

MOMENTS WITH MARX

Revolution was described by Marx in the mid 19th century as the overthrow of autocracy and capitalism by any means possible; which crucially included the abolition of private property. The revolution should be aimed at conditions relating to Russia; in other words, Communism as envisaged at that time by Marx and Engels was not seen as a possible new world order.

Revolution in contemporary times is applied to dictatorial and autocratic, particularly when history continues to remind us only of the brutality of such regimes. Such conditions strike terror into the hearts and minds of those of us who live in the so-called liberal democracies in the developed west. Democratic and capitalist states by their very nature, cannot and have not been the result of revolution; there is no need. I want to argue that this contention is a fallacy. The situation in Britain is so unjust, unequal, and exploitative, that revolution is exactly what is demanded.

The main outstanding questions that remain to be answered are; what form such a revolution should take, and will it be generated by right wing reactionary extremists, or Democratic Socialists.

For at least the last 40 years, Britain has been in the grip of a revolution; a radical reactionary revolution. Capitalism in tooth and claw is at the heart of this carefully planned and implemented process. As Marx asserted, one of the results of this corrosive policy has been 'to reduce the nexus between people to naked self interest and callous cash transaction. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, that has set up that unconscionable freedom; 'Free Trade'

The cornerstone of capitalism as practiced in the 19th century, as now, is the notion of Free Competition; this is nothing more than a crude euphemism for mass exploitation.

Labour, Wages, Conditions.

Marx- 'Labour must sell itself piecemeal is a commodity; like every other article of commerce. The cost of production of a worker is restricted almost entirely to the means of subsistence required for basic maintenance. In proportion, as the repulsiveness of the work increases;

wages decrease. All we want to do is to remove the miserable character under which the worker must live, merely to increase capital’.

Inequality. Marx- ‘Modern society has established new classes, new conditions of oppression. New forms of struggle to replace the old ones. Meanwhile markets are forever growing, demand always rising. The industrial classes replaced by industrial millionaires; the leaders of whole industrial armies. Society has conjured up such gigantic means of production and exchange, it is like a sorcerer that can no longer control the powers he has called upon. Inequality leads to social and economic degradation of common identity’.

Crises of Capitalism. Marx- ‘By the periodic return, society finds itself reduced to a state of monetary barbarism. The present system paves the way for even more destructive events. We diminish the means by which such calamities can be prevented’. It appears as a famine, a universal war of destruction, that has cut off the means of subsistence; industry and commerce are destroyed. Thus, capitalists become their own gravediggers’.

World Order. Marx- ‘Cheap prices for commodities are the heavy artillery that batter down opposition. It compels nations on pain of extinction, to adopt the capitalist’s mode of production. Thus, creating the world order in its own image’.

Society. Marx- Modern subduation to capital has stripped the proletariat of every trace of national character. Law, morality, religion, politics, are seen as bourgeois prejudices behind which hide more capitalist ambushes. The executive of the modern state is seen as but a committee to manage capitalist interests. Real society is one in which the individual can obtain freedom through association’.

It becomes increasingly obvious that we have learned very little from history. Many of the general principles proffered by Marx and Engels 170 years ago, I would argue are relevant today. Communism as a political creed may have failed, but the analysis by Marx is uncannily appropriate to modern day Britain.

The main purpose of these notes is to seek opinions on the contention that the political, social, economic, and financial situation in Britain is ripe for revolution; a word that should hold no fear for Democratic Socialists.

It was said that Lenin's greatest skill was to inspire hope and optimism. Democratic Socialists should eagerly embrace those ambitions.

Contemporary Comments. – 'Damn Philip Green, and damn the culture that allowed him to flourish'.

'His concept of business it seems was of the firm as his fiefdom, and staff as his chattels; to be hired and fired as he saw fit'.

'Staff are not seen as members of an organisation, but as commodities and disposable'.

British capitalism needs a root and branch makeover'.

Will Hutton- 28. 10. 2018

'Inequality causes real suffering, regardless of how we choose to label that distress. Greater inequality increases social threat and status anxiety, evoking feelings of shame which feed into feelings of withdrawal and subordination'.

'I would ban private education, stop intergenerational unfairness in line with Finland. Initiate a large inheritance tax'.

'We have to extend democracy into the economy. And hugely inflated salaries have to be stopped. We should have employee representatives on company boards, and incentives to grow cooperatives and employee owned companies'.

Pickett and Wilkinson-Authors of The Spirit Level.

A few ideas.

The purpose of Democratic Socialism must be therefore based on directing power to revolution. Inspire hope and optimism.

We must firmly reject the capitalist objective to normalise poverty, injustice, inequality, exploitation, and discrimination. The hostile environment created by the Tories that demonises minorities.

Convince people that they are a vital part of this project, by extending dramatically democracy and accountability.

There must be a determination to the redistribution of wealth and power.

Progressive taxation must become a common good,

Marx wanted to abolish private property. By this he did not mean those workers who had acquired property by their own labours. He was

attacking the dominance of property and land by the elite. Our revolution should have as a priority tackling the land holders, land hoarders, property speculators; public utilities in private ownership.

We should adopt the Marxist doctrine on education. 'We have always accepted intervention by society in education. We seek nothing more than to alter the character of that education, and to remove it from the affluence of the ruling class'. Impelling logic; Remove private education. Dismiss the notion that there is any such thing as 'caring capitalism'. The only objective of capitalism is to increase that capital in as shorter time as possible. They have the power to bring down governments who stand in the way, thereby destroying democracy. The casualties of this corrosive process are any notion of society, workers, the poor, the exploited and the unemployed.

Regards, G. W. Stevenson