

COMMUNIST PARTY OF BOHEMIA AND MORAVIA

*Socialism for the 21st Century**

INTRODUCTION

The document ‘Hope for the Czech Republic’, passed by the VI Congress of KSÈM, determined *KSÈM’s key programme objective as socialism, a democratic society of free and equal citizens, and a politically and economically pluralist society*: ‘It is based on a maximum level of civil self-government and is prosperous and socially equitable. It works to preserve and improve the environment, secures a dignified lifestyle for its people and promotes security and peace. In its economics, it promotes the benefits and key role of social ownership, which guarantees an effective, society-wide, coherent and directed collective of employees of businesses, co-operatives, municipalities, regions and other civic associations. This is a strategic objective which is based on the many years of tradition of Marxist thought. We want to achieve this in a democratic way. KSÈM continues to reject any practices which allow or justify restrictions in democracy, discrimination or repression for holding opinions, and which create the conditions for a cult of personality.’

At the current time, full of crude distortions of the nature of socialism and KSÈM’s political and economic objectives, we consider it essential to develop this characteristic in more detail. In recent decades, the world has changed fundamentally, and we too need to specify for ourselves what conclusions to make from these changes.

The failure of the first forms of socialism which collapsed here and in other countries under the pressure of capitalist encirclement and through our own errors did not reduce the importance of the basic ideas of socialism for the wider society. Social advancement involving greater social justice, security in lifestyle, growth in the standard of living, a world at peace; these are permanent values which most of our citizens would identify with. It is our job to demonstrate that these values are realistically achievable and are not just a utopian dream, while also showing which paths lead to their fulfilment.

Global capitalism has not changed its nature, even during the phase of the globalisation of economic relations. It continues to spawn military conflicts which could at any moment erupt into a destructive worldwide fire. In taking no account of the environment it is threatening the lives not just of the generations to come, but also of the present generation. It condemns tens of millions of citizens of poor countries to poverty and starvation, and even in economically advanced countries it does not prevent the growth in numbers of the socially excluded, or those left to scrounge or turn to criminality. With every year capitalism continues, the damage the society to come will have to deal with grows. Critics of capitalism, whose numbers continue to grow, have come up with the slogan ‘A different world is possible!’ We would add: Not only is it possible, but it is necessary in the interest of preserving human civilisation.

Communists are convinced that this different world will be socialism: a free society, economically powerful, socially equitable, freeing up the creative abilities of every individual, and last but not least having learnt from its own errors in the past. It is the job of politics to set in motion the social forces which could create such a society. It is the job of science to discover on what basis it must be built so that a real way out from the crisis of contemporary capitalism can be found, and not just one which just patches up its consequences. The contours of the socialist society rising from these principles are outlined in the following text.

1. BASIS

Conceptions of socialism have developed over history according to what objectives seemed most pressing to the exploited masses and their leaders, and what requirements and means they had available to use.

The basis for our ideas of socialism is the intellectual legacy of traditional socialism. Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and later V I Lenin too, gave a contemporary scientific substantiation for their vision for overcoming capitalism with socialism. Their concept of social development remains today a methodological basis for the scientific concept of socialism.

A second basis is evidence from an analysis of contemporary capitalism. Socialism cannot be simply a rejection of capitalism, but rather its overcoming. Socialism inherits developed productive forces from capitalism, its technical and organisational structures, civilisational achievements, cultural and artistic values. It takes from these everything which is valuable to human life.

Contemporary capitalism today looks different to how it did during the industrial revolution, and it is also different compared to the state monopoly capitalism of Lenin's era. Contemporary capitalism promotes a global hegemony of the superbourgeoisie, with multinational corporations spinning their nets across the planet and a technological and information revolution developing fast. Although capitalism has not changed in essence, new phenomena in its development are also changing the conditions for a transition to socialism.

The third springboard for considering the model for a socialism for our era is the more than half-century experience from the historic type of manufacturing relations in the form which arose in the originally undeveloped Russia, and which was later accepted in the vast majority of European socialist-oriented countries, including Czechoslovakia, under the influence of the USSR.

This experience demonstrates on the one hand the partial success of the Soviet model of socialism here in the Czech lands, especially in terms of extensive economic development and in the social field, where it clearly demonstrated its ability to secure social rights and equity. On the other hand, it had serious deficiencies, particularly in terms of stimulating people to work effectively, securing civil rights, in supporting initiative and creativity, and in dealing with environmental problems.

In the end, these deficiencies – along with the gradual decline in economic success and concentrated pressure from abroad – led to socialism in Czechoslovakia and other countries failing to withstand the competition from capitalism, stagnating, being unable to capture new stimuli, particularly in scientific and technological development, and with the support or passive observance of most of its population its existence came to an end. It was significantly weakened by the feedback between the public and the sphere of power, and the weak initiative and engagement of the people. A future socialist society must learn from the mistakes of the past.

The necessity of a new social order is not just because capitalism is afflicted with functional and structural crises. Change is required due to the fundamental limits on which the system comes up against; the intransigent nature of its internal conflicts. We know of major overhauls throughout history. Without fundamental change, developments may even result in regression and barbarism as a result of military conflicts, the collapse of current ecosystems and the social consensus necessary for traditional democracy to work.

The lesson has been learnt that for each additional step in building socialism, the consent of the majority of the population must be achieved in a democratic manner. Eagerness and impatience can lead to a loss of contact with the people, and to the failure and discrediting of otherwise well-meaning plans.

The transition to socialism, a new form of social revolution in which the citizens must force the governing structures to accept democratic rules of play and not try to reach for weapons, will likely consist of two phases. These will be a phase where there will still remain a fairly strong capitalist sector and a phase where socialism will become dominant. In order to develop a new, and this time permanent, form of socialism, it will be important to give the scientific and technological revolution currently underway a humane dimension.

Conditional for successful progress is respecting socialism's global dimension. In the previous era, it was possible for the construction of socialism to be successfully completed within one country, but this doesn't mean that favourable conditions cannot be created within one country for the transition. This also requires a new architecture of global institutions allowing for the globalisation of solidarity, more equal division of wealth in the process of sustainable human development and advocacy of the general application of human rights.

2. MATERIAL BASIS FOR SOCIALISM

The current state of productive forces allows us to get an impression of the future material basis of socialism. The scientific and technological revolution in economically advanced countries has lifted productive forces to another, qualitatively higher, level of development. It has dissolved the traditional technical basis of the industrial phase of capitalism, broken down the former division of labour and changed the requirements for qualification and efficiency of the workforce. The development of the technological and information revolution today forms a material and technical basis whose sheer size and productive force is sufficient to allow for the establishment and operation of socialist economic relations. In order to develop towards socialism, we will need to get to a state where people to an ever greater extent move from operating machines and hard manual labour to highly qualified, strongly intellectualised activities.

The objective of a socialist society is to rearrange these forces of production and focus their development on fields key for the future needs of citizens. To begin with, society will find the means for such restructurising in limiting the losses resultant from the disproportions of elemental market production, in eliminating the costs of war, in using the opportunities to concentrate the accumulated means first on projects formerly financially inaccessible, and later on growing the performance of the economy itself. Only growth in the productivity of work, however, can allow the basic needs of society to be met in comparison to capitalism to a competitively capable extent, with a better composition and ever decreasing number of workers in production.

Already today, less than half of all workers are employed in branches of material production in economically advanced countries. Under socialism, this trend is sure to continue – and likely intensify – with shorter working hours and expanded leisure time. Demand for services and other non-material needs will also increase.

It can reasonably be expected that in a socialist society, most employees will work in a field outside productive manufacturing – in various services, social administration organisations, social care, education, culture and sport, etc. This will also result in a change in society's social structure.

3. ECONOMIC RELATIONS

General economic laws will continue to exist and be applied under socialism. Even under socialism, production must develop in certain mutual, objectively given proportions; even under socialism there will still be overtime and overproduction as well as work; even under socialism the first law of economics will be 'saving time', i.e. increasing the efficiency of production. Even under socialism, one of the factors for increasing efficiency will be competition between economic entities. Above all, however, productive forces, science, technology, information and communication networks will be huge, people will be educated and highly qualified and these will interact effectively. Without these productive forces, a fundamental change in society would be impossible.

It isn't just productive forces which socialism can take over and adapt to the changed conditions. Not even production relations, which are the core of the whole economic system and the whole social order, need to be totally destroyed. There are elements even here which can serve well if we incorporate them

into socialist reality with an active role for social ownership relations and with political power open to the widest sections of society.

In the field of economic relations, there are certain constituents and forms which have – figuratively speaking – an operational and economic nature, which ensure the standard running of the economy. These include, e.g. organisations and methods of managing work, the business and financial system, relations of functional superiority, subordination and working disciplines, systems for rewarding work etc. Plus such phenomena of everyday economic life such as banks, supermarkets, credit cards and consumer loans. Their job is to materially mediate the full running of the economy – production, distribution, exchanges and consumption. Although socialism will end their capitalist form, the substance of these relations will be preserved.

A socialist economy will not be a rejection of everything that the capitalist economy has produced; it will not be its ‘opposite’ at any cost. In order that it can be created, we will need to carefully determine which elements of capitalism’s complex system of economic relations can be built within the services of a socialist economy, and which really do need to be replaced with completely new elements.

A fundamental change in the economic system must be found in the field of ownership. Socialism is based on long-term historical tendencies aiming to socialise work. Under socialism, the task of social ownership is to eliminate the exploitation of man by man, stop the current senseless waste of human labour and limited natural resources, but also to preserve and multiply all stimuli of economic development and make the working person a true co-owner of society. Market relations and economic management will serve the new system even better than under capitalism and will be regulated through democratic planning and getting the workers involved in management. This new socialism will not be a return to the bureaucratic mechanisms of the past. Experience has also demonstrated that different types of production activities and service provision will require varying forms of ownership, amongst which those with the most perspective, and the economic means will be ensured by different forms of social ownership.

The task of ‘replacing private ownership with social ownership’, however, is not about the formal legal expropriation of the power of the ‘old’ owners of the means of production by the new owners, which is sometimes stressed. It’s about creating the kind of economic system in which there are various paths (democratic regulation, involving workers in management and policy and putting social capital into capitalist businesses) to boost social ownership and its perspectives are proven in equal economic competition with other forms. It will also have to be capable of competing with large multinational corporations.

We have learnt from previous mistakes and we certainly do not want any kind of administrative, general nationalisation. It can be assumed that in a socialist economy, economic subjects will be multinational and state businesses, autonomous employee collectives, co-operative, regional and communal businesses, and also private, individual or family companies, as well as foundations and other organisations. All these forms of ownership, including private ownership will be incorporated into socialism’s system of economic relations. A strong non-private sector will create a positive framework for the activities of medium-sized and small businesses. And in contrast – the existence of private owners of productive means will be important in this framework for socialism. Sufficient space will remain for some time for private subjects, in which the danger of worker exploitation will be significantly reduced compared to the prevailing method of production.

A socialist economy will be a planned market economy. The plan, however, will not be promoted by state directives and a list of state plan indicators, but rather using economic tools and will be focused above all on the economic development strategy. Above all, it will have co-ordination and indicative functions, with the indicator ‘growth of growth’ replaced by the indicator ‘growth of quality of life’. Planning, projecting and predicting in various forms will be a part of society, in particular economic management at all levels for various entities.

Socialist market relations will not be an end in themselves, but a means. Market elements of economics will serve as a corrective to government economic strategy, and also as a measure of the economic efficiency of businesses and the work of their employees. They will be linked with enterprise and competition, with market pricing in much of the economy. It should be stressed that a socialist economy as a precursor to a communist economy cannot work without market relations.

In the past, the objective of socialist production was generally described as systematic growth of the standard of living, measured by the volume of individual or family consumption. This benchmark has lost its exclusivity for the socialism of the 21st century, although in undeveloped countries outside Europe it still has its importance.

On the one hand, economic development over time allows the vast majority of the population to have their basic needs satisfied, live a dignified life and turn their attention to other objectives in life than mere growth of material consumption – to creative work, quality of life, the social environment, health and security. On the other hand, continuous sustainable development is going to come up against the current limits in using up the Earth's natural resources.

4. SOCIAL JUSTICE

The primary interest of a significant section of the world's population and the driving force behind revolutionary movements is the desire for social justice, security in lifestyle and mutual respect. Amongst people, disaffection with the world in which some become wealthy simply through inheritance or forced usurping of privileges, or through privileges of landed estate, property, race, nationality, religion etc., while others are condemned to a life in poverty despite working hard all their lives, is continuing to grow.

Karl Marx showed that exploitation in capitalism is a result of capitalist laws of private ownership even with formal civil equity and laws of commodity exchange. The essence of a capital relation still remains that a capitalist appropriates a part of the work of manual and intellectual employees without compensation. A condition for social justice is as such the removal of the dominance of capitalist forms of ownership by developing social ownership forms which should become dominant. This allows us to secure everyone with:

- a. equal opportunities to work according to abilities,
- b. reward for work according to merit,
- c. equal rights to education, healthcare and other conditions for cultivating personality,
- d. social welfare for all those working of such an extent that even ordinary work paid the least provides the opportunity for a dignified standard of life

The principle of social justice does not mean social and wage levelling – key is the principle for rewarding workers according to their work done, naturally while applying accompanying supporting mechanisms of solidary social assistance to those groups and individuals who are put at a disadvantage through no fault of their own and cannot help themselves.

Social justice is in no way simply the provision of passive social comforts by the state to undeserving individuals; it is the systematic support of citizens' social activities; a flexible and motivational social policy with a wide range of forms and providers of social services.

During initial phases of the evolution to socialism, society will have to face up to problems regarding the old division of labour and deformations of a capitalist economy. Above all, this is a problem of the amount and composition of jobs, solvable on the one hand by reducing working hours, and on the other hand by restructuring production and services, involving extensive changes to preparation for work, fundamental and life-long.

The group of 'unemployable' and 'socially excluded' make up a special problem, with their status in part inherited and in their second or further generation. This group is not just made up of people lacking the necessary qualifications and work habits, and often not even showing any attempt at gaining them or

becoming involved in the way of life of the majority population. It is also the group of 'technologically' unemployed, who have been squeezed out of the production process through technological development, and for whom it will be difficult to find job opportunities in the services sector and activities developed in leisure time. A society on the path to socialism will find a humane solution to such problems which demands the active participation of those affected and methods for preventing such situations.

This all means that with general social justice principles, these principles will be applied within state social policy over a number of gradual phases of development to socialism, at various levels in accordance with objective circumstances. Social justice must be understood as a process, a tendency, and not an ideal which is always the same. There should be no unrealistic expectations, nor populist social policies.

5. THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

The changes to the social division of labour which have arisen as the information and technological revolution progresses, and the dominance of social forms of ownership will be substantially reflected in the social make-up of a socialist society and in the political forms of its life. The prior existence of classes with mutually irreconcilable interests will lose its basis. Its members will gradually move into new social and economic relations which will equal society-wide interests. This does not mean that the interests of social groups will not be without conflict.

The inertia of group interests and social consciousness will last, although the influence of the prior system will weaken under socialism. Even under socialism, however, there will still be different social groups who will differ and have their own specific interests, sometimes different from general interests, sometimes in opposition to them, sometimes competing against the interests of other social groups. These groups will differ according to property relations, their status in the social division of labour, and their generational, local, ethnic or other interests.

Even under socialism, there will continue to be some non-antagonist conflicts between these social groups which will need to be dealt with. Their solution must be non-violent, must be achieved through discussion, and must be achieved in accordance with rights and democracy. Hence the need for various forms of association of these groups in order to achieve representation, and formulate and defend their specific interests, including any need for political parties. These conflicts between social groups and individuals should be perceived as objective and natural, and as the basis for the dynamic of society's further development.

This also implies the necessity of a plural political spectrum reflecting the diversity of interests of different elements of society's social structure. A plurality of political parties limited only by constitution will replace the former monopoly of one party. Leading roles will not be forever given for any party. A political entity's vanguard role may be the result of their ability to best express and unify the interests of citizens, use the most advanced theories or latest findings, or send the most able and best prepared candidates to social contests. This cannot be achieved through any kind of formal bureaucratic mechanism.

Every sovereign citizen has the right to jointly decide on what social interests prevail over the partial interests of social groups. Every citizen will be able to apply the right to take part in decision making on basic political issues directly (in the form of direct democracy) or through the methods of representative democracy as developed over the years. The opportunities for direct democracy will be expanded thanks to communication technology.

Various forms of direct democracy (including the participation of children and young people such as through pupil and student self-government and children and youth parliaments as schools of democracy and active citizenship) will reflect the development of a diverse civil society and expand the spheres of freedom. The dissolution of the political sphere into the civic sphere will take place very gradually in

accordance with the growth of conscious discipline. Even under socialism, the main form of political government will in essence be representative democracy, despite its well-known drawbacks.

The democratic order of all bodies of state power and administration will be based on a combination of the principles of self-government as management of participating individuals, and the principles of democratic centralism. The temptations of corruption and abuse of executive power in state institutions and economic organisations will not be lost even with the arrival of socialism; they will have to be fought consistently for many years. A special task will be to carry out civil checks and independent enforcements, beginning with employee works councils in economics, and ending with civil watchdog committees.

Many state functions will be met by non-state, non-profit organisations. The sharp borders between political parties and other types of social organisations will also become blurred. Legislative political power will be consistently separated from executive power, i.e. from specific activities of the state apparatus which turn strategic decisions into reality. The work of state apparatus will have its own rules, which must be kept to in order that society can function properly, and the security of lifestyle and safety of its citizens can be ensured.

6. SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE VALUES OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

In order that people can identify with the principles of a socialist society and act in accordance with it, it is not enough to place them within externally decreed conditions; we need them to take them on as their own. Creating a socialist conscience is a complex process, a gradual change in social thinking is completed by a set of changes which society goes through in building socialism and which require nurture, education, patience and tolerance.

This process will undoubtedly take a number of generations. Economic and social experience are not reflected in consciousness immediately and precisely: inertial intellectual stereotypes which have created real and perceptive prejudice over whole generations, and the influence of traditions and cultures, social models, selective provision of information which we are surrounded by, all interact in their formation. Changes to social consciousness are as such difficult and take time; they demand patience and tolerance.

Within socialism, all fields of social consciousness will undergo qualitative change, from worldview issues to the values of citizens. This development, however, cannot be presented merely as the result of changes in the fields of nurture, education, propaganda, information dissemination, etc. Its basis is above all the gradual transformation of social relations and corresponding forums of practice in all fields of the life of society. And it is peoples' practical experiences of life which will be projected within our morals, culture and art, science, legal, economic and environmental consciousness, which will then help in the formation of society. Ideology as a special dimension of spiritual life will integrate various interests, taking account of social interests which will not be a priori artificially constructed, but will result from the natural unity of the basic interests of every social group.

At its basis, these changes, involving all fields of social consciousness from worldview issues to the values of citizens will give the direction for achieving the key objectives of a socialist, and later communist, society: to the free, all-round development of the individual, and so the whole society. Instead of the simplified concept of collectivism, it's about the free individual development of every individual, stressing the maximum use of his creative abilities, which will ultimately serve the whole of society.

Socialism will be characterised by a wide development of cultures of all kinds and forms, including modern trends and directions, and with respect to creative freedom, and the widest possible active and passive civic participation. The importance of self-governing forms of cultural life will grow. A key aspect will not just be the protection of cultural memorials and cultural inheritance, but also the spread of culture's emancipation function in a complex multicultural world, and towards unconventional minorities, people leading particular ways of life, etc.

The role of scientific knowledge, and the development of science and research will undoubtedly grow. Education will have an exceptionally important role as a source and condition for developing all aspects of life. As well as school and family nurture, of great importance will also be the effect of the mass media and the opportunity for using the internet's information network. The information and values-creating effect of the media, including the internet, will continue to spread in a socialist society. Open access to information, critical sense and plurality of opinions will prevent manipulation. The effect of the media, particular the electronic and interactive media, will be used to develop an information democracy, to nurture and educate citizens, and also, of course, for their relaxation and entertainment.

Religion too, as an important form of a person's spiritual life and an integral part of culture, will not lose its justification under socialism. With the creation of ownership equality of citizens, the convergence of classes and groups and the overcoming of the conflict between intellectual and manual work, its nature will fundamentally change. It will no longer be an ideology sanctifying social inequality and serving to manipulate large social groups. The abuse of faith to achieve political objectives and religious intolerance including the defamation of symbols and convictions will be incompatible with socialism. The cultivating effect of faiths, and their impact on forging a moral consciousness and solidarity between people will be duly appreciated. This co-existence of worldviews, including religion and atheism, will be based on freedom of religion, equality, mutual respect, and dialogue opening opportunities to find a common language and together to grow human values, generosity and morals. On this basis, a church which promotes democratic and self-governing principles will have the opportunity for full integration within the life of a socialist society, and participation in finding our common duty for the future of the world and humans.

7. SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY

A necessary aspect of life under socialism is the protection – or rather saving – of the environment. Environmental threats, global warming, the threat of energy and raw material crises, insufficient drinking water, air pollution, chemicals in food, the decreasing number of options for redressing damages caused – all this is alarming. Not only are a number of forms of life in serious danger, but so is their very existence.

Scientists have warned that human activities may have devastating consequences. The solution is to promote and respect the fundamental unity of humans and society with nature, so the whole natural environment can reproduce itself and become a responsibly managed source of human and social forces.

The democracy of the socialist order suits the needs to strengthen feedback on the status of nature. It offers the benefit of rational organisation and forecasting of human activities taking account of the nature of environmental processes. It deals purposefully with raw materials, land, water and air, and not recklessly as if they are freely available commodities, or in accordance purely with principles of profit.

A necessary step to protect the environment is the remodelling of productive forces. This involves focusing on reducing material and energy use, saving fuel and energy (moving away from fossil fuels, especially crude oil) to the growth in importance of nanotechnology and biotechnology. Production restructuring will strengthen fields which involve the application of science, including fields with a social and environmental dimension. We will strive to secure enough food self-sufficiency for our climate zone through environmentally-friendly agriculture.

Consumption will undergo major shifts and rationalisation so that projects are focused on satisfying basic needs, and not artificial, false needs aroused by advertising aiming above all to maximise profit while destroying the environment and other people, including consumers themselves. This involves adequately satisfying needs, but it is also about the ever more important effect of nascent new needs, including spiritual needs.

Consistent protection and support for a healthy environment, biodiversity and landscape, assumes systematic environmental education, but also appropriate economic motivation corresponding to the opportunities of socialism.

8. SETTING OUT ON THE PATH TO SOCIALISM

Fulfilling the vision of socialism can be considered a creative process which occurs in a democratic way. The outline of the image of a socialist society as communists' strategic objective also includes the means and path to achieve this objective and clarification of how the system change itself will be undertaken, what its nature will be, and who its decision-makers will be.

During the process of globalisation, the need for the international left and communist movements to co-ordinate their activities is growing. This is linked to the ability to integrate the interests of citizens of various types, to mould solidarity with a more transnational dimension. A drift to nationalism would be a great barrier for socialism's perspectives. The issue of socialism for the 21st century must become a subject of discussion within the international communist movement.

The formation of socialism cannot be a single process. It involves the accumulation of various conditions for advance in time and space, the mutually conditional processes of evolution and revolution.

In contemporary capitalism, the situation can become critical at essentially any time. There are many focuses for a potential revolutionary situation: the ongoing threat of war, irreversible negative climate change, energy crises, the inability to keep using natural resources and protecting the environment to an acceptable degree and beneficial to the lives of future generations, escalating economic and social conflicts between the poor and rich parts of the world, continuing social polarisation even within the economically advanced states, the inability of contemporary capitalism to secure the functioning of political democracy and civil freedoms, the confrontation of totalitarian tendencies. The spark can be lit anywhere.

The opportunity to set out on the path to socialism, the process of socialist revolution in some parts of the world, is an important political act which can create a new basis for acting in other countries and can contribute to the conditions for overall success. In current conditions, however, there is no one country which has the ability to build socialism – and today not even maintain a long-term sustainable success of a socialist revolution – not even those the size of Russia, the USA or China. As well as economically highly advanced countries, there are also countries which are only now undergoing industrialisation, and countries whose development has not even led to capitalism yet.

A specific revolutionary situation in highly developed countries will in all likelihood have a different form to one in less developed countries. On the 'peripheries', a poorer social situation is linked with a stronger national, anti-imperialist resistance, which leads to a more radical approach. In more advanced countries, the opportunity to accomplish socialist change is closer. Due to global interconnection, these changes mutually influence each other, together creating the general conditions for a transition to socialism.

Various starting points and the various immediate objectives of revolutionary movements in different countries and their associations call for the need for different revolutionary approaches. Differences and diversity, taking account of peculiarities and unique conditions in applying the same general principles, are in fact an irreplaceable inspiration and guarantee the further development of socialist ideas as a permanent one.

In its considerations of socialism in the 21st century, the communists in the CR base themselves logically on conditions in the most economically advanced countries, because these are the springboard for socialism as a higher social order. In these countries, the material conditions for socialism are most advanced, and democratic principles of government most common. These conditions will be most advantageous where we can repel the onslaught of antisocial capital offensives, and defend or reassert, and in further phases significantly deepen, the essential elements of a social state. This battle for a social state should in no way be underestimated. It's not just about improving capitalism, but about promoting the legitimate interests of citizens, which can then grow and improve in quality. Although even here the overcoming of capitalism will mean a number of fundamental social transformations, we assume that they will play out peacefully.

9. MAIN FEATURES OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Various concepts of the relationship between objectives and means, various initial conditions and specific forms of the development of the socialist revolution, are reflected in the wide spectrum of opinion on the future specific order of a socialist society. This diversity of opinion is completely natural, and in fact welcome. It brings new perspectives on socialist society, new stimuli for its development, and prevents a sclerotic insistence on results achieved and an unwillingness to investigate and deal with new problems which social development must always bring with it.

On the other hand, a dispersion of opinion within the Marxist left has its borders, beyond which socialism loses its scientific position and politics becomes short-sighted pragmatism or fruitless sectarian bickering. Within all the objective and subjective conditional diversity of specific approaches to separate sub-issues on the operation and working of a socialist society, there are some general social principles which unite them and which must be in its foundations..

We believe that the basic, generally applicable principles which make up the system of a socialist society are, after a foreseeable period of its development, at the very least:

1. *A fast, effective and sustainable development of productive forces on the basis of the science and technological revolution.* If socialism does not demonstrate its economic superiority over capitalism, it cannot win the final victory over it; if it does not adopt and conform to the science and technological revolution in its objectives, it will not be able to meet even its general civilising mission.

2. *The crucial status of social ownership of the means of production in their diverse forms* is a key condition. This breaks down private ownership barriers to the socially beneficial development of the productive forces, corrects their deformation and creates the conditions for social justice.

3. *Planned management of a socialist market economy* implemented mainly in the form of strategic planning through economic tools and indicative targets. This allows concentrated economic means to be focused on meeting desired social objectives, removing the current waste of society's production potential.

4. *Social justice.* Providing equal opportunities so everyone can work with various levels of reward based on the results of their work. This is an expression of the elimination of exploitation, an expression of social equity in the economic sphere, and a condition for the individual to identify with society's interests.

5. *Securing social welfare and security for everyone* to such an extent that even the least rewarded ordinary job, the pension after its completion, and social assistance benefits to the disabled, secure everyone a dignified life. The crucial tool here is the social state and legal standards, sources creating an increased efficiency of economic processes.

6. *Guaranteeing equality of civil rights and freedoms for all citizens,* their sovereign decision-making through direct and long-term mainly representative democracy. The removal of all forms of discrimination and social exclusion.

7. *Care for all-round personal cultivation and development, support for creativity, availability of education, social responsibility education, social solidarity and respect for the principles of humanism.*

8. *Conditions for the peaceful resolution of international and intercultural conflicts* in the spirit of mutual tolerance and coexistence, eliminating the social and ideological roots of terrorism.

Some of these principles are today perceived as a general requirement for the democratic development of society. They are contained – sometimes perhaps just proclaimed – even in the manifestos of other left-wing parties, and partially implemented within various concepts of the social state. This is proof of the accordance of the communist programme with the main left-wing and democratic streams in the world. KSÈM's attention, dedicated to socialist theory, also includes open communication with left-wing intelligentsia. In contrast to most of the non-communist left, *the communists aspire to a radical, yet realistic, project of socialism, they want to get to the root of matters – they are not just aiming at alleviating the harmful consequences of the capitalist social system, but rather want to remove their*

causes. This is the path which sooner or later we will set out on, from historic necessity and in the interests of humanity.

* Excerpts from the document of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSÈM).