

# Socialism as a Trend

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I have recently read a book titled *The Origins of Socialist Thought in Japan* by John Crump in which he makes a point to use single quotes around the word Socialism when referring to theories that although they believed to be Socialist were not, as they failed to think of a system that challenged the currently existing wage labor society along with the private ownership of capital. However, I would say that compared to what we are experiencing where a person believes themselves to be a Socialist despite not even advocating a hard-line social democracy, what the *Socialists* of Meiji Japan believed might as well have been called Socialism.

While true that especially the left-leaning youth in the U.S. have begun to accept the term *Socialist*, it is very disputable whether that is a good thing. Many Socialists believe that having youth who feel associated to Socialism and who believe themselves to be Socialists is a step forward for the Socialist movement. However, it must be analyzed as to whether they truly are Socialists or simply are following a growing trend. For although they are no longer afraid of the term ‘Socialism’, a term’s meaning can change, and if what they believe is *Socialism* is truly nothing but a newer word for Progressive Liberalism then this trend is not only not Socialist, but also it is an attack on Socialism itself, causing us to lose sight of any kind of economic system that challenges that of Capitalism.

I would be willing to argue that what the American youth are calling *Socialism* is nothing more than a Progressive Liberalism, a form of Capitalism that has a few social policies in order to assure that the workers can continue exploited as they fight among themselves over petty issues of identity. This is self-evident as the leaders of this new *Socialist Movement* seem to give most importance to issues of identity, causing a divide of the working class, which I have explained in my article *The Fall of Reason and the Rise of the Reactionary Left*, yet they never give much importance to the economic issues causing the working class to be enslaved by the Capitalist class. However, it cannot be denied that they do propose a few economic/social measures

that could be considered Social Democratic, such as free higher level education, free healthcare (though it is often not emphasized that this healthcare system should be publicly owned), and a higher minimum wage (although this measure is not Socialist, since Socialism is an economic system that has abolished the wage system, it can be considered Social Democratic and as a temporary policy to aid the working class). However, with the exception of the higher minimum wage, it can be perfectly interpreted as simply a means of being able to consume more. If the amount of money spent on healthcare and higher level education is reduced (as it would since the cost would be distributed among all members of society, making the cost cheaper and paid in the form of taxes) then that leaves more money for the individual to spend on the already outrageous over-consumption that exists (*green* or not). This thought is often made fun of by American *Conservatives* (as they are nothing more than Christian Liberals, people with Conservative morals but Liberal economic policies) as a ‘free stuff’ ideology. To an extent this is understandable, as these people suggest these policies, to which I agree, but they do not propose how it should be done or how it will be paid for except with vague responses such as “We’ll give higher taxes to the top 1%” showing no clear understanding of their own beliefs. For although I agree that the rich should be paying more in taxes (truly, in the U.S. any more than around \$70,000 a year is completely unnecessary in order to live a decent life, which is all that is needed), however, there are many more things to take into account than raising taxes, such as closing tax loopholes, being more strict on offshore accounts, making sure companies pay their fair share of taxes (that is, if they want to sell in the U.S. they need to pay their taxes in the U.S.).

The lack of theoretical development that has been made by these American youths who call themselves *Socialists* proves to me that what they are pursuing is nothing more than their own worries, not caring about the ideology itself, using the label as a means to call out for attention. Therefore it can be deduced that the abuse of the term *Socialism* that we are witnessing in the U.S. is nothing more than a cry out for attention by the American youth which are taking advantage of the attention it draws to their advantage for objectives that are not related to Socialism or even go against Socialist thought all together (as how it is amazing to see these so-called *Socialists* admire the rich and the celebrities who are examples of nothing more than what is wrong with this system).

Of course, I would not say that these youths are intentionally distorting the meaning of Socialism, many most likely truly believe that what they believe in is a form of Socialism, and I am not one to believe in conspiracies that there is a secret society that is controlling these movements in order to destroy any form of resistance. It is simply a systemic defense of the

Capitalist system. No one is pulling strings, no one is trying to manipulate all forms of resistance, the Capitalist system itself does that by turning every form of resistance into a trend, into consumption. It turns Socialism into nothing more than the purchasing of different products. Feudalism also had its defenses, religion being at the root of many of them. That did not mean that in the Feudal societies the Pope was controlling all opposition during the time, it just happened to be that the system was setup in order to avoid change, like all systems are.

Therefore, it can be said that these American youths who believe themselves to be *Socialist* are doing nothing but following a trend in order to better their own circumstances in society rather than those of the entire working class, and that by doing so they are distorting the meaning of the term ‘Socialism’ without necessarily trying to (as ignorance simply causes them to have a misunderstanding of what the term actually means). This is not a problem with a very clear solution, rather, it seems evident to me that the only thing we can do as of now is challenge the ideology of these people who claim to be *Socialists* until they begin to understand their own beliefs a little more. We must also be sure to not be misled into believing that just because the youth have begun to accept the word ‘Socialism’ that they know what it means, nor that they would associate with any movement that is truly Socialist (as I have already pointed out in my article *End of Religion* that there are fundamental aspects of Socialism that are currently being ignored by the new left, such as the abolition of wage labor, a communal mentality rather than an individualized one, a mentality of creation rather than consumption, a thirst for knowledge rather than a new episode in a TV series). Therefore, as a final remark, we must be careful of these people that call themselves *Socialists*, as they will most likely want nothing more than to improve their own situation by using a term that is very controversial in order to attract attention to their wants (not always needs).

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