

Reflexions: In defense of marxism?

The end of history. . . Game over?

By millions human beings in the ancient east-block today are calling for democracy and human rights, which were withheld from them during decades in the name of socialism. Nobody should be astonished, that these fights for emancipation are not going on in the same name of socialism. Our hope and joy, our solidarity and help is on the side of these people, freeing themselves from their oppression. So what should it be good for, to think about marxism and to defend it, instead of being happy finally to get rid of its real existence. Isn't capitalism the yellow of the egg, the last word in the book of history, the last achievement of wisdom?

The achievements of real existing socialism

"And such a world can not give measures for what is realistic and what is not. When the ruling situation is neither normal nor necessary, it has historical alternatives, which are denied by the existing state." With these words Herbert Marcuse introduced 1960 the german edition of the critics on "Soviet marxism". They seem to be dressmaked for the selfpropagated realism of the real existing socialism.

In an unbelievable speed within one year the after-world-war-order is disappearing in Europa and with it a system, which chose itself as model. Marxism, created as a theory and an analyse of capitalism and as an instrument for the liberation was violated to the basis of a system of administration of human beings. Out of a theory, that is radical, what means attacking the things at their roots - and following Marx the roots of everything are the human beings - was built up a house of lies to legitimate and to secure domination. It subordinates the will of the people to a bureaucracy, which in its own grace without shying any costs follows its own project. Like an architect uses the laws of static, these revolutionaries used marxism: The plan for the socialist society seemed to be drawn - the construction, stone by stone, could start. When the plan would have been fulfilled, communism been built up, than everything seemed to be done, the end of history arrived - and the long boredom could start.

But marxism isn't a model! Marxism does not set systems and systems can't be derived from it. Marx in his analyses researched the fundamental laws of an upcoming mode of production and its contradictions: capitalism. With an astonishing clarity he perceived its logic of development already in a moment, when capitalism was still in his infancy. Climbing up from the abstract, the fundamental laws of movement, he added more and more factors of the concrete situation to reach at the top of real existing capitalism. Unfortunately he did not get up there. His hope to

think a system, which connects the analysis of the mode of production to the concrete society, was also not realized after him and is to be doubted in its possibility very generally. Marx did not call himself marxist. He had no model. But his followers forced him within a model. The real existing working class had to fulfill the tasks Marx defined in the analysis of the capital. Proletariat - by Marx mentioned as fragment in the third volume of Capital very shortly as deduction of its position in the pure capitalist mode of production - was confounded with the real existing working class. Instead of developing a theory of politics, which Marx only touched lightly in some parts of his work, mainstream marxism after Marx short-circuited from the theory of the mode of production to the praxis of political struggles.

In the name of this theoretical proletariat the vanguard as satrap executed all these stunts, which appeared as historical tasks in the program. On this violation of marxism was dressed a model, that we see collapsing now - and I must say, as marxist I am glad about it. Insofar we don't live the breakdown of marxism, but the end of the ismism, the end of models. Doesn't just that give space and hope to marxists, that this theory can be renewed and can turn back to be an instrument of understanding and analyzing in the interest of human beings, fighting against their oppression and exploitation, against the laws behind their back determining them, trying to subordinate economy and politics to the interests of the society?

The defeat of the October revolution

When the Bolsheviks put a final end to tsarism with the October revolution 1917, as the only force they had the strength and the credibility by the majority of the population, to end war, hunger and the lack of ground for the peasants. As revolutionary force they understood, that only a fundamental change of the social relations would prevent them from a return of the old oppressors. But the majority for the revolution was never a majority for socialism, the way the Bolsheviks understood it. The question, if it was right or wrong to do the revolution, is a meaningless question, because revolutions never ask about their justification. Either a breach is necessary and is supported by the population, or every intention of revolution degenerates to putschism. Insofar the Russian revolution was an authentic revolution, according to the will and the activity of the population.

But the project for a socialist society, that the Bolsheviks linked to the revolution, based since the beginning on their conviction, that the Russian revolution will just be the signal to the revolution in Western Europe. Nobody believed in the possibility of an isolated revolution, of socialism in one country. Insofar the perspective of

Socialism was not a figment of the mind, but it corresponded to the real processes in other countries, mainly Germany. But this socialist project as living force died away as real perspective with the defeat of the German revolution and the taking of power by the bureaucracy in Soviet Union. Many of the coercive measures, which the Bolsheviks introduced to defend the revolution until the breakthrough of the revolution in Western Europe, turned now against their own revolution. The political counterrevolution by Stalin killed the socialist project of a free, just society, but as a cadaver this project survived - or better kept on existing - and started to rot more and more. With the export of this rot cadaver after the Second World War in the occupied territories, Stalinism buried there many hopes linked to the notion and the theory of Marxism.

While the uprisings in GDR 1953, in Hungary 1956, in CSSR 1968 and even in Poland 1980/81 were possible in the name of a free, human socialism, the bloody repression of these first steps towards a revolution destroyed this hope more and more.

Stalinism tugged the hopes of the socialist project with him into the grave. When this cadaver now was falling to his dust particles, he left only a destroyed economy, a demoralized, apoliticized society and a collapsing political system.

Real existing oppression

Who wonders, that capitalism appears as the best alternative or at least as the lesser evil? Marxism decayed to a word-ruin. Its real existence was built up on the defeat of the working class in these countries. When the Bolsheviks in the elections to the Constituent November 1917 obtained only 175 of the 707 mandates, wouldn't it have been wiser - with the intention of a socialist transformation of the whole society, which never can be done against the will of the majority - to accept the result and to try to win with political means the majority of the population for their project (even in situation of war), instead of dissolving the Constituent in the beginning of 1918. Afterwards it is easy to be clever: Do not the Sandinistas show that accepting the bitter and hard result of the last elections, even these elections from the conditions they had to hold were everything else but democratically? Or were there ever elections in England during the war? The FSLN is conscious that he has no chance to win the fight against imperialism in the economical or military field. Precisely for revolutionary Marxists after the experience with Stalinism it must be very clear, that this struggle can only be won politically - and that the suppression of the will of the majority can turn fast to a defeat of the own project.

By defending in the name of socialism against the interests of the working class a system that for the legitimation of its domination used the vocabulary of marxism, stalinism robbed not only the freedoms of the working class, but also their hope and the possibility to express it.

When today in the name of socialism national movements are blocked, the actual leadership is digging a new grave for marxism. Without the complete guaranty of the right of selfdetermination no emancipatory project can have any credibility. Revolutionary marxists must defend conditionsless these interests und defend them just in the name of socialism against those who violated this word to a system of oppression. Who could wonder elsewhere when the wishes and hopes of the popular movement as in the baltic republics hope on capitalism. Capitalism will assure the right of political selfdetermination more credible. But if the right of selfdetermination stops by the political independency might at least be put as question. It can be at least suspectet, that capitalism will not care about an economicaly and socialy undependent developement.

Real existing capitalism

Capitalism does not only consists of his chocolate side as it is to be seen in western europe - at least for a larger part of the society. How small the elbowroom for an alternativ beside the conditionsless subordination under the laws of the capitalist world market and its political governers is, is shown in the examples of East-Germany and Nicaragua. When the vast majority of the population of GDR put their hope in an as fast as possible unification process with West-Germany, this is the late vengeance for the SED-politics quatsching about the german unity for decennies and in the same time destroying the conditions in their own part up to the total hopelessness. To see the hopes for a german unity smashing the security of working place under the logic of capitalist profit-making, shows the western friends of an united Germanys true motivation.

In Nicaragua US-imperialism succeded with militarian and economical warfare to drive the population of a country, wich economicaly ist totaly insignificant, so deep in the corner that they saw no other way out than to vote for their own defeat. Ten years war against a poor country, only because its population dared to try their own way.

A study by the UNICEF, the children help organisation of the United Nations, describes the ugly side of capitalism: 40.000 children die every day in the underdevelopped countries by maalnutrition and easy to be cured illness. 8000 of them because they do not receive any vaccination, 7000 because of lack of water

by diarrhea (dysentery), 6000 by inflammation of the lungs - every day. With the actual existing cheap methods their life and their health could be saved with 2.5 Billion Dollar a year - or 7 million dollar a day. That is the same amount of money spende in the Soviet Union for Vodka or spende by the us-american enterprises for cigarettes-publicity.

150 million children under 5 years are underfed in the Third World. That is every third of all children younger than 5 years. One fifth of the humanity suffers lack of food, water, elementary medical support and schooling.

Only in 1988 the states of the third world payed to the rich imperialist countries 178 Billion Dollar as interests and back-paying of the debt. That is three times as much as they received as help for developpment.

Because the underdevelopped countries are withhold from 2.5 Billion Dollar a year during paying 178 Billion Dollar for their debt to the imperialist countries, keeping the ruling class there on power, 10 million children a year have to die: every year one Auschwitz plus Hiroshima!

Where from should we take the hope that this capitalism would show his human face in eastern europe? Is'nt it much more likely to see his bloody grimace in the heart of europe?

What should it be good for, to think about theories?

Every theory is dealing with models. Insofar a theory never corresponds to an individual case. It always is an abstraction trying to sum up by simplifying. Marxism as theory is an open system as analyse and simplification of social relations. If marxism is abel to understand fundamental rules and laws of capitalism, that does not mean, that marxism is abel to explain everything. Large parts of social developments are still lacking and in changing social relations always again lacking fundamental analyses. Up to the possibility of an abstraction lots of concrete knowledge of individual events is necessary. Like Marx studied over years and decennies the flow and movements of the exchange rates to understand its logic, so we have to be part of and to follow the actual changes in eastern and western europa very carefully, trying to understand and analyse them und generalize there, where it is possible to generalize. This approach makes sense, because only the understanding of the laws of movement behind every event authorizes us to think in alternatives and to realize them.

Real existing human beings

The chance of marxism is not intered in a system, but it lives in the existence of real human beings fighting for their interests.

Marxism isn't the answer to all the question nobody asks, but a method for learning to ask and understand your own interests. Socialism has to serve the world, not the world serving socialism! As long as there is a humanity there will be interests. As long as there are human beings unable to follow and realize their interests because they are oppressed, exploited and alienated, there will be struggles against this system cutting these rights. As long as there are human beings, there is no end of history. After decennies of repression in the name of socialism a new process of selforganisation started wich up to now did not have the time to develop to an alternative. If and wich politic beyond unfreedom in a market economy and a bureaucratically centralized missplaned economy will be possible will stay open for quiet a time. It will be decisive if we succeed to give political answers to the pressure of the capitalist economy and if it can be prevented that capitalism without any scrupels can transform the crisis in the east for his own profit calculation. It will be decisive if the ancient bureaucratic laws, acting behind the back of humanity, are only replaced by capitalist laws, acting in the same way, or if a society manages to retake parts of determination in a public decision-making process by forming consciensly their economy and their political system.

In all these countries during the last decades a civil society is arised, asking for its rights. This society asks for democracy as possibility of decision-making to rule its own future. Even if these democratical decisions lead to new dependencies and alienations, in the ability of learning processes, the hope to find new answers to new problems lies the only chance of a socialist project. In what form these societies wil make democracy living is still an open question. But it is for sure that with administrative "answers" in the name of superior aims of humanity the society in reality is robbed of its own learning process. Only as a conscious process of the majority of a population the empire of necessity can be pushed back to enlarge the empire of freedom. Every administrative measure against the majority in the name of freedom creates new compulsions to overthrow the oppression. Can there be an other conclusion of 70 years of stalinism? For revolutionary marxists one thing should be clear: We do not defend systems, but living interests of real existing human beings to - with Marx - "overthrow all relations, in wich man is a humble, an enslaved, an abandoned, ascorned being".