

FROM SOCIAL CONFLICT TO SOCIAL COOPERATION TOWARDS LIBERAL SOCIALISM

Alvin Sario

Introduction

Contemporary human life is critical. The entire human world is faced with challenges *universal* in nature, such as global ecological issues that situate our crucial bearing in the world, the unending social conflict in every part of the earth that suggests inherent human incapacity to create a society defined by a sense of humanity, principles of justice, and genuine peace, in effect questioning the nature and development of social formation and transformation, and a global political economy that describes and prescribes the dynamics of productive forces and relations of production given the existing neocapitalist paradigm of social progress primarily characterized by alienation and money fetish. Human life and values are challenged by the international market economy and globalisation. Moreover, such human world allows for *incommensurable* comprehensive doctrines and conflicting perspectives to thrive and flourish. Such pluralism is exemplified by different philosophical interpretations of the world, moral beliefs in various moral situations, and religious views that serve as basis of one's world view constituting one's human action. Reality, in this case, is no longer univariate. One's conceptions and principles are being challenged by other critical standpoints. One's *moral* identity as subjectivity is challenged by one's *social* identity. His rationality *poses* and *deposes* social/political/economic/cultural reality. He tries to understand the world that always and still shapes him; the world that demands for praxis. Collective human decision becomes imperative. It calls forth moral obligation and social responsibility. It resorts to human rationalities. It demands reason, for action, for praxis.

Contemporary human life as critical is in the realm of two realities: first, it is in the age of neocapitalism; and second, it is in the age of democratic constitutional regime. In the former, everything is defined by economic forces. Social, political, and cultural landscapes are conditioned by economics. The *globalised* human world depends on (the law of) demand and supply, stock market exchange (rates), and international economic relations (of production, distribution, and consumption). Modern (or postmodern) life offers commercialism, urbanism, and wealth accumulation. Such normative cultural life is characterized by calculative

thinking,⁸⁷ money fetishisms, and economic (in)security or (in)stability. In the latter, nation-states are characterized by the fact of reasonable pluralism and are defined by constitutional consensus;⁸⁸ in effect, embrace democratic liberal constitutional framework (of governance and public management). It subscribes to liberal principles loyal to the social contractarian tradition evidenced by various state constitutions. Such realities specify a kind of (serious) social conflict (in the level of international relations). Neocapitalism magnifies the gap between the rich and the poor, the better off and the worse off. Production is monopolised by the capitalists and technocrats. There is no *equitable* distribution of world's goods and resources. There are peoples who cannot widely participate in the consumption of goods and services. Contemporary human life is social injustice. The liberal and non-liberal peoples are alienated. Thus, there is a need to challenge the status quo. Marxian philosophy provides us a radical view of social change. It is in real sense praxis. Materialist dialectics and historical materialism present a comprehensive and challenging (social, political, economic, cultural) view of egalitarian and just society based on the social conflict theory. The social critique given by Karl Marx is given a resolution by John Rawls through his liberal political constructivist conception of justice as fairness based on social cooperation. Such conception tries to articulate a conception of justice that addresses basic rights and liberties, equal opportunities, and wealth (re)distribution but in the context of a liberal democratic constitutional framework.

The study argues that Marxian social critique should go beyond social conflict to promote social justice and recognize society as a fair system of social cooperation, that is, in the form of liberal socialism, taking from the context of liberal democratic constitutional regime, that would challenge capitalist mode of production but not necessarily (immediately) by means of violent social revolution (but if only to be taken as a last recourse in case liberal socialism fails) and at the same time recognizes and honors basic human rights and civil liberties. In short, liberal socialism is to be taken as an alternative system, a social reform that critiques contemporary social and political realities but in (full) recognition of the legitimate claims of Marxian social critique. It is a convergence of two powerful tendencies: liberalism and socialism.

⁸⁷ Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address," in *Discourse on Thinking* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 50.

⁸⁸ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 158-164.

Marxian Analysis

In the middle of the 19th century, Karl Marx (working with Friedrich Engels) combined a critique of Hegelian philosophy⁸⁹ with a critique of French revolutionary politics⁹⁰ and an analysis of the political economy of Britain⁹¹ to produce a synthesizing theory of social structure and social change. His most significant contribution is in establishing a conflict model of social systems.⁹² Rather than conceiving of society based on consensus,⁹³ Marx's theory posits the domination of a powerful class over a subordinate class. However, this domination is never long uncontested. It is the fundamental antagonism of the classes, which produces class struggle, ultimately changes socio-economic, socio-political, and socio-cultural systems. The engine of social changes, according to Marx, is class struggle.⁹⁴ Social conflict is at the core of the historical process.

Marx's social theory and critique rest on the premise that 'the history of all hitherto existing society is a history of class struggles.'⁹⁵ This claim is based on the social development of history. For him, classes characterized by social antagonisms and divisions always define such development. In every period, there exist two opposite classes: the superior and the inferior, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, the powerful and the powerless, the dominant class and the dominated class.⁹⁶ The relationship is defined by dialectical process until a classless society called communism is

⁸⁹ Dialectical Idealism. Read G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1999. Retrieved from <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/ph.htm> on 14 December 2012.

⁹⁰ Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity as the core values of the French Revolution.

⁹¹ This pertains to the theories and doctrines of Jeremy Bentham's dogma of a fixed wage fund, Edmund Burke's observation of compensation of differences in co-operative labor, Ricardo's analysis of value, and Adam Smith's conception of capital.

⁹² This is known in sociology as social conflict theory. See Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1999.

⁹³ 21st century political philosophy is focused on the development and generation of consensus on matter of basic justice and constitutional essentials as part of social formation and transformation given social and political principles.

⁹⁴ Karl Marx, "Bourgeois and Proletarians," in *Manifesto of the Communist Party of 1848*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org) 1987, 2000, 2010, 14.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ In slavery society, it is a relation between the master and the slave. In feudalism, the relation is between the landlords and the serfs. In capitalism, the two classes are bourgeoisie and proletariat.

reached which can be done through dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism by means of a violent social revolution. Competition, power, and structural inequality define the relationship of the two historical classes. The unity and conflict of the opposites within the process of negation of the negation brings both the qualitative and quantitative social transformations. By their very nature, the two elements are always in opposites and can never arrive into a consensus or dialogue. The ruling class always wants to dominate to protect their interests and to preserve the current state of affairs. The ruled class always wants and demands social justice, which can only be realized by declaring all-out hostilities against the ruling class. This struggle has reached a stage where the exploited and oppressed class can no longer emancipate itself from the class which exploits and oppresses it without freeing the whole of society from exploitation, oppression, and class struggles. No other means are applicable since ruling class has power over the economic substructure⁹⁷ and therefore has the control both of the basic structure⁹⁸ and the superstructures⁹⁹ in society. Both classes are motivated by their own socio-economic and socio-political interests. In this framework, social change is actually defined by their competing interests built in the social structures. Communism becomes the alternative to characterize social justice in socio-political community, which is fundamentally classless (i.e. stateless and governmentless) type of society initiated by the proletariat.¹⁰⁰

Marx's analysis of history and society is seen in the context of domination, power, and economics. Those who are in power dominate over the less powerful, the powerless, because they have control of the economic

⁹⁷ Economic substructure is the grounding or underlying principle of the superstructures given the basic structure.

⁹⁸ The basic structure is the social and political framework of the society, i.e. democratic regimes.

⁹⁹ Superstructures refer to the social, political, and economic institutions present in society.

¹⁰⁰ Communism is described as: "When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class." See "Proletarians and Communists," in *Manifesto of the Communist Party of 1848*, 27.

substructure. For Marx, it is the economic substructure that conditions the superstructures.¹⁰¹ The social classes characterize social conflict given such case. Human history has always been characterized by conflict based on power, control, and supremacy. Those who have power have control of all resources available to them. The seat of power always depends and rests on the kind of social structures that exist. Inequality and suffering spring from imbalanced and disproportionate social structures. Social conflicts arise due to undistributed social structures. Such conflict is entrenched in the capitalist conception of labor process.

In *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*,¹⁰² Marx conceives of labor process as metabolic,¹⁰³ that is, our ideas of the world are not separated from our (material) experiences; they are connected, making ideas wholly natural. Such labor process ‘is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature, and therefore human life itself.’¹⁰⁴ But this internal relation between idea and nature is externalized to produce something (new and different). The dynamics of human nature and human thinking and the transformation of nature and social evolution are created and established through labor(ing). Marx believes that human beings can transform the world given their idea or imagination of purpose. Hence, we must reflect on our purposes in order to become more conscious of how (and when) we can transform our world and empower ourselves to perform such transformation. This world change is seen through Marx’s (idea and) dream of creative labor, but definitely not in the sense and context of capitalist mode of production.

For Marx, the labor process as a universal condition of human existence is characterized by ‘...the personal activity of man, i.e., work itself, the subject of that work, and its instruments.’¹⁰⁵ So labor is always the interaction of these elementary factors making labor as the process; ‘the heart of laboring is the process.’¹⁰⁶ ‘The labour process resolved into its simple elementary factors is human action with a view to the production of use-values, appropriation of natural substances to human requirements...between man and Nature.’¹⁰⁷ But this is not the case how

¹⁰¹ Karl Marx, “Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy.” Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1999.

¹⁰² Karl Marx, “The Labor Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value,” in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: The Modern Library, 1906), 197-220.

¹⁰³ David Harvey, *A Companion to Marx’s Capital*. (New York: Verso 2010), 111.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ The Labor Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value, 116.

¹⁰⁶ Labor construed as a process of making; Ibid., 117.

¹⁰⁷ The Labor Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value, 204-205.

capitalist mode of production makes distinctive use of labor process given labor's universal capacities and powers. Under capitalism, the labor process is defined by surplus-value. Surplus-value is created because of the sale and purchase of labor-power taken as commodity. In effect, the contract between the capital and labor is the buying and selling of labor-power. And there are two conditions attached to this contract: first, 'the worker works under the control of the capitalist to whom his labour belongs;' and second, 'whatever the laborer produces during the period of the contract belongs to the capitalist, and not to the laborer.'¹⁰⁸ And this exemplifies the two basic goals of the capitalist: '...he wants to produce a use-value that has a value in exchange, a commodity; and he desires to produce a commodity whose value shall be greater than the sum of the values of the commodities used in its production, that is, the means of the production and the labour-power.'¹⁰⁹ The activity of the capitalist lies in surplus-value and his sole role is to seek and gain profit. Hence, 'the process of production...as the unity of the labour process and the process of producing surplus-value...is the capitalist process of production, or capitalist production of commodities.'¹¹⁰

This fact generated by the capitalist mode of production contradicts the relationship between man and nature; such capitalist conception of labor process mediates, regulates, and controls the metabolism between man and nature; it contrasts the appropriation of the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs.¹¹¹ In effect, because of the capitalist labor process, the movement or process man acts upon nature (i.e., in such a way that he changes nature) (also) changes his very own nature. Such (capitalist) labor process opposes the (original form of metabolic, i.e., man-nature) labor process. Capitalism dehumanizes man and misappropriates nature in human life. The relationship between man and nature is transformed into the relationship between capital and labor. Human nature as process is taken as part of the fetishism brought about by antagonisms between use-values and exchange-values,¹¹² between relative and equivalent forms of value,¹¹³ between concrete labor and abstract labor,¹¹⁴ and between social relations between things and material relations between persons.¹¹⁵ Through class struggle, creative labor (preserving the relationship between man and

¹⁰⁸ David Harvey, 120.

¹⁰⁹ The Labor Process and the Process of Producing Surplus-Value, 207.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 220.

¹¹¹ David Harvey, 112.

¹¹² Karl Marx, "Commodities," in *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (New York: The Modern Library, 1906), 41-55.

¹¹³ Ibid., 54-79.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 81-96.

nature) is realized and observed in an egalitarian society called communism (defined by common ownership of the means of production) and therefore there is respect for the relationship between man and nature. Such egalitarianism through creative labor frees humanity from alienation.

The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts raises Marx's philosophical analysis of labor (as the source of all forms of wealth), private property (which is the root cause of alienation), money (as the fetishism both of the worker and the non-worker), and communism (where there is abolition of private property and in effect alienation and therefore the state of a fullest development of humanism and humanity). His critical discussion rests on the political economy of capitalism. The central idea of these conceptions is alienation. In "Estranged Labour,"¹¹⁶ Marx showcased four forms of alienation: first, as the estrangement of the worker from the product of his labor;¹¹⁷ second, as the estrangement of the worker from the activity of labor;¹¹⁸ third, as the estrangement of the worker from his species;¹¹⁹ and fourth, as estrangement of man from man.¹²⁰ These four forms compose a system of estrangement in society. To liberate man from his alienation and therefore to liberate society from private property, the workers must first be emancipated, which would lead to a universal (genuine) human emancipation. Such alienated labor, the externalization and the objectification of the worker to nature and to himself, results to private property. Private property is the situation of estrangement, the seat of the activity of human alienation as individual worker and as humanity in general.¹²¹ The abolition of private property then characterizes the necessary consequence of the estrangement.

Capitalism as based on private property does not allow drastic reforms in the mode of production. It only preserves the status quo, that is, the social gap, to maintain the interests of the capitalists (and technocrats), i.e., capital accumulation. Given such context, the masses cannot emancipate themselves from poverty and exploitation. Those who are in power are those with the capital, technology, and resources to generate more capital and resources. The great majority are not given the equal opportunity to control or at the least to take part in the mode of production. Instead, they are made to rely on the system as the labor power in service to the capitalists thereby maintaining the state of affairs and therefore the

¹¹⁶ "Estranged Labour," in Karl Marx's *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, 322-334.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 326-328, 334.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., 331-332.

resources are only for the good of the elite few. They remain poor and exploited. Social reforms cannot be expected from a system manipulated and controlled by the capitalists. Such reforms are not possible because both the basic structure and the superstructures are regulated and restricted by the rich and the powerful. The only way is to alter it radically, that is, violent social revolution is the only key for social change to offset social gap. Revolution would level off the social context. Communism, as the common ownership of the means of production, is the best possible alternative system defined by social justice and equality given human rights, needs, and goods. Hence, it does not create alienation or estrangement in any form, making the way for the (full) realization of creative labor restoring the metabolic relation between man and nature.

Karl Marx affirms conflict as a deep-seated underlying feature of any political community. But he fails to recognize the possibility and feasibility of having and promoting social cooperation and forming social consensus. He defines society as motivated by two forces: competition and structural inequality. He has pessimistic conception of human nature and man's capacity to engage in a more rational and more reasonable situations and strategies to resolve conflict and gain justice and peace. Two points can be raised. First, the fact of social conflict does not negate the possibility and feasibility of social cooperation (even in the form of tolerance and diplomacy). Second, the most reasonable solution as rational human beings is to value common understanding in the light of mutual advantages and strategies for cooperation (given conflict resolution mechanisms), and place good faith on the (mutual) agreements for justice. These two things are anchored on the notion and nature of human agency (i.e., man as rational and at the same time reasonable) and the capacity of human rationality to enter and build a well-ordered society given appropriate conditions. The view that men cannot and can never succeed in having dialogue or consensus because they are defined and conditioned by social conflict which are already attached to their nature as *menschliches naturwesen*¹²² undermines the capacity of human persons to become rational, reasonable, and objective with regard to their capacity to enter into social cooperation and articulate bases for consensus, institutes social arrangements, and arrive at (common and agreed) principles of justice that value cooperation, objectivity, and commitment. Though there are major sources of conflict, they do not negate and violate the capacity of the human person to formulate social rules, construct norms and practices, structure a system of rights, and shape moral obligations. The capacity to set criteria for order which serve as guidelines in following the rules and as policy to avoid

¹²² Marx conceived man as having a mere socio-economic existence. He is simply *homo faber*.

conflict and maintain trust and loyalty, and commitment are approaches to guarantee understanding and cooperation.

Marx offers an alternative conception of the good. But it is seen not as fully appropriate because it assumes as a comprehensive doctrine that tends to be dominant in the social sphere. Any doctrine that dominates the public sphere cannot be the standard and the basis of social relations for such would annihilate others' views and rationalities which are equally valid and legitimate and seen as part of the development and transformation of society given a democratic constitutional framework. Any dominant claim would result and further (existing) social conflict. It is a historical fact that no comprehensive doctrine is suitable as a political conception of justice.¹²³ There is a need to conceptualize justice as a political conception considering the fact of reasonable pluralism (i.e., involving philosophical, religious and moral views). The political liberalism of John Rawls may provide us conceptions and principles that would realize the goal of Karl Marx.

Rawlsian Analysis

The starting point of Rawls' political theory of justice is his view that there is a fact of reasonable pluralism in modern constitutional democracy. Rawls puts emphasis on incompatible yet reasonable comprehensive doctrines as the basic character in a liberal democratic society and recognizes them as the normal result of the exercise of human reason in democratic regime. A liberal democratic society is made up of groups and individuals who differ in many ways in what their conceptions of the good life and just society are. They are attached to very different comprehensive doctrines. "A reasonable doctrine is an exercise of theoretical reason."¹²⁴ Comprehensive doctrines cover the philosophical, religious, and moral aspects of human life in a more or less consistent and coherent framework. They organize and characterize recognized values so that they are compatible with one another and express an intelligible view of the world. "A reasonable comprehensive doctrine is also an exercise of practical reason."¹²⁵ They single out which values are significant and how these values can be balanced when they are in conflict. "It normally belongs to, or draws upon, a tradition of thought and doctrine."¹²⁶ Comprehensive doctrines are relatively stable but tend to evolve as real conditions allow it. All comprehensive doctrines belong to the 'background culture' of civic

¹²³ *Political Liberalism*, xviii, 63, 133-144.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

society. "This is the culture of the social, not of the political."¹²⁷ It is the culture of daily life, which includes church organizations, academic institutions, social clubs, and others. The fact of reasonable pluralism must not prevent citizens from striving to establish greater political justice and liberty that will enable them to enjoy a decent and worthy life. It must not hinder citizens from developing a better and more promising society. Such fact of reasonable pluralism calls for a (re)construction of justice.

The rational and reasonable persons under a fair situation should be able to test and evaluate reasons and evidence in such a way that the best and fairest reasons for a political conception of justice are constructed. This can only be done if public reason¹²⁸ is exercised such that all representatives of rational and reasonable persons have their voice in the deliberations and in the process of reflection. When all reasons are expressed, arguments and judgments are weighed according to the objectives and goals of the political conception. They will be able to create a framework of thought that will become the basis of all suppositions and judicious reasoning based on their normative deliberations. This suggests the idea of the reasonable, which anchors itself on (objective) reason specified by the principles of justice justified by procedural fairness founded on the conception of the person and society.

The idea of the human person is crucial in Rawls' political conception of justice. A political conception of the human person is the basis of justice as fairness as a political conception of justice since person seen as free and equal, reasonable and rational, manifests the capacity to enter into social cooperation for reciprocal advantage and to build a well-ordered society in the midst of conflicting comprehensive doctrines. Overlapping consensus can only be sought if human person's identity and behavior are conducive to it. To present a conception of the human person as political, citizens should be considered as free. Citizens are free in three respects. First, 'citizens are free in that they conceive of themselves and of one another as having the moral power to have a conception of the good.'¹²⁹ Second, 'they regard themselves as self-authenticating sources of valid claims. That is, they regard themselves as being entitled to make claims on their institutions so as to advance their conceptions of the good.'¹³⁰ And third, 'they are viewed as capable of taking responsibility for their ends and this affects how their various claims are assessed.'¹³¹ The political conception of person

¹²⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹²⁸ Public Reason secures the autonomy of just state's citizens in the public sphere. See *Political Liberalism* VI: 1-8; Law of Peoples pp. 129-180.

¹²⁹ *Political Liberalism*, 30.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 32.

¹³¹ Ibid., 33.

also views the individual as reasonable and rational. “The rational is a distant idea from the reasonable and [it] applies to a single, unified agent with the powers of judgment and deliberation in seeking ends and interests particularly its own.”¹³² The human person as rational represents pure practical reason, adopts the most effective means to ends, and selects more probable alternatives. Persons are reasonable in the basic aspect when, among equals say, they are ready to propose principles and standards as fair terms of cooperation, and to abide by them willingly, given the assurance that others will likewise do so.¹³³ Reasonable persons ‘are not moved by the general good as such that derive for its own sake a social world in which they, as free and equal, can cooperate with others on terms all can accept.’¹³⁴ While we know that people are rational, we do not know the ends they will pursue, only that they will pursue them intelligently. Knowing that people are reasonable where others are concerned, we know that they are willing to govern their conduct by a principle from which they and others can reason in common; and reasonable people take into account the consequences of their actions on others’ well being. ‘It is by reasonable that citizens enter as equals the public world of others and stand ready to propose, or to accept fair terms of cooperation with them.’¹³⁵ They are complementary ideas. Each is an element in the idea of social cooperation and each connects with the two moral powers.

The various reasonable comprehensive doctrines cannot be taken as basis of democratic society because they are incompatible and conflicting with each other. Every reasonable doctrine insists on and adheres to a particular conception of the good. The diverse nature of the moral, religious, and philosophical doctrines disqualifies them to become the basis of social cooperation. Different forms of conflict and threats of violence prove the seeming irreconcilability of these doctrines. Imposing a favored ideology to be embraced by a democratic institution is a categorical form of domination and tyranny. There are no comprehensive doctrines appropriate to be a political conception for a constitutional regime. But this does not mean that such reasonable pluralism must be seen as a negative character of the evolution of political societies. Rawls asserts ‘this reasonable plurality of conflicting and incommensurable doctrines is seen as the characteristic work of practical reason over time under enduring free institutions.’¹³⁶ Hence, in conceptualizing a political conception of justice, this fact of

¹³² Ibid., 50.

¹³³ Ibid., 49.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 50.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 53.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 135.

reasonable pluralism must be at first considered. This kind of pluralism must not prevent citizens from striving for political justice and basic liberties for them to enjoy human flourishing. It must not prevent them to construct a political society. Rawls posited the idea of society as a fair system of social cooperation as a fundamental organizing idea for a political conception of justice for a democratic regime, i.e. justice as fairness. Society as a fair system of cooperation is the necessary consequence of democracy. The idea of social cooperation has to be viewed together with the conception of person as free and equal, reasonable and rational, and the idea of a well-ordered society. This idea of society aims at establishing a kind of social cooperation embracing the pluralism of philosophical, religious, and moral doctrines. It intends to develop a fair social cooperation among the supporters and followers of these comprehensive doctrines. When citizens are ready to cooperate as free and equal they become truly reasonable. Reasonable citizens result to reasonable system of cooperation which requires fair rules and norms of cooperation recognizable and applicable by all. They see the rationality of others' views with such clarity that, should the situation be reversed, they would still agree to the decision as formulated even before the reversal. Reasonable means reciprocity. Reasonable citizens want a world of social cooperation given the citizens as free and equal. They pursue their conceptions of the good in terms of the principles of justice. The two moral powers (i.e. the capacity for a sense of justice and the capacity for a sense of the good) of the human person are essential in such society because they specify the fair terms of the said cooperation. With these two moral capacities, reasonable citizens provide others with fair opportunity to realize their conceptions of the good. Such social atmosphere speaks of a society as a fair system of cooperation. Social cooperation as the central organizing idea has at least three distinct features. First, cooperation operates under the guidance of rules and regulations publicly recognized and accepted by all participants involved. Second, it includes fair terms of cooperation specifying an idea of reciprocity. And third, it encompasses the idea of each participant's rational advantage or good. All participants work for the good as specified by the central authority.

Rawls says that the reasonable persons as free and equal in the original position and its accompanying conception of ideal society as a fair system of cooperation would formulate and adopt the first public principles of justice. The first principle is the Liberty Principle. It states that 'each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties which is compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for all'¹³⁷; and in this scheme the equal political liberties, and only those liberties, are to be

¹³⁷ Ibid., 291.

guaranteed their fair value. Its primary concern is the social system that defines and secures basic liberties. This principle stipulates that every person is equally entitled to a system of equal basic liberties and that the liberty conferred by this system is to be as extensive as possible. This means that defined basic liberties are equally distributed among all persons and cannot be sacrificed at the expense of greater social and economic benefits. Basic liberties are to be treated and valued as inalienable. The First Principle guarantees the possibility for citizens to deliberate and relate with one another as free and equal, reasonable and rational persons. This also opens up the possibility that they would arrive at decisions and agreements that concern social organization. This principle defines social cooperation. This secures that whatever agreements that are made are based on fair conditions. The second principle consists of two principles. It states that 'social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions. First, they are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; and second, they are to be to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society.'¹³⁸ The first part is known as the Equal Opportunity Principle and the second part is known as the Difference Principle. They apply to the socio-economic aspect of the social system. The Equal Opportunity Principle tells us that the offices and positions, which may generate economic and social advantages, be open to all. It is concerned with the arrangement of social and economic inequalities. It demands that political institutions take positive steps to ensure that persons with similar skills and motivation enjoy similar opportunities and have opportunity to enjoy a decent life. The Difference Principle requires government intervention within the social and economic order. It requires that inequalities be eliminated except in cases where they are to the benefit of those worst off in society. Difference Principle is the principle that an inequality is unjust except insofar as it is necessary means to improve the position of the worst off members of society. It seems that justice does not require equality; there may be inequalities as long as they can be justified. It should explain that a certain degree of inequality is necessary to achieve a higher level of welfare for the worst-off. Allowing certain degree of inequalities is actually meant to satisfy the principle of fair equality. Since citizens equally share the two moral powers, they deserve equal treatment and opportunity to enjoy a decent life. Justice as fairness stresses those social arrangements must be evaluated on the basis of the worst-off position. These two principles are arranged in a lexical order. The first principle, the Liberty Principle, is prior to the second principle, Principle of Justice Over Efficiency and Welfare. In the Principle of Justice Over Efficiency and Welfare, the Principle of Fair Equality of Opportunity

¹³⁸ Ibid.

is prior to the Difference Principle. The first principle specifies citizens' basic liberties and establishes a just constitutional regime. The second principle provides an institutional background to regulate inequalities in the socio-economic dimensions and to allow citizens to fairly benefit from the social cooperation they have established. The combination of fair equality of opportunity and difference principle becomes the best way to guarantee fairness in the regulation of inequalities. This is so because it allows the better-off to benefit more than the others provided that the worse-off benefit too. The allowance of inequalities satisfies fair equality. These two principles of justice embody the political conception of justice as fairness and serve as the guiding principles for the structure of social institutions. They secure citizens' basic rights and liberties which includes socio-economic interests. Hence, they substantially influence the basic structure of society (social, political, economic arrangements). These principles are stipulated to govern the distribution of primary goods.

To guarantee fair opportunity to all citizens, justice as fairness requires that the right be treated as prior to the good. Maximizing socio-economic gains at the expense of basic rights and liberties must be rejected absolutely. This priority must be recognized because this is the only acceptable way of dealing with both the fact of reasonable pluralism and the need for stability for the right reasons. There must be no comprehensive view that would be the common framework for social cooperation. Otherwise, this would threaten social unity in a pluralistic political society and push back citizens to enter into cooperation. Choosing a definite conception of right is a precondition enabling citizens to choose between different conceptions of the good life provided by the comprehensive doctrines. The right sets constraint in the acceptable conceptions of the good life.

The principles of justice (Liberty Principle and Principle of Equality over Efficiency and Welfare) exemplify the Marxian social critique of labor, private property, and capital. The social gap can be narrowed down through equal basic human rights and civil liberties among all citizens regardless of social backgrounds, empowering them to harness and develop cooperative political values, based on social cooperation, with reflective equilibrium as coherent account of justification, and strengthening public political culture given liberal democratic regime. Liberal socialism as a fair system of cooperation is a viable alternative to institute drastic socio-political reform to effect social change given Marxian political analysis; it is a plausible alternative socio-political arrangement. Revolution is a last recourse if the alternative system, liberal socialism (or property-owning democracy), fails; beyond this condition, it is not ethical.

A View on Liberal Socialism

Liberal Socialism is a synthesis of Marxian socialism and 19th century liberalism, that is, a socialism that is democratic and liberal. It critiques totalitarian socialism and democratic capitalism. It rests on the principle that basic rights and liberties be upheld and at the same time capitalist mode of production be challenged to become a property-owning democracy.¹³⁹ It is a political economy that makes the control of capital as widely dispersed as possible among the citizens (i.e., worker-control mode of production). Liberal socialism is an *egalitarian* social democracy; it is based on a cooperative framework. It advocates a meaningful and good society that promotes democratic principles such as equal representation, equal voice, and equal rights and liberties. It avoids elitist control of productive assets, centralization of economic power, and private-interests politics. Liberal socialism has to promote and work for wealth *redistribution*, *entitlement* policies, *labor* unions and assemblies, and *fair* trade and industry. To secure the creation or establishment of liberal socialism correcting the mistakes of liberal socialists,¹⁴⁰ basic rights and liberties must be prioritized, cooperative political values encouraged, social cooperation promoted, reflective equilibrium enhanced, and public political culture enriched.

In order to secure liberal socialism, a political conception of justice must have a clear notion of basic liberties. Basic rights and liberties are called as basic because they are the foundation of values citizens must have for them to exercise their moral powers and as they deliberate and relate among themselves to arrive at common and public principles of justice. They are considered as the groundwork of human personality because citizens are able to assert themselves in the society through these principles. They are required for social cooperation. Social cooperation starts from a clear perception of how to conceive human persons as rational agents of political conception and as reasonable citizens trying to adjust themselves with others' rights and liberties. Since these basic rights and liberties are so important in the development of human persons and society in the context of the public political conception of justice, they are taken as special priority. There must be measures assuring all citizens adequate all-purpose means to make effective use of their basic liberties and opportunities. Possible measures could be securing these rights and liberties to the constitutional essentials and matters of basic justice. These basic rights and liberties must be continuously asserted and reiterated constantly in order for

¹³⁹ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 135-179.

¹⁴⁰ John Stuart Mill, Eduard Bernstein, G.D.H. Cole, John Dewey, Carlo Rosselli, Norberto Bobbio, Chantal Mouffe, Guido Calogero, Piero Gobetti, Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, and R.H. Tawney, Ramsay MacDonald, Clement Attlee, and Tony Blair.

reasonable and rational citizens to become fully aware of their rights and liberties and the society as a whole always respects and considers these rights and liberties in the policy formulations and in the adoption of state laws. Once the recognition and appreciation of these rights and liberties are wide, we could say that social structures are structured in such a way that citizens are able to exercise their moral powers and thus able to participate actively in the state affairs. Citizens must be conscious of these rights and liberties and hold them so dearly to attain a well-ordered society based on a fair social cooperation.

In order to acquire social cooperation from reasonable citizens, there must be an encouragement of cooperative political values. These are unconditional cooperativeness, virtue of reasonableness, sense of fairness, spirit of compromise, readiness to meet others halfway, political trust, and toleration. These political values are values that constitute the public conception of justice. They are the political values that all reasonable citizens can reasonably be expected to endorse. Reasonable citizens will voluntarily maintain their support for these values because these are understood to provide the best foundation for a public agreement that can secure the conditions that will enable all reasonable people to pursue freely and realize their visions of the good life. These political values must always be encouraged especially when parties concerned in the deliberation are conflicting with one another with regard to the issues needed to be resolved. The main reason why we enter in the first place into social cooperation is in order to allow ourselves to be part of the social schemes and structures for mutual advantage and human flourishing.

Liberal socialism works within the framework of social unity and social cooperation. Its goal is to provide an alternative and the best conception of justice that would guide the basic structure in the distribution of the primary social goods. The idea of cooperation is significant because it serves as the common rational and reasonable virtue of parties engaged in doing shared policies, mutual agreements, and viable collective scheme of principles and standards. But such value should be incorporated into society's public political culture and therefore part of progressive development of a democratic society in a constitutional framework. In other words, a sustainable population should see the value of cooperation as a principle of facilitating liberal social(ist) democracy. A democratic framework within a culture of cooperation under and supported by public political culture avoids wars and major social conflicts. Ideas of peace and social justice are operational only in the context of cooperation. The idea of well-ordered society is stipulated because of the principle and culture of cooperation among persons seen as citizens. The political notion of the person should be known to them for them to understand the social role and moral obligation attached to their social and political identities. The liberal

socialist society should at the same time perceive citizens with their moral powers and with their social and political identities. Seeing them now as political in the sense that they try to have cooperation in the midst of conflicting and incommensurable comprehensive doctrines, they exert efforts to arrive at common points of understanding and in that sense a certain level of meeting of minds. Conceiving persons as free and equal and reasonable and rational, they should value and find the meaning of cooperation in their state of affairs. Social conflict should immediately be mediated and resolved not through (drastic) violence or (justified) wars but through principle of cooperation. Cooperation is the key word for conflict resolutions in a way that is objective and rational.

Reflective equilibrium is a coherence account of justification. Reflective Equilibrium is the end-point of a deliberative process in which we reflect on and revise our beliefs about moral or non-moral claims. It consists in working back and forth among our considered judgments or intuitions. It comprises particular instances or cases and principles or rules that we believe govern these intuitions or judgments. It contains theoretical considerations that we believe bear on accepting these considered judgments, principles, or rules. But it also includes the possibility and capacity of revising any of these elements if necessary to achieve adequate coherence among them. It allows possible revisions to set liberal socialism.

Liberal socialism is possible and realizable depending on the level of development of certain political culture. Such political culture must be supported, adopted, and fostered by the public majority of citizens in a well-ordered democratic society. The higher the political efficacy, the higher the political culture; the higher the political awareness of citizens, the higher their involvement in governance. This suggests a deeper sense of membership, and hence elaborate meaning of human welfare in terms of rights, needs, and goods, and a justified sense of security against alien forces. Such case posits a broad sense of human rights, liberalism, political will, and social justice. With such kind of political culture, citizens look for justifications of definite political actions, demand common claims, and engage in various free and public inquiries and discussions of ideas making society a (political) community of (political) inquiry given reasonable pluralism. Therefore, there is a high regard for civic competence, a strong presence of civic duty, and high sense of political efficacy (both of internal and external efficacies). In this sense, there is a strong public political culture. But the lower the level of political culture of democratic society, the lower the possibility of realizing liberal socialism. There is a need therefore to develop public political culture of a democratic society to establish and sustain such kind of alternative. Public political culture is said to be enriched when citizens tend to agree on means of making political decisions; they tend to share views on what the major problems are and on

how these major problems are to be solved. To change and sustain (and in that sense to enrich) political culture is through political socialization that which shapes political attitudes. Political socialization can be expressed through explicit communication and moulding of and reflection on significant human experiences. The reasonable and rational, free and equal citizens, and the government structures as agents of constructing political culture through political socialization shape attitudes toward authority, increase sense of political competence, provide skills for political interaction, establish different perceptions, affirm values and roles, and direct aspirations.

Conclusion

Marxian social critique is valid and relevant in contemporary human life. It speaks the truth of current social and political realities. There is a need to challenge the status quo. Given political conception of the human person and the plausibility of liberal socialism as a fair system of social cooperation in a liberal democratic constitutional regime, human society can still address contemporary social injustice under fair social conditions instituting wealth redistribution, entitlement policies, labor unions and assemblies, and fair trade and industry; not necessarily through violent social revolution to pave the way for communism. Revolution can be taken as a final recourse in case liberal socialism fails to initiate social change to remove social gap and still realize an egalitarian society. To secure the creation or establishment of liberal socialism, basic rights and liberties must be prioritised, cooperative political values has to be encouraged, social cooperation should be promoted, reflective equilibrium need to be enhanced, and public political culture ought to be enriched.

Works Cited

- Beckwith, Burnham. "Liberal Socialism Applied." (1978): 99-104.
- Dagger, Richard. "Property-Owning Democracy, Civic Education, and the Reasonable Surfer." *Good Society* 21, 1 (2012): 36-46.
- Finlayson, Lorna. "Death Camps and Designer Dresses: The Liberal Agenda and the Appeal to Real Existing Socialism." *Theoria: A Journal of Social & Political Theory* (March 2011): 1-26.
- Harvey, David. *A Companion to Marx's Capital*. London and New York: Verso, 2010.
- Heidegger, Martin. "Memorial Address," in *Discourse on Thinking*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966.
- Hodges, Donald Clark. "Liberal Socialism: On the Horns of a Dilemma." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 22, 4 (October 1963): 449-462.
- Lever, Annabelle. "Privacy, Private Property, and Collective Property." *Good Society Journal* 21, 1 (2012): 47-60.
- Marx, Karl. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1999.
- Marx, Karl. *A Critique of the German Ideology*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 2000.
- Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: Random House, 1906.
- Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 2000.
- Marx, Karl & Engels, Frederick. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1987, 2000, 2010.
- Nielsen, Kai. "Toward a Liberal Socialist Cosmopolitan Nationalism." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 11, 4 (2003): 437-463.
- Pejovich, Svetozar. "The Emergence of Liberal Socialism in Continental

Europe.” *Economic Affairs* (2009): 94-97.

Rawls, John. *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Rawls, John. *Collected Papers*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Rawls, John. *The Law of Peoples with the Idea of Public Reason Revisited*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Rawls, John. *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Rooksby, Ed. “Relationship Between Liberalism and Socialism.” *Science & Society* 76, 4 (October 2012): 495-520.

Sadoun, Marc. “Is Socialism Liberal?” *Dissent* (Spring 2007): 77-81.

Thomas, Alan. “Rawls, Adam Smith, and an Argument from Complexity to Property-Owning Democracy” 21, 1 (2012): 4-20.

Williamson, Thad. “An Egalitarian Interpretation of John Rawls’ Idea of a Property-Owning Democracy.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 4, 3 (2009): 434-453.

Williamson, Thad. “An Emancipatory Interpretation of Property-Owning Democracy: Rawls, Wright, Sen, and Politics” 21, 1 (2012): 74-89.

Williamson, Thad & O’Neill, Martin. “Property-Owning Democracy and the Demands of Justice.” *Living Reviews in Democracy* (2009): 1-10.