

Socialism from the early premises of thought to the experiments of ages: A study of the intellectual roots and historical transformations of the socialist system

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Abstract---This study aims to trace the historical trajectory of socialism from its earliest emergence as a philosophical idea rooted in class struggle to its practical experiments in the modern era. The rise of socialism in Europe was closely linked to the intellectual and practical responses to the Napoleonic Wars, the Industrial Revolution, and the revival of democratic values during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was further deepened by the contributions of Karl Marx, who transformed socialism from a critical theory into a societal project with political and economic dimensions. The research also examines the intersection between socialism and nationalist movements, highlighting the attempts of early pioneers such as François-Noël Babeuf and Philippe Buonarroti to revive the Constitution of 1793, which promised greater social equality. This trajectory was later embodied in major experiments in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea, where socialism faced challenges such as centralized planning, resource management, and the reduction of class disparities. Through this comparative historical reading, the study seeks to demonstrate how socialism has constituted a distinctive model in its pursuit of social justice and how its legacy continues to shape contemporary political and economic systems.

Keywords---Socialist Thought, Class Struggle, Karl Marx and Marxism, Political Economy.

How to Cite:

Abid, S., Rabehi, M., & Moussaoui, Y. (2025). Socialism from the early premises of thought to the experiments of ages: A study of the intellectual roots and historical transformations of the socialist system. *The International Tax Journal*, 52(5), 2344–2356. Retrieved from <https://internationaltaxjournal.online/index.php/itj/article/view/246>

The International tax journal ISSN: 0097-7314 E-ISSN: 3066-2370 © 2025

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Submitted: 12 March 2024 | Revised: 10 January 2025 | Accepted: 30 July 2025

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Introduction

The role of the state in organizing society has long been a subject of continuous debate since the emergence of human civilizations, particularly concerning economic and social planning and the determination of the scope of authority necessary to achieve the public interest. Socialist thought emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as a result of the interaction between intellectual, social, and economic transformations. Thinkers such as Thomas More and Plato attempted to envision societies based on collective ownership and social justice, although these conceptualizations largely remained within the realm of intellectual idealism.

As history progressed, and with the advent of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century—accompanied by the widening gap between capital and labor—socialism turned toward offering practical solutions to the increasing social inequalities, emphasizing the role of the state in organizing resources and redistributing wealth. These principles were realized in practice in the twentieth century, particularly through the unique historical experience of the Soviet Union, which succeeded in achieving an advanced level of social equality and cohesion among various social strata and ethnic components, while maintaining high growth rates and improved living standards.

The socialist experience also highlights the historical dialectic of class struggle in shaping patterns of ownership and relations of production, from primitive communism through slavery, feudalism, and capitalism, culminating in modern socialism, where state ownership or cooperative property serves as a mechanism to ensure justice and equality. From this perspective, the socialist system seeks to transform society from an entity dominated by a minority into a collective society in which all members participate in shaping the economic and social reality according to the principles of justice and equality.

From this framework, the following research problem can be formulated:

- How did the early stages of the socialist system emerge?

From this central question, several subsidiary questions arise:

- How did the ideas of this system develop?
- Which were the most prominent countries to adopt it?
- What are the main differences between the socialist and capitalist systems?

The research plan follows a structured approach, beginning with the introduction, followed by the elements of the study as outlined. The study relies on a list of sources and references, including two key works:

Amer Muhammad Saeed Toukan, *The Islamic Economic System: Between Theory and Practice*, Al-Biruni Publishing and Distribution, Beirut, 2018, p29.

Mundhir Muhammad Radi, *Economic Systems in the Twentieth Century*, Al-Janadriyah Publishing and Distribution, Amman, 2015, pp30-31.

These references provided insights into understanding the topic, its boundaries, and the practical implementation of the system, as well as its economic, social, and political impacts in countries that adopted it.

The study also employs two methodologies: the descriptive and comparative approaches, to uncover the nuances of the research. The main challenges included the broad scope of the topic and the limited time available

Firstly . Historical Reference on the International Environment and the Socialist System:

1. The Nature of the Socialist System and Its Roots:

Class struggle has remained a central subject in political theory throughout history; however, the origins of modern socialism can be traced to the philosophical and practical responses to the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), the Industrial Revolution, and the resurgence of democratic ideas in Europe during the

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In fact, if the emergence of modern nationalism is viewed as a product of the French and Napoleonic revolutions, nationalism was, from its inception, intertwined with socialism. During what the British historian Ernest Belfort Bax (1854–1926) called the final phase of the French Revolution, agitators such as the French politician François-Noël Babeuf (1760–1797) and the Italian Philippe Buonarroti (1761–1837) attempted to restore the Constitution of 1793, which had promised greater social and economic equality. By establishing a secret guide, Babeuf and his allies, numbering in the thousands, organized their movement.⁽¹⁾

Historically, socialism arguably first emerged in Italy in 1803, and it was later developed further by Karl Marx, becoming the foundation for practical implementation in the Soviet Union after World War I, and subsequently in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea. This reflects a unique model that faced economic, political, and social challenges, most notably centralized planning, resource management, and the pursuit of reducing class disparities. Consequently, it became a model aimed at achieving justice and equality within modern political systems.⁽²⁾

Accordingly, the socialist system can be defined as a socio-economic framework based on the collective ownership of the means of production, with the state, through its government, centrally managing this property. Moreover, one of its defining characteristics is that citizens function as workers or employees within the state, receiving in return the fulfillment of their essential needs, such as clothing, food, and housing, while provisions for luxury or discretionary welfare are typically limited or absent. Consequently, this system is directed toward meeting the growing needs of the populace, while minimizing significant disparities in income and wealth among individuals, with inequalities linked primarily to the quantity and quality of labor rather than to ownership or inheritance.⁽³⁾

2. The Early Signs and Emergence of Socialist Thought:

Some scholars argue that the development of socialist thought underwent multiple stages and philosophical interpretations prior to the emergence of Karl Marx. Although the exact originator of the term "socialism" remains uncertain, it first appeared in print in 1803 in Italy, and later in 1832 in the journal *Cooperation*. Marx subsequently deepened the concept, emphasizing its significance in addressing social problems,⁽⁴⁾ despite the presence of earlier materialist socialist ideas.⁽⁵⁾

Socialism was not merely a collection of empty slogans; rather, it constituted a revolutionary pedagogy for societies and an organizational system aimed at dismantling obstacles to the implementation of its principles alongside democratic values. Its initial successes were observed in certain countries, such as Syria, through paths of liberation, industrialization, positive neutrality, and the reinforcement of democracy and unity.⁽⁶⁾

In practice, socialism imposed limits on class distinctions by transforming private ownership of production means into collective ownership and establishing a centrally planned economic system. These efforts often faced resistance from capitalist economic realities, as exemplified by Lenin's implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP).⁽⁷⁾

(1) Khalfān, Aḥmad ʿĪsā. *Al-Nazariyya Al-Islāmiyya Fī Al-Iqtisād*. Amman: Al-Janadriyya Publishing And Distribution, 2016, P73.

(2) Dustin Ellis House, *Freedom Without Violence: Resisting The Western Political Legacy*, Translated By Dawood Suleiman Al-Qurna, Obikan Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2018, P 194.

(3) Mundher Muhammad Radi, *Economic Systems In The Twentieth Century*, Al-Janadriyah Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2015, pp30-31.

(4) Ghalib Bin Ali Awaji, *Contemporary Intellectual Doctrines And Their Role In Societies And The Position Of Muslims On Them*, Vol. 1, Golden Modern Library, Jeddah, 2025, P 1029,

(5) *Baath Struggle For Unity, Freedom, And Socialism*, Vol. 4, Al-Talī'ah Publishing, Beirut, 1963, P. 172.

(6) Roger Keeran, Thomas Kenny, *Socialism Betrayed: The Shadow Economy In The Soviet Union*, Trans. Montajib Younis, Alaa Al-Din Publishing And Distribution, Raslan Foundation For Printing And Publishing, Damascus, 2014, pp 13-14.

(7) Muhammad Husayn Heikal, *The Islamic Empire And The Holy Places*, Arab Press Agency, Amman, 2017, P 47

Historically, comprehensive national application of socialist systems emerged only in the modern era, notably with the rise of communism as the principal system in Soviet Russia. Communism represented the most extreme variant among diverse socialist forms, as it completely rejected individual property. Socialist thinkers consistently focused on inequalities in individuals' opportunities, attributing their roots to the flaws of prior economic and social systems that governed human societies throughout history.⁽⁸⁾

Historical records provide no clear evidence of socialist forms prior to Plato's philosophy, leading many researchers to regard him as the spiritual progenitor of socialist thought. Since then, debates on social inequality and ways to overcome it have persisted, with socialists continuously shaping doctrines and proposing systems they deemed instrumental in achieving the desired justice and equality.⁽⁹⁾

The first practical implementation of socialism occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution in the Soviet Union following World War I, and it expanded after World War II to include Eastern European countries, China, and later Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea, albeit with variations in implementation. Over more than seven decades of the twentieth century, socialism posed a fundamental challenge to capitalism, profoundly affecting international political and economic structures and culminating in the Cold War, which divided the world into two antagonistic blocs: the East, favoring central planning, and the West, adhering to market economies. Despite the challenges, the early socialist model facilitated rigorous resource mobilization and allocation, which provided it with temporary momentum.⁽¹⁰⁾

In the modern era, the worker was portrayed as weaker than in previous times, having lost significant technical skills due to the dominance of industrial production methods. The Great War demonstrated this transformation, as factory operations continued smoothly despite the conscription of workers, compensated by unemployed laborers and rural women. Consequently, traditional labor unions declined in influence, shifting from agents of social balance to sources of internal conflict. Thus, workers increasingly aspired to possess capital rather than refine their craft or enhance productivity, making them more receptive to socialist and communist slogans advocating class equity.

Since its inception, socialism aimed to eliminate social inequality by equalizing living conditions across various social strata. It posited that the abolition of private property and state management of industries would achieve this goal. Although these principles reflected an age-old conflict between the rich and the poor, historical evidence reveals that their excessive application weakened major entities; for instance, it contributed to the decline of Greek independence and the transformation of the Roman Republic into a centralized empire. The French Revolution, despite its emphasis on equality and the removal of aristocratic and clerical privileges, failed to meet socialist aspirations, as it upheld the sanctity of private property as a cornerstone of the social order. Any move toward communism was met with repression, including the elimination of prominent proponents.⁽¹¹⁾

Modern socialism, however, transcended theoretical discourse to become, in the eyes of many, a doctrine with a messianic dimension. Its flexible formulations allowed multiple interpretations: some viewed it as a means to improve the conditions of the poor, others as an expression of dissatisfaction with existing systems. Utopian thinkers considered it an alternative social model. This perspective entailed a rigorous critique of various forms of superiority—whether based on wealth, intellect, or talent—transforming socialism into, for its advocates, a quasi-mystical force capable of establishing a just and utopian society.⁽¹²⁾

⁽⁸⁾ Ibid, P47.

⁽⁹⁾ Majid Bin Abdullah Al-Munif, *Principles Of Microeconomic Analysis*, 5th Ed, Obekan Publishing And Distribution, 2021, P.66.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Ismail Mazhar, *Dilemmas Of Modern Civilization*, Hindawi Foundation, United Kingdom, 2017, P.42.

⁽¹¹⁾ Gustave Le Bon, *The Spirit Of Politics*, Trans. Adel Zaiter, Hindawi Foundation, United Kingdom, 2017, P137.

⁽¹²⁾ Ismail Mazhar, *The Era Of Socialism*, Al-Muqattaf And Al-Muqattam Press, Cairo, 1947, pp34-35.

The development of socialist thought stands as one of the defining features of the modern era. Scholars such as Chadoul have described it as among the most complex challenges of contemporary times, whereas the German researcher Miers referred to it as the "key" to understanding the present. This concept has permeated collective consciousness, becoming a beacon of hope for societies grappling with crises. Socialism thus evolved from a mere intellectual construct to a global socio-political project, challenging traditional systems with conviction and facilitating discussions on its practical implications, particularly in the Russian experience.⁽¹³⁾

Early twentieth-century industrialization in Russia presented a historical dilemma, as the country lacked a capitalist base capable of transcending its imperial and feudal legacy. This situation catalyzed opposition led by the middle class and intellectuals, supported by the emerging peasantry and laborers. The Tsarist system, deeply tied to feudal structures and strict centralization, hindered genuine industrial development, while global capitalism resisted independent industrialization to protect its interests. Consequently, social contradictions intensified faster than economic infrastructure development, escalating class conflict and expanding confrontations among peasants, workers, nationalities, and intellectuals, paving the way for a historical alternative embodied by socialism.⁽¹⁴⁾

Historical evidence suggests that socialism was not merely an ideological choice but a response dictated by the imperatives of reality. Democratic objectives, particularly industrialization and modernization, were intertwined with the transition to socialism, which emerged as the only viable means to achieve these goals amidst capitalism's inadequacy. Marxism, as the proposed alternative, enabled the pursuit of these objectives outside the capitalist framework, thus forming a novel historical project. Despite socialism's eventual collapse, its success in fulfilling objectives unattainable by global capitalism, albeit in limited instances, marks a significant milestone in modern development and attests to the vitality of the socialist experience in establishing the foundations of modernization.⁽¹⁵⁾

The countries of the Global South experienced profound marginalization, reinforcing underdevelopment as the antithesis of European progress. By the end of World War I (1914–1917), Europe had advanced rapidly in economic and social development, whereas colonial powers concentrated on dividing the world—particularly Africa and Asia—according to a logic of imperial dominance. This reality imposed severe constraints on the resources of Southern nations, which endured economic depletion under colonial systems and inequitable international labor divisions. Although their external debts were limited, they faced actual indebtedness due to the inflation of foreign direct investments on their lands. Thus, the world became unified under the dominance of the capitalist market and its strategic mechanisms, giving rise to the first globalization, which relied on state intervention and regulation of markets, in contrast to later globalization that sought to dismantle national boundaries and weaken state authority in favor of global market supremacy.⁽¹⁶⁾

Lenin viewed the imperialist era as evidence of the imminent "decay of capitalism," considering it the final stage preceding the proletarian revolution. The crises brought by war in Europe created material and objective revolutionary conditions, prompting calls for mass mobilizations aimed at overthrowing bourgeois dominance, seizing political power, and establishing socialism as the sole means of freeing humanity from wars. Global working-class conviction in this project strengthened at an unprecedented pace. Nevertheless, the failure of the European revolutions and the shift of the revolutionary epicenter from West to East resulted in the Soviet Union emerging as the primary base of the socialist

⁽¹³⁾ Salama Kila, *The Crisis Of Socialism After A Hundred Years Of The October Revolution: A Study In Twentieth-Century Experience*, Dar Ibn Rushd For Printing And Publishing, Beirut, 2017, pp60-61.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Salama Kila, *op,cit*, P80

⁽¹⁵⁾ Haifa Abdul Rahman Yasin, *Mechanisms Of Economic Globalization And Their Future Impacts On The Arab Economy*, Dar Al-Hamed For Publishing, Amman, 2010, pp137-138.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Ali Abboud Al-Muhamdawi, *Western Marxism And Beyond: Foundation, Turning, And Restoration*, Dar Adnan, Baghdad, 2014, P207.

experiment. Stalin's later advocacy of "building socialism in one country" further confronted Marxist-Leninist theory with several constraints, particularly since Russia represented a relatively late stage in capitalist development compared to Western Europe.⁽¹⁷⁾

Throughout the twentieth century, global economic systems experienced significant instability. Early in the century, capitalism dominated as the prevailing system in several countries; however, the success of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 in Tsarist Russia produced a new economic and political model with a socialist character. Meanwhile, most nations, particularly in the Arab world, remained subjected to bourgeois and feudal tendencies under colonial dependency. By the end of World War II, the contours of a global socialist system crystallized with the formation of socialist states in Eastern Europe, China, Cuba, Vietnam, and North Korea. These developments, coupled with the rise of liberation movements, fostered a qualitative shift toward mixed economic models, combining public and private ownership of production means.⁽¹⁸⁾

Socialism was rooted in Marxist thought, established by Karl Marx, and materialized through the Soviet Union—the first state governed by socialism in modern history. Its influence extended beyond domestic affairs, positioning it as a guiding force for the global socialist movement, encompassing most countries adopting this approach across continents. Its impact also reached the Arab world, with Egypt, Syria, Algeria, Iraq, and South Yemen joining the socialist bloc, consolidating the Soviet Union's status as a global power leading the anti-capitalist movement.⁽¹⁹⁾

Nevertheless, the last two decades witnessed profound transformations reducing the differences among economic systems. Following the collapse of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, China emerged as a model by adopting a socialist market economy.⁽²⁰⁾

Secondly. The Principles of the Socialist System and Its Practical Foundations:

1. The Principles of the System and the Structure of Its Demands

Based on this goal, the socialist system relies on centralized and comprehensive planning, where the state sets ambitious objectives and directs available resources to achieve them. This planning is characterized by centralization, comprehensiveness, and obligatoriness, and the state enjoys dominance over the economy through public ownership of the means of production, which enhances coordination among various branches of the national economy and achieves an advanced social division of labor. Consequently, one can observe how central planning complements the social equality goal previously mentioned.⁽²¹⁾

Collective ownership of the means of production forms the foundation of the socialist system, as the state owns these means. Economic planning aims to address economic disparities arising from the capitalist economy, classifying developing countries according to their economic levels to highlight various aspects of backwardness, which often overlap and influence each other. In this way, it becomes clear that planning and collective ownership are interconnected to achieve economic justice.⁽²²⁾

The central bank supervises the implementation of the central plan and ensures the alignment of cash flow with goods flow, although money does not play a role in price determination as in the capitalist

⁽¹⁷⁾ Ali Ibrahim Al-Khidr, *International Business Management*, Ruslan Foundation For Printing, Publishing, And Distribution, Damascus, 2000, pp98-99.

⁽¹⁸⁾ *Ibid*, P30

⁽¹⁹⁾ Ali Ibrahim Al-Khidr, *op,cit*, P99.

⁽²⁰⁾ Majed Bin Abdullah, *Principles Of Microeconomic Analysis*, Obikan Publishing, Riyadh, 2021, P66.

⁽²¹⁾ Adel Amer, *The Role Of The State In Achieving Economic Balance*, Dar Al-Kitab For Publishing And Distribution, Cairo, 2016, P220.

⁽²²⁾ Arthur Lewis, *Op,Cit*, pp14-15.

system, but is primarily used for accounting purposes, The system also relies on separating production from consumption, where workers produce a specific quantity of goods, and the state distributes them according to standards of justice or efficiency, taking into account challenges related to human nature, Thus, the role of the state appears as a central organizer to ensure the application of social justice at all stages of the economic process. ⁽²³⁾

Separating production from consumption represents one of the fundamental principles of pure socialism, allowing workers to produce resources and goods first, and then the state distributes them to beneficiaries according to fair standards such as family size, Despite criticisms related to human nature, this system may provide greater distributional justice compared to capitalism, although the quantity of distributed goods may be smaller, Therefore, this principle links the philosophy of social justice with practical implementation. ⁽²⁴⁾

Economic disparity in socialism is linked to the quantity and quality of labor expended, not individual ownership or inheritance, and depends on comprehensive central planning that ensures resources are directed efficiently and consciously, Central planning also seeks to achieve coordination among various branches of national production, leading to strong and stable relations between these branches, Hence, a connection can be drawn between labor division, state planning, and achieving economic and social stability. ⁽²⁵⁾

To achieve the unity of the public interest, it requires the intervention of political authority and its objective will through enacting flexible and fair laws and regulations that protect property, ensure project stability, reinforce the rules of democratic work, and enable qualified officials to access legislative and executive power, thereby achieving a balance between politics and economy, Thus, the state's role is completed between economic planning and political sovereignty to ensure the realization of socialist system objectives. ⁽²⁶⁾

2. 1. Its Practical Foundations: From Theory to Implementation:

The socialist system is based on several interconnected fundamental principles:

- The supremacy of public ownership of the means of production held by the state, while limiting private ownership to a narrow scope,
- A collective philosophy aimed at the public interest, achieving efficiency in resource utilization, and justice in the distribution of income and wealth among all members of society,
- Addressing economic problems through comprehensive central planning to direct resources across different sectors to meet societal needs,
- The extensive role of the state in making central decisions, while individuals' roles are limited to executing orders issued by central authorities,
- Distribution of resources according to the amount of labor expended, coordinating production and distribution through the state, away from capitalist market mechanisms,
- These principles illustrate the interconnection between theory and practice in socialism, enhancing the harmony between philosophy and economic reality. ⁽²⁷⁾

Based on these principles, the socialist system achieved an integration between theoretical principles and practical reality, demonstrating the importance of public ownership, collective philosophy, and central planning in addressing economic problems, This lays the groundwork for explaining how these

⁽²³⁾ Walid Mustafa Shawish, Monetary Policy Between Islamic Jurisprudence And Positive Economics, International Institute For Islamic Thought, Amman, 2011.

⁽²⁴⁾ Robert Murphy, A Simple Guide To Economics, Translated By Rahab Salah El-Din, Hindawi Publishing And Distribution, Cairo, 2017.

⁽²⁵⁾ Mundher Muhammad Radi, opcit, pp30-31.

⁽²⁶⁾ Hamoud Ali Khair, Introduction To Political Governance Systems, Ruslan Publishing, Damascus, 2018,P89.

⁽²⁷⁾ Majid Khalil Hussein & Abdul Ghafour Ibrahim, Principles Of Economics, Zahran Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2012,P20.

principles are practically applied in production and distribution processes, and for centrally determining price levels, unlike the capitalist system, which relies on the market mechanism to coordinate economic decision-making units, This linkage between central planning and resource distribution demonstrates the theoretical superiority of socialism over capitalism in economic control.⁽²⁸⁾

Consequently, the application of these principles is represented by the state and its institutions undertaking all production and distribution processes according to comprehensive central planning, determining price levels and ensuring the balance of supply and demand in accordance with the state's social and economic objectives, This distinguishes the socialist system from the capitalist system, which is based on the free market mechanism, including setting uniform price levels to achieve justice among citizens and reduce economic disparities, This is entirely different from capitalism, which relies on free market mechanisms and prices to coordinate production and distribution, Therefore, the socialist system enables the state to efficiently direct available resources and ensure that production aligns with the society's actual needs, reflecting the philosophy of social justice that forms the backbone of this system.⁽²⁹⁾

Based on the above, it becomes clear that the success of the socialist system depends on strict adherence to the foundations of practical socialism, which include the supremacy of public ownership, distribution according to the amount of labor, and separating production from consumption to ensure justice and efficiency, In addition, the central role of the state in guiding economic activity, establishing legislative and regulatory frameworks that protect projects and reinforce democratic work, ensures the unity of the public interest and harmony between politics and the economy, enabling qualified officials to make decisions, thereby strengthening the unity of public interest and achieving harmony between politics and economy. ⁽³⁰⁾

Thirdly. Brief Insights into the Doctrines of the Socialist System:

1. Theoretical Socialism:

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several thinkers emerged who paved the way for socialist thought, although some of its theoretical seeds trace back to earlier periods. Plato (429–347 BCE) in his writings alluded to early forms of communism, though he limited them to the elite class without developing a comprehensive theoretical framework or establishing a distinct school of thought. The writings of later thinkers of these centuries largely focused on critiquing contemporary society and depicting idealized communities governed by communal principles. Among these, the English writer Thomas More is prominent, publishing his work *Utopia* in 1516, structured as a dialogue with a Portuguese sailor named Raphael, in which he described a fictional island organized according to strict communal rules. This work is regarded as foundational to what is known as "utopian socialism," which viewed imagination as a tool to propose alternatives to the existing social order. Despite its significance in the intellectual history of socialism, this approach remained limited and fundamentally different from scientific socialism, which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century through the work of Karl Marx and his followers, representing a major shift toward a more coherent and realistic theoretical framework.⁽³¹⁾

2. The Doctrine of Utopian Socialism:

Socialist and communist principles were not exclusive to modern times; their roots extend far into antiquity. The Spartans implemented such ideas within their political and social systems, and medieval institutions, including monasteries and agricultural guilds, reflected similar communal practices. These principles also resonated in philosophical thought, as Plato in *The Republic* described a city founded on collective ownership, and Jesus Christ promoted a community in which members shared all possessions

⁽²⁸⁾ Nizar Assaf, *Economic Concepts And Terminology*, Al-Yazouri Scientific Publishing, Amman, 2020m P27.

⁽²⁹⁾ Ibid, p27.

⁽³⁰⁾ Researcher's Commentary.

⁽³¹⁾ Muhammad Hilmi Murad, *Economic Doctrines And Systems*, Arab Press Agency, Cairo, 2021, pp81-82.

in a spirit of solidarity. During the Renaissance, Thomas More in *Utopia* (1516) criticized private property and proposed a moneyless society based on shared labor. Campanella further elaborated on socialism in *The City of the Sun* (1603), emphasizing communal ownership of property, labor, and women. Later thinkers, such as Morely (1753), challenged individual property rights and advocated equality. The Industrial Revolution, with its social crises and widening gap between labor and capital, inspired reformist writings, notably by economist Sismondi, who called for state intervention to regulate wealth, limit machine exploitation, and control competition. While Sismondi influenced both Roberts and Marx, he preferred moral and social reform over radical abolition of private property.⁽³²⁾

In this context, throughout the nineteenth century in England and France, intellectual movements emerged that initially raised a cry against exploitation and misery. These movements sought to establish a new social order, imagined and constructed by each thinker in his mind. Each thinker thus drew a specific vision of society that he believed to be the most suitable, attempting to translate it into a tangible reality.⁽³³⁾

3. Scientific and Democratic Socialism:

a) Scientific Socialism:

This trajectory is associated with the emergence of Karl Marx, who strongly criticized utopian forms of socialism, regarding them as idealistic visions lacking a scientific foundation. Marx emphasized the necessity of starting from an objective analysis of the structure of society and its economic conditions, in order to reveal the underlying laws of the capitalist system. Understanding these laws, he argued, allows for the explanation of capitalism's internal contradictions and opens the path toward a more just alternative.

b) Democratic Socialism:

Democratic socialism represents a current that diverged from strict adherence to Marxist principles, adopting democracy as the primary means to transform society and achieve its objectives. Its forms varied, ranging from parliamentary models to revolutionary frameworks, yet all shared a common goal: pursuing social reform that balances the values of social justice with the mechanisms of democratic practice.⁽³⁴⁾

4. Utopian Socialism:

Utopian socialism represents a movement closely tied to intellectual idealism, advocating for a human society based on collective ownership, equitable distribution of goods, and compulsory labor for all members. These movements emerged in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, with notable figures including Owen in England and Saint-Simon and Fourier in France. Marx and Engels were the first to label this current as "utopian socialism," distinguishing it from scientific socialism, which is grounded in the materialist conception of history and the theory of class struggle.⁽³⁵⁾

It is the name given to a number of socialist movements that emerged in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, advocating the creation of a happy human society based on collective ownership, equality in the distribution of products, and compulsory labor for all members of society. Leading figures of these movements included Owen in England and Saint-Simon and Fourier in France. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were the first to label these movements with this name, which signifies the idealistic or utopian nature of their vision, distinguishing them from the scientific socialism they advocated, which was based on the materialist conception of history and the idea of class struggle.⁽³⁶⁾

⁽³²⁾ Hassan Khalifa, *History Of Political Theories And Their Development*, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Masriyah, Cairo, 2019, pp343-344.

⁽³³⁾ Emile Fahmy Shenouda Et Al., *Human Rights Education: Philosophy And Reality*, Al-Asriya Library, Beirut, 2009, pp22-23

⁽³⁴⁾ Emile Fahmy Shenouda Et Al, *op,cit*, P.23.

⁽³⁵⁾ Muhammad Ahmad Al-Haj, Bassam Ali Al-Amoush, *Dictionary Of Creed: One Thousand Terms In Doctrines*, Academicians For Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2012, pp118-119.

⁽³⁶⁾ Ali Subaih Al-Tamimi, *The State In Socialist Philosophy: Theory Of The Decline Of The State*, Vol.2, Dar Amjad For Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2016, pp113-114.

Utopian ideals are not confined solely to socialist movements; they trace their roots back to ancient philosophies and religious traditions. Plato, in *The Republic*, articulated a vision of an ideal society based on harmony, which was later echoed by Al-Farabi in *The Virtuous City*. Similar concepts appear in Eastern spiritual traditions, such as "Moksha" in Hinduism and "Nirvana" in Buddhism, representing mental states aimed at liberation from the cycle of life and death. Additionally, the Abrahamic religions contributed utopian notions through concepts of reward and eternal life, establishing utopian thinking as a persistent horizon of hope throughout human history.⁽³⁷⁾

Similarly, Joseph Keeble highlighted the interconnectedness between history and utopian thought, noting that history both produced utopian ideas and was, in turn, shaped by them. This relationship is not merely between objective reality and utopian consciousness, but also involves the projection of utopian awareness onto reality through sermons and discourses directed at a believing public. Similar to ideology, utopianism is linked to deep psychological processes, as studies have revealed connections between dreams and utopian imagination. The latter functions as a means of fulfilling desires and devising mechanisms of escapism, whether through the vision of a better earthly future, as in Marx's dream of a classless society, or through the hope for eternal life beyond death.⁽³⁸⁾

The relationship between history and utopian thought is a complex dialectic, whereby utopias are not only products of history but also actively reshape its trajectories. This dynamic includes the capacity of utopian consciousness to impose its vision on reality, reforming it through discourses and sermons directed at the public. Similar to ideology, utopianism encompasses deep psychological mechanisms that may even verge on dissociation. Research indicates that utopian imagination and dreaming serve as tools to fulfill desires and devise means of escapism, whether through the envisioning of a better earthly future, as in Marx's dream of a classless society, or through the hope for eternal life beyond death.⁽³⁹⁾

Ideology remains closely linked to utopianism or Utopism as a vision of what ought to be. As Karl Mannheim noted, ideology often coexists with the existing social reality, whereas utopianism remains in constant opposition to it. However, these two elements do not emerge independently; the utopias of ascending social classes frequently transform into effective, real-world ideologies. The criterion for differentiation lies in the extent to which utopian visions are realized historically and become concrete ideological systems. Accordingly, Emge regarded utopia as a "visible ideology" capable of realization, aiming to establish a new social order that outlines future structures and demands radical transformation of existing political and social frameworks. The Polish Marxist philosopher Kolakowski further emphasizes that utopia is not merely an idea but an active force, representing the ideal upon which new systems rely in their efforts to reshape society.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Fourthly: The Socialist System between Politics and Economy:

1. The Problematic of the System between its Political and Economic Effectiveness:

The Soviet Union represents a unique historical model that successfully achieved a remarkable level of social equality and integration among the diverse components of society while maintaining a steady economic growth rate and improving living standards. This achievement was largely attributed to Soviet economic policies based on public ownership of the means of production and a centrally planned economy. Within this framework, the state sought to ensure a decent standard of living for citizens through practical measures such as price controls and income redistribution. Essential goods were priced below their actual cost to alleviate the burden on low-income groups at the expense of higher-

⁽³⁷⁾ Faleh Mahdi, *Sunni Submission And Shiite Frustration: Critique Of The Circular Reason*, pp328-329.

⁽³⁸⁾ Faleh Mahdi, *Ibid*, pp328-329.

⁽³⁹⁾ Abdel Qader Marzaq, *Metaphor In Max Weber And Zygmunt Bauman's Sociology*, Arab Center For Research And Policy Studies, Beirut, 2023, pp366-367.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Yumna Tarif Al-Khouli, *Naturals In Theology From Past To Future*, Hindawi Foundation, United Kingdom, 2022, P.22.

income groups. Social welfare funds were established with clearly defined tasks, while exceptional measures were adopted in key economic sectors, directly reflecting on the reduced costs of food and public transport compared to their actual expenses.⁽⁴¹⁾

As an example, Certain practices can be understood within their historical or social context as temporary phenomena subject to change; however, they often solidify into enduring traits in individual behavior. In this context, the self-interest observed by Adam Smith among private sector producers was interpreted as a natural human inclination toward exchange and trade. Additionally, perceiving oneself as an isolated individual frames society as a set of constraints limiting personal choices rather than as a collective space to shape collaboratively. Marxist theory highlights that viewing social relations as natural and necessary restricts individuals' ability to envision alternatives or to socially produce possible worlds. Paradoxically, the unprecedented growth of productive forces under capitalism has historically coincided with the disempowerment of collective producers.⁽⁴²⁾

According to socialist philosophy, the form of ownership is determined by the dialectic of class struggle, as patterns of ownership and production relations evolve through successive historical contradictions. Following primitive communism came slavery, then feudalism, followed by capitalism, ultimately leading to socialism as a preparatory stage for the final communist phase. The Russian experience was exceptional, as feudalism rather than capitalism paved the way for socialism there. Socialism redefined ownership concepts by replacing the individual with the collective and enhancing state intervention over absolute freedom. Consequently, the means of production—land, factories, and machinery—became public property managed by the state as the representative of the people. Public ownership can be divided into two main categories: state ownership, covering key industries and services where the state is the direct owner and operator, exemplified by the Soviet Union controlling approximately 90% of the means of production; and cooperative ownership, represented by large agricultural estates and some service sectors where individuals organize into cooperative associations to collectively engage in production and distribution of returns.⁽⁴³⁾

This type of economy is based on organizing production to serve the interests of all members of society, in line with the political revolutions that abolished monarchical and aristocratic structures favoring a privileged few. Similarly, socialist reforms aim to consolidate economic democracy, whereby the people are represented in government officials and exercise decision-making power over major economic affairs, rather than leaving them in the hands of a wealthy minority controlling resources. However, despite its reformist intentions, this vision faces significant challenges, as it alters the incentives driving both producers and consumers, which may impede economic efficiency. Consequently, attempts to implement the Marxist slogan “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs” may reduce individuals' motivation to work compared to the incentives in a capitalist system.⁽⁴⁴⁾

2. The Features of Economic Integration within the Socialist System:

The socialist system considers social labor as the sole source of wealth and value, whereas the capitalist system defines value by a commodity's ability to be exchanged for other goods, expressed monetarily through market prices determined by the forces of supply and demand. Since land is not the product of human labor, it incurs no production costs, and therefore does not conform to the logic of value in socialism. However, capitalism assigns land a price through private ownership, a notion rejected by

⁽⁴¹⁾ Roger Kieran, Thomas Kenny, *Sellers Of Socialism: The Shadow Economy In The Soviet Union*, Trans., Montajib Younis, Dar Alaa Al-Din For Publishing And Printing, Dar Raslan Publishing House, Damascus, 2014, pp11-12.

⁽⁴²⁾ Tim Dan Melia Corky, And Steve Smith, *International Relations Theories: Specialization And Diversity*, Trans., Dima Al-Khudra, Arab Center For Research And Policy Studies, Beirut, 2016, P395.

⁽⁴³⁾ Taher Qana, *The Distributive Role Of Property In The Islamic Economy*, Dar Al-Khaleej For Publishing And Distribution, Amman, 2017, pp46-47.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Robert Murphy, *Ibid*, P202.

socialist thought through the abolition of private land ownership. Nevertheless, the legitimacy of private ownership in capitalism is grounded in social and historical justifications that extend beyond the purely economic dimension, which explains its persistence as a foundational element of the capitalist system.⁽⁽⁴⁵⁾⁾

Despite the collective solutions provided by the socialist system to economic issues through central planning, this approach remains vulnerable to biases and its inability to fully address all individual needs. The central planner may fail to prioritize accurately, resulting in misallocation of resources or neglect of essential needs. Furthermore, individual productivity tends to be lower compared to the capitalist system, as collective planning emphasizes the public interest over personal gain, which diminishes personal incentives and affects overall economic efficiency.⁽⁽⁴⁶⁾⁾

However, these measures failed to overcome its structural crises, serving only as temporary and superficial solutions aimed at asserting its formal legitimacy and avoiding popular unrest. Workers continued to receive wages below the value of their labor, amid rising prices, widespread poverty, and unemployment. This situation widened the gap between social classes and triggered recurrent conflicts and strikes between owners and producers. Thus, the socialist system failed to address economic, social, and political problems comprehensively, and in fact, contributed to deepening its internal crises related to productivity.⁽⁽⁴⁷⁾⁾ From a broader perspective, societies around the world differ in terms of culture, history, and political and economic systems. However, sociology has observed a growing convergence among societies in which industry serves as the primary driver. Inkeles identified five domains in which this similarity manifests: patterns of production and distribution, forms of political systems and mechanisms of control, social institutions, types of social relationships, and prevailing cultural values. With global transformations since the second half of the twentieth century, the manifestations of this convergence have expanded to include even developing societies, despite the limited contribution of industry.⁽⁽⁴⁸⁾⁾

Conclusion

The study shows that the socialist system is not merely a theory but a historical and practical project that emerged in response to social inequalities generated by capitalism. It relies on collective ownership of the means of production and central planning to achieve justice and equality. The Soviet Union stands out as the most notable practical example, attaining high social cohesion and improved living standards despite challenges related to economic efficiency and individual incentives. The Soviet experience illustrates how the state can organize the economy and direct resources for the benefit of society while upholding social justice, highlighting the ongoing need to balance equality with economic efficiency in practice.

In light of the above, it can be concluded that socialism represents a unique historical experience, combining theory and practice, ideal aspiration and economic reality. It provides an integrated model for understanding the role of the state in promoting the public good, the importance of central planning, and the impact of public and cooperative ownership in redistributing wealth and reducing

⁽⁽⁴⁵⁾⁾ Hashim Alwan Al-Samurai, *Agricultural Business Management*, Dar Al-Yazouri, Amman, 2008, P225.

⁽⁽⁴⁶⁾⁾ Fouad Mohamed Al-Sharif, *Urban Economics*, Dar Al-Yazouri Scientific Publishing And Distribution, Beirut, 2014, P60.

⁽⁽⁴⁷⁾⁾ Latifa Misbah Hamir, *The Evolution Of The Crisis Of Traditional Democracy In The Era Of Globalization: An Analytical Study From The Perspective*, Dar For Printing And Publishing, Cairo, 2006, 1st Ed, P346.

⁽⁽⁴⁸⁾⁾ Mustafa Al-Tir, *The Struggle Between The Tent And The Palace: A Critical Vision Of The Libyan Modernist Project*, Forum Of Knowledge, Beirut, 2014, 1st Ed, pp33-34.

class disparities, while drawing lessons from the Soviet experience to inform the development of just and sustainable social systems.

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