist thinkers. Proudhon was aware of Marx they had meant in France in the 1840s and had corresponded but Marxism was unknown in France during his life time and so Proudhon did not directly argue against Marxism he did, however, critique Louis Blanc and other French state socialists. However, like Proudhon, Stirner attacked other state socialists and communists. These critiques contain many important ideas and so are worth summarising. However, it is worth noting that when both Stirner and Proudhon were writing communist ideas were all authoritarian in nature. This means that when Proudhon and Stirner were critiquing "communism" they were attacking a specific form of communism, the form which subordinated the individual to the community. Anarchist communists like Kropotkin and Malatesta also opposed such kinds of "communism. The old idea of Communism was the idea of monastic communities. The last vestiges of liberty and of individual energy would be destroyed, if humanity ever had to go through such a communism. For Stirner, the key issue was that communism or socialism, like liberalism, looked to the "human" rather than the unique. Stirner was aware that capitalism was not the great defender of freedom it was claimed to be by its supporters. Communism rightly revolts against the pressure that I experience from individual proprietors; but still more horrible is the might that it puts in the hands of the collectivity. By nationalising property, the various state socialist regimes turned the worker from a servant of the capitalist into a serf of the state. He particularly attacked the ideas of Louis Blanc. Blanc, whose most famous book was *Organisation du Travail* *Organisation of Work*, first published in 1839 argued that social ills resulted from competition and they could be solved by means of eliminating it via government initiated and financed reforms. Since that "which the proletarians lack to free themselves are the tools of labour," the government "must furnish them" with these. Such state-initiated workshops would soon prove to be more efficient than privately owned industry and, by charging lower prices, force privately owned industry either out of business or to change into social workshops, so eliminating competition. Proudhon objected to this scheme on many levels. Blanc is never tired of appealing to authority, and socialism loudly declares itself anarchistic; M. Blanc places power above society, and socialism tends to subordinate it to society; M. Blanc makes social life descend from above, and socialism maintains that it springs up and grows from below; M. Blanc runs after politics, and socialism is in quest of science. No more hypocrisy, let me say to M. For my part, I deny your God, your authority, your sovereignty, your judicial State, and all your representative mystifications. As it was run by the state, the system of workshops would hardly be libertarian as "hierarchy would result from the elective principle. Who will make the law? As he put it, the "problem before the labouring classes. Proudhon argued for a two-way approach to undermining capitalism from below: In this way, the working class would emancipate itself from capitalism and build a socialist society from below upwards by their own efforts and activities. Proudhon, as Marxist Paul Thomas notes, "believed fervently. Proudhon advocated, and to a

considerable extent inspired, the undercutting of this terrain [of the state] from without by means of autonomous working-class associations. In the mid-nineteenth century, the bulk of the French working class were artisans and peasants and so such an approach reflected the social context in which it was proposed. With a predominance of small-scale industry, the notion of free credit provided by mutual banks as the means of securing working class people access to the means of production is theoretically feasible. He never failed to stress that association would be tyranny if imposed upon peasants and artisans rather, he thought that associations would be freely embraced by these workers if they thought it was in their interests to do so. The net effect was the same, though, namely to abolish wage labour. He continually stressed that state ownership of the means of production was a danger to the liberty of the worker and simply the continuation of capitalism with the state as the new boss. As he put it in , he "did not want to see the State confiscate the mines, canals and railways; that would add to monarchy, and more wage slavery. I am not a Communist, because Communism concentrates and swallows up in itself for the benefit of the State all the forces of society, because it inevitably leads to the concentration of property in the hands of the State. I want to see society and collective or social property organised from below upwards, by way of free associations, not from above downwards, by means of any kind of authority whatsoever. That is the sense in which I am a Collectivist and not a Communist. Kenafick, Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx, pp. It was in these exchanges that the two schools of socialism the libertarian and the authoritarian clarified themselves. With Bakunin, the anarchist critique of Marxism and state socialism in general starts to reach its mature form. This conflict helped clarify the anarchist opposition to the ideas of Marxism and can be considered as the first major theoretical analysis and critique of Marxism by anarchists. First, however, we must stress that Marx and Bakunin had many similar ideas. They both stressed the need for working people to organise themselves to overthrow capitalism by a social revolution. They argued for collective ownership of the means of production. They both constantly stressed that the emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves. They differed, of course, in exactly how these common points should be implemented in practice. Both, moreover, had a tendency to misrepresent the opinions of the other on certain issues particularly as their struggle reached its climax. Anarchists, unsurprisingly, argue Bakunin has been proved right by history, so confirming the key aspects of his critique of Marx. There are six main areas. Firstly, there is the question of current activity i. Secondly, there is the issue of the form of the revolution i. Thirdly, there is the prediction that state socialism will be exploitative, replacing the capitalist class with the state bureaucracy. Fourthly, there is the issue of the "dictatorship of the proletariat. Sixthly, there was the issue of whether the revolution be centralised or decentralised in nature. We shall discuss each in turn. On the issue of current struggle, the differences between Marx and Bakunin are clear. For Marx, the proletariat had to take part in bourgeois elections as an organised political party. As the resolution of the gerrymandered Hague Congress of First International put it: The conquest of political power has therefore become the great duty of the working class. The Social Democratic parties which were the first Marxist parties and which developed under the watchful eyes of Marx and Engels saw revolution in terms of winning a majority within Parliamentary elections and using this political power to abolish capitalism once this was done, the state would "wither away" as classes would no longer exist. In effect, as we discuss in section H. Bakunin, in contrast, argued that while the communists "imagine they can attain their goal by the development and organisation of the political power of the working classes. For men do not make their situations; on the contrary, men are made by them. A few years after Engels death in , German Social Democracy was racked by the "revisionism" debate. This debate did not spring from the minds of a few leaders, isolated from the movement, but rather expressed developments within the movement itself. In effect, the revisionists wanted to adjust the party rhetoric to what the party was actually doing and so the battle against the revisionists basically represented a battle between what the party said it was doing and its actual practice. As one of the most distinguished historians of this period put it, the "distinction between the contenders remained largely a subjective one, a difference of ideas in the evaluation of reality rather than a difference in the realm of action. Schorske, German Social Democracy, p. Clearly, Bakunin was proved right. However, we must stress that because Bakunin rejected participating in bourgeois politics, it did not mean that he rejected "politics" or "political struggle" in general see section J. Bakunin clearly advocated what would

later be termed a syndicalist strategy see section H. This union movement would be complemented by a specific anarchist organisation which would work within it to influence it towards anarchist aims by the "natural influence" of its members see section J. Comparing Bakunin and Marx, it is clear whom history has validated. Even that anti-anarchist Stalinist hack Eric Hobsbawm could not avoid admitting "the remarkable achievement of Spanish anarchism which was to create a working-class movement that remained genuinely revolutionary. Which brings us to the second issue, namely the nature of the revolution itself. For Bakunin, a revolution meant a social revolution from below. This involved both the abolition of the state and the expropriation of capital. In his words, "the revolution must set out from the first radically and totally to destroy the State. This also meant that Bakunin considered a political revolution before an economic one to mean the continued slavery of the workers. As he argued, "[t]o win political freedom first can signify no other thing but to win this freedom only, leaving for the first days at least economic and social relations in the same old state, - that is, leaving the proprietors and capitalists with their insolent wealth, and the workers with their poverty. As such, "every political revolution taking place prior to and consequently without a social revolution must necessarily be a bourgeois revolution, and a bourgeois revolution can only be instrumental in bringing about bourgeois Socialism - that is, it is bound to end in a new, more hypocritical and more skilful, but no less oppressive, exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeois. Discussing the Paris Commune, Marx noted that it was "the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour," and as the "political rule of the producer cannot coexist with the perpetuation of his social slavery" the Commune was to "serve as a lever for uprooting the economic foundations upon which rests the existence of classes. That document stressed that it was not possible for "private property to be abolished at one stroke", arguing that "the proletarian revolution will transform existing society gradually. Direct in England, where the proletarians are already a majority of the people. Which makes perfect sense, as otherwise the term "dictatorship of the proletariat" would be meaningless.

Criticism of socialism refers to any critique of socialist models of economic organization and their feasibility as well as the political and social implications of adopting such a system.

Ulli Diemer What is Libertarian Socialism? We call ourselves libertarian socialists. But why the adjective? Is libertarian socialism any different from socialism as it is generally understood? There are more variations of socialism currently in existence than there are varieties of soup on the supermarket shelves, more socialist parties with the correct line than religious sects with a monopoly on salvation. The temptation is strong to abandon the label entirely, to adopt some new term to indicate the kind of social change we propose. But to do so would be to attempt to side-step a problem that really cannot be avoided. For the terminological confusion is not accidental. It is rooted in the fact that the dominant social system always acts to integrate that which it cannot destroy – movements, ideas, even words – and therefore destroys them precisely by integrating them, by claiming them. It denies the very possibility of an alternative to itself, and proves this impossibility by absorbing the alternative and emptying it of meaning, by adopting new forms and new language which create the illusion of choice and change while perpetuating the same essential relations of domination. Since the main challenge to capitalism has always come from that which called itself socialism, it is hardly surprising that capitalist social relations have survived in half the world by calling themselves socialist. Capitalism has dissolved the socialist alternative by stealing away its name, its language, and its dreams. We have to take them back, for without words there can be no concepts, and where there is no language of freedom, there can be no dream of liberation. Consequently, we cannot simply abdicate the terminology of socialism and arbitrarily invent new labels. To do so would be futile, both because any new terms will be similarly sucked dry if they acquire popular recognition, and because the existing language of freedom refers to meanings and history that must be recovered from those who now suppress them by laying claim to them. That critique can be realized only by reconquering it and giving it new life, not by abandoning it and searching for another. This process of criticism has not yielded any finished results that can be presented as a comprehensive picture of libertarian socialism. Indeed, the very concept of critique stands in opposition to the idea of having finished results. What is presented here are some beginnings, some themes for elaboration. Most of the ideas presented here are not new, but neither are they generally accepted. The idea that socialism is first and foremost about freedom and therefore about overcoming the domination, repression, and alienation that block the free flow of human creativity, thought, and action. Similarly, we believe that socialism will involve equality, but we do not think that socialism is equality, for it is possible to conceive of a society where everyone is equally oppressed. A politics that is completely revolutionary because it seeks to transform all of reality. We do not think that capturing the economy and the state lead automatically to the transformation of the rest of social being, nor do we equate liberation with changing our life-styles and our heads. Capitalism is a total system that invades all areas of life: Libertarian politics concerns itself with the liberation of the individual because it is collective, and with the collective liberation because it is individualistic. Being a socialist is not only an intellectual thing, a matter of having the right ideas or the right intellectual approach. It is also a matter of the way you lead your life. A conception of the left not as separate from society, but as part of it. We of the left are people who are subjected to social oppression like everyone else, who struggle for socialism because our own liberation is possible only when all society is liberated. We seek to bring others to our socialist project not to do them a favour, but because we need their help to achieve our own liberation. We of the left see ourselves as equal participants in the struggle, not as the anointed leaders of it. We put forward our socialist vision as part of our contribution, but we do not think that our belief in socialism means that we have all the answers. We deal with people honestly, as equals, not presuming the right to dictate what they shall think or do, nor presuming that we have nothing to learn from them. We have enough faith in our politics that we do not seek to manipulate people to our conclusions. As socialists we form organizations with other people who share our ideas. This is necessary and valid, but it represents a situation that we should continually try to overcome, not one that we should accept and even institutionalize in the Leninist mode. Socialism

implies not only the withering away of the state, but also the withering away of the left and its organizations as separate entities. Power in a socialist society must be exercised in ways allowing the participation of everyone, not only those belonging to a given organization. This must be prefigured in the political forms and movements that emerge before the revolution. The ultimate goal of the left and its organizations must not be to rule society, but to abolish themselves. The most important component of socialist consciousness is critical thought. We must learn to think about everything critically, to take nothing for granted, nothing as given. Consequently, we do not want people to accept socialist ideas in the way they now accept, partially or completely, bourgeois ideas. We want to destroy all uncritical acceptance and belief. We think that a critical examination of society leads to socialist conclusions, but what is important is not simply the conclusions but equally and even more so the method of arriving at them. We base ourselves on the heritage of Marxism. This does not mean that we accept all the ideas of Marx, let alone of those who claim to be his followers. Marxism is a point of departure for us, not our pre-determined destination. Our debt to Marxism will be no less if we find that we have to go beyond it. On the contrary, we have yet to formulate many of the important questions. We have to try to maintain a balance of theory and practice which seeks to integrate them, and which recognizes that we must engage in both at all times. The centre of gravity of our politics has to be when we are, not in the vicarious identification with struggles elsewhere. Solidarity work is important, but it cannot be the main focus of a socialist movement. But because people do make history, we know that it is possible to build a new world, and we strive to realize that possibility.

Chapter 5 : A Fascinating Critique of European Socialism

A Critique of State Socialism has 8 ratings and 1 review. Ben said: Bakunin's text is actually only part of this book, the bulk of it being a cartoon his.

Out of this was born liberalism and individualism. Marx sets out to make a distinction between political emancipation and real human emancipation. Marx believed that history involves a continuous transformation of human nature, that nature is not immutable but subject to social conditioning, and for Marx the social world, is the world in which man produces the necessities of life. Liberal rights and justice are premised on the idea that each of us needs protection from others, these legal rights are rights of separation, freedom from interference and freedom to acquire property. I think it would be wrong to ascribe the concept of species being entirely to Marx. Capitalism and the liberal democratic state are seen as being indivisible. Use value is distinguished from exchange value, use value is the value of the commodity only realised upon its consumption and not upon its exchange. Exchange value is determined by the average or socially necessary labour time in its production. This is called the Labour theory of value. The production of absolute surplus value: The capitalist pays the worker only a fraction of the exchange value of the commodity. The capitalist accumulates the surplus value created from the labour of those he employs. This exploitative relationship based upon waged labour, is what characterises capitalism. Under capitalism the so called free worker is forced to sell their labour. The mode of production refers to the base structure of society, the economic base, the way in which and under the conditions of which, men produce the necessities of life. Capitalism is based upon the exploitation of the many, for the enrichment of the few. In the Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of Marx writes The worker becomes all the poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and size. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates. Each of us would have, in two ways, affirmed himself, and the other person. Our products would be so many mirrors in which we saw reflected our essential nature. For Marx, the alternative is communism. The state in which man is not estranged from his labour, or alienated by the distinction between his social being and the sphere of politics. Liberal democracy divides us between civil society and politics, with the state in the last resort being an instrument that re-enforces the class relations of capitalism. The state, exists to reproduce the conditions of production. What is actually the whole function of bourgeois legality? However, as soon as the process takes place in accordance with the book known as the penal code, and the quarters in question are in prison, then the whole affair immediately becomes peaceable and legal. If one man is compelled by another to kill his fellow men, then that is obviously an act of violence. In other words, what presents itself to us in the cloak of bourgeois legality is nothing but the expression of class violence raised to an obligatory norm by the ruling class. Once the individual act of violence has been raised in this way to an obligatory norm the process is reflected in the mind of the bourgeois lawyer and no less in the mind of the socialist opportunist not as it really is, but upside down: In reality the truth is exactly the opposite: Marxists differ from left wing anarchists on one very important point, the belief that in order to transition to communism it is necessary for the working class to seize control of the state. There is no absolute agreement between Marxists on how this seizure should come about. Karl Kautsky and others believed that universal suffrage under liberal democracy could bring about state socialism simply by virtue of capitalist crisis, the continued contradictions, and the fact that the working class outnumbered their exploiters. The Left-Right paradigm theorizes that the two opposing political parties representing the class interests of the opposing workers and their exploiters, utilize their tremendous domination over mainstream culture, dramatizing their political differences in grand performances of bureaucratic rivalry. It seems clear that the ideological state apparatus is intent upon perpetuating the idea that we have a mainstream left party representing the interests of the working class. But I would suggest that the idea that socialism can be realized through the liberal state is a dead duck. Socialism cannot be realised through the liberal democratic state, the two are incompatible.

Chapter 6 : Tocqueville's Critique of Socialism () - Online Library of Liberty

*A critique of state socialism [Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin] on www.nxgvision.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

A collection of scholarly works about individual liberty and free markets. A project of Liberty Fund, Inc. Classical Liberal Critique of Socialism Source: Tocqueville on Socialism Copyright: The copyright to this publication is held by Liberty Fund, Inc. The New Individualist Review is prohibited for use in any publication, journal, or periodical without written consent of J. Powell, or David Levy. This material is put online to further the educational goals of Liberty Fund, Inc. Unless otherwise stated in the Copyright Information section above, this material may be used freely for educational and academic purposes. It may not be used in any way for profit. The new republic believed that the unemployment problem which was plaguing Paris could be solved by setting up government work-projects, guaranteeing employment at a certain wage rate for all who desired it. On September 12th, the Constituent Assembly debated the continuance of this arrangement and Tocqueville rose to speak against it. This translation from the transcript of the proceedings, here appears for the first time in English. At the bottom of the amendment which is under consideration, perhaps unknown to its author but for me as clear as day, is the question of socialism. We are duty-bound to clear up this issue, which lies heavy upon the breast of France. I confess that it is principally because of this that I mount the podium today, that the question of socialism might finally be settled. I must know, the National Assembly must know, all of France must know "is the February Revolution a socialist revolution or is it not? I want only to attempt to uncover those characteristics which are common to all of them and to see if the February Revolution can be said to have exhibited those traits. Now, the first characteristic of all socialist ideologies is, I believe, an incessant, vigorous and extreme appeal to the material passions of man. A second trait, always present, is an attack, either direct or indirect, on the principle of private property. But I say that all socialists, by more or less roundabout means, if they do not destroy the principle upon which it is based, transform it, diminish it, obstruct it, limit it, and mold it into something completely foreign to what we know and have been familiar with since the beginning of time as private property. They unceasingly attempt to mutilate, to curtail, to obstruct personal freedom in any and all ways. They hold that the State must not only act as the director of society, but must further be master of each man, and not only master, but keeper and trainer. They call, in fact, for the forfeiture, to a greater or less degree, of human liberty, [Further signs of assent. I have indicated what socialism is by pointing out its universal characteristics. They suffice to allow an understanding of it. Everywhere you might find them, you will be sure to find socialism, and wherever socialism is, these characteristics are met. Is it, as it has been pretended to be, the natural development of democracy? No, neither one or the other. Re-examine the awesome and glorious origin of our modern history. Was it by appealing to the material needs of man, as a speaker of yesterday insisted, that the French Revolution accomplished those great deeds that the whole world marvelled at? Do you believe that it spoke of wages, of well-being, of unlimited wealth, of the satisfaction of physical needs? I said nothing of the kind. Do you believe that by speaking of such things it could have aroused a whole generation of men to fight for it at its borders, to risk the hazards of war, to face death? No, gentlemen, it was by speaking of greater things, of love of country, of the honor of France, of virtue, generosity, selflessness, glory, that it accomplished what it did. But, concerning the very principle of private property, the Revolution always respected it. It placed it in its constitutions at the top of the list. No people treated this principle with greater respect. It was engraved on the very frontispiece of its laws. The French Revolution did more. Not only did it consecrate private property, it universalized it. It saw that still a greater number of citizens participated in it. It is because the French Revolution peopled the land of France with ten million property-owners that we can, without danger, allow these doctrines to appear before us. They can, without doubt, destroy society, but thanks to the French Revolution, they will not prevail against it and will not harm us. There is one thing which strikes me above all. It is that the Old Regime, which doubtless differed in many respects from that system of government which the socialists call for and we must realize this was, in its political philosophy, far less distant from socialism

than we had believed. It is far closer to that system than we. The Old Regime, in fact, held that wisdom lay only in the State and that the citizens were weak and feeble beings who must forever be guided by the hand, for fear they harm themselves. It held that it was necessary to obstruct, thwart, restrain individual freedom, that to secure an abundance of material goods it was imperative to regiment industry and impede free competition. The Old Regime believed, on this point, exactly as the socialists of today do. It was the French Revolution which denied this. Gentlemen, what is it that has broken the fetters which, from all sides, had arrested the free movement of men, goods and ideas? What has restored to man his individuality, which is his real greatness? And it is not only the members of that immortal assembly—the Constituent Assembly, that assembly which founded liberty not only in France but throughout the world—which rejected the ideas of the Old Regime. It is the eminent men of all the assemblies which followed it! AND AFTER this great Revolution, is the result to be that society which the socialists offer us, a formal, regimented and closed society where the State has charge of all, where the individual counts for nothing, where the community masses to itself all power, all life, where the end assigned to man is solely his material welfare—this society where the very air is stifling and where light barely penetrates? Is it to be for this society of bees and beavers, for this society, more for skilled animals than for free and civilized men, that the French Revolution took place? Is it for this that so many great men died on the field of battle and on the gallows, that so much noble blood watered the earth? Is it for this that so many passions were inflamed, that so much genius, so much virtue walked the earth? I swear it by those men who died for this great cause! It is not for this that they died. It is for something far greater, far more sacred, far more deserving of them and of humanity. A perfected Old Regime would have served adequately. I myself will not search, as some of my colleagues have done, for the real etymology of this word, democracy. I will not, as was done yesterday, rummage around in the garden of Greek roots to find from whence comes this word. And in these republics you will search in vain for socialism. Not only have socialist theories not captured public opinion there, but they play such an insignificant role in the intellectual and political life of this great nation that they cannot even rightfully boast that people fear them. America today is the one country in the world where democracy is totally sovereign. It is, besides, a country where socialist ideas, which you presume to be in accord with democracy, have held least sway, the country where those who support the socialist cause are certainly in the worst position to advance them I personally would not find it inconvenient if they were to go there and propagate their philosophy, but in their own interests, I would advise them not to. Their goods are being sold right now. Democracy and socialism are not interdependent concepts. They are not only different, but opposing philosophies. Is it consistent with democracy to institute the most meddlesome, all-encompassing and restrictive government, provided that it be publicly chosen and that it act in the name of the people? Would the result not be tyranny, under the guise of legitimate government and, by appropriating this legitimacy assuring to itself the power and omnipotence which it would otherwise assuredly lack? Democracy extends the sphere of personal independence; socialism confines it. Democracy values each man at his highest; socialism makes of each man an agent, an instrument, a number. Democracy and socialism have but one thing in common—equality. But note well the difference. Democracy aims at equality in liberty. Socialism desires equality in constraint and in servitude. If it must not be then we must have the energy to loudly proclaim that it should not be, as I am doing here. When one is opposed to the ends, he must be opposed to the means by which one arrives at those ends. When one has no desire for the goal he must not enter onto the path which necessarily leads him there. It has been proposed today that we enter down that very path. We must not follow that political philosophy which Baboeuf so ardently embraced [cries of approval]—Baboeuf, the grand-father of all modern socialists. We must not fall into the trap he himself indicated, or, better, suggested by his friend, pupil and biographer, Buonarotti. They merit attention, even after fifty years. There are no Babovists here. But he well realized that such an order could not be established immediately following victory. He thought it essential that [the State] conduct itself in such manner that the whole people would do away with private property through a realization of their own needs and interests. Mind you, it is his own panegyrist I am quoting. I sincerely hope that it is not that of the February republic. No, the February republic must be democratic, but it must not be socialist— A Voice from the Left: And if it is not to be socialist, what then will

it be? A Member from the Left: Citizen de Tocqueville turning toward the left: It might, perhaps become so, if you allow it to happen, [much approval] but it will not. If the February Revolution is not socialist, what, then, is it? Is it, as many people say and believe, a mere accident?

Chapter 7 : Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis | Mises Institute

Online Library of Liberty. Tocqueville's Critique of Socialism () There is nothing in it which authorizes the State to meddle in the affairs of industry.

Bakunin was born on 30 May , in Pryamukhino Russia. Becoming interested in philosophy at the age of 21, he became a Hegelian and left to study in Germany, which was then the home of philosophical speculation. He progressed from Hegelianism to an interest in the pan-Slavic movement, as one of anti-colonialism, against Russian autocracy and German imperialism. Through Weitling, pioneer of libertarian communism, he became acquainted with revolutionary ideas; he moved towards socialism, but with the reservation that there was an absence of freedom in the then current socialistic programmes and ideas. Becoming acquainted with anarchism through the French school, in particular Pierre Joseph Proudhon, he became its most famous exponent of the day. His theoretical development was stopped short by the fact of his participation in the democratic revolution of In he was expelled from France for making a speech in support of independence for Poland. His passion for liberty and equality, and his condemnations of privilege and injustice gave him an enormous appeal in the radical movement of the day. The following year Bakunin rushed to Dresden where he played a leading role in the May insurrection. This led to his arrest and he was sentenced to death. The Austrian monarchy also wanted him, so he was extradited and again sentenced to death. But before the hangman could put the noose around his neck, Russia demanded his extradition and he spent the following six years jailed without trial in the Peter and Paul Fortress. Release from jail was followed by exile in Siberia. For the next three years he threw himself into the struggle for Polish independence. Then he began to rethink his ideas. Would national independence, in itself, lead to liberty for working people? This took him away from nationalism and towards anarchism. Very rapidly his ideas developed and he became a famous exponent of anarchism. While Marx believed that socialism could be built by taking over the state, Bakunin looked forward to its destruction and the creation of a new society based on free federations of free workers. This soon became the policy of the International in Italy and Spain, and grew in popularity in Switzerland, Belgium and France. After failing to defeat the anarchist idea, Marx and his followers resorted to a campaign of smears and lies against Bakunin. A committee set up to investigate the charges found, by a majority, Bakunin guilty and voted to expel him. The Swiss section called a further congress, where the charges were found to be false. An international conference also vindicated Bakunin, and went on to adopt the anarchist position of rejecting any rule by a minority. Defeated, Marx and his followers moved the General Council of the International to New York where it faded into irrelevance. The ideas developed by Bakunin in the last decade of his life went on to form the basis of the modern anarchist movement. Worn out by a lifetime of struggle, Bakunin died in Switzerland on July 1st His legacy is enormous. Although he wrote manifestoes, articles and books he never finished a single sizable work. Being primarily an activist he would stop, sometimes literally in mid-sentence, to play his part in struggles, strikes and rebellions. What he left to posterity is a collection of fragments. Even so, his writings are full of insights that are as relevant today as they were in his time. He cautioned them against trying to take power and create a dictatorship of the proletariat. Long before the Russian revolution he warned that a new class of intellectuals and semi-intellectuals might seek to step into the shoes of the landlords and bosses, and deny working people their freedom. In he foretold, with great accuracy, that under the dictatorship of the proletariat of the Marxists the party leaders would concentrate the reins of government in a strong hand and divide the masses into two great armies industrial and agricultural - under the direct command of state engineers who will constitute a new privileged scientific and political class. Bakunin understood that government is the means by which a minority rules. It is necessary to abolish completely and in principle and in practice, everything that may be called political power, for as long as political power Over the Water, Sanday, Orkney exists there will always be rulers and ruled, masters and slaves, exploiters First published and exploited. This essay was previously published by Coptic Press in , and it seemed a good idea to republish it in a fairly easy sort of cartoon format. Oddly, no one could think of a snappier title Anything with quotation marks is a direct quote Yes, Lenin did say that! Anything without is a paraphrase or just pure

invention, though still, I trust, truthful. Baboeuf was one of the last energetic and pure-hearted citizens whom the Revolution created and then killed off in large numbers. Seeing that the Revolution was failing for lack of radical change, he conceived, faithful to the statist spirit of the Revolution, a political and social system according to which the Republic, viewed as the expression of the collective will of the citizens, would confiscate individual property and administer it in the interests of all, allotting education, the means of existence and pleasures to all in equal shares, and compelling all, without exception, to do physical or mental labour according to their capacity. Taken up by Buonarroti, and fostered by the secret societies which he founded in Belgium and France, these ideas of communism blossomed. Between and they were interpreted as the revolutionary socialism of Cabet and Louis Blanc. The merits of Saint-Simonism and Fourierism, often called Utopian and socialism, lie mainly in the profound scientific criticism they made of Christianity and the way in which they shook it in the cause of the rehabilitation of matter and human passions. They wanted to replace Christianity with a new religion, based on the mystic cult of the flesh, with a new hierarchy of priests, people who would exploit the majority by virtue of their privilege of genius and talent. There, they believed, each would find the kind of work and kind of place most natural to his passions. All were authoritarians to some degree. The one exception was Proudhon, The son of a peasant, and by instinct a hundred times more revolutionary than all the doctrinaire and bourgeois socialists, Proudhon developed a critical viewpoint, as ruthless as it was profound and penetrating, in order to destroy all their systems, Opposing liberty to authority, he proclaimed himself an anarchist as distinct from the state socialists, and in the face of their deism or pantheism he also had the courage to declare himself an atheist. Such a socialism, functioning outside any governmental regulation or state protection, and subordinating politics to the economic, intellectual and moral interests of society, was bound in the course of time to arrive at federalism. New socialist ideas penetrated the working class, and when the revolution broke out in France in that year, socialism emerged as a powerful force. But it was not socialism in general that went under in June , only state socialism, the authoritarian, regimented socialism which believed that the State could satisfy all the needs and aspirations of the working class, and that once armed with unlimited power, it would be able to inaugurate a whole new social order. Socialism did not die; on the contrary, it was the State itself that went bankrupt. Deciding that it was unable to pay off the debt it owed to socialism, the State attempted to kill it off instead, in order to remove the debt. This was the main cause of their defeat. But is that any reason to doubt the future power of socialism? Christianity, which aimed to found the Kingdom of Justice in heaven, took several centuries to conquer Europe. First of all there are the peaceful or bourgeois socialists The latter can be subdivided into revolutionary state socialists It comprises men of various political persuasions, who are flirting with socialism only, with a view to strengthening their own cause. There are conservatives who are socialists Each of them recognises a formidable force rising in socialism, and tries to channel it in his direction, hoping with its help to restore his own sinking and decrepit party. Among these many exploiters of socialism are some well-meaning people who really do want to see an improvement in the lot of the proletariat, but who lack the intelligence or the will to see the problem clearly. They may be sincere, but this sincerity is most harmful, as it disguises the insincerity of the malicious exploiters of socialism. If his passion for justice is insufficient to inspire such resolution, he need not deceive himself, and should not deceive the workers; he will never become their friend. His ideas and dreams of justice may inspire him to join with the exploited in moments of calm contemplation when nothing much is happening in the world of the exploiters, but as soon as there comes a moment of crisis when those two opposing worlds meet in a great social struggle, all his former bonds will pull him back into his former world. Logically, since they start from the assumption, which we think mistaken, that thought is prior to life, and abstract theory prior to social practice, and that therefore sociology must be the starting point for social upheaval and reconstruction. The fact is that the masses are ruled by a small handful of privileged individuals elected or for that matter not even elected by crowds herded together on election day, ignorant of whom they elect, and why. Upon this fictitious and abstract expression of the imagined general will, the theory of the State and that of revolutionary dictatorship are based. It is clear why. They are only enemies of the powers-that-be because they cannot take their places. They are enemies of the existing political institutions only because these institutions stand in the way of their own dictatorship, but they are at the same time the

most ardent friends of State power. Without such power, the Revolution, by freeing the working masses, would obviously not allow this minority of would-be revolutionaries any opportunity to put the people into a new harness and shower upon them the blessings of their new governmental measures. However popular it might be made in form, the State will always be an institution of domination and exploitation, and therefore a permanent cause of slavery and misery. Consequently, the only way to emancipate the people economically and politically, to provide them with well-being and freedom

Chapter 8 : Marx's Critique of Liberalism – The Marxist Minx

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

A theory suggests certain outcomes and if those predictions come to be then it becomes accepted as valid. Strangely, while proclaiming itself "scientific socialism" something, like so much else, appropriated from Proudhon, Marxists refuse to apply that criteria to the socialist movement. Against Marx, he argued, firstly, that socialists standing for election would produce reformism, not revolution, and, secondly, that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" would be simply a dictatorship over the proletariat. Both came to pass. If the left were actually scientific, Marxism would be dead and those few left would be viewed like creationists or, at best, defenders of Lamarckism. A truly farcical situation. So while Marxists ignore it, the awkward fact is that Bakunin was right. This makes *A Critique of State Socialism* a very welcome reprint, albeit an extremely expensive one. Originally published by Cienfuegos Press in 1971, I fondly remember getting the B Books reprint when I just became an anarchist in 1972. Do not be put-off by the extremely dated cover the New Labour Party and SDP being stooges of a Soviet invasion of a revolutionary Britain which Thatcher had fled in 1979! Humour is well used to underline the serious points being made. It starts with Bakunin sketching the origins of socialism, starting with French Revolution, then moves onto the conspiracies of Baboeuf and Blanqui "So where are the masses? This account is short and the bulk of the book, rightly, deals with Marx and Lenin. There is such a wealth of material it is difficult to summarise. This is closely followed by his skilful summary of how easy it could be for Lenin to rationalise centralisation of power from the proclaimed dictatorship of the workers and peasants, via the party, to his own and, sadly, it does echo actual Bolshevik rationales. However, pointing out just one page amidst so many wonderful ones is hard – as can be seen. Ironically, given the devastating nature of this critique it could be argued that Warren gives the Trotskyists an easy time of it. Given that these span two decades and were expressed before, during and after the rise of Stalin this is a rich source of embarrassing quotes Warren could have utilised – and libertarians really should be aware of! As well as critique, the libertarian alternative is also presented. Makhno and his struggle against white and red dictatorship gets 3 pages, followed by one on Kronstadt. But neither did we destroy it!! Zapata in Mexico 44, Hungary 56 and other revolts against Stalinism rightfully get mentions. Of course, as with any short critique, much is left out. For example, it does not mention directly that Bakunin recognised the necessity of organising a federated militia to defend a revolution but the account of the Makhnovists should indicate this to anybody with basic common sense. Similarly, while Bakunin is quoted speculating that the peasantry might be "subjected" to a "new domination" by the proletariat when it is "the ruling class" 33 it helps immensely to know that when Bakunin wrote this in the proletariat was very much the minority of the working classes in Western Europe as it was in Russia. So to call for, as Marx did, for a "dictatorship of the proletariat" was to argue for rule by a minority, not the majority. As Joe King summarises, "Bakunin understood that government is the means by which a minority rules" based on "the concentration of authority in a few hands. Much muttering while he voiced on how Warren ignores the "objective circumstances" facing the Bolsheviks – civil war, economic collapse, isolation and so forth. Ironically, this Leninist fixation on "objective circumstances" results in a strange irony – downplaying the importance of Leninist ideology. Logically, this determinism means that the ideas of the leading Bolsheviks i. A strange position to take, to proclaim that you should become a Leninist while also maintaining that your ideology was irrelevant during an apparently "successful" revolution as if Bolshevik imposition of party dictatorship and state capitalism can be considered a success by non-ideologues! Still, such contradiction is hardly rare – they also maintain that civil war and economic disruption caused the degeneration of Leninism while Lenin himself proclaimed both were inevitable aspects of a revolution! Worse, the awkward fact is that Bolshevik authoritarianism started before the outbreak of the civil war. Moreover, Bolshevik ideology and vision of socialism as centralised state-planning made the economic crisis worse and destroyed the socialistic tendencies that existed by, for

example, preferring Tsarist state-capitalist economic structures over the factory committees. In short, ideas matter – particularly the ideology of the ruling elite as this will impact on the decisions made and structures favoured. The notion that Bolshevik ideology and the centralised top-down structures their ideology preferred had no impact on the development of the revolution simply cannot be maintained once you know the facts. Admittedly, all this would be hard to squeeze into comic format – it is hard enough to summarise in text form see section H of An Anarchist FAQ for details. Suffice to say, this book gives you a taster to the subject matter – and does so in a memorable and extremely enjoyable manner. It just means that Marx got more wrong than right and that libertarians, not limited by calling our ideas after a dead-guy with a beard, are in a position to appreciate this and incorporate his better ideas in our theories. Just as we do with the likes of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. We are also better placed to appreciate the contributions of others to the socialist project and see when Marx appropriated their ideas into his own usually, as with Proudhon, without mentioning the source – but that is another issue. So, all in all, a classic polemic which every anarchist should have in order to give to any new recruit to or disillusioned member of a Leninist Party – although it is so good you may not get it back again! However, if you can afford it then please buy it alternatively, it would make an excellent present to give or receive!

Chapter 9 : Socialism as a Reaction to State Corruption | Mises Institute

With Bakunin, the anarchist critique of Marxism (and state socialism in general) starts to reach its mature form. We discuss Bakunin's critique in the next section.

History[edit] The philosophy of state socialism was first explicitly expounded by Ferdinand Lassalle. Lassalle considered the state to be an entity independent of class allegiances and as an instrument of justice that would therefore be essential for the achievement of socialism. Description and theory[edit] As a political ideology, state socialism is one of the major dividing lines in the broader socialist movement. It is often contrasted non-state or anti-state forms of socialism, such as those that advocate direct self-management , adhocracy and direct cooperative ownership and management of the means of production. Political philosophies contrasted to state socialism include libertarian socialism , anarchist socialism , anarcho-communism , syndicalism , free market socialism , De Leonism and economic democracy. These forms of socialism are opposed to hierarchical technocratic socialism , scientific management and state-directed economic planning. In Marxist theory , socialism is projected to emerge in the most developed capitalist economies where capitalism suffers the greatest amount of internal contradictions and class conflict. On the other hand, "state socialism" became a revolutionary theory for the poorest, often quasi-feudal, countries of the world. Such systems are described as state capitalism because the state engages in capital accumulation. However, there is a clear difference between those two concepts. In state socialism, the state as a public entity engages in this activity in order to achieve socialism by re-investing the accumulated capital into the society whether be in more healthcare, education, employment or consumer goods, whereas in capitalist societies the surplus extracted from the working class is spent in whatever needs the owners of the means of production wants. Specifically, the state would become a coordinating economic entity consisting of interdependent inclusive associations rather than a mechanism of class and political control [13] [14] and in the process it would cease to be a state in the traditional definition. In Marxist theory, socialism would eventually give way to a stateless communist society. Preceding the Bolshevik-led revolution in Russia, many socialist groups including reformists , orthodox Marxist currents such as council communism and the Mensheviks , anarchists and libertarian socialists criticised the idea of using the state to conduct central planning and nationalization of the means of production as a way to establish socialism. This was intended to be a transitional phase in the process of building a socialist economy. The goals of nationalization were to dispossess large capitalists and consolidate industry so that profit would go toward public finance rather than private fortune. Nationalization would be the first step in a long-term process of socializing production: They wish to neutralize or to abolish capitalism, respectively, but through political reform rather than revolution. This method of gradualism implies utilization of the existing state apparatus and machinery of government to gradually move society toward socialism and is sometimes derided by other socialists as a form of "socialism from above" or political "elitism" for relying on electoral means to achieve socialism. Socialists who advocate representative democracy believe that after a certain period of time under socialism the state will "wither away" because class distinctions cease to exist and representative democracy would be replaced by direct democracy in the remaining public associations comprising the former state. Political power would be decentralized and distributed evenly among the population, producing a communist society. State socialism in Communist states[edit] Main article: Communist state The economic model adopted in the former Soviet Union , Eastern Europe and other Communist states is often described as a form of state socialism. The ideological basis for this system was the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialism in one country. The system that emerged in the s in the Soviet Union was based on state ownership of the means of production and centralized planning, along with bureaucratic management of the workplace by state officials that were ultimately subordinate to the all-encompassing communist party. Rather than the producers controlling and managing production, the party controlled both the government machinery which directed the national economy on behalf of the communist party, and planned the production and distribution of capital goods. Trotskyism argues that the leadership of the Communist states was corrupt and that it abandoned Marxism in

all but name. State Socialism Germany Otto von Bismarck implemented a set of social programs between 1871 and 1890 following his anti-socialist laws, partly as remedial measures to appease the working class and detract support for the Social Democratic Party of Germany SPD. But as usual he acted on his beliefs at the exact moment when they served a practical need. Whoever has pensions for his old age is far more easier to handle than one who has no such prospect. Look at the difference between a private servant in the chancellery or at court; the latter will put up with much more, because he has a pension to look forward to. They use the term in contrast with their own form of socialism, which involves either collective ownership in the form of worker cooperatives or common ownership of the means of production without state economic planning. Libertarian socialists and anarchists believe there is no need for a state in a socialist system because there would be no class to suppress and no need for an institution based on coercion and thus regard the state being a remnant of capitalism. Most also hold that statism is itself antithetical to true socialism, the goal of which is the eyes of libertarian socialists such as William Morris: State socialism is often referred to by detractors simply as "socialism". For example, Austrian economists such as Ludwig Von Mises and Friedrich Hayek continually used the word "socialism" as a synonym for state socialism and central planning. The attributive "state" is usually added by socialists with a non-state based method for achieving socialism to criticize state socialism. Those socialists who oppose any system of state control whatsoever believe in a more decentralized approach which puts the means of production directly into the hands of the workers rather than indirectly through state bureaucracies which they claim represent a new elite. While an association for managing production and economic affairs would exist in socialism, it would no longer be a state in the Marxist definition which is based on domination by one class. This leads some socialists to consider "state socialism" a form of state capitalism an economy based on wage labor and capital accumulation, but with the state owning the means of production, which Engels states would be the final form of capitalism. These social reformers do not advocate the overthrow of capitalism in a social revolution and they support the continuing existence of the government, private property and the capitalist economic system, only turned to more social purposes. Modern social democracy can also be considered "state capitalism" because the means of production are almost universally the private property of business owners and production for voluntary exchange is carried out rather than production for use.