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In dialectical thought going back to Socrates, it has often been useful to define something by indicating what it is not, and from there, getting closer to a true definition of the issue at hand. This method of presentation is different, of course, from that in traditional textbook learning, but it is utterly appropriate to the discussion of socialism, a subject both complex in its own right and overlaid with so many conflicting perspectives and interpretations.

In the discussion below, I will base myself on two main considerations. One, does socialist theory accurately describe what faces us today and offer a positive alternative? Two, to what extent are various socialist ideas and practices in accord with the perspectives of Karl Marx? This assumes, at least provisionally, that Marx's thought remains an important yardstick by which to measure both the state of contemporary capitalism and the best manner in which to transcend or sublimate [*Aufheben*] it. The need for such a recourse to Marx is by no means certain to most commentators, above all in the USA. But as the great socialist humanist Erich Fromm once wrote, in lines that unfortunately still ring true today: "It is a sad comment, yet one which cannot be avoided, that... ignorance and distortion of Marx are to be found more in the United States than in any other Western country."

### Socialism Is Not Capitalism

Capitalism's antithesis is socialism, which aims to abolish and replace it on a positive basis with a new humanist society. Too often, however, attempts at socialism, whether reformist or revolutionary, land us right back in capitalism (French social democracy, Russia, China, etc.), because they hit only at the surface manifestations of capitalism, and do not uproot it completely. Often, this was because the understanding of capitalism was itself limited. But what is capitalism?

The most obvious, glaring feature of capitalism is exploitation, which is the source of today's obscene levels of economic inequality. Capitalism is the most efficient mode of production ever created by human beings, far more so than feudalism or the ancient Greco-Roman slave-based economies. Rather than the whip, although versions of it are still used as well, labor is more often dominated by the silent compulsion of the labor market and once on the job, by impersonal bureaucratic management. No previous mode of production has produced as much material wealth as has capitalism. And no

system in history has produced such yawning economic gaps between those at the top and those at the bottom. This is not because those at the bottom are typically worse off than before capitalism, but because modern capitalism has created fortunes that feudal lords, Roman patricians, or Chinese gentry could not have imagined.

According to Marx's famous law of value and surplus value, the labor of workers adds value to the raw materials furnished to them. His prime example is the modern capitalist factory, where he specifies how wages are actually calculated, in a process he sees as theft. He examines the issue at two levels. At the first level, that of the labor market, which operates outside the factory, outside the sphere of production, capital seeks to pay the workers the minimum necessary for their immediate survival and reproduction (mainly childrearing), or even less, by setting them in competition with each other in a race to the bottom. This ceaseless quest by capitalists for cheap labor is a product of the competition they themselves face with other capitalist to lower their labor costs. At Marx's second level of analysis, we are no longer outside in the labor market, but inside the factory, inside production. Only at this point, in discussing how capital extracts value (and later profit) from workers, does Marx discuss productivity, how much value labor actually adds to the raw material. Here, the cost to capital of a day's wages is equivalent only to a very small portion of the value actually added by workers to the raw materials during the workday. The rest of the value created, once other costs like raw materials and rent for the factory are deducted, is *surplus value* (some of which becomes profit). This surplus value is based upon the *surplus labor time* the workers are forced to work, far beyond the small amount of labor time that adds sufficient value to the product to equal their wages. Marx calls this smaller portion of the workday *necessary labor time*, in contrast to the rest of the workday, which comprises that surplus labor time that amounts, as he sees it, to a free gift to capital. Moreover, capitalism keeps pushing that necessary labor time in a downward direction, under the pressure of what Marx terms "socially necessary labor time," forcing workers to work harder and harder as the system develops. After Marx's death in 1883, these processes became even more pronounced, with innovations like assembly lines or cobots, a 21st century term for "collaborative" robots that work alongside humans. These developments force workers into a breakneck pace that never slows, not even for a moment.

Early capitalism extends surplus value (and profits) by radically lengthening the working day, in this way creating large quantities of surplus labor time relative to necessary labor time. For example, a sixteen-hour workday might comprise four hours of necessary labor time and twelve hours of surplus labor time, a real bounty for capital. Once these inhumanly long workdays brought workers to the breaking point, labor unrest broke out and laws were passed limiting the working day to ten hours. In response, capitalism moved

toward labor-saving machines. In this second phase, the necessary labor time shrinks, since with industrial machinery workers can create enough value to equal their wages in far less time. In this example, a ten-hour workday might comprise one hour of necessary labor time and nine hours of surplus labor time.

In both cases, a huge portion of the workday is surplus labor time, just as much a free gift to capital as was the unfree and obligatory *corvée* labor conducted by medieval French peasants. But when the peasants performed several days a week of free labor in the feudal lord's vineyards to "thank" him for his protection, the exploitative relationship was utterly clear. Peasants did not think of themselves as having the same economic freedoms or opportunities as their lord, especially since they were tied to the land. Under capitalism, something similar occurs, but it is deeply hidden under the wage system, as described above, with the discrepancy between the value of a day's work as calculated in the labor market and the much higher value that same day's labor generates inside production. This veiling process, where the actual value labor creates in production is hidden by the wage system, is part of what Marx terms commodity fetishism. In this sense, capitalist labor relations are not fundamentally different from the unfree labor of peasant or slave-based economies. Modern capitalism also masks its domination in another way, with a formally free labor system based upon wage labor, and in which workers can quit at will. But they soon realize that other jobs that have similar or even worse forms of exploitation are what usually await them.

Moreover, modern machine industry is no boon to the working class in another sense, since from this time onwards capitalism is marked by permanent, mass unemployment. As machines replace people, and automation and robotization come along, this is only exacerbated. At one level, mass unemployment stabilizes the system, giving capital another whip over the workers who are told to obey or be replaced. But at another level, permanent mass unemployment threatens the very basis of the system, leading those at the bottom to question its viability. This is exacerbated further the by the periodic economic crises that wrack the system.

A second core feature of capitalism, alienation, is in a sense logically prior to exploitation, for alienated labor undergirds the entire productive apparatus that exploits workers and creates value and profits for capital. From his earliest writings onward, Marx took over the concept of alienation from his philosophical mentor, G.W.F. Hegel. Creative labor forms a major part of our identity as human beings and the human being is often defined as a tool-making animal. While other animals perform labor, sometimes systematically and cooperatively as in the labor of ants or bees, human beings do so in a conscious, planned manner that changes fairly rapidly (at least in evolutionary time) according to historical circumstances. Moreover,

human labor is inherently creative, not merely repeating the same patterns over and over again. We combine our muscles and our minds together to produce our sustenance, and have been doing so ever since hunter-gatherer days. As the youthful Marx of 1844 sees it, creative and freely organized cooperative labor is at the core of who we are as human beings, central to our species being or essence. Two decades later, in *Capital*, he writes, "A spider conducts operations which resemble those of the weaver, and a bee would put many a human architect to shame by the construction of its honeycomb cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is that the architect builds the cell in his mind before he constructs it in wax. At the end of every labor process, a result emerges which had already been conceived by the worker at the beginning, hence already existed ideally." This does not mean only physical labor, for the earliest humans also produced art and probably some forms of religious and scientific knowledge, as seen in the symbolic expressions found in cave paintings and our early migration patterns attuned to the seasons and probably planned out by rudimentary scientific observations connected to some sort of cosmology.

To Marx, alienation is based upon a radical separation between mental and manual labor, with some of us relegated to stoop labor and others to the more intellectual, creative side producing our sustenance. To be sure, this has occurred in some form at least since the pyramids, but in these early class-divided societies most people farmed and did so with their own tools and land. While the long hard work of farming meant they could not attend Socrates's philosophy seminars, they were able to use both their minds and their muscles to plant and harvest crops, and to plan this activity from year to year. They used tools, rudimentary machines like ploughs, and draft animals to do so, all of which they commanded. This changes radically under capitalism, especially by its industrial stage. Capitalism separates mental from manual labor more completely than previous systems. The human worker is increasingly reduced to a bee or ant-like existence, while a very few people involved in more creative labor do so on behalf of a small sliver of society that forms the dominant classes. And even that creative labor is increasingly channeled and homogenized. A major source of that homogenization is the fact that workers no longer control their tools, their means of production. In fact, the machines in the factory come to dominate the worker, who become their "mere appendage," as Marx and Engels write in the *Communist Manifesto*. (Charlie Chaplin's iconic film "Modern Times" offers a humorous but profound interpretation of this form of alienation.) Under this subject-object reversal, human workers experience a very acute type of alienation during the process of work, one of our core life activities. As Marx deepens the concept of alienation in *Capital*, he writes of a fetishized existence wherein human relations are as relations between things. How many who have worked at the lower end of society, whether in production or service, have been told when they asked a question or made a slight criticism: Your job is not to think or question but to work exactly as we

tell you to do, and if you don't like it, there's the door. Moreover, the most modern technologies use machines, to which no question or complaint can be directed, to take over much of this supervision, tracking us every millisecond of the workday.

Part of the power of the term alienation is that it describes not only the low-wage exploitative factory work found in nineteenth century Europe and the twenty-first century Global South, but also the higher-wage blue collar work sometimes found in the economies of North America, Western Europe, and Japan. Even at higher rates of pay, workers are still exploited and also robbed of almost all creativity and meaning at work. In this way they are alienated from their species essence as free and creative beings. Even the creative professions are subject to elements of alienation, albeit not the full version of it found in factory work.

In this sense, alienated labor courses through all aspects of capitalist society as a defining element, from the bottom nearly to the top. Moreover, the level of alienation only increases as the system matures. And as the young Marx wrote, alienation runs even deeper than private property as a defining feature of the capitalist system.

A third core feature of capitalism is the racism, imperialism, and war that accompany it at every stage. Modern capitalism begins about 500 years ago with Columbus's rapacious colonization of the New World, soon followed by large-scale slave plantations worked by kidnapped Africans. Capitalism also begins with throwing the peasants of Western Europe off the land, first in England, in order to form capitalist agribusinesses like giant sheep farms that produce wool for export. This increasingly replaces subsistence farming by smallholder peasants subject to a tax in kind or in labor to their overlords. For its part, slavery on a large scale and as a central feature of the productive apparatus of society is not new. But modern capitalist slavery, as Marx notes, is the cruelest and most inhuman form of slavery ever seen, because it combines the brutality of ancient forms of slavery with modern forms of value creation and the relentless pressure of socially necessary labor time. (On this, see my article, "What Marx Understood About Slavery," *Jacobin*, September 9, 2019 <https://jacobinmag.com/2019/09/slavery-united-states-civil-war-marx> ) Modern slavery also forms the institutional basis for modern racism, an unprecedented and obscene gradation of the entirety of the world's population into "superior" (whiter) and "inferior" (darker) peoples. Marx creates the term primitive accumulation of capital to describe this process of wealth creation via modern slavery and the uprooting of the peasantry. A few centuries later, as modern industrial capitalism comes to the fore, the leading industrialized countries reach out and subjugate the less developed ones, coming to dominate not only Africa and Latin America, but also the still somewhat powerful empires of China, South Asia, and the Middle East. Superexploitation based upon cheap labor and forcible

extraction of raw materials helps capital to accumulate at ever higher levels by around 1900.

However, there was then and is now no single completely unified capitalist system, but rather a number of capitalist nation states and national empires. Competition over colonies and for control of the world economy results in inter-imperialist rivalry, culminating in World War I. Revolutionary uprisings follow the end of the war, especially the anti-capitalist revolution in Russia in 1917. In response, capital in some countries backs fascist and Nazi parties, which promise to forestall the revolutionary threat. They build upon centuries of racism based upon slavery and colonialism, targeting Jews as the "other" inside the industrialized world, whom they blame for unemployment, crime, and chaos, promising to place the Christian, white popular classes back in the saddle, with good jobs on the way. This kind of politics allows extremely reactionary movements to gain a popular base, far wider than that of traditional far-right ones like monarchism, by appealing to and fomenting anti-Semitism and racism as ways of diverting class anger away from capital and the state. Nazism gains its greatest popular strength in Germany after the global economy collapses in 1929. Its genocidal ideology and practices are in this sense a product of capitalism, a morbid response to its deep crisis and degeneracy. Fascism and Nazism also import the brutality and superexploitation of imperialism back into the heart of Western Europe. If Nazism is a product of the economic and social crisis of capitalism generated by war and the Depression, then imperialism and racism are longstanding structural factors that help make it possible.

A fourth core feature of capitalism is its gender subordination and its regulation of sexuality and the human reproduction of the species. Although many preliterate and preclass societies seem to have enjoyed a measure of gender equality, class societies, going back to the ancient world, have enforced male domination. Capitalism does so in a particular way, according to its needs. Whereas precapitalist societies the world over tended to carry out most production in family or clan groups, capitalism radically separates home and work. In an early phase, male workers go out of the home to workshops and factories, eventually not returning until the end of the workday. This aspect of capitalism heightens the gendered division of labor, confining women to household management and small-scale food production. Over time, however, a countervailing pressure exerts itself, as capital draws women out of the home as well in order to work in the factories. This recourse to female labor becomes more pronounced with machine production, as less heavy lifting and more manual dexterity is required. In this phase, capitalism narrows some gender differences, as large portions of the population, both female and male, become workers. However, this transformation is differentiated by class, as it is the women from the popular classes who work outside the home, while the more middle and upper-class women remain for several more decades primarily in non-

waged employment. Over time, this too fades, as middle and upper-class women take on white collar and professional occupations. At all levels, some women break into highly paid positions previously limited to men as a result of protracted struggles in social movements and in the courts. By this century, middle and upper-class women are often employing low-wage women of color to do part of the domestic household labor neither they nor their partners are able or willing to perform. Thus, while male domination continues under capitalism, the successive forms it takes are different from those in precapitalist societies. Sexual relations also become more individualized, with pleasure rather than procreation alone increasingly seen as moral, normal, and healthy. Whole areas of life, like same-sex relations, also undergo huge changes under modern capitalism, losing some of their shadowy existence, with many legal barriers falling in recent years as a result of determined struggles. At the same time, sexuality is colonized increasingly by capital, in myriad ways ranging from the cosmetics industry to corporatized LGBT pride days and women managers and capitalists taking their place at the heights of the system. As these changes in sexuality and gender relations have emerged, reactionary fractions of capital have played upon the concomitant anxieties of parts of the populace, similarly to how fascism and Nazism did so during the last century.

A fifth core feature of capitalism is the strengthening and centralization of the state, until it reaches modern state-capitalism. As with gender oppression, state domination is much older than capitalism. Historically, the state crystallizes around a ruling class with a body of armed men who work fulltime for it and who enforce its will on the underlying population. Thus, the ancient Roman or Chinese states defended the landed aristocracy and the modern capitalist one defends what Marx called the bourgeoisie, the small stratum that owns and controls the means of production -- the chief economic institutions -- of society. The state undergoes several changes under capitalism. With modern means of communication and surveillance, the state becomes more successful than ever at controlling the population, even at the granular, day-to-day level. (Think of Chinese face recognition software that can monitor even small crimes like littering.) The state also develops greater than ever military strength, undergirded by capitalist industrial production and technology. Think of how the vast productive apparatus of the USA ultimately defeated Hitler's Germany by manufacturing unheard of numbers of tanks and planes for its forces and those of its less developed ally Russia. The state also takes over more benign activities, like mass education and social welfare. As capitalism moves through various phases, from early competition among many small enterprises to monopoly capitalism, the state strengthens and centralizes in tandem with the centralization of capital itself. This process culminates in the tendency toward state-capitalism, where giant state bureaucracies come to the fore, whether in totalitarian forms like Nazism or Stalinism, or more democratic ones like Roosevelt's New Deal. (On this point, see CLR James, *Raya*



Dunayevskaya, and Grace Lee Boggs, *State Capitalism and World Revolution* and Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*.) Since the 1950s, the most powerful modern states each possess enough nuclear weapons to destroy most life on the planet, with the decision to use them in the hands of individual state leaders. It is hard to think of a more complete destruction of democracy or of a more total concentration of power in the hands of the state. All of this is made possible by the same advances in technology that power the modern capitalist industrial system, in what is often termed the military-industrial complex.

A sixth core feature of capitalism is environmental destruction. To be sure, precapitalist pastoral and agricultural societies certainly cleared forests, degrading the environment in this and other ways. But modern capitalism operates at an entirely different level. It destroys the environment relentlessly and with the same efficiency with which it exploits labor. Its appetite for surplus value is literally limitless, what Marx calls accumulation for accumulation's sake. This makes capitalism a unique destroyer of the environment.

### What Is Socialism?

If socialism is the positive and emancipatory antithesis of capitalism, then what is involved in actually going beyond capitalism in a positive way? A genuine, humanist socialism would need to bring to a halt or abolish not only economic exploitation and alienated labor, but also racism and imperialism, sexism and gender subordination, the modern state, and environmental destruction. Here we are faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, it is hard to see how racism, sexism, environmental destruction, and the abuses of the modern state could be abolished fully without abolishing capitalism, their economic foundation. On the other hand, it is hard to see how abolishing capitalist exploitation and alienation would automatically abolish racism, sexism, environmental destruction, and the modern state. Let us examine these issues briefly.

Socialism as practiced over the last century and more has been almost always state-centric. This was obviously the case with those forms of socialism that emerged from Leninism, whether in Russia, China, or elsewhere. Even though Lenin had written of the need to abolish the state in favor of workers councils or soviets that governed through direct democracy from below, this idea was quickly scrapped during the civil war that followed the Russian revolution, never to return. However, the pre-Stalinist Soviet Union advanced the cause of anti-imperialism by backing movements in India, China, the Middle East, and elsewhere against European, US, and Japanese colonialism, while also taking measures to support oppressed racial and ethnic minorities both at home and abroad. The early USSR also strongly supported women's rights. It was the first major political entity to legalize

abortion and enacted many other measures to emancipate women. Its anti-racist and women's liberation agenda was largely scrapped under Stalin, under whom Russia evolved into state-capitalist totalitarianism. Maoist China was fully Stalinist from day one and therefore completely state capitalist, although it did free China from over a century of imperialist domination, also taking many measures to emancipate women from a patriarchal system whose ideological roots stretched back over two millennia. These forms of socialism are clearly anti-democratic. Moreover, they mercilessly exploited their workers and peasants in a drive toward rapid industrialization. After a ruthless destruction of this sort, comparable or even greater in its ferocity than what Marx described as the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe and the Americas, these states sometimes achieve successes in an empirical sense. This was seen in Russia's defeat of Hitler and development of modern nuclear weapons that put it on a par with the USA, or the way the Maoist system threw off foreign domination and helped lay the foundations for the economic behemoth that is twenty-first century China.

Partly in response to such oppressive forms of socialism, in the last few decades many have adopted the term "democratic socialist." These latter forms of socialism eschew revolutionary dictatorship and promise grassroots democracy. In contrast to Stalinism, they favor multiparty elections, mobilization from the grassroots, and free internal debate within their organizations. In addition, in contrast to the politics of feminism, anti-racism, and environmentalism that dominated leftist discourse and practice since the 1990s, these movements put class and the critique of capitalism back at the center. But they sometimes do so in ways that run the danger of class reductionism, dismissing as merely liberal those movements against gender subordination, racial oppression, or environmental destruction that fail to explicitly target capitalism. Moreover, democratic socialism invariably calls for strengthening the state, at least those parts of the state that support education, social welfare, and the like. In the USA, it sometimes amounts to nothing more radical than a return to Roosevelt's New Deal or a support of the social policies of contemporary Canada or Sweden. To be sure, this means opposition to neoliberalism, but not to capitalism itself.

And in a fundamental though often missed affinity with Stalinism, democratic socialism centers on getting the state to control capital in a way that is supposed to benefit the working people. Thus, both Stalinism and democratic socialism are forms of statist socialism that are inadequate to the challenges facing us today. Nor do they share the depth of Marx's total critique of capitalism. Finally, these statist forms tend to glorify modern technology and to view scientific progress in uncritically positive terms.

The Marxist-Humanist notion of socialism cuts much deeper, challenging the hyper-modernism of statist socialism. What would socialism mean in this context? Above all, it would mean the re-creation of meaningful, creative

work by narrowing the gap between mental and manual labor. Everyone would do some physical and some mental labor, and all would have the chance to develop their capacities in ways foreign to capitalism and other class societies, where the most complex and interesting forms of learning are relegated to just a few drawn mainly from the elites. As the young Marx and Engels wrote, in a communist society, one would hunt and gather in the morning, farm or herd animals in the afternoon, and engage in intellectual discourse in the evening.

This comprises more than combating economic inequality while maintaining capitalism. As the young Marx wrote in his little-known essay on suicide, "it is the conceit of the benevolent bourgeoisie that the only issues are providing some bread and some education to the proletariat, as if only workers suffer from present social conditions, but that, in general, this is the best of all possible worlds." While few today believe in the type of capitalist progressivism Marx is attacking here, his core argument still holds: Are we just trying to slice up the economic pie differently, which would be no small thing, or are we trying to radically change the very nature of work and life?

However, it is important to note that such a radical change, such an overcoming of alienated labor, does not mean a total rejection of advanced technology and related aspects of modern society. Who would not want highspeed rail or the Internet? Who would want to return us to working mainly in agricultural labor or hunting and gathering, without advanced medicine, mass literacy, and so many other features of modernity that make our lives more livable even under capitalism, and which could work miracles in a society beyond capitalism?

At the same time, Marxist-Humanist socialism recognizes that capital accumulation as a relentless process has to be brought to an end if it is not to work us to death and to destroy the very basis of all life, our natural environment. Part of this involves critiquing science and technology when they are in the service of capital. Because far right discourse has openly attacked science, especially evolutionary biology and climate science, socialists today sometimes forget or downplay the deleterious effects of science and technology under capitalism. In the past century, scientific and technological revolutions have brought us not only some clear benefits, but also nuclear weapons. Even the "peaceful atom" hailed in the 1950s has resulted in nuclear power plants, with their disastrous meltdowns, in addition to the ongoing danger of nuclear waste and proliferation. As discussed above, science and technology in the service of capital have also brought about workplaces that monitor every second of the workday, way beyond even what Fordist assembly lines achieved a century ago. Moreover, robotics, following in the wake of automation, is eliminating jobs at a staggering rate, while also heightening the alienation of labor for those who remain employed. Another factor related to an uncritical stance toward

science and technology is a type scientific atheism, which Marx never supported as a political project, that rejects all forms of religion as hopelessly reactionary. This can be seen the writings of people like Richard Dawkins. Not only can it be mobilized in the service of Islamophobia, as can be seen especially in France today, but such scientific atheism also makes dialogue between socialists and progressive people of faith much more difficult. Operating like a sledgehammer, scientific atheism fails to differentiate between fundamentalist and reactionary forms of spiritual politics -- the Christian right, Islamic fundamentalism, Hindu revivalism, or rightwing Zionism -- and more progressive forms of religion and politics like Latin American liberation theology, Black liberation theology, the progressive Judaism typified by *Tikkun Magazine*, or Gandhian satyagraha.

Scientific atheism's cookie cutter approach parallels the class reductionism found in some currents of socialism. Fostering working class unity across racial lines against capital is terribly important, but this cannot occur without acknowledgment of both the historical depths of racial oppression and of the leading role of people of color in combating not only racism but a variety of other oppressions. This is what led Dunayevskaya to formulate in the 1960s the concept of "Black masses as vanguard," as historically the leading force for progressive social change in the USA. We need to look in similar fashion at oppressions connected to gender and sexuality. How deeply rooted are these, not only in capitalism, but going back millennia? How central have women's struggles been to social movements and revolutions, from France, to Russia, to the Civil Rights Movement in the USA?

In this light, what would a genuine, humanist socialism actually look like? Marx gave us a good general outline in texts like *Critique of the Gotha Program*. There, he elaborated basically three stages on the road to full communism. (The best guide to these matters is Peter Hudis, *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*.) The first of these stages still has one foot in capitalism, and the key example Marx had in mind was probably the Paris Commune of 1871, which instituted a radical democracy for a few months before being crushed by rightwing republican forces. The Commune established direct democracy, with elected representatives subject to immediate recall. It abolished the police and the standing army in favor of a citizen's militia, thus effectively abolishing the state in favor of a communal system. The Commune also validated takeovers of factories by democratic committees of workers where their owners had fled, authorizing the workers to resume production of crucial commodities like bread. The Commune was a transitional form, not full socialism, in the sense that it did not take over the banks, it kept using wage labor, and it did not grant women formal voting rights, even though their voices were indeed powerful in the popular assemblies.

The next stage, which Marx calls the first phase of communism, involves the abolition of value production and of the state, with the means of production collectively and democratically owned and administered. People continue to work, not for wages, but for a nonwage type of remuneration. In this system, which has just transitioned from capitalism, work is remunerated based upon how much time or intensity is involved, but much of the millennia-old division between mental and manual labor has disappeared. Thus, highly intense work like brain surgery, or caring for autistic children, or operating a jackhammer are remunerated more highly than the same number of hours expended upon less intensive labor. But at a general level, there is a tendency toward the equalization of remuneration for all occupations. Still, some serious economic inequality remains, as some are able to work more or harder than others and to therefore reap greater rewards. However, this inequality is nowhere near as marked as it is under capitalism or previous class societies.

The third stage, which Marx calls the second phase of communism, overcomes the last vestiges of inequality and alienation remaining in the previous one. Here, the hierarchical division between mental and manual labor has disappeared. Productivity in the positive sense has increased. By now, the social product can be distributed purely on the basis of need, from each according their abilities, to each according to their needs.

With such measures in effect, the state, economic exploitation, and alienated labor would have disappeared. However, this is a very abstract model that needs to be fleshed out with concrete examples and experience, and also to be brought up to date.

What are some examples of further concretization on a humanist, Marxist basis? Hierarchies of race, gender, and sexuality would need to be addressed explicitly, as they in fact were in some of Marx's other writings, with the exception of sexuality. (On this, see my *Marx at the Margins* and Heather Brown's *Marx on Gender and the Family*.) But the level of consciousness concerning race, gender, and sexuality is much higher today than in Marx's time and those issues would need to be addressed more completely. Thus, overcoming of hierarchies due to race, gender, or sexuality would have to be incorporated more into the various stages of communism.

In addition, the environmental effects of economic production of any sort, at whatever phase of communism, would need to be addressed explicitly. Again, Marx was no uncritical productivist and in fact held many positions compatible with the ecological movement of today. (On this see, Kohei Saito, *Karl Marx's Ecosocialism*.) But this could be addressed with greater specificity today, on the basis of advances in our knowledge about environmental destruction and sustainability. Not only would we need to examine the position of the worker in production and the distribution of the

social product, as well as issues like abolishing the division between mental and manual labor, but also whether production is sustainable or not.

It is often said that socialists neglect race, gender, sexuality, state oppression, and the environment in favor of an exclusive focus on capital, class, exploitation, and alienation in ways that amount to class reductionism. Of course, as discussed above, this has sometimes been the case. At the same time though, the proponents of such critiques of socialism, who sometimes claim to be even more radical than the socialists, need to ask some questions of themselves. Can racism be fully abolished under capitalism? Can subordination on the basis of gender and sexuality? Can state oppression or environmental destruction? Or are all of these so interconnected with capitalism that we need a total view, that of a Marxist-Humanist socialism that, far from class reductionist, incorporates into its critique of capital and class, and of alienation and exploitation, a full-bodied critique of racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, and environmental destruction?